UNIVERSIDADE CATÓLICA PORTUGUESA

EVENT EXPERIENCE:
A CONSUMER'S POINT OF VIEW DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

Dissertation submitted to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to obtain a Master's Degree in Communication Studies: Communication, Marketing and Advertising

By

Julia Camila Bonilla Merino

Faculdade de Ciências Humanas

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Under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Mariana Victorino

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Abstract

Social distancing measures and restrictions set by the Covid-19 Pandemic influenced how brands interact with their consumers and how consumers experience brands. The present study addresses the influence of the Covid-19 Pandemic in event marketing, specifically in online events. Due to social isolation during the Covid-19 Pandemic, marketing events were transferred from a face-to-face format, to an online or hybrid format. To understand how this change affected consumer brand experience, a mixed methods approach was implemented. This methodological approach was chosen because marketing events comprise two perspectives: the consumer's perspective and the brand's perspective. To gather the consumer's point of view, 100 surveys were conducted among individuals who attended events during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The quantitative approach served to characterize the events attended during the Covid-19 Pandemic and to assess five dimensions of consumer experience, respectively the affective, physical, cognitive, novelty and social dimensions. The survey analysis showed that consumers felt less stimulated during online events versus face-to-face events in all experience's dimensions. Regarding the qualitative approach, three in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted to a creative director, a brand manager, and an event organizer to understand the brand's point of view. The results of the qualitative approach showed that it was a challenge to maintain consumers' engagement during online events held during the Covid-19 Pandemic, and that consumers are demanding brands to hold face-to-face events or hybrid events instead of online events. Besides, in-depth interviews helped to develop a set of guidelines that contribute to enhance consumer experience in events. The analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data revealed that brands had to adapt to the changes set by the Covid-19 Pandemic on a fast pace, mostly through trial and error. As for consumers, they felt that their experience was negative in online events versus face-to-face events they attended in the past. In special, the social dimension of event experience was affected when attending online events.

Keywords: Consumer brand experience, event marketing, Covid-19, event experience, online events

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Introduction

Background and justification of the research

In the past year, due to the Covid-19 pandemic of 2020, we have experienced a transformation in our daily routines, and most of our previous physical social interactions have changed into an online format. Education, business, communication, and marketing activities had to adapt to a new reality in which consumers and individuals are physically isolated. The Covid-19 pandemic is an event that has led to a global economic and social crisis, which is characterized by uncertainty (Karpen & Conduit, 2020). Consumer behavior, psychographic behavior, and buying patterns have changed; therefore, companies and businesses are developing new strategies to engage with their consumers (Karpen & Conduit, 2020; Zwanka & Buff, 2020). There has been an exceptional growth in e-commerce, online communication, and online entertainment (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020). During this particular time, new consumer habits were developed; the lack of mobility made most of the activities to be conducted from home, which in consequence made consumers embrace technology (Sheth, 2020). Even though consumers remain physically isolated from their communities, there is still a pursuit for social interaction, which is now experienced in an online format (Karpen & Conduit, 2020). Therefore, the physical restrictions set by the Covid-19 Pandemic have transformed marketing strategies and activities, adapting them to a new reality, in which online connection and digital interaction are crucial. As in many other marketing activities, the influence of the Covid-19 Pandemic changed how event marketing strategies, such as product launches, exhibitions, product sampling, reward events, and conferences are developed and executed. This change has affected how brands interact with their consumers and how consumers experience events that, before the pandemic, were held in person and are now transferred to an online format.

Madray (2020) analyzes reports from event management associations [1]that were released during the Covid-19 Pandemic and draws the conclusion that there has been an enormous loss in the

[1] Reports from the Events and Entertainment Management Association (EEMA) and the Professional Convention Management Association (PCMA) were analyzed. EEMA report available at: https://eemaindia.com/theme/FrontThemeTemplate/pdf/EEMA-advisory.pdf and PCMA report available at: https://www.pcma.org/survey-results-covid-19-changing-business-events-industry/

events management industry due to the cancellations and postponements of events. The author states that the industry is surviving through the organization of virtual events, promoted especially in social media (Madray, 2020). Online events during the Covid-19 Pandemic have had a positive impact because they are driven by a sense of personalization and accessibility (Madray, 2020). The author addresses that even though the cost of organizing virtual events is lower than the conventional in-person events, the revenue of online events is also low (Madray, 2020).

The following research will be focused on the influence that the Covid-19 Pandemic had on consumer brand experience in events. The research will study how marketing events had to transform from face-to-face interactions to online experiences because of the social distancing measures imposed during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The topic chosen is relevant to the changing reality we are living today, because it is likely that outbreaks, such as the Covid-19 Pandemic, will continue to happen in the future (Donthu & Gustafsson, 2020).

The topic of consumer brand experience in events was chosen for this research because consumers' perceptions and their relation to technology changed during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. Consumers, from all ages, were drawn to the digital space and had to quickly learn the perks and disadvantages of transferring their activities to an online format (GWI, 2020a). We all experienced changes such as working from home, studying from home, and having our leisure activities from home, amongst others. From a managerial point of view, it is important for brands and companies to understand their consumer's experience in online environments, especially because online communication will continue in the future. In a survey implemented by GWI (2020a) to internet users between 16 and 64 years of age in Latin-America, Middle East, Asia- Pacific, 46% of the individuals stated that 'online interactions are just as real and as valuable as face-to-face interactions' (p. 06). Meaning that, virtual communication and face-to-face communication are equally important for individuals when perceiving the world around them. Due to the lack of physical events during the Covid-19 pandemic, virtual events emerged, and were one of the most outstanding trends of 2020 (GWI, 2020a). Virtual events have become part of our daily lives; through a survey, GWI (2020a) found that 8 in 10 consumers have

attended at least one virtual event since the Covid-19 pandemic started. These events included concerts, training sessions, fitness classes, etc. Besides, GWI (2020a) states that individuals are not yet comfortable with going back to physical venues, which means that online events will continue to predominate in the near future. Since online events are part of our day-to-day activities, it is vital to understand how individuals experience them and how the interaction between individuals differs from a face-to-face format to an online one. The topic studied for this dissertation was also chosen because there is a lack of academic studies referring to consumer experience in online or hybrid event marketing, and this research aims to fill that gap.

Research problem framework

The general objectives of the research are the following:

- To identify the main theories about consumer brand experience and its relation to event marketing.
- To understand the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on brand practices, specifically on events.

Setting the previous general objectives, the research first aims to identify the state of the art and existing theories about consumer brand experience and event marketing. The revision of literature frames and contextualizes the research and provides insights to delimit the object of study (Creswell, 2009). The second general objective focuses on understanding how the Covid-19 Pandemic influenced events that were held during this particular time.

In addition, the research will address two specific objectives:

- To assess consumer's brand experience in events during the Covid-19 Pandemic.
- To develop a set of guidelines, from a consumer's point of view, that will contribute to improve their brand experience in online events.

The specific objectives address the change and transformation to which events had to adapt during the Covid-19 Pandemic. To understand how brands adapted their event marketing strategies during this specific time, it is important to measure consumer brand experiences in events. It is also opportune to propose a set of improvements that brands can add to their practices in the scope of event marketing.

Conceptual grounding

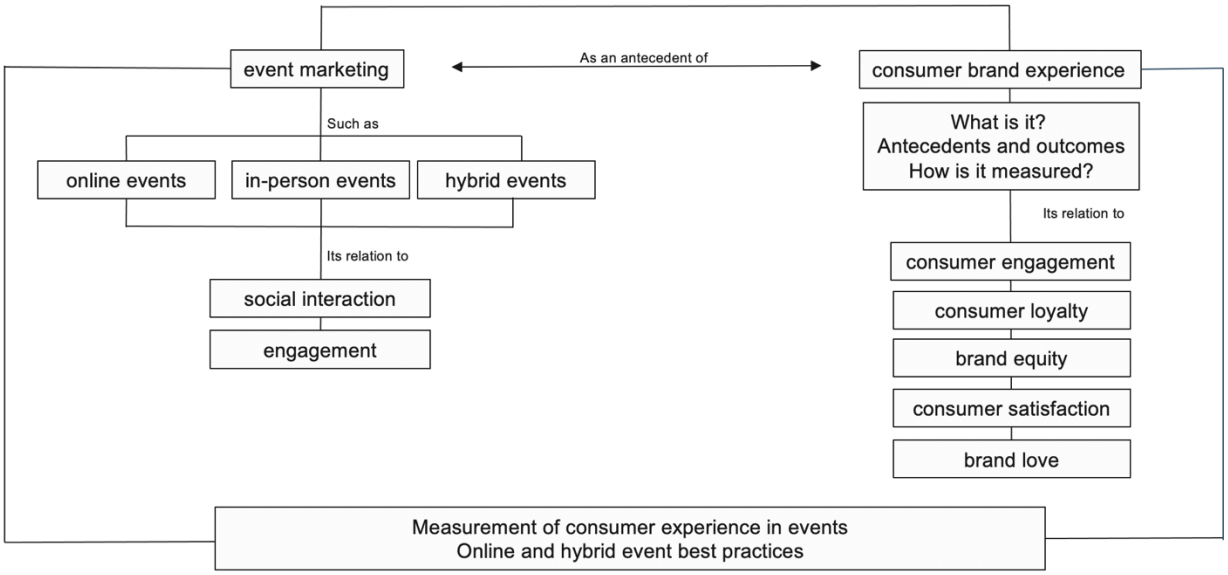


Figure 1 – Concept Map

The two main concepts that frame the research are *event marketing* and *consumer brand experience.* Both concepts are related because a body of literature recognizes *event marketing* as an antecedent of *consumer brand experience* (Khan, Rahman, 2015; Khan & Fatma, 2017; Tafesse, 2016). *Event Marketing* is conceived as either, *online events*, *in-person events* or a mix of both, meaning *hybrid events*. The different formats in which *events* are designed, influences and relates to the consumer's *social interaction*, and to their *engagement*. Event attendees have different experiences depending whether their interactions are physical, digital or both.

In relation to *Consumer Brand Experience*, the concept must first be defined. It is also important to understand how it is assessed and which are their antecedents and expected outcomes.

Consumer brand experience influences and is related to the concepts of consumer *engagement*, *consumer loyalty*, *brand equity*, *consumer satisfaction* and *brand love*.
For the purpose of the research, it is necessary to link the concepts of *event marketing* and *consumer brand experience* in a scale that measures consumer experience in events. Besides, the idea of *online and hybrid event best practices* will be researched during the literature review.

Research question

The primary research question to be answered is:
What impact did the Covid-19 Pandemic have on consumer brand experience in events?

To answer the previous question, and to have a deeper understanding of the topic, the following complementary research questions will be answered: What is consumer brand experience and how is it measured? What are its antecedents and outcomes? How is brand experience related to event marketing? How is consumer brand experience perceived in events? During the Covid-19 Pandemic, how did brands/companies adapt their events from being in-person to online? How did this shift, from in-person held events to online events, affected consumers? Communication wisely, what can brand do to improve consumer's experience in events?

Research planning and design

Methodological options

Consumer brand experience in marketing events combines two dimensions. On one hand, consumers develop their own opinions and expectations of the events. On the other hand, event organizers or brand managers design and plan events with the goal of engaging with event attendees. A Mixed Methods strategy, that combines both qualitative and quantitative methods, is considered appropriate to understand the scope of consumers' experience at event.
Brand experiences are subjective and depend on each consumer's individual point of view (Brakus et al., 2009). Being an individual construct, it is important to gather information from different subjects who have attended marketing events during the Covid-19 Pandemic. For this purpose, a quantitative method with a survey is considered appropriate. Regarding the

organization and planning of marketing events, it is also important to examine the point of view and knowledge of brand managers, who create and design the event. Taking this into consideration, a qualitative method should be adopted, in this case with in-depth interviews.

According to Creswell (2009) a Mixed Methods design is useful to 'both generalize the findings to a population as well as develop a detailed view of the meaning of a phenomenon or concept for individuals' (p. 18). Running a survey to a broad number of individuals would help to understand the general experience and expectations that consumers develop during marketing events, while engaging in in-depth interviews with brand managers or event organizers would provide a comprehensive understanding of event marketing processes during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The triangulation of quantitative and qualitative strategies will consider a survey to event attendees (quantitative method), and in-depth interviews to brand managers or event organizers (qualitative method).

Data collection options

Regarding the quantitative approach, the data collection method will be an online survey directed at individuals who have attended an online event during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The quantitative data will be collected via Qualtrics by means of a questionnaire, in which, amongst others, subjects will identify the online platform in which the event was executed, as well as the format of event attended (such as webinar, livestream, conference, amongst others), and the event type (such as entertainment, academic, product demonstration, etc.) .

In relation to the qualitative approach, data will be collected through three semi-structured interviews with open-ended questions with a brand manager, a creative director of an advertising agency, and an event organizer. Interviews will last a minimum of 40 minutes with each participant and will be conducted through Zoom, which allows the video calls to be recorded.

Data collection options for both quantitative and qualitative methods will be analyzed in Subchapters 3.2.1.1 and 3.2.2.1.

Research design

A Sequential Mixed Methods Strategy will be adopted, meaning that the quantitative data (survey) will be collected first, and the qualitative data (interviews) will be collected later. The inputs gathered from the consumer's point of view will help adjust and complement the interview questions. The weight of each research tool will be equal between the two methods.

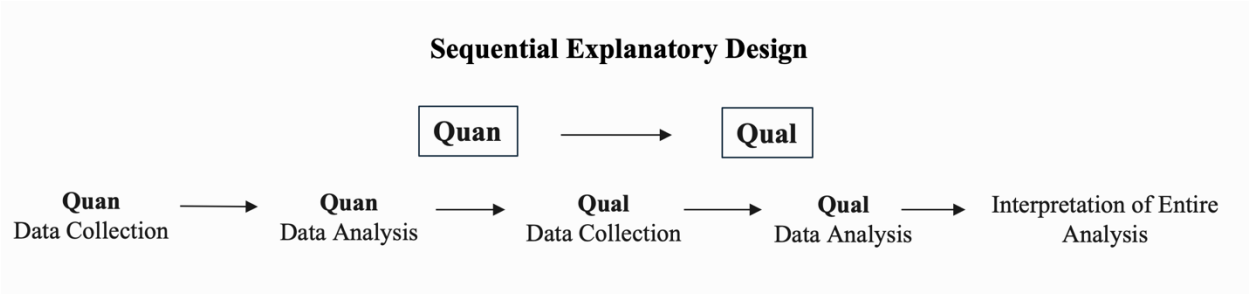


Figure 2 - Sequential Design (Adapted from Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 300)

Analysis options

Regarding the quantitative method, the data collected in questionnaires will be analyzed using Qualtrics tools and will be presented in the form of figures and charts.
In case of the qualitative method, in-depth interviews as well as the field notes taken during the interviews will be transcribed. The next step of the analysis will be reading through all data and starting the coding process, in which the material will be organized in themes. Later, themes will be interrelated and interpreted (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The mixing of the quantitative and qualitative results will be developed in the final discussion of the work.

Research constraints and validity

The aim of the survey is to generalize consumer brand experiences in marketing related events. As stated before, each consumer holds its own personal opinion and experience of the event they attended, that may not be reflected in the survey's parameters. Besides, some external factors, such as internet connection, environment in which the consumers experienced the events, personal expectations, amongst others, may affect the overall experience of event attendees. Such external factors are uncontrollable by the event's organization and would be difficult to determine by the proposed survey. Another constraint is that there are consumers that are more familiarized with online and digital tools, to whom interaction during events might be easier.

Since the sample will be composed of subjects who attended events during the Covid-19 Pandemic, results of the questionnaire will comprise consumer experiences from brands/ organizations from different sectors. It is important to mention that participants' responses might vary from industry to industry. Therefore, it is advised to conduct further research of the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic in event experience in specific industries.

Regarding in-depth interviews, it might be possible that brand managers or event organizers faced constraints such as aligning to specific budgets, internal brand/ company policies, lack of know-how, amongst others. These specific conditions might affect how marketing events are planned and at the end affect consumers' experience. Another constraint is that the interviews will be conducted through Zoom, which is not a natural field setting and might limit the interaction between the researcher and the interviewees. Even though identities of the subjects will remain hidden, the presence of the researcher may bias responses (Creswell, 2009).

Part I: Theoretical Framework

The first part of the research will be focused on understanding the concepts of consumer brand experience and its relation to event marketing. The literature review will serve to understand how consumers form their experience in events, and why consumer brand experience is vital for creating long-lasting relationships between brands and their public. Research shows that it is important to understand the way consumers experience brands, because it serves to develop marketing strategies for products and services (Brakus et al., 2009). Several theories, as well as measurement scales, will be reviewed, and will contribute to create and validate the results of the survey to be conducted in the empirical part of the research.

Chapter 1 - Consumer brand experience

The first chapter will address the definition of consumer brand experience, their antecedents, outcomes, and its measurement. Different authors' points of view will be analyzed, from the most traditional ones (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Schmitt, 1999) to more recent ones (Brakus et al., 2009; Skandalis et al., 2019).

This chapter will begin by exploring the traditional conceptualization of consumer brand experience, coined by Holbrook & Hirschman (1982) and Schmitt (1999). Brakus et al. (2009) conceptualization and brand experience scale, which is still relevant in recent studies, will also be examined. Later, the previous authors' point of view will be contrasted with Skandalis et al. (2019) research.

After defining the concept of consumer brand experience, their antecedents and outcomes will be explored. The antecedents of consumer brand experience that will be addressed are event marketing, brand related stimuli and storytelling. Regarding its outcomes, a broad body of literature identifies brand loyalty, consumer satisfaction, brand equity, consumer engagement and brand love as the key consequences (Hepola et al., 2017; Brakus et al., 2009; Iglesias et al., 2011; Moreira et al., 2017; Huang, 2017; Prentice et al., 2019; Huaman-Ramirez & Merunka, 2019; Nysveen & Pedersen, 2014; Dwivedi et al., 2018; Sahin et al, 2017; Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al., 2012).

This section will show that the creation of experiences is vital, so that brands can successfully engage with their consumers. Besides, the literature review will present that brand events are a key marketing activity that can lead to successful marketing strategies.

1.1 Conceptualization of consumer brand experience

One of the first references about the concept of consumer experience is mentioned by Holbrook & Hirschman (1982), who analyzed and contrasted two different points of view regarding human behavior. The first one being directed towards the rational process of information and the second one related to an experiential view.

The rational view on consumer consumption is based on a method of information processing, which is characterized by the consumer's judgmental and analytical evaluation. During this process, the consumer is seen as a problem-solver and his/her mind is directed towards a goal. In this view, consumers are identified as individuals who engage in activities such as 'searching for information, retrieving memory cues, weighing evidence, and arriving at carefully considered judgmental evaluations' (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982, p. 135). By the time these authors conducted their study, much of the previous research was directed towards the utilitarian function, tangible benefits, and objective features of products and services. It was also focused on the consumer's choice process, that is later developed on purchase decisions and measured as buying behavior.

On the other hand, experiential perspective classifies consumption experiences as part of a multidimensional construct, that is formed by hedonic dimensions, such as fun, feelings and fantasies (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982). The experiential view considers ludic activities, sensorial pleasures, and esthetic enjoyment as influential aspects when consumers engage in buying decisions. The experiential aspects of consumption are focused on 'the symbolic, hedonic and esthetic nature' (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982, p. 132). The authors state that this perspective has subjective characteristics, and that the process is subconscious, private and

depends on each individual. Such inner beliefs, for example fantasies, daydreams and imagery are personal, and can be socially sensitive. The experiential view is related to the product's subjective characteristics and symbolic meanings, for example elegance, happiness, sociability, amongst others. Consumers will seek products that make them feel pleasurable emotions, such as 'fun, amusement, fantasy, arousal, sensory stimulation, and enjoyment' (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982, p. 135).

Building into Holbrook & Hirschman (1982) research, Schmitt (1999) elaborates a strategic framework for experiential marketing. Along the same line as Holbrook & Hirschman (1982), Schmitt (1999) separates the traditional marketing view from the experiential marketing view. Traditional marketing considers consumers as rational and analytical individuals, who buy products and services based on their function and benefits (Schmitt, 1999). This view is what Holbrook & Hirschman (1982) named rational information processing.

Schmitt (1999) proposes that consumers are rational and at the same time emotional individuals, who seek experiences that are pleasing. According to the researcher, there are five different brand experiences, which he names as 'Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs)' (Schmitt, 1999, p.53). The first module (SENSE) comprises the sensory experiences consumers can archive through touch, taste, smell, sight and sound. The second module (FEEL) gathers the affective experiences, which appeal to emotions and feelings that help the creation of an affective bond with consumers. The third module (THINK) is related to creating cognitive experiences, for example by developing problem-solving schemes that engage creatively with consumers. The fourth module (ACT) addresses behavioral change by showing consumers different lifestyles and interactions. The fifth module (RELATE) focuses on relating the individual to a social system, and by being positively perceived by others (Schmitt, 1999). According to Schmitt (1999), experiences are the response to some stimulation, for example communication, such as advertising, brand identity, and media presence. The stimulus that triggers an experience can be 'interpersonal (between people) or intrapersonal (within a person); it can be a marketing stimulus (e.g. 4P) or environmental (e.g. economic, technological, cultural)' (Same & Larimo, 2012, p. 483).

Both researchers, Holbrook & Hirschman (1982) and Schmitt (1999), identified experiences as the outcome of living through things. In most cases sensory, emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and relational values replace functional values when choosing a product or service (Schmitt, 1999). Brands that create experiences for consumers should transmit cognitive consistency to their publics, meaning that they should communicate and act accordingly to their brand values. Schmitt's (1999) research also recognizes that brands should provide sensory variety so that their messages are stronger. It is vital to expose consumers to a great range of experiences before, during and after the purchase, for example smell, visual stimulus, emotions and a sense of affiliation to the products, services or to other consumers. The author suggests that brands that use only one kind of Strategic Experience Module or use multiple, but disconnected, create experiential strategies that tend to be diffused, impoverished and simple.

Holbrook & Hirschman (1982) and Schmitt's (1999) research has been the foundation of marketing experience research, in which there is an emphasis of intangible dimensions, such as 'emotion, symbolism, ideology, socialization' in consumer experiences (Batat, 2019, p. 22). Authors like Brakus et al. (2009) have developed their research based on Schmitt's strategic framework and his Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs). Through their study, Brakus et al. (2009) defined consumer brand experience as the 'sensations, feelings, cognitions and behavioral responses evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments' (p. 52). For the purpose of this research, Brakus et al. (2009) conceptualization of consumer brand experience will be taken into account. Similar to Schmitt's (1999) research, Brakus et al. (2009) recognized four dimensions of brand experience: sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioral. Brand experience and their dimensions have a direct and indirect influence on consumer satisfaction and consumer loyalty, that is mainly perceived through brand personality associations.

Consumer brand experience gathers the process in which consumers search, shop, consume products or acquire a service (Brakus et al. 2009). Brand experience takes into account all encounters where consumers meet with brands, for example before and during the purchase,

while the consumers use the product/service, and even in the form of memories that the brand evokes (Khan & Rahman, 2015, b). The moment when consumers interact with products, for example in the course of searching and evaluating them, is defined by the authors as product experience. Product experience can be direct, when there is physical contact involved, or can be indirect, as in advertising or digital communication. Shopping and service experience is also part of the brand experience construct, because these are the stages where consumers interact, for example with a store's physical or virtual environment, its personnel and the brand's practices or policies (Brakus et al. 2009). When consumers use products, they acquire a consumption experience that combines hedonic dimensions, for instance feelings, fantasies and fun.

Brakus et al. (2009) research recognized consumer brand experience as a subjective process that carries internal consumer responses, such as cognitions, emotions, sensations and feelings. The behavioral responses, triggered by brand experiences, are 'evoked by brand-related stimuli that are part of a brand's design and identity, packaging, communications, and environments' (Brakus et al., 2009, p.53). Not all brand experiences are lived in the same way, the authors recognize that they vary in strength, intensity and valence, meaning their emotional force or attraction. Some brand experiences are spontaneous and short-lived, while others arise deliberately and can last longer. Regarding their valence, some are perceived as more positive than others. Khan & Rahman (2015, b) suggest that due to the sensitive nature of experiences 'it is possible that a negative impression can be created by a single cue at any stage of the customer-brand interaction' (p. 253). In consequence, it is important for marketing experts to be careful at choosing marketing communication stimuli and strategies.

To have a better understanding of the concept of brand experience, Brakus et al. (2009) made a distinction between consumer brand experience and other marketing constructs, such as brand attitude, brand involvement and brand attachment.

In comparison to the concept of brand attitude, which is defined by Kotler & Armstrong (2018) as 'a person's consistently favorable or unfavorable evaluations, feelings and tendencies' (p. 667) towards a brand, brand experience does not give general evaluative judgement. Brand

experience gathers specific sensations, for example feelings, thoughts, emotions and behavioral responses that are generated by specific brand stimuli: ‘experiences may include specific feelings, not an overall ‘liking’’ (Brakus et al., 2009, p.53). In comparison to the concept of brand involvement, which is characterized by the needs and interests that motivate consumers, brand experiences do not seek consumer’s motivation. Experiences can be lived in situations where consumers do not show interest in brands or do not have a previous personal connection (Brakus et al., 2009). Regarding the construct of brand attachment, which is distinguished by a strong emotional bond from consumers towards brands, brand experience is not perceived as a concept that is related to an emotional relationship.

Based on Schmitt’s Strategic Experiential Modules (SEMs), Brakus et al. (2009) defined four experience dimensions: sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioral. Sensory experiences being the stimulation provided by visual, olfactory, gustatory and tactile means. Affective experiences being the emotional stimulus, intellectual experiences being the cognitive stimulation and behavioral experiences being the actions influenced by brands. To validate their conceptualization of consumer brand experience and their dimensions, the researchers designed a qualitative study. Participants were told to select two brands within the same category; one that provided them a strong consumer experience, and other that created a weak experience. After a series of open ended responses, participants characterized strong experiential brands with feelings, sensations, imaginative thoughts and behaviors. While weak experiential brands were often described for their price, promotions and functionality. In total, the study had more than 1000 respondents, who referred to a number of 70 different brands. Brakus et al. (2009) concluded that the previously mentioned study was aligned with the researchers' concept of consumer brand experience and their proposed dimensions.

Adding on previous research by Brakus et al. (2009), Schmitt et al. (2015) added another dimension to consumer brand experience; the social/relational dimension. Brands are drivers of social experiences and act as mediators between the consumption of products/services and the consumers’ well-being (Schmitt et al., 2015). Brands can evoke a consumer's feeling of pleasure through sensory, affective, and bodily experiences and can derive a consumer's sense of meaning

from intellectual and social experiences. Besides, brand experiences allow consumers to develop meaningful connections with the brands, organizations and other peers (Schmitt et al., 2015).
To complement Schmitt et al.'s (2015) social dimension of brand experience, Andreini et al. (2018) concluded that brands are socially-constructed phenomena. Meaning that the brand's stakeholders help shape their meaning through interaction that creates brand value. The authors argue that experience should be framed through a relational perspective, because it relates individuals, 'activating subject-to-subject(s), subject(s)-to-brand and subject(s)-to-stakeholder(s) relationships' (Andreini et al., 2018, p. 127). Consumers have now acquired the role of being active makers and shapers of brands, and brand experience is considered a co-created practice. Nysveen & Pedersen (2014) added the rational and co-creational dimensions to Brakus et al. (2009) framework. Their research shows that co-creation, which is defined by the authors as 'a collaborative activity including both producers and consumers for the purpose of creating value', has a positive influence on the other experience dimensions, and thus strengthens brand experience overall (Nysveen & Pedersen, 2014, p. 811). After analyzing the previous literature, consumer brand experience integrates five spheres: sensory experience, affective experience, intellectual experience, behavioral experience, and social experience.

Brakus et al. (2009) work is considered the main study in the realm of consumer brand experience. There is criticism by the academic community since Brakus et al.'s (2009) research represents the only definition and single theoretical perspective of brand experience: 'No marketing studies have tried to critically analyze or extend the brand experience concept after the conceptualization of Schmitt (1999) and Brakus, Schmitt, and Zarantonello (2009). Instead, almost all adopted their definition' (Andreini et al., 2018, p.124). Since Brakus et al. (2009) conceptualization is the most accepted and used in the brand experience literature, the present study will consider it for the development of the research.

One study that contrasts Brakus et al. (2009) findings is Skandalis et al. (2019) research about event experience in the context of a music festival. Previous literature considers that experiences are created through certain brand-stimuli that evoke emotions, sensations and feelings to consumers (Brakus et al., 2009; Schmitt et al., 2015). These special experiences are usually

stronger when they take place outside the sphere of everyday life, for example in exotic locations, with new people, amongst others (Skandalis et al., 2019). Through an ethnographic study made to music festival attendees in Spain, Skandalis et al. (2019) conclude that consumers also perceive extraordinary experiences in an everyday context. And that these experiences are formed by structural and nonstructural marketplace tensions, such as the perception of an experience being commercial vs. authentic, ordinary vs. escapist and the feeling of being immersed in the experience by oneself or being part of a community (Skandalis et al., 2019). For example, the attendees described that the music festival created an extraordinary experience because it had a commercial nature that contrasted with an authentic music line-up. Besides, attendees felt the festival's setting as being ordinary because it took place in the city, yet they felt immersed through music which contributed to the escapist dimension of the festival. In addition, the festival's context provided social interaction between participants and at the same time, a personal and individual retrospection within the music experience. Skandalis et al. (2019) propose that the creation of intense, extraordinary and unique experiences can occur within an everyday context.

1.1.1 Consumer brand relationships

When consumers are in touch with brands, they tend to develop relationships towards them. Consumers feel that some specific brands are closer to them, meaning that they develop a preference for them, while they avoid other brands. 'Consumer brand relationships' as coined by Fetscherin & Heinrich (2014) determines the positive or negative experiences consumers can acquire with brands.

Fetscherin & Heinrich (2014) analyze consumer brand relationships and develop two theoretical frameworks: the 'brand connection matrix' and the 'brand feeling matrix' (p. 366). The 'brand connection matrix' organizes consumer brand relationships in regard to emotional and functional connections. As shown in Figure 3, functional connections are completely met when consumers are fully satisfied with a product's performance, while emotional connections are fully met when consumers connect affectionately with a product. Consumers that are

‘functionally invested‘ with a brand (quadrant 1) usually appreciate a brand’s performance, but might switch to another one if they find a better deal. Fetscherin & Heinrich (2014) state that brands that fall into this quadrant are seen as ‘colleagues’ by consumers (p. 368). Consumers that have a close connection with a brand are categorized as ‘fully invested’ (quadrant 2). In this relationship, consumers have very positive feelings about the brand and are likely to declare their love to the specific brand. This relationship is regarded as very powerful since it can develop into brand loyalty and positive word-of-mouth. Consumers feel that brands are part of their family or even part of themselves (Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2014). When consumers are neither emotionally nor functionally connected with a brand, the relationship falls into the category of ‘un-invested’ (quadrant 3). There is no brand loyalty and consumers see brands as their ‘acquaintances’. The last quadrant (quadrant 4) represents consumers that are solely ‘emotionally invested’ with brands. Consumers might feel that brands fulfill their needs in the emotional sphere but lack functional benefits. Fetscherin & Heinrich (2014) state that this relationship is possible only for a period of time, because consumers will end up finding other brands that fulfill their whole scope of needs.

Functional connection (thinking/ cognitive)	Emotional connection (feeling/affective): Low	Emotional connection (feeling/affective): High
High	**(1)** 'functionally invested'	**(2)** ‘fully invested’
Low	**(3)** ‘un-invested’	**(4)** ‘emotionally invested’

Figure 3 - Brand connection matrix (Adapted from Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2014, p. 368)

The second matrix proposed by Fetscherin & Heinrich (2014) is the brand feeling matrix that focuses on the strength of affection between consumers and brands. As seen in Figure 4, quadrant 1 represents relationships in which consumers have positive, yet weak feelings about a brand. Consumers are satisfied with a brand, but do not feel emotional connection towards it. On the other hand, consumer brand relationships that fall in quadrant 2 are characterized by intense positive feelings, such as love or passion for a brand. Consumers that have weak negative feelings about a brand, as seen in quadrant 3, tend to avoid it. In the last quadrant (quadrant 4) consumers have very strong negative feelings regarding a brand, which can be linked to the feelings of hate.

Strengths of brand relationship

Feelings towards brand	Weak	Strong
Positive	**(1)** Brand satisfaction	**(2)** Brand love Brand passion
Negative	**(3)** Brand avoidance	**(4)** Brand hate Brand divorce

Figure 4 - Brand feeling matrix (Adapted from Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2014, p. 371)

Both matrices developed by Fetscherin & Heinrich (2014) show the complexities of consumer brand relationships. Through their study, Fetscherin & Heinrich (2014) present that brands can provide either positive or negative experiences, driven by the relationships they hold with their target audience.

1.2 Antecedents and outcomes of consumer brand experience

Marketing strategists have identified brand experience as an important aspect to build long term relationships between consumers and brands (Khan & Rahman, 2015, a). Therefore, there is a large body of literature dedicated to analyze the antecedents and outcomes of brand experience. Khan & Rahman (2015, a, b) provided a complex literature review on the topic and developed a conceptual and theoretical framework for brand experience formation and its outcomes.

In order to develop the conceptual framework, the authors analyzed 73 articles from 38 journals related to brand experience, experience branding, consumer experience, experiential marketing, amongst others (Khan & Rahman, 2015, a). In total, 32 product categories were studied, from which food and beverage brands were the highest in number. The researchers concluded that event marketing, brand contact, brand related stimuli and storytelling are the factors that enable brand experience formation. Event marketing allows consumers to be involved with brands, have first-hand experiences and it is linked to brand equity and sales growth (Khan & Rahman, 2015, a). Regarding brand contact, it can be achieved through a physical/in-person approach, for example in point of sales, or in a digital way, such as a brand's website. Concerning brand related-stimuli, the authors state that it 'can be associated with any inherent characteristics of a brand that signify its presence or absence. These characteristics (...) can be listed as: brand name, simple touch points such as order forms, application forms, invoices given to consumer once a sale is made, and physical infrastructure' (Khan & Rahman, 2015, a, p.8). The last identified antecedent by the authors is storytelling, which tends to hold consumers' interest through stories, appeal to their emotions and thus create lasting experiences.
As for brand experience outcomes, the authors identified brand satisfaction, brand loyalty, brand credibility, brand equity, brand attitude and purchase intention as the main consequences.

Building into the previous mentioned research, Khan & Rahman (2015, b) developed a theoretical framework through a revision of literature (Figure 5).

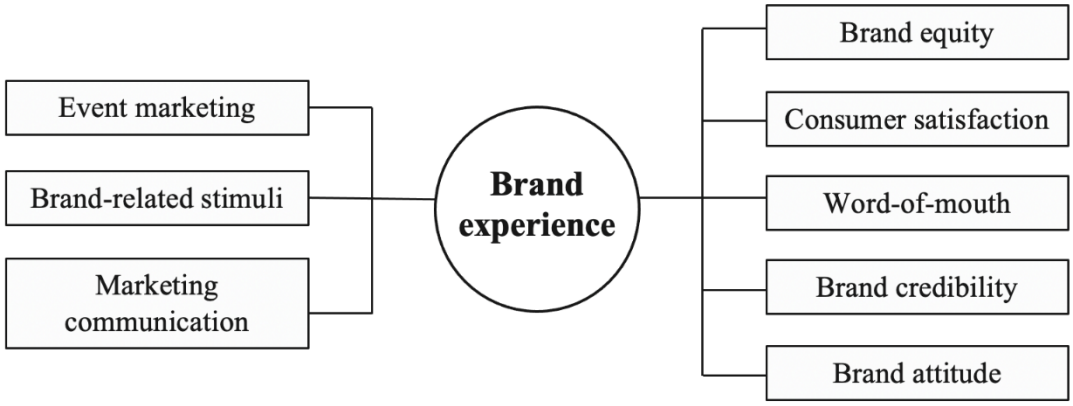


Figure 5 - Brand experience theoretical framework (Adapted from Khan, & Rahman, 2015, b, p. 250)

In addition to marketing communication, event marketing and brand-related stimuli continue to be mentioned as consumer brand experience antecedents. In this context, the authors state that various forms of marketing communication, such as advertising, sales promotions, sponsorships, celebrity endorsement, amongst others, are beneficial for generating pleasurable brand experiences. Marketing communication can occur in both online and offline brand communities. Marketing communication includes one-way communication, such as in advertising, two-way communication, for example in consumer service, or direct marketing (Khan & Fatma, 2017).

Similar to the previous study, the authors established that consumer satisfaction, brand credibility, brand attitude and brand equity are consumer brand experience outcomes. In addition, word-of-mouth was added to the framework as a consequence (Khan & Rahman, 2015, b).

Elaborating into the two previous frameworks, Khan & Fatma (2017) developed an empirical study which proved that event marketing, brand clues and marketing communications are the three main antecedents of brand experience. While brand trust, brand loyalty, consumer satisfaction, word-of-mouth, brand credibility and brand attitude are regarded as the outcomes.

The study used a qualitative method approach, which consisted of 38 interviews with university students. It is important to highlight that the study was conducted on restaurant brands, which tends to be a sensitive industry. Empirical analysis confirmed the relationships between the antecedents of brand experience, brand experience itself and its outcomes.
Khan & Fatma (2017) concluded that brand clues are more influential to the creation of brand experiences compared to marketing communication and event marketing. Brand clues can be functional, as in the technical quality of the offerings, they can also be mechanical, as in the tangibles related to the product or service, or can be humanic, such as the behavior of the product/service providers (Berry et al. 2006). Brand cues can be brand's slogans, mascots, colors, shapes, design elements, packaging, brand names, amongst others (Khan & Fatma, 2017).

Khan & Rahman (2015, a, b) and Khan & Fatma (2017) studies showed the importance of building strong consumer experiences through event marketing, brand clues and marketing communication. Besides, a large body of literature supports the results of brand experience outcomes presented by the authors.

1.2.1 Consumer brand experience, consumer satisfaction and consumer loyalty

Several studies prove the positive relationship between brand experience and consumer satisfaction, and brand experience and consumer loyalty (Iglesias et al, 2011; Moreira et al, 2017; Huang, 2017; Wahyono & Nurjanah, 2020). Consumer satisfaction is defined as 'the extent to which a product's perceived performance matches a buyer's expectations' (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018, p. 668) and consumer loyalty is seen as 'the customers' continuous purchases of a brand, as well as their repeated intention to purchase in the future' (Huang, 2017, p. 5). Both concepts are strongly linked because consumers that feel satisfied by the brand are likely to remain loyal and also to present the brand/company to other peers (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018).

One study that supports the direct and indirect relationship between brand experience and consumer loyalty is Iglesias et al. (2011) quantitative research in three product categories, cars,

laptops and sneakers. Through the collection of 195 surveys, it was established that affective commitment mediated the relationship between both constructs. If brands want to obtain more loyal consumers, they should put their efforts on the affective and emotional dimensions by means of their communication. Brand experience can affect previously lived satisfaction judgements, and also influence future directed loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009).

These results are aligned with Huang (2017) research, which supports that brand loyalty, mediated by brand love and brand trust, is an outcome of brand experience. Huang (2017) analyzes the specific impact of sensory, intellectual and behavioral dimensions of brand experience. As a result, it is established that the sensory dimension influences brand love and drives the sense of brand trust. On the other hand, intellectual experience does not have an effect on brand trust. Brand love, formed largely by sensory brand experience, helps to the development of brand trust, which later evolves to brand loyalty (Huang, 2017).

Regarding the service sector, Moreira et al. (2017) conducted a study with telecommunication brands which validates the relationship between brand experience, loyalty, trust and quality perceptions. This study contradicts previous research (Iglesias et al., 2011; Brakus et al., 2009) because a direct relationship between brand experience and brand satisfaction was not established. Moreira et al.'s (2017) results are consistent with Wahyono & Nurjanah (2020) study about the influence of experiential marketing, quality of service and consumer satisfaction towards consumer loyalty. Using a quantitative approach, it was determined that experiential marketing has an influence on consumer loyalty, but no significant effect on consumer satisfaction. The researchers state that not all dimensions of brand experience have a positive influence on consumer satisfaction (Wahyono & Nurjanah, 2020).

1.2.2 Consumer brand experience and brand equity

In regard to the relationship between brand experience and brand equity, Beig & Nika (2019) and Hepola et al. (2017) studies confirm a positive relation. Brand equity is understood as 'the differential effect that knowing the brand name has on consumer response to the product or its marketing' (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018, p. 667). Beig & Nika (2019) created a conceptual framework, in which four aspects of brand experience, based on Brakus et. al's (2009) sensory,

affective, behavioral, and intellectual dimensions, had a positive impact on brand equity. According to the authors, and based on Aaker's model, brand equity is formed by four realms: brand awareness, brand association, perceived quality and brand loyalty (Aaker, 1991, as cited by Beig & Nika, 2019). Brand equity is perceived as a long-term route for building strong and valuable brands. And brand experience, lived through their different dimensions, can allow brands to form brand equity and create bonds between companies and consumers, that at the end will help the brand to differentiate from others (Beig & Nika, 2019). Hepola et al. (2017) conducted a quantitative study, which demonstrated the positive influence of sensory brand experience on brand equity. By creating strong sensory experiences, consumers felt a higher level of emotional engagement with the brands.

1.2.3 Consumer brand experience and brand love

The close relationship that consumers develop to certain brands, and their ability to specifically love some products has been widely analyzed (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Brand love is defined by Carroll & Ahuvia (2006) as the 'degree of passionate emotional attachment a satisfied consumer has for a particular trade name' (p. 81). Consumers are more likely to be engaged with brands that are perceived as hedonic, meaning that their focus is on emotions rather than on functional values. According to Carroll & Ahuvia (2006), brand love comprises several aspects, for example 'passion for the brand, attachment to the brand, positive evaluation of the brand, positive emotions in response to the brand, and declarations of love for the brand' (p. 81). In further research, Batra et al. (2012) added three more elements that characterize brand love. The additional characteristics are the following: the feeling of separation anxiety when consumers are not in touch with the brand they love; the possible formation of a long-term relationship between the consumer and the brand; and what the authors call 'self-brand integration', which is the brand's ability to be integrated into the lives of their consumers (p.13). Batra et al. (2012) advise brand managers to develop brand presence in events that are emotionally meaningful to their target audience, for example music festivals or sports events. Through events, consumers feel encouraged to be part of active brand communities.

The relationship between brand love and consumer brand experience has also been an object of research. In previous studies, brand love was studied as the mediator between brand experience and other constructs (Huang, 2017). Nevertheless Zhang's (2019) research specifically analyzed the relationship between 3 spheres of consumer brand experience and brand love. The author defines brand love as the 'positive feelings about the products and services they [consumers] have bought. This emotion is extended through the interpersonal love emotion between people in psychology and applied to the consumption field, which is called brand love' (Zhang, 2019, p. 899). By means of a quantitative study, the researcher addressed sensory, emotional and social brand experience. Sensory experience and emotional experience have a great impact on consumers' development of brand love, while social experience demonstrates a lower relationship. In addition, Prentice et al. (2019) research constitutes another contribution to the brand love and consumer brand experience studies. Prentice et al. (2019) concluded that consumers' brand experience in the airline industry influences brand love and consumer engagement. Brakus et al. (2009) dimensions of brand experience contribute to the passengers' emotional connection to the airlines, and to brand engagement.

In a managerial perspective, creating rich brand experiences demands a significant investment and an increase in marketing budgets. Activating diverse consumer touch points with a brand experience strategy may have the potential to increase profitability (Dwivedi et al., 2018).

1.3 Measurement of consumer brand experience

The most accepted and widely tested tool to measure consumer brand experience is Brakus et al. (2009) 12-item brand experience scale. The scale is formed by four consumer experience dimensions: sensory, affective, intellectual and behavioral and establishes 'the overall degree to which a brand evokes experiences' (Brakus et al., 2009, p. 63). To build the scale, Brakus et al. (2009) derived the experience dimensions from a revision of literature and then proved them with the means of a qualitative study. Afterwards, they designed five following studies that allowed them to generate and create the scale items.

The first study generated specific items for each brand experience dimension through a revision of literature and then validated, and tested them with consumer's survey. The second study reduced the number of scale items and confirmed the scale dimensions, in sensory items, intellectual items, behavioral items and affective items. Study number three was used to establish validity and reliability of the scale. And studies four and five used the scale on a population to measure and predict behavior outcomes, such as consumer satisfaction and loyalty (Brakus et al., 2009). Figure 6 presents Brakus et al. (2009) consumer brand experience scale, one item in each dimension is measured with reversed polarity (RV).

Dimension	Item
Sensory	This brand makes a strong impression on my visual sense or other senses
	I find this brand interesting in a sensory way
	This brand does not appeal to my senses (RV)
Affective	This brand induces feelings and sentiments
	I do not have strong emotions for this brand (RV)
	This brand is an emotional brand
Behavioral	I engage in physical actions and behaviors when I use this brand
	This brand results in bodily experiences
	This brand is not action oriented (RV)
Intellectual	I engage in a lot of thinking when I encounter this brand
	This brand does not make me think (RV)
	This brand stimulates my curiosity and problem solving

Figure 6 - Brand experience scale (Adapted from Brakus et al., 2009, p.60)

The scale presented by Brakus et al. (2009) represents the most used tool to measure brand experiences and the only operationalization of this construct (Andreini et al., 2018). The scale was used in a number of investigations to research specific dimensions of consumer brand experience (Hepola et al., 2017) and the relationship between consumer brand experience and other constructs (Iglesias et al., 2011; Moreira et al., 2017; Huang, 2017; Prentice et al., 2019;

Huaman-Ramirez & Merunka, 2019; Nysveen & Pedersen, 2014; Dwivedi et al., 2018; Sahin et al, 2017).

As Andreini et al. (2018) expose, there is a lack of criticism in the academic community to Brakus et al. (2009) conceptualization and operationalization of consumer brand experience. Most researchers have either adopted or adapted this scale to directly measure the four brand experience dimensions mentioned by Brakus et al. (2009). Brand experience, being a construct that is based on co-practice and cooperation between brands and consumers, is socially constructed, which is a dimension that Brakus et al. (2009) do not take into account when measuring experiences (Andreini et al., 2018). Another critique to Brakus et al. (2009) scale comes from Iglesias et al. (2011) study about the role of brand experience in the creation of brand loyalty. The researchers state that the scale items that have a reversed polarity (RV) show a 'much lower reliability than the rest of the items in each dimension and that they can cause 'misspecification errors' (Iglesias et al., 2011, p. 579). The authors suggest that the reversed polarity items should be reworded or deleted so they preserve the same polarity as the rest of the items.

In conclusion, Chapter 1 provides a definition to the brand experience construct and its different dimensions (sensory, affective, intellectual, behavioral and social). Modern consumers are rational and at the same time emotional individuals, that seek products and services for their functional features, but also for gaining fun, pleasurable and memorable experiences with each brand contact. Experiences may vary in their strength and intensity; some can be positive, other negative, some stronger and some weak. However, researchers agree that experiences evoke emotional and behavioral responses that help consumers develop brand love, satisfaction and loyalty, while brands develop credibility and brand equity. Sensory and affective/emotional experiences have proven to be the most influential when consumers engage with brands.

A large number of studies have focused on measuring brand experience for product/services using Brakus et al. (2009) scale, but there is a lack of research on measuring consumer brand experience in different contexts, for example in digital or online interactions. It is important to

mention that traditional consumer experience studies (Schmitt, 1999; Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Brakus et al., 2009) understand extraordinary experiences as occurring outside everyday context, for example in impressive events, unique locations, amongst others. Nevertheless, recent studies (Skandalis, 2019) show that extraordinary experiences can arise in everyday life. This finding is specifically important in the context of the Covid-19 Pandemic, since a considerable number of consumers' brand contacts are developed in everyday contexts, such as working at home, online shopping, studying at home, amongst others. Consumer brand experience theory is largely based on Brakus et al. (2009) research, and even though it represents its foundation, it is important to mention that no other studies have been found that challenge their conceptualization and scale.

Chapter 2 - Event marketing and consumer brand experience

The second chapter examines the relationship between event marketing and consumer brand experience. First, it is important to understand the definition of events and what event marketing comprises, and later how events are experienced by consumers. The first subchapter will be focused on the definition of event marketing, how event marketing strategies are created and its relevance in advertising and marketing plans.

One of the goals of the dissertation is to understand how event marketing was experienced by consumers during the Covid-19 pandemic. To accomplish this goal, it is important to measure such experiences with the use of a scale. In this chapter, two recent event experience scales will be discussed.

2.1 Conceptualization of event marketing

2.1.1 Conceptualization of events

To start the discussion about event marketing we must first understand the meaning of events themselves. The gathering of people and the formation of communities have been a part of human history since its very beginning. Events can entertain us, promote commerce and encourage our competitive spirit. In ancient times most events were organic, informal and organized by and for the communities, such as in harvest festivals, family related celebrations, competitions related to sports, among others (Getz, 2020). Throughout history, some events were also planned to meet specific political and commercial goals, as in royal inaugurations, triumphant parades and fairs. Events define cultures, shape human identity and connect communities (Getz, 2020). Regarding the periodicity of events, they can occur in regular intervals, for example in the case of annual festivals, or they can be sporadic, when they are held only once. Getz (2020) states that we are living in a time in which events are seen as instruments and agents of change, economic growth and part of marketing strategies.

According to Getz (2020), events can be defined as occurrences that are framed in a specific time and space. Events 'are a live "occurrence" with an audience. If an audience exists, then a message or experience is being shared, transmitted, generated and, therefore, all events can potentially communicate something' (Wood, 2009, p. 248). Events are temporal, they have a starting point and they have an end. When events are planned, their schedule or program is well defined and also advertised. Regarding locations, events are held in specific places, such as an open space or a particular facility (Getz & Page, 2012). Events can be categorized as having a commercial or noncommercial nature. Events that have a commercial purpose can become products themselves, such as festivals or touristic related events, or they can be used as part of a media plan within a marketing strategy (Ristevska- Jovanovska, 2019)

In the case of virtual events, Getz & Page (2012) consider that online and teleconferenced events are not a replacement for 'live' events. Even though virtual events have their place, for example the platform in which they are transmitted, they are not social in nature. The authors recognize planned events as social occurrences, meaning that people should be physically together to socialize, do business and celebrate. The authors acknowledge the importance and benefits of broadcasting face-to-face events through an online platform, for example when travelling is not possible or when the attendees do not have time available to assist the live event. Nevertheless, Getz & Page's (2012) state that virtual events do not fulfill the social expectations that individuals have, and that event business is more effective when done in person. A large body of literature does not agree with Getz & Page's (2012) point of view and considers that events can also be organized and lived through online or virtual platforms (Ristevska-Jovanovska, 2019; Wreford et al., 2019; Roos et al., 2020). This research will consider events as occurrences that can be developed in person, online or in a mix of both (hybrid events).

Getz (2020) categorizes events in the realms of festivals or cultural celebrations, entertainment/arts, religious celebrations, exhibitions, meetings/conferences, competitions or sport games, recreational events, political, educational, business and scientific events. There is no definition regarding the size that an event should have; they can be small and informal, or they can be big with a large investment (Getz, 2020). Events that focus on measurable and short-

term results, for example profit/revenue, guest/consumer satisfaction or attendance, are typically designed for the entertainment, business and tourism industries. Events are unique, they cannot be recreated because the interactions of some factors such as the setting or the relationship between the attendees, may differ. Besides, 'the expectations, moods and attitudes of guests and participants will always be new. This uniqueness of events makes them attractive, even compelling, so that cultivating a 'once in a lifetime' image for an event is the marketer's goal' (Getz & Page, 2012, p. 37). Typically, events can be measured by their effectiveness, meaning by reaching the proposed goals, and by their efficiency in the employment of the resources (Getz, 2020).

As we have analyzed in the first chapter, experience is personal and unique. Event attendees' experience is shaped by the setting, the program, and other guests at the event. Event organizers cannot ensure memorable and enjoyable experiences for all the guests because it is a personal outcome. When attending the same event, some guests can find it fun and entertaining while others can find it boring and predictable (Getz, 2020). Getz & Page (2007) divide event experiences in two categories; generic and specific experiences. Generic experiences are more related to the 'individual's state of mind and particular circumstances than with the event theme, programme or setting' (p. 182). Generic experiences are often described as 'fun', entertaining', 'relaxing', 'enjoyable', 'stimulating', among others. According to Getz & Page (2007), these descriptions are too ambiguous and cannot be used for describing events. Besides the personal meanings that attendees develop through generic experiences are usually not profound, memorable or transforming.

On the other hand, specific experiences are related to seeking particular objectives when attending the events. For example, when frequenting a cultural celebration, guests are seeking knowledge about a new culture, or attendees participate in a sport or recreational event for fitness reasons. Political, convention, cultural and sports related events often lead to specific event experiences (Getz & Page, 2007).

Events that are created with specific objectives related to culture, business, environment, society and economy are called 'planned events' (Getz & Page, 2012, p.40). The design of planned

events includes the themes, consumables, services offered and settings that ease the experience for the guests. Guests, consumers and attendees participate in events for a number of personal and social reasons. As for personal reasons, events can foster an inner process of self-discovery, understanding and self-actualization. In events related to entertainment, personal hedonism in the form of pleasure, fun, and relaxation, is the main reason for attending events. Personal growth, for example developing new skills, fulfilling aspirations, and testing one-self are seen as a result of attending events (Getz & Page, 2007). Besides, consumers visit events to learn, which could be done through cultural, artistic, academic and intellectual experiences. In the case of the social sphere, attendees feel they belong to a community, which shares similar connections and values between its participants. In addition, individuals find a sense of validation, self-worth and reputation when being part and sharing with other event attendees. Through the social setting that events provide, its attendees develop self-awareness and strengthen their self-image (Getz & Page, 2007).

2.1.2 Conceptualization of event marketing

The shift from a product focused industry to an experience orientated industry is what some authors define as 'experience economy' (Getz & Page, 2007). Consumers are more willing to connect with brands that deliver enjoyable and fun experiences, and event marketing is a channel that has the potential to provide such experiences and emotionally attract consumers. Regarding event marketing, Wood (2009) defines this concept as 'any event that helps market a product/service, idea, place or person, and that communicates or has the potential to communicate with a target audience' (p. 248). Companies organize marketing events that focus on a brand, a product line or in the company itself (Ristevska-Jovanovska, 2019). Wood (2009) limited event marketing to events in which the target audience interacts with a brand or product face to face. Marketing events have corporate goals and are conceived to engage with consumers or possible consumers in commerce by promoting products and services (Getz & Page, 2007).

The development of an event that exhibits, displays, presents and promotes an organization, brand, service, product or cause is known as a marketing event (Ristevska-Jovanovska, 2019).

Marketing or sales activities are possible to do at any kind of event, either in an online or offline atmosphere. Traditional advertising, in the form of television, radio or billboards, has the purpose of targeting a large number of consumers, while event marketing concentrates on gaining the attention of specific individuals/groups and archiving quality individual impressions (Ristevska-Jovanovska, 2019; Wood, 2009). The interest in event marketing has been rising over the years, because there has been an overwhelming use of traditional media to target potential consumers. Brands seek to differentiate themselves from their competitors by offering consumers original and novel experiences, which add value to their lives and provide emotional attachment (Ristevska-Jovanovska, 2019; Wood, 2009). Traditional and mass media advertising, as in television, radio, OOH (Out of Home), among others, are characterized by being one-way communications. To the contrary, event marketing has the singularity of being direct and highly interactive between brands and consumers (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013). Event marketing is a communication tool and is part of several promotional strategies that brands/companies develop to create long-lasting experiences with the target audience. Kotler & Armstrong (2018) add that event marketing or event sponsorship comprises 'creating a brand-marketing event or serving as a sole or participating sponsor of events created by others' (p. 669). Events can be designed by the company or be owned by a third party with the company's endorsement in the form of sponsorships (Kotler & Armstrong, 2018). Brands can either own or sponsor events, depending on the event marketing strategy they wish to adopt (Ristevska-Jovanovska, 2019; Karpinska-Krakowiak, 2015). When brands are the proprietaries of the event, they produce it and host it. On the other hand, when brands sponsor events, they normally enter a contractual relationship with a third party (Karpinska-Krakowiak, 2015).

In Figure 7 we can find examples of marketing events, such as product launches, product sampling, open days, conferences, road shows, press conferences, and exhibitions (Wood, 2009).

Examples of marketing events		
Incentive/reward events: Events offered as a bonus for achievements for internal staff, sales force, distributors, etc.	**Product launches:** Creating an "occasion" around the development or improvement of a product. Aimed at the media, distribution chain or consumer.	**Publicity events:** Designed to gain maximum media exposure often through unusual or controversial activities linked to the product or brand.
Conferences: Conferences, meetings and seminars can all be used as marketing communication vehicles.	**Product sampling:** Creating the opportunity to try or experience a product or service. Often combined with product launch.	**Press conferences:** Inviting the press to hear about some important or newsworthy development related to the company, product, brand, industry etc.
"Created" events: Developing an event often as a product in its own right to carry the brand values.	**Road shows:** Mobile events which spread the brand message to different locations.	**Competitions/contests:** An event created around some form of contest and linked to the brand (e.g., Red Bull's flying machines).
Corporate entertainment: Using events to entertain, reward clients and partners. Ranging from golf days to theatre, safaris to paintballing.	**Exhibitions:** Ranging from trade shows hosting a number of organizations to art exhibitions related to a specific brand.	**Product visitor attractions:** "Permanent" events developing involvement with the brand and often marketed as a product in their own right (e.g., World of Coca Cola Museum; Heineken Experience in Amsterdam).
Charity fundraisers: Linking event marketing and corporate social responsibility.	**Open days:** Inviting employees, customers, partners, local community to activities hosted within the organization (e.g., Family fun days, factory tours).	

Figure 7 - Examples of Marketing events (Adapted from Wood, 2009, p. 249)

Wood (2009) states that event marketing effectiveness is influenced by a number of factors, such as the social context, the individual's emotional reaction, and other marketing communications. So that attendees feel engaged with the event, Wood (2009) suggests that there should be a level of challenge or stimulation depending on the target audience. Some attendees might find the event as overly challenging, or uncomfortable, while at the same time other attendees might find it novel and stimulating. Beforehand, event managers should focus on knowing the abilities, knowledge and profile of their target audience, so that they can design an event that fits with their expectations and competences (Wood, 2009). According to Tafesse (2016), there are four aspects that characterize event marketing; the audience is highly involved, it is a novel marketing technique that sets itself apart from traditional marketing strategies, it provides individuals a rich experience and it is framed in space and time.

Companies implement event marketing strategies because they foster consumer engagement and offer a personal opportunity for brands to interact with their target audiences. As seen in Chapter 1, event marketing is an antecedent of consumer experience, which leads to building loyalty, satisfaction, among others. Events with marketing objectives can be designed to appeal to specific consumer's preferences and personal interaction, therefore foster loyalty towards brands.

Lead generation is another key reason why companies and consumers are interested in event marketing. On one hand, companies can gather data bases of potential consumers that are interested in their product/service or engage with current consumers (Ristevska-Jovanovska, 2019). On the other hand, consumers attend events to network and connect with other individuals that share similar preferences. Ristevska-Jovanovska (2019) argues that specific events like shows, contests, parties and festivals contribute to a brand's awareness and branding. In such events, brands can directly sample their products and engage with consumers with the use of interactive displays. While attending events, consumers find themselves in a willing and participatory position.

Ristevska-Jovanovska (2019) conducted a quantitative research that compared event marketing, digital marketing and traditional advertising. The findings showed that individuals trusted event marketing activities over digital and traditional advertising. In addition, the majority of respondents found event marketing as a more fun and interesting activity, compared to the other marketing communication tools.

For the purpose of this work, event marketing will be defined as any event that exhibits, displays, presents and promotes an organization, brand, service, product or cause either with face-to-face interactions, online interactions, or both, as in hybrid events (Ristevska-Jovanovska, 2019). Planned events that are sponsored, hosted or have the presence of brands/companies will be considered, for this work, as part of an event marketing strategy.

2.1.3 Traditional and non-traditional event marketing

Karpinska-Krakowiak (2015) divides event marketing in two categories; traditional marketing events and non-traditional marketing events. There is a large body of literature that analyzes traditional marketing events, such as festivals, celebrations, concerts, political and governmental events, among others (Getz & Page, 2007; Getz, 2020; Berridge, 2020), while non-traditional marketing events remain less studied

The category of traditional marketing events comprises festivals (in the realms of art, fairs, concerts, fashion, design, among others), fairs, concerts and sport activities. All of these events have a celebratory spirit and are developed in extraordinary settings with special assistance of other participants, for example celebrities or actors. Traditional marketing events are occurrences that take place occasionally, therefore are considered unique and unusual. Traditional events provide brands several opportunities to interact with their consumers. During events, attendees have the disposition to use products, receive free samples or try a service. (Karpinska-Krakowiak, 2015).

To the contrary, non-traditional marketing events allow a more intense interaction between the target audience and the brand. Examples of non-traditional marketing events are alternate reality games, branded pranks, the use of augmented reality, holograms and live-streaming. With the organization of non-traditional events, brands can extend the potential of the marketing activity from the immediate attendees to online audiences with the use of social media (Karpinska-Krakowiak, 2015). Besides, they do not directly promote the brand, which is usually revealed at the conclusion of the activity. Two examples of non-traditional marketing events will be examined; alternate reality games and branded pranks.

Alternate reality games are based on transmedia storytelling, and allow participants to solve riddles, search for clues and follow trails. Consumers/participants are involved in the game by playing the role of detectives, which work together with other participants, to solve challenges set by the game designers (Karpinska-Krakowiak, 2015). To celebrate its association with the

Olympic Games, in the year 2008 McDonalds developed an alternate reality game called 'The Lost Ring'. Participants who entered the game searched for offline and online clues and solved several challenges. The presence of McDonalds as the brand sponsoring the game was only revealed at the end (McDonald's Advertising Strategy, 2009). Around 3 million gamers from 100 countries played McDonald's "The Lost Ring", and the company attracted millions of media impressions (Karpinska-Krakowiak, 2015). Another non-traditional event strategy are branded pranks, which often involve jokes set by brands to unsuspected consumers. Brands record live pranks and later distribute them through social media with the goal of archiving viral content. Consumers are set up in a trap, usually with actors involved, and their reactions are filmed (Karpinska-Krakowiak, 2015). One example is Heineken 'The Candidate', in which the brand sets up interviews with possible candidates for a job opening in the company. During the interviews unexpected situations occur, for example the 'boss' (played by an actor) blacks out and seeks for medical attention, firefighters enter the Heineken facilities, among others (Heineken 'The Candidate', 2013). The candidates' reactions were filmed and distributed online, creating a viral video on social media.

In conclusion, both traditional and non-traditional marketing events are planned occurrences that have the intention to entertain the audience offline and online. Non-traditional marketing events are related to innovative technologies, and erase the line between fiction and reality, allowing companies to promote their brands in an indirect and appealing way (Karpinska-Krakowiak, 2015). Due to our high connectivity, traditional and nontraditional marketing events can be broadcasted and amplified through online and social media, reaching a broad target audience.

2.1.4 Event marketing design

The process of developing an event marketing strategy crosses the paths of a company's management and marketing departments. Specifically, the administration, operations, marketing and risk management departments are constantly active in the development of any event (Moise et al., 2012). In Figure 8, we can find the interconnections between a company's departments

and the event marketing process. The process begins with a research phase, and then continues with planning and organization. Once the company's departments approve the organization of the event, it is implemented and executed. After the event is finished, there is an unfolding of control operations so that at the end the events' organizers can develop an evaluation, depending on the goals that they set at the beginning of the process. After the evaluation, the cycle repeats, starting again with the research phase. Moise et al. (2012) states that bringing together different company's departments while designing the event, generates creative solutions and enhanced proposals for each of the stages.

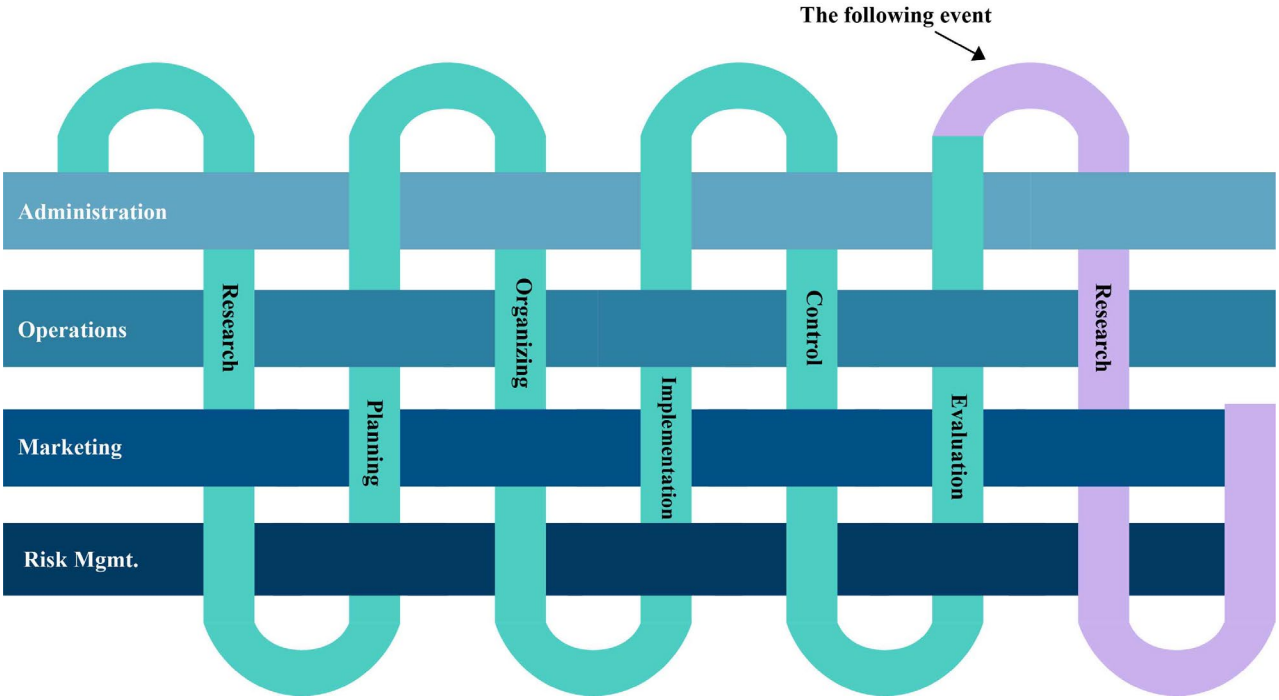


Figure 8 - Event Management Process, Moise et al. (2012) adapted from Rutherford (2008)

Some elements in event marketing can be designed and planned, but the personal experiences that attendees acquire are private and cannot be predicted. Event experiences are internal constructions that are formed by emotional and cognitive processes. Event organizers can design the controllable elements of the event, such as the setting, the schedules, the service quality and the consumables, with the expectation of facilitating a positive consumer experience (Getz, 2020). Regarding the setting, Getz & Page (2007) define it as the location, the decoration, the technical requirements, the staging and the controlled environment in which an event occurs.

Through decoration, event designers create atmospheres that inspire and call the attention of event goers, for example with the use of sensory stimulation as in the interior design, lighting, colors and smells. Event goers can feel the influence of the setting design in aspects such as an appropriate crowd control, easy access to the venue, and the signage or information they are provided before and during the event. Additionally, the theme and program of the event can be designed in advance. It is vital to have a schedule or agenda, which details the activities, entertainment, and other programmatic features the event is going to have. Event organization considers the services that the event will provide, for example the security, safety measures and staff management. The last aspect that Getz & Page (2007) identified is the consumables, which comprises the gastronomy, as in the food and beverage preparation for the catering services, the creative and visual presentations, and the gifts or merchandising aimed for the attendees.

Orefice (2018) agrees with Moise et al. (2012) and Getz & Page's (2007) idea that event design combines different dimensions, and that events should respond to specific goals set by the company. But the author criticizes that the present literature focuses on event design from a managerial perspective, but is in fact a value creation process. Moise et al. (2012) and Getz & Page (2007) research suggest that events are focused on creating experiences that attract and therefore strengthen and maintain the relationship between consumers and brands. On the other hand, Orefice (2018) states that events are 'platforms that support exchange and value co-creation among peers and over time' (p. 2). The different event stakeholders can be part of the event design strategy and become co-creators and co-designers, so that the events develop into atmospheres of networking and integration of individuals. The research area that studies event design and its relationship with value co-creation remains unexplored and presents an opportunity for future research (Orefice, 2018).

2.2 Conceptualization of brand experience in an event marketing context

Consumer brand experience and event marketing were analyzed separately in the previous sections. The purpose of this subchapter is to identify a conceptualization of consumer brand experience that is suitable to an event marketing context. Therefore, we can enrich our

understanding on how consumers experience brands while attending events that have a marketing purpose.

Getz & Page (2007) divide event experience in three dimensions; the conative dimension, the cognitive dimension, and the affective dimension. The first one being the actual behavior of every single individual, which also includes physical actions and movement. Inner processes of thought, awareness, memory and understanding are part of the cognitive dimension, which also comprises an individual's judgment formation. Events in which sharing information is dominant, such as seminars, scientific events and business or trade events have a considerable component of cognitive experience. Affective experience is the last dimension Getz & Page (2007) describe, which includes the emotions, values and preferences of event attendees. Pleasurable emotions can be influenced by the social environment, for example attending an event with family or friends often results in positive experiences because individuals share with others and feel part of a larger community. The three event experience dimensions described by Getz & Page (2007) are aligned with Brakus et al. (2009) consumer brand experience scale. De Geus et al. (2016) affirm that consumer experience is a response to different brand stimuli, and that it involves the 'interaction between an organization and a customer, with the context created by a service provider' (p. 278).

Tafesse (2016) elaborates a conceptualization of brand experience in an event marketing context. The researcher analyzes relevant literature, including Brakus et al. (2009) scale, and collects data from an international motor show. During the research qualitative data was collected, such as interviews, observations, analysis of media and video clips, amongst others. The researcher interviewed senior brand managers, was allowed full access to the brand stands and took in-person observations of the consumers behavior during the motor show. After conducting the data analysis, the author defined brand experience in marketing events as: 'Consumers' multifaceted interaction with brands enabled through four interrelated processes of multisensory stimulation, bodily performance, social interaction, and discovery/learning. In turn, these four interaction processes trigger perceptual, embodied, social, and epistemic brand experience' (Tafesse, 2016, p. 40).

The first concept named by Tafesse (2016) is multisensory stimulation, which is the physical approach individuals have with an environment, respectively how they see, feel, smell, taste and hear different brands. Multisensory stimulation comprises visual brand clues (logos, slogans, visual advertising, screens and branding elements), sound brand clues (music, brand tunes, radio messages, sound brand advertisements) and olfactory brand clues (the peculiar smell that differentiate one brand from the others). Marketing events should work on elaborating multisensory stimulation to the public, meaning that consumers should use their senses, such as the sense of vision, hearing, and smell to engage with brands in events. The use of different sensory brand clues triggers perceptual experience. The second element that is part of Tafesse's (2016) definition is bodily performance, which is the individuals 'movement, touching, tactile exploration, and experimentation' of brands (p. 42). Bodily performance can be directed towards objects or products, as long as they are the focus of consumer experience. To trigger embodied experience, brands should engage consumers into activities in which they can explore, experiment, test, handle, move, touch and be active in a physical context. Tafesse (2016) states that bodily experience is crucial for activating emotional connections between consumers and brands. Multi-sensory clues create an event environment that fosters the immersion and participation of consumers (Zarantonello & Schmitt, 2013).

Social experience, enabled through social interaction, is the third element that Tafesse (2016) suggests as crucial for creating consumer experience in events. When attending events, consumers are more likely to share and be part of a greater social context. Social interaction can be verbal and non-verbal and occurs between consumers and brand representatives. Brand representatives, such as a brand's spokesperson, are associated with the brand and present the brand's qualities through human agency. How a brand spokesperson is dressed, how he/she speaks, their gestures and presentation skills are related with the brand (Tafesse, 2016). The process of discovery and learning, defined by Tafesse (2016) as 'epistemic experience', brings relevance and novelty to the consumer's perspective (p. 44) The discovery and learning of new ideas, insights and even history about a brand/product engage consumers, allows interactions and has a great impact on the attitude consumers develop towards brands. During marketing events, consumers usually learn through 'self-initiated learning efforts' for example reading a

brand's advertisements or informative support material, attending presentations and with the tactile exploration of a product (Tafesse, 2016, p.44). Consumers also learn through brand's educational programs, which can be product/services demonstrations, content live-streaming and keynotes with spokespersons. As it was analyzed in subchapter 3.1, novelty is a motivation for consumers to attend events, and epistemic experience allows it.

Tafesse (2016) agrees with Getz (2020), Getz & Page (2007) and Liu et al. (2017) and considers that brand experience in marketing events is a subjective phenomenon, because interaction and engagement varies from consumer to consumer. Each individual interprets, selects and configures brand's stimuli in different ways, meaning that consumers construct different experiences, even though being exposed to the same brand environment (Tafesse, 2016). Brand experience in events is triggered through brand-consumer interactions and also through the context in which the event is developed. Physical and social space create a context in which brands can develop certain strategies to connect with consumers, for example through visual material, interactions with brand representatives, among others. Tafesse (2016) also agrees with Orefice (2018) and Liu et al. (2017) statement which considers brand experience in events as a co-creational process.

Tafesse's (2016) research goes along the same lines as Liu et al. 's (2017) study, who developed a conceptual framework that describes event experiences through the consumer's point of view. Using a photo elicitation methodology, the researchers identified five main themes that create a positive impact on consumer experience. The themes described by the authors are the following: sensory experience, discovery, entertainment/fun, physical environment and human interaction. Liu et al. 's (2017) research adds a new dimension to Tafesse's conceptualization of consumer experience in marketing events, which is entertainment/fun. The organization of entertaining activities by a brand, such as tastings, interactive games, interaction with celebrities or prominent brand spokespersons trigger excitement in the event attendees. Liu el al. (2017) states that the sense of entertainment and fun is linked to the sense of novelty and discovering something new. Tafesses's (2016) 'social interaction' dimension, is named by Liu et al. (2017) as 'human interaction' and includes the interconnection between event attendees and the events'

staff (brand spokespersons, performers, vendors), and the relationship between consumers attending the event simultaneously (p. 473).

Figure 9 describes the conceptual framework developed by Lui et al. (2017), which is conceived as a co-creation process. The event ecosystem, composed of the venue, products, activities and social sphere interact with the event attendees personal/individual factors, for example past experiences and preferences. According to Liu et al. 's (2017) model, event organizers set the stage for developing experiences, which are complemented with a consumer's unique factors. Event components, or the event setting, and a consumer's personal factors, converge into sensory experience, discovery, entertainment, the recognition of the physical environment, and human interaction. The latter factors have a direct influence in an individuals' cognition, feelings and behaviors. This model shows that event attendees co-create their own experiences with the interaction between them and other event components, such as a brand spokesperson, vendors and event staff.

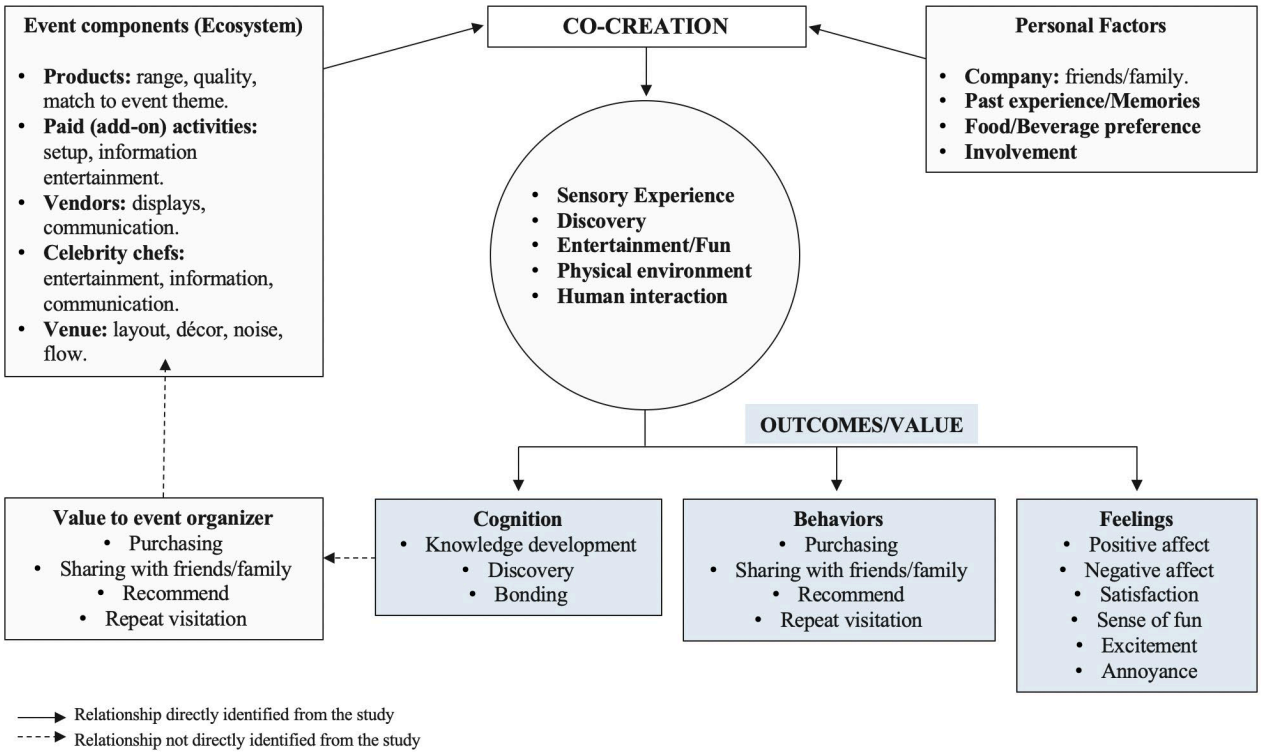


Figure 9 - Conceptual model of consumer experience creation at a food and wine show (Adapted from Liu et al., 2017, p. 475)

One limitation of these studies is that Tafesse (2016) and Liu et al. (2017) conducted their research in specific face-to-face events. Tafesses's research (2016) was conducted in an international motor show, while Liu et al's (2017) research was in a food and wine event. There has not been found any research that focuses on the conceptualization of brand experience in an online or hybrid marketing event.

Previously mentioned research shows that consumer event experiences are the result of the event context and the personal factors each individual brings with himself during and after the event. For the purpose of this study, it will be considered that consumer event experiences are evoked through five factors: the event's multisensory experience, the consumer's sense of discovery/learning, the physical environment in which the event develops, the social/human interaction, and the feeling of being entertained or have fun (Tafesse, 2016; Liu et al., 2017)

2.3 Measurement of event experience

The previous subchapter examined the factors that influence consumer experiences during events. This section will focus on studying recent measuring tools to understand in what scope can experiences be measured specifically in the context of event marketing. Respectively, two experience scales will be analyzed: The Event Experience Scale (EES) by De Geus et al. (2016) and the Event Social Interaction Scale (ESIS) by Marques et al. (2021).

Through an exploratory study, De Geus et al. (2016) developed an 18-item Event Experience Scale (EES), which addresses four different dimensions: affective engagement, cognitive engagement, physical engagement and experiencing newness. The dimensions measured by De Geus et al. (2016) are aligned with Tafesse's (2016) and Liu et al. 's (2017) factors that were mentioned in the previous subchapter. During the first stages of their research, De Geus et al. (2016) developed a conceptual model for event experience, which includes the core of events experiences, their conditions and outcomes. The core of event experiences is built out of the personal realm of consumers, who have certain expectations and motivations. It also includes the event environment, that can be a social or physical atmosphere, and the product/service that is communicated in the event. The authors identified several conditions that trigger event

experience, for example interpersonal interaction, emotional intensity, feelings of communion and the feeling of the unusual or out of the extraordinary (De Geus et al., 2016). The researchers recognize satisfaction, emotions, behaviors, cognitions, imprints, memories, and learning as event experience outcomes. According to De Geus et al. (2016) event experience is defined as 'an interaction between an individual and the event environment (both physical and social), modified by the levels of engagement, involving multiple experiential elements and outputs (such as satisfaction, emotions, behavior, cognitions, memories, and learning), that can happen at any point in the event journey' (p.277).

To develop the Event Experience Scale (EES), the researchers started with the scale's item generation, then the researchers selected the items and purified the scale. In order to select the scale items, a consumer panel was created. Each of the panel's members were asked to think and describe the latest event they attended. Through their descriptions, De Geus et al. (2016) developed 77 concepts, which were later purified into 18 items that describe 4 consumer experience dimensions: affective engagement, cognitive engagement, physical engagement and experiencing newness.

Figure 10 describes the Event Experience Scale (EES) developed by De Geus et al. (2016). The first component of the scale is related to affective engagement, which are emotions, such as excitement, adventure, energy and intimacy created by different event stimuli. This component is linked with Getz & Page's (2007) description of 'affective' dimension, related to a consumer's preferences, feelings and values. The second component of the scale is the cognitive engagement consumers have while attending events. Cognitive engagement refers to the knowledge acquisition, learning, interpretation and intellect developed by consumers. This component is linked to Getz & Page's (2007) 'cognitive' dimension and serves the purpose of understanding and making sense of the experiences felt by the consumers. The third scale component is physical engagement, and is the active participation or behavior consumers engage during events. Getz & Page (2007) describe this element as 'conative' dimension and is the actual behavior individuals develop, including their physical activity. The last set of items proposed by De Geus et al. (2016) is experiencing novelty, which refers to the uniqueness of the event's features: 'the experience of novelty can relate to the event content, whether new elements are

incorporated into the event design, programme or setting, but also to the visitor, and their previous experience and knowledge of the event' (p. 283). This item is mentioned in previous literature such as Tafesse's (2016) and Liu et al. 's (2017) research.

	Concept	Item
Affective Engagement	Excitement	I was excited
	Emotional Energy	I got emotional energy/ got emotionally recharged
	Intimacy	I experienced intimacy
	Adventure	I felt a sense of adventure
	Values(s) (creation)	I was aware of my own values
	Recollection	I wanted to relive this later (talk about it with others and show pictures)
Cognitive Engagement	Interpretation	I was explaining/ interpreting things for myself
	Cognition/ thinking	I was thinking
	Intellect	I used my intellect
	Learning	I learned something
	Knowledge acquisition	I acquired new knowledge
	Reflexivity	I reflected on ideas that I got and discussed this with others
Physical engagement	Behavior	I was active
	(Active) participation	I did not actively participate (RV)
	Creativity	I was not being creative (RV)
	Multisensory elements	… all my senses were stimulated (taste, scent, hear, smell, tactile)
Experiencing novelty	Distinctiveness of event	I had the impressions that the events were different from others
	Unfamiliarity	I experienced things unknown to me/ I was outside my 'normal life'
	Uniqueness	I thought this was unique

Figure 10 - Event Experience Scale (EES), (Adapted from De Geus et al., 2016, p. 284)

The Event Experience Scale (EES) was tested in music, art, culture, business, and sport events, and was proven to be consistent (Richards, 2020; Colombo & Marques, 2020; Coetzee et al., 2019). The items measured in the sets of affective engagement, cognitive engagement and physical engagement can be applied to experiences in general. The last set of items, corresponding to experiencing novelty, are more related to event experiences because 'events provide a framing for a unique moment in time, placing more emphasis on the dimension of

novelty' (p. 286). De Geus et al. (2016) suggest researchers to add additional items to the scale in order for it to be appropriate to specific events.

One of the largest studies that used the Event Experience Scale (EES) was Richards' (2020) research, in which he applied the scale to seven cultural events in different countries. The researcher had the goal of identifying generic event experience dimensions in each country. The Event Experience Scale (EES) was applied in a range of events, such as music festivals and arts events, in Mexico, Portugal, Brazil, Romania, United Kingdom, United States and Bulgaria. In general, event attendees proved to have a strong cognitive engagement, followed by affective engagement. Consumers felt less attracted to the dimensions of novelty and physical engagement. Richards (2020) also analyzed the social media use by event attendees. Results show that 22.3% of consumers shared information about the event before attending, 30.8% shared their experience on social media while attending the event, and 15.5% were active on social media after the event. The researcher found that the realm of affective engagement is linked to the use of social media and communication. Events that provide a strong affective experience generate results in social media posting. Users were sharing about their event experiences mostly on Snapchat and Instagram, since these platforms provide fast and visual content. Richards (2020) concluded that the Event Experience Scale (EES) is a reliable tool to measure and gather experiences from different types of events at different countries.

The second measuring tool addressed in this research is the Event Social Interaction Scale (ESIS) by Marques et al. (2021). The literature reviewed in the first subchapters showed that social interaction is a crucial factor for consumer experiences in events (Tafesse, 2016; Liu et al., 2017). Researchers like Nordvall et al. (2014) agree that social interaction between event attendees can influence consumer experiences in events. The event design, such as the schedule, program, venue, setting and consumables 'can facilitate positive experiences and (...) constrain negative experiences related to such interactions (Nordvall et al., 2014, p. 127).
Marques et al. (2021) created the Event Social Interaction Scale (ESIS) to quantify social dimensions of event experience. The researchers designed this tool to complement the Event Experience Scale (EES), which, in the point of view of Marques et al. (2021) gives little consideration to human and social interactions.

According to Marques et al. (2021), the Event Social Interaction Scale (ESIS) has been tested and can be applied in various types of events, for example cultural, arts, sports, business, among others. The scale is composed of 14 items, which are measured with a Likert scale of 7 points. The scale measures aspects of co-creation, such as feelings of belonging, bonding with others, detaching, communing, connecting and the sense of amiability. The scale also measures group rituals or interactions. Figure 11 describes each of the items included in Marques et al.'s (2021) scale.

Concepts		**Survey Item**
Cocreation	**Belonging**	I followed my group's code of behavior (habits, rituals, etc.)
		I felt a sense of belonging
		I felt part of a larger group
	Bonding	I shared information with the people in my group
	Detaching	I avoided contact with strangers
		I talked only to people in my group
	Communing	I did things together with strangers
		I felt I could trust strangers at the event
	Connecting	I helped anybody who needed
		At the event, we shared the same interests
	Amiability	I enjoyed meeting new people
		I made new acquaintances/friends
Known-group interaction rituals	**Group rituals**	We have our own rituals at the event
	Symbolic moment	We see this event as a meaningful meeting moment

Figure 11 - Event Social Interaction Scale (ESIS) (Adapted from Marques et al., 2021, p. 15)

Marques et al. (2021) mention that any event can work as a social interaction platform and that event managers should work specifically in the social interaction dimension they want to

promote. Given the fact that the Event Social Interaction Scale (ESIS) is relatively new, not many studies have been found that apply the scale through different types of events.

To have a broader sense of consumer experience in events, items of the Event Social Interaction Scale (ESIS) can complement the Event Experience Scale (EES). In that sense, the dimensions measured would gather affective, cognitive and physical engagement, experiencing novelty and social interaction. It is important to mention that none of the previous scales were specifically created for online or hybrid events. Given the fact that online events are mediated through screens, the dimension of 'physical engagement' by De Geus et al. (2016) should be adapted to fit into this context.

2.4 Online, in-person, and hybrid events: social interaction and engagement

2.4.1 Conceptualization of in-person, online, and hybrid events

As analyzed in Chapter 2, in-person events are defined as live occurrences that develop in a specific time and spatial frame. In person events are characterized by having a live audience that engages in face-to-face interactions (Getz, 2020). On the other hand, online events are defined as 'live meetings using a virtual platform provided by a virtual (event) platform corporation (or one which has been custom built for the client), or presented within a virtual world (e.g., Second Life)' (Sox et al., 2017, p. 134). Virtual events are either in-person events that were moved to an online format, for example due to travel restrictions, or were originally conceived to exist only in an online environment (Chodor, 2020). Chodor (2020) illustrates that individuals require internet connection to access virtual events, which can be broadcasted through a computer, tablet, laptop, mobile or Smart TV in the case of OTT (over the top) media, such as Amazon Prime, Netflix, Hulu amongst others. Virtual events can consist of webinars, webcasts, streaming and web conferences/meetings (Sox et al., 2017; Chodor, 2020). The importance of developing technologies that support collaborative practices between individuals relies on the fact that events are social occurrences that foster human interaction (Sox et al., 2017). According to GWI (2020, a), the potential to earn profit through an online event is higher compared to a face-to-face event because on-demand contents can be released after the event is over, there is

no limit regarding how many viewers an online event can have, and event attendees can join the event from all over the world.

Chodor (2020) states that event organizers should choose the format of the online event, such as webinar, streaming, etc., according to their target audience and business objectives. It is important to know the viewing habits of the target, for example if they are more comfortable watching online events from their desktop computers, laptops, mobile devices, or others. In order to have a deeper understanding of how online events are conceived, it is vital to define each of the online event formats, respectively webinars, webcasting, streaming, and web conferencing.

Webinars are 'an audio-over-slide broadcast that includes Q&A and chat functionality' (Chodor, 2021, p. 40). Usually the host/presenter of a webinar is not seen on the screen because the focus is on the presentation/slides they are showing. Through the means of a chat, the audience can write questions to the presenter. Webinars are low cost and the software required to access them is usually easy to use. Often webinars are used to present new products/services, conduct product training, or are used as a tool for internal communication (Chodor, 2021).

The concept of Webcasting is defined by Chodor (2021) as a live online broadcast that occurs at a specific date and time. Since webcasting is a real time occurrence, it tends to be spontaneous. When the streaming of the webcast is over, the contents are immediately available so that other users can watch it on demand. Webcasting focuses on video content, and normally after the webcast is over, parts of the video are edited and portions of it are uploaded to the company's website or social media. This format is mostly used in online events that have a marketing or educational purpose (Chodor, 2021).

Streaming is an online format that refers to the broadcasting of live content to social media, such as Facebook live, Youtube live, Twitch, LinkedIn live, Instagram live, TikTok, amongst others. Through streaming, a brand/company can reach as many users as possible through various locations and through social media that do not have additional costs. Streaming is mostly used in online marketing events, or as a part of an influencer strategy. Livestreaming is usually used by influencers to share their experiences with different products. Since they can interact live

with their audience, livestreaming becomes entertaining and engaging to viewers. Consumers who watch livestreams do not necessarily buy the products they see; 'much like when visiting retailers in-store, they can be 'just browsing'' (GWI, 2020, b, p. 125). A survey conducted in seven countries by GWI (2020, b) concluded that 29% of internet users frequently watch livestreming content from influencers they follow. 80% of those internet users state that they are likely to buy the products the influencers recommend.

Another format of online events are workshops, which are based on mutual collaboration from the participants. Gottesdiener (2002) defines workshop as: 'a structured meeting in which a carefully selected group of stakeholders (...) work together to define, create, refine, and reach closure on deliverables' (p. 269). Workshops serve to gather a group of individuals who share similar interests, and through teamwork, discover information together and create (Gottesdiener, 2002). The last format of online events that will be defined is digital trade fairs. Trade fairs can take place in physical or online platforms and are characterized by the participants' interaction with a brand/company's content. Trade fairs are part of marketing and selling strategies, and serve to promote products, create new sales or generate leads (Sarmento & Simões, 2019). Brands/companies that participate in virtual trade fairs usually have virtual stands and a virtual exhibition hall, in which they present their products/services (Sarmento & Simões, 2019). Individuals who attend the virtual fais are in touch with brands through audio and video presentations. Virtual event experiences depend on the hosts' and participants' internet connection; if the internet connection has poor quality, event attendees could develop feelings of frustration towards the event itself (Roos et al., 2020).

The convergence of different elements of in-person events and online events is defined as hybrid events. Hybrid events are conceptualized as a mix between a face-to-face event and an online event. Chodor (2021) defines this concept as 'a physical event that has a portion or the entire content program available online; bottom line, there is always a physical element to a hybrid event' (p. 28). The combination of a physical event with online features includes a face-to-face audience and, at the same time, a virtual audience. During hybrid events there is an overlap of information between the physical event and the online event, in which interactive elements are included (Sox et al., 2017). The hybrid event format is very flexible since the physical events

can take place in different locations, while the online audience can be connected from anywhere. Participants from a specific area can attend the event in-person, while attendees outside that area can follow the event online (Roos et al., 2020). Chodor (2021) states that it is important to create specific and exclusive content for the online audience, so that in the future they are eager to assist the face-to-face event. Hybrid events allow companies/brands to expand their reach to a larger audience and give life to the event content outside a physical space. After the in-person event is over, the virtual event and its contents can still live on. For example, virtual event attendees can have the opportunity to view on-demand content, sponsored content and download other information after the event is finished. Simons (2019) discusses that all in-person events have an online component, because event attendees often share information on their social media before, during and after the event. Through the organization of a hybrid event, the event organizers can gain direct and indirect feedback. Direct feedback about the hybrid event is gathered when the attendees log in or out of the sessions, how many participants clicked on the linked shares during the event, which participants downloaded the attachments, who participated in the chats, surveys or polls. Indirect event feedback can be gathered through social listening and social media monitoring (Chodor, 2021). With the help of social listening tools on channels like Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, event organizers can understand the impressions event attendees had in the event and what is being shared about it. Online and hybrid events are rich in data because the majority of actions performed by event attendees can be measured. In face-to-face events it is more difficult to gather data that assesses the actions of event attendees (Chodor, 2021).

2.4.2 Social interaction and engagement of online vs. in-person events

Given the fact that events are social gatherings, it is important to understand how event format influences human interaction and engagement. This section will analyze how face-to-face communication and online communication work in an event environment.

In-person event interactions are characterized by three offline practices: bonding, communing and belonging (Simons, 2019). Bonding is composed by socializing with others and sharing mutual experiences. After individuals bond, communing practices start to take place. During in-

person events, individuals break their daily routines and are brought together in an extraordinary setting. Individuals tend to form strong and temporary social connections with other strangers attending the same event. After individuals interact with each other and form links between them, belonging practices occur. Individuals start forming groups around particular themes and take their connections and relationships outside of the event (Simons, 2019). Face-to-face communication is very rich, because human beings gather information through all their senses. Through non-verbal communication, such as gestures or eye contact, individuals can determine how the other party is feeling, whose personality is dominant during the conversations and how to react to others (Morgan, 2018).

During the past fifty years humans started to communicate online, which changed various aspects of human interaction, such as the behavior towards others, how individuals form impressions from others, and how they connect with others (Lieberman & Schroeder, 2020). According to Morgan (2018), online communication lacks the sense of emotion that is characteristic of face-to-face communication. Through emotion, individuals are able to connect easier to others and to form relationships quicker. Body language, facial expressions, and emotions are unconscious actions that help human beings interact with each other (Sox et al., 2017). Individuals communicating from a distance need to put more effort on their actions in order to avoid miscommunication (Morgan, 2018). According to Lieberman & Schroeder (2020), there are four main differences between face-to-face and online interactions. The first difference is that online communication has fewer non-verbal clues in comparison to offline communication. Examples of non-verbal clues are exchanging smiles, touching, changing the voice in correspondence of the mood, amongst others. A great part of online communication is based on written communication, for example the use of chats, forums, etc., which lacks visual, physical, and auditory signals (Lieberman & Schroeder, 2020). Non-verbal cues are vital to understand an individuals' mental state, feelings, and thoughts. The second difference identified by Lieberman & Schroeder (2020) is that online communication provides a greater feeling of anonymity than face-to-face communication. Online users are able to interact anonymously, which creates feelings of disinhibition and potential aggressive behavior. The third difference addressed by Lieberman & Schroeder (2020) is that online communication serves to form,

maintain, and strengthen ties between people. Technology helps to expand social networks and erases geographical boundaries, so that individuals can connect and meet new people without any restrictions, something that face-to-face communication does not allow. The last difference identified by Lieberman & Schroeder (2020) is that online communication allows content to be disseminated at a faster pace and to an unlimited public. In face-to-face communication, the audience size is limited by the physical space in which the crowd gathers, while online, the audience cannot be limited. Lieberman & Schroeder (2020) state that even though online communication can lead to miscommunication due to the lack of non-verbal clues and anonymity, it can foster new connections between individuals and strengthen the relationships between known individuals. Online communication has some disadvantages, such as the lack of non-verbal cues, but provides a territory in which new relationships between individuals from all over the world can be developed or strengthened.

On the other hand, authors such as Morgan (2018) consider that online communication is more flattened and unsatisfying compared to face-to-face communication. Online communication is usually more fragile than face-to-face communication because it lacks the unconscious emotional connections the latter provides (Lieberman & Schroeder, 2020; Morgan, 2018). Even video calls are sensory poor compared to in-person communication; since the smells, air pressure and sounds of the environment can influence the communication outcomes (Morgan, 2018). Morgan (2018) states that there are five issues regarding online communication, which are not seen when communicating face-to-face. The first problem identified by Morgan (2018) is that online communication lacks feedback, specifically sensory information. Feedback can be implicit and explicit. Implicit feedback is the sensory information that our senses gather, such as the sounds, smells, touches, sights, and tastes. While explicit feedback is the specific communication and commentary given from one individual to another. In face-to-face communication implicit and explicit feedback mix, giving individuals a larger scope of information, besides 'the mix [of feedback] allows us to soften the harsh messages and toughen the soft ones' (Morgan, 2018, p. 28). Virtual communication lacks some of the information provided by our senses, and therefore feedback tends to be explicit, not implicit. The second problem identified by Morgan (2018) is the lack of empathy, which is related to the lack of

feedback. Since individuals communicating online gather less information about the others, they struggle with understanding their emotional state and feelings. The lack of control is the third issue identified by Morgan (2018) and refers to the digital footprints every individual leaves online. All the information individuals share online can be traced and can be used by others to form an online persona of someone else. The fourth problem of online communication is the lack of emotion, which is related to the lack of feedback and empathy (Morgan, 2018). As seen before, communicating online complicates the understanding of others' emotions and feelings, and as Morgan states 'a virtual conversation is not important to our unconscious minds (...), it's not engaging (human interest), and it's not moving (emotion)' (p. 87). The last issue of online communication, in Morgan's (2018) point of view is the lack of connection and commitment. Online interactions might reflect the illusion of social connection, since it is easy and simple to reach other individuals, nevertheless the social connections fostered online are empty. As stated by Lieberman & Schroeder (2020), Roos et al. (2020) and Morgan (2018), the problems that lead to online miscommunication are deeply embedded in human psychology.

When attending online events, individuals tend to focus their attention not only to the event, but also to other day to day chores (Roos et al., 2020). The problem of 'being in two places at once', meaning attending events in a domestic setting, causes lack of concentration (Erickson, 2018, p. 03). Interruptions are likely to occur when attending online events, for example users start using their mobile phones, they are interrupted by their families, or they engage in house chores. On the contrary, in face-to-face events it is easier to engage an audience that is physically present, and also to identify the lack of engagement when looking at the audience's reactions (such as their gestures and facial expressions).

Engagement in virtual events depends on how attendees interact with each other. This means that the technological platform that backs online events should support interactions in text and video formats. Examples of platforms are public chats, private chats, and the use of gamification, which is defined as 'the use of game design techniques, including game mechanics and game dynamics, to drive participation, engagement, and loyalty with an audience' (Chodor, 2021, p. 106). Gamifications in online events can be set up as trivia, leaderboards, giveaways, badges,

amongst others. To achieve more interaction and engagement in online events, technologies like VR (virtual reality) are being adopted. Online and hybrid events are starting to use 2D and 3D design environments to create interactive experiences for event attendees. A 2D environment is characterized by having a flat layout with buttons and labels from which users can navigate, similarly to a website (Chodor, 2021). A 3D environment represents angles, textures, and depth, which gives the user the illusion of being in a three-dimensional space. The 3D environment makes the experience immersive because users customize their avatars and can walk, start conversations, and get in touch with personalized content (Chodor, 2021). 3D environments can be complex, for example users can walk through different rooms, such as convention centers, lounges, exhibit halls, and outdoor designs. Even though VR technology gives users a sense of immersion, it cannot replace the sense of community and social life that a face-to-face event provides. A research by Wreford et al. (2019) studied VR experiences and compared them to face-to-face experiences during events. The subjects of the study were introduced to a VR experience that was similar to a physical experience they attended before, such as a concert. Information was gathered through a qualitative approach and in total 10 interviews were conducted (Wreford et al., 2019). The study concluded that VR experiences lack the social component characteristic of events. The social and sensory gratifications are not present in VR experiences, mostly because there is a lack of non-sensory clues.

In conclusion, social interaction and engagement in events depends on physical (sensory) and physiological aspects. Online events are more accessible to the general population but lack the social component that face-to-face events provide. Technologies, such as VR, can 'extend the experience escape but not replace live events' (Wreford et al., 2019, p. 721).

2.4.3 Best practices in online and hybrid events

Recent literature identifies cues for organizing online and hybrid events. Since online events have had an exponential growth in the past years, it is necessary to understand their best practices. According to Chodor (2021), not all the elements of a face-to-face event can be transformed into an online event; 'what works for an in-person event does not necessarily

translate to success online' (p. 25). As seen in subsection 2.4.2, social interaction between event attendees depends on the format. Meaning that, an event organizer cannot take a physical event and make it instantly virtual, and expect that attendees have a great user experience. In online events it is not possible to bring the physical aspects of a face-to-face event to the virtual world. Since physical aspects cannot be replicated, companies/brands should focus on developing interactive and customizable event designs (GWI, 2020, a). A survey conducted by GWI (2020, a) to internet users between 16 and 64 years old, established that interaction, shared experiences, and quality are the most important aspects for individuals when attending virtual events. As for hybrid events, they should incorporate a physical event, with a limited number of seats, with an infinite virtual audience (GWI, 2020, a).

When conducting an online and hybrid event, Chodor (2021) created a checklist (see Figure 12) to help event organizers determine the event design. Before creating the event, it must be clear how the company/brand will assess their goals, ROI (return of investment), interaction, profit, and the availability of post-event content. Regarding the event profit, it is important to consider that face-to-face events that have an entrance fee, should also be charged in their online version. Chodor (2021) states that it is important 'to find that balance between what you should charge for your virtual event compared to what you are charging for your physical event' (p. 58).

Question	Subquestion
What are your goals?	Attendance?
	Engagements?
	Time that attendees spend inside the virtual event?
	Number of sessions the attendee watches?
	Sales of event sponsor?
	Brand recognition?
	Learning or accreditations?
What is the ROI (return of investment) you are looking for?	Revenue from registrations
	Revenue from exhibit booths sold?
	Product demonstrations?
	Revenue from sponsorships?
	Increasing memberships?
	Increasing visibility?
	Regarding public relations, the number of stories written about the event/ sponsors?
How do you assess the interaction?	By the number one-on-one interactions?
	By the audience answering polls?
	By testing new products/offerings?
	By the interaction in gamification iniciatives/contests?
How important is video? How important is two-way video?	Are there going to be breakout rooms?
	Sholud atendees activate their video?
	How are media interviews going to be delivered?
Where will the program live after it is over?	Will the virtual event be open for a period of time?
	Will the sessions be downloaded?
	Will there be multiple sessions at the same time?
Are atendees paying for the event?	Will the prices of the face-to-face event and online event differ?

Figure 12 - Checklist for online and hybrid event design, adapted from Chodor (2021, p. 51)

For an online or hybrid event to be successful, Rubinger et al. (2020) suggested four phases for event planning. The first phase consists of pre-planning considerations, such as defining the audience, appointing an organization committee in which all stakeholder groups are represented, and choosing the event format, respectively face-to-face, online or hybrid. The second phase gathers planning considerations, which deals with the processes of registration and scheduling of the event. Technological aspects, cybersecurity, monetization and the organization of materials. In this phase it is important to prepare the event hosts, ensure they have a good internet connection, and software and hardware up to date. Rubinger et al. (2020) consider that hybrid events should have a mix between live and recorded content, so that event organizers and hosts

can have time to rest between different online sessions. Regarding the event registration, it is advised that attendees who buy their entrance tickets in advance, receive early bird discounts. The third phase addressed by Rubinger et al. (2020) is the event execution, which should consider the interactions between attendees, the use of polls, surveys, trivia, games, amongst others to engage with the virtual audience. If the event has an entrance fee, access codes should be available to every user. The event administrators should monitor the different online sessions, in order to avoid hacking and disruptions (Rubinger et al., 2020). A virtual information desk should be visible for all event attendees, so that they feel supported though the event journey (Chodor, 2021). After the event is over, take away materials and content should be available for attendees to download or access. Also, if sessions are being recorded, event administrators should obtain the consent of participants who appear on video or audio. Entertainment options should be available for event attendees after the event is over, such entertainment can be concerts, award sessions, live performances, amongst others (Chodor, 2021). The final phase, according to Rubinger et al. (2020), gathers response and engagement considerations. Data about the event should be collected, with the consent of its participants, and an analysis of such data should be conducted and presented to the events' stakeholders. As Chodor (2021) stated, the goals set at the beginning of the event, such as attendance, sales, engagement, etc., should be compared to the actual results. In this way, new future events can be built around the feedback and suggestions of past events.

Online and hybrid event best practices addressed by Chodor (2021), Rubinger et al. (2020) consider a wide spectrum of attendees and assume that all audiences should have a similar behavior. To complement the cues given by Chodor (2021) and Rubinger et al. (2020), Sox et al. (2017) research will be examined. Through qualitative research, Sox et al. (2017) determined online and hybrid event best practices for three different generations, namely baby boomers, generation X and generation Y. Baby boomers are individuals born between 1946 and 1964, Generation X represents individuals born between 1965 and 1978, and Generation Y is formed by individuals born between 1979 and 2000 (Sox et al., 2017). Figure 13 shows best practices for the three generations in online and hybrid events. It is important to note that older generations, such as baby boomers, focus on technological aspects, such as easy accessibility to

online platforms. While younger generations focus on social aspects of events, such as networking and interaction.

	Best practices	
	Online events	**Hybrid events**
Baby boomers (born between 1946 and 1964)	Make access to virtual content as simple as possible	Make access to virtual content as simple as possible
	Provide easy to use and convenient technology	Provide an interface that is easy and simple to use
Generation X (born between 1965 and 1978)	Include interactive experiences	Include real world examples
	Include interaction with live experts	Provide easy to use and convenient technology
Generation Y (born between 1979 and 2000)	Include social networking components	Include social networking components
	Provide challenges to help participants stay focused	Provide positive feedback for participants
	Include interactive experiences	Include technological challenges

Figure 13 - Best practices for online and hybrid events for baby boomers, generation X and generation Y, adapted from Sox et al. (2017, p. 159)

Conclusions of the theoretical framework

Consumer brand experience is personal, and it is evoked by consumers' multisensory stimulation, the sense of discovery/learning, the physical environment in which the event develops, the social/human interaction, and the feeling of being entertained or having fun. Experiences that consumers acquire with brands help promote positive brand equity, consumer satisfaction, word-of-mouth, brand love and consumer loyalty. Event marketing is regarded as an antecedent of consumer experience, since it provides a platform in which individuals can live out of the ordinary experiences. This work will consider event marketing as any event that exhibits, displays, presents, and promotes an organization, brand, service, or product. Events can be conducted fully face-to-face, online or hybrid, which is a mix of both formats.

Even though experience is personal, several controllable aspects of events can help promote positive results, such as having an organized program, providing help and support to event attendees, among others. Other aspects of events are not controllable and can affect the experiences individuals have, such as the interaction with other event attendees, personal

preferences about the setting, their internet connection, their emotional reactions, among others. Event experience can be assessed by addressing an individual's affective engagement, cognitive engagement, physical engagement, and novelty felt during the events attended. Since consumer event experience is a co-creation process, the social sphere and interaction should also be considered. Although the Event Experience Scale (EES) by De Geus et al. (2016) and the Event Social Interaction Scale (ESIS) by Marques et al. (2021) were not specifically created to assess online or hybrid events, they constitute helpful tools when assessing events in general.

Regarding online events, they can be implemented in different formats, such as webinars, livestreaming, webcasts, web conferencing, and can occur in different platforms, for example social media such as Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, Zoom, etc. Online events can also be streamed through different devices, such as laptops, desktop computers, tablets, mobile phones, and smart TVs. Online and hybrid events thrived during the Covid-19 pandemic since there were limitations regarding physical interactions. Online and hybrid events should encourage interaction amongst users, since the physical and social aspects of face-to-face communication are lacking in the virtual environment. Technologies such as virtual reality are being used in virtual event environments to help individuals have immersive experiences and thus compensate for the lack of social and physical interactions. Online events have measuring capabilities face-to-face events do not possess; the event journey of all users can be traced, where they clicked, how long they stayed, which are their interests, which are their social networks, etc. This amount of information gives event organizers the opportunity to customize event experiences, and thus create specific content for each one of them. Hybrid events are regarded as the future of event management, since they can appeal to a limited physical audience, and an unlimited virtual audience.

The literature review, composed by Chapter 1 and 2 of this work, helps us understand that experiences have a psychological background, and that are influenced by the environment in which they take place, whether it is physical, virtual or both. The literature analyzed gives us tools to assess online events and social interaction for consumers, as well as to develop questions for the interviews in the empirical part of the work.

Part II

To answer the research questions presented in this dissertation and to fill the gaps left by the literature review, empirical research was conducted and presented in Part II. The methodology, research design, data collection, and data analysis will be addressed in chapters 3 and 4.

Chapter 3 - Methodology

3.1 Problem framework and research objectives

The Covid-19 Pandemic changed the interactions between brands and their consumers in marketing events, shifting communication and brand experiences from face-to-face to online platforms. The present dissertation aims to understand how consumer's brand experience in events was influenced by the Covid-19 Pandemic.

In the introduction of this work, the general and specific objectives of this dissertation are presented. The first general objective is to identify the main theories about consumer brand experience and its relation to event marketing. The literature review conducted in Part I served to identify the concepts, theories, and scales to assess consumer brand experience in events. The literature review answered the first research objective and helped to identify some existing gaps in the literature. The main gaps being the lack of studies of consumer brand experience in online marketing events, the lack of assessment tools that help measure online consumer experience in events, and the lack of literature on the topic of hybrid events. It was also identified that virtual interaction and digital relationships are widely studied in the fields of digital communities and gaming, but not thoroughly studied in the area of marketing and events marketing. Bearing in mind these literature gaps, the empirical research conducted in the present dissertation pays special attention to online events.

The second specific objective of this dissertation is to understand the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on event marketing. Besides, this research aims to assess consumer's brand

experience in events during the Covid-19 Pandemic and to develop a set of guidelines that contribute to improve consumer's brand experience in online events. All of the previously mentioned objectives will be addressed in the empirical research in Chapters 3 and 4.

Part II of this dissertation presents the research design and research methods that were implemented. According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), the research design refers to the 'types of inquiry within qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches that provide specific direction for procedures in a research study' (p. 335). The research design of this study acts as a framework and structures the collection and analysis of data (Bryman & Bell, 2019; Bryman, 2012). For this work, the concept of research methods is defined as the forms or techniques of data collection and analysis, in this case a self-completion questionnaire and a structured interview (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Bryman, 2012).

3.2 Research Design

Creswell & Creswell (2018) identified three different research approaches: quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods. The quantitative approach tends to use 'hard' methods, such as the analysis of large amounts of data, while the qualitative approach is characterized by the collection and analysis of 'soft' data, such as words (Della Porta & Keating 2008). Quantitative approaches usually analyze a large number of cases, with the aim of generalizing the results, while qualitative approaches tend to analyze less cases, with the goal of understanding each one of them in depth (Della Porta & Keating, 2008). The qualitative approach is normally interpretivist, and 'seeks to understand the social world through other people's interpretations of it' (Bryman & Bell, 2019, p.199). Researchers using quantitative methods often separate themselves from the population that is being studied in order 'not to contaminate the research by becoming part of it', while qualitative researchers immerse themselves in the study and have personal interactions with the individuals studied (Della Porta & Keating 2008, p. 31). A mixed methods approach refers to the use of methods of both quantitative and qualitative research (Bryman, 2012). The integration of qualitative and quantitative approaches 'yields additional

insight beyond the information provided by either the quantitative or qualitative data alone' (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 41).

This dissertation aims to understand consumer brand experience during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Consumer brand experience in events is personal, varies from individual to individual, and can be generalized using the assessment tools reviewed in chapter 2.3. Consumers' personal experiences can be translated into variables, which can be 'measured, typically on instruments, so that numbered data can be analyzed using statistical procedures' (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 42). Marketing events are usually organized by the marketing and communication area of a company or organization. Event marketing, which leads to consumer brand experience, is part of a brand's marketing strategy and is composed of activities that are planned and organized with the goal of connecting a brand with their consumers. On one hand, the consumers' personal experiences can be analyzed with the use of quantitative methods, while the brands perspectives can be understood with the use of qualitative methods.

In the case of this dissertation a mixed methods approach is appropriate, because it incorporates both quantitative and qualitative methods. Collecting these two types of data contributes to a more complete understanding of consumer brand experience in events (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Consumer experience in events comprises two perspectives: the consumers' perspective and the brands' perspective. Combining both perspectives, through a mixed methods approach, provides an integral understanding of the topic. Quantitative methods, in this case a self-completion survey, address the consumer's personal perspectives of brand experience in events, while in-depth structured interviews focus on gathering information from the brand's or companies' point of view. A mixed methods approach is appropriate because quantitative and qualitative methods serve to answer the different research questions proposed in this dissertation. Figure 14 explains which research method and which research techniques will be addressed to answer the different research goals and research questions.

Research objective	Research question	Research method	Research technique
To identify the main theories about consumer brand experience and its relation to event marketing.	What is consumer brand experience and how is it measured?	Revision of literature	Revision of literature
	What are its antecedents and outcomes?		
	How is brand experience related to event marketing?		
	How is consumer brand experience perceived in events?		
To understand the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on brand practices, specifically on events.	During the Covid-19 Pandemic, how did brands/companies adapt their events from being in-person to online?	Qualitative and quantitative	In-depth interviews and survey
To assess consumer's brand experience in events during the Covid-19 Pandemic	How did the shift, from in-person held events to online events, affected consumers?	Quantitative	Survey
To develop a set of guidelines that will contribute to improve consumer's brand experience in online events.	Communication wisely, what can brands do to improve consumer's experience in online events?	Qualitative	In-depth interviews

Figure 14 - Research methods and techniques used to address each research goal and question (Image by the author)

To understand the influence of the Covid-19 Pandemic on consumer experience in events, a sequential explanatory research design was implemented (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The research design involves two phases of data collection and analysis: first the quantitative data and then the qualitative data. As seen in Figure 15, each data set was collected and analyzed separately. Quantitative data analysis will be conducted in subchapter 4.1 and qualitative data analysis will be done in subchapter 4.2. Both quantitative and qualitative data have the same weight, meaning that both are equally important at the moment of collection and analysis. The last step of the data analysis procedure will be done in subchapter 5.3, in which both databases are combined and integrated in order to connect the quantitative results to the qualitative results (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). According to Creswell & Creswell (2018), quantitative data and

qualitative data provide different types of information; the first one being close-ended data, and the second one being open-ended data. The combination of both provides a deeper understanding and greater insight of the research topics. Because of time management and convenience for the author and the participants of the study, both datasets were collected in a post-event context.

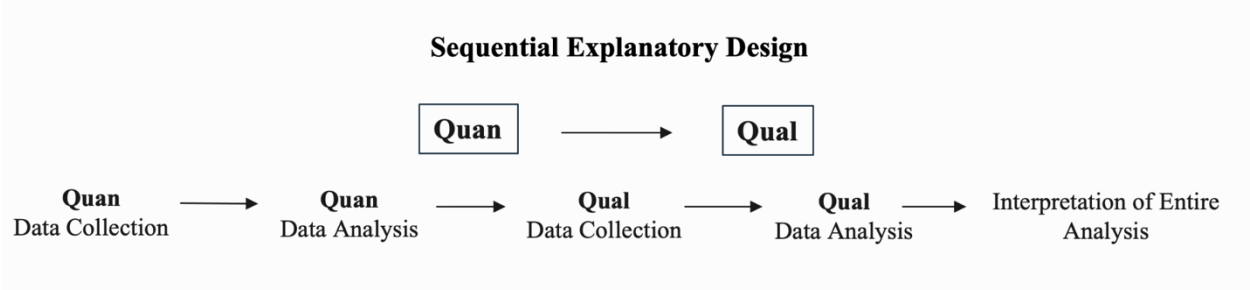


Figure 15 - Sequential Design (Adapted from Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 300)

3.2.1 Surveys

The first step of the research design is to conduct quantitative research by means of a survey. Survey research was chosen to study the consumer's perspective because it provides a numeric description of the 'trends, attitudes, and opinions' of the population that is studied (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 207). The advantage of using surveys as one of the research techniques in this dissertation is that it allows the collection of a large amount of data, meaning that many individuals can take part in the study. Besides, the literature review proved that quantitative research, specifically surveys, was beneficial in the study of consumers' experiences in events.

3.2.1.1 Data collection and instrumentation

For the purpose of this research, the population, which is defined as 'the universe of units from which the sample is to be selected' (Bryman, 2012, p. 187) is constituted of individuals who were affected by the changes of the Covid-19 Pandemic, respectively people who experienced the shift from being in a face-to-face environment to an online one. The Covid-19 Pandemic affected people from all ages, and the survey was focused on age groups who are more active online, from 18 to 45 years old. This population was chosen because it represents individuals

who worked or studied during the Covid-19 Pandemic, therefore had more contact with online events. The concept of sample is defined as a segment or 'subset' of the selected population (Bryman, 2012; Bryman & Bell, 2019, p. 147). The researcher chose the sample by convenience, meaning that the individuals were chosen by their availability. Being a non-probability sample, the findings cannot be generalized, because the sample might not be representative of the population. Because of convenience for the researcher, the sample was composed of individuals who live in Portugal, Ecuador and Germany.

The survey was created in Qualtrics software and was distributed online. The researcher distributed the survey via social media handles, such as Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. The researcher consciously sent the survey to individuals who fitted with the sample that was being studied. The survey was hosted on Qualtrics website, meaning that the respondents had to open the link sent by the researcher and complete the questionnaire online. As a self-completion survey, respondents had to read the questions by themselves and record their own answers (Bryman & Bell, 2019; Bryman, 2012). Qualtrics was chosen as the quantitative research instrument because it was provided by Universidade Católica Portuguesa and had a design that is easy to follow. Surveys were cross-sectional, meaning that the data was collected at a single point in time (Bryman, 2012; Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The survey was active on the Qualtrics website from the 10th of September 2021 until the 8th of October 2021. In total 100 valid responses were collected. A fully completed survey is considered as a valid response.

3.2.1.2 Survey design

The survey was created to gather the insights from the consumers point of view, and it was composed of four parts. Appendix 1 shows the complete survey that was sent to the respondents. All items of the survey were conceived as closed questions, meaning that the respondents had to select an answer from a list of possible responses. The advantage of using closed questions is that the answers are easy to process. The disadvantage is that the given answers can possibly not cover all the potential replies that the respondents have in mind (Bryman & Bell, 2019). For this reason, a response box named 'Other' was created in most of the questions, which gave the

respondents the possibility to write other possible answers. Another disadvantage of using closed questions is that the respondents may differ in the interpretation of the answers (Bryman & Bell, 2019). The respondents had to give an answer to every question in order to continue to the following section and finish the survey. If the respondents tried to continue to the next section without answering, a message would appear indicating the questions that were left unanswered.

The first part of the survey included an introduction which described the purpose of the survey, presented the researcher, and clarified the anonymity of the responses. The email of the researcher was provided in the description in case the respondents had any comment or question regarding the survey. The first part of the survey included personal, demographic, and factual questions, which are essential to characterize the sample, such as age group, gender, education, and country of residency (questions 1, 2, 3 and 4). The second part of the survey focused on gathering information about the type of events (questions 5, 6, 7, 13, 14 and 14a), brand presence (questions 10 and 11), platforms (question 9), formats (question 8) and devices (question 12) used by the consumers when attending events during the Covid-19 Pandemic. These questions are important because they describe the features of the events attended by the respondents during the Covid-19 Pandemic, respectively between March 2020 and September 2021. Question 14 was a filter question; if the respondents answered with a 'yes', question 14.a would appear. Question 14 focused on understanding how the events were adapted during the Covid-19 Pandemic, respectively if they were intended to be face-to-face and then transferred to an online format. Question 14.a assessed the intention of the respondents to assist to online events during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

The third part of the survey, question 15, included statements about the attitudes of the participants towards an online event and their face-to-face counterpart. Using a five-point Likert scale, respondents assessed their experience in an online event versus a face-to-face event. The Likert scale is a multiple-item measure that has the goal of assessing the intensity of feelings about specific statements (Bryman, 2012; Bryman & Bell, 2019). In the case of this survey, 1 meant 'strongly disagree', 2 meant 'disagree', 3 meant 'neither agree nor disagree', 4 meant

‘agree’ and 5 meant ‘strongly agree’. The respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with thirteen statements. The thirteen statements, which assessed consumer experience, were based on established scales in the literature, respectively the Event Experience Scale (EES) by De Geus et al. (2016) and the Event Social Interaction Scale (ESIS) by Marques et al. (2021) reviewed in subchapter 2.3. Respondents had to assess their online vs. face-to-face event experiences in the affective, cognitive, physical, novelty and social dimension, which were identified as the main experience dimensions in the literature review. The literature review showed that there is no tool available for measuring the five dimensions of event experience, therefore this survey complemented items from both scales. Given the fact that the original EES and ESIS scales are extensive, EES consists of nineteen items and ESIS of fourteen items, the researcher deliberately chose the items that best fitted both online and face-to-face experiences. Three items were chosen to represent the affective dimension, two items represented the cognitive dimension, three items represented the physical dimension, two items represented the novelty dimension and three items the social dimension. Figure 16 shows the thirteen statements assessed in the survey and their theoretical framing, which was drawn from the literature in chapter 2.3.

Statement	Theoretical framing
I felt more excited in the online event than in the face-to-face event	This set of questions refers to the **affective** dimension of event experience in the EES scale (De Geus et al., 2016).
I experienced more intimacy in the online event than in the face-to-face event	
I had a stronger feeling of reliving the online event than the face-to-face event (talk about it with others and share pictures on social media)	
I was more intellectually active in the online event than in the face-to-face event	This set of questions refers to the **cognitive** dimension in the EES scale (De Geus et al., 2016)
I learned more in the online event than in the face-to-face event	
I was more active in the online event than in the face-to-face event	

I participated more in the online event than in the face-to-face event	This set of questions refers to the **physical** dimension in the EES scale (De Geus et al., 2016)
I felt more creative in the online event than in the face-to-face event	
I experienced more things unknown to me/outside of my 'normal life' in the online event than in the face-to-face event	This set of questions refers to the **novelty** dimension in the EES scale (De Geus et al., 2016)
The online event was more unique than the face-to-face event	
I was more likely to have contact with strangers in the online event than in the face-to-face event	This set of questions refers to the **social** dimension in the ESIS scale (Marques et al., 2021)
I made more acquaintances/friends in the online event than in the face-to-face event	
It was easier to meet new people online than face-to-face	

Figure 16 - Survey statements and their theoretical framing drawn from literature (Image by the author)

The fourth part of the survey had the goal of understanding which are the most important motivations for individuals to attend events. With the information gathered in the first and third part of the survey, one can see if online event experience matched with the individuals' motivations. Question 16 was a rank order type of question; through dragging and dropping, participants ordered the items from the most important one being at the top to the less important one being at the bottom. Figure 17 shows the question, the six items that respondents had to order, and the theoretical framing of the chosen items drawn from the literature review.

Question	**Items**	**Theoretical framing**
What is the most important aspect of attending events? Please rank the following items	Connecting with others, making new friends, being around people	Tafesse, 2016; Liu et al., 2017; Marques et al., 2021
	Getting new knowledge, learning something new	Tafesse, 2016; Liu et al., 2017; De Geus et al., 2016
	Being entertained, having fun	Liu et al. 2017
	Being active, being able to use my creativity	Tafesse, 2016; Liu et al., 2017; De Geus et al., 2016

	The feeling of excitement and emotion	Tafesse, 2016; Liu et al., 2017; De Geus et al., 2016.
	The stimulation of all my senses during the event (touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste)	Tafesse, 2016; Liu et al., 2017; De Geus et al., 2016.

Figure 17 - Theoretical framing and items of question 16 of the survey (Image by the author)

3.2.2 Interviews

After the surveys were collected, the qualitative method was conducted. Surveys helped to gain insights into the consumers perspective on event experiences, while in-depth semi-structured interviews gained insight into the point of view of the brands or companies that organize such marketing events. In-depth interviews provide open-ended forms of data, in which participants 'share their ideas freely, not constrained by predetermined scales or instruments' (Creswell & Creswell, 2018, p. 257). The questions asked in the interviews are open-ended, so that interviewees can express themselves and share their knowledge. In contrast to the quantitative method, which involved a large number of participants, the qualitative method looked into less participants, but demanded a higher involvement from them. Interviews explore expert knowledge and are a way of obtaining systematic and complete information on the expert's field (Bogner & Menz, 2009; Meuser & Nagel, 2009). An expert is defined as an individual who has specific and specialized knowledge, which is 'not accessible to anybody in the field of action under study' (Bogner & Menz, 2009; Meuser & Nagel, 2009, p. 18). Experts are recognized individuals in their fields of action.

3.2.2.1 Data collection and instrumentation

The researcher chose to interview three different types of experts who are involved in the organization of marketing events: a brand manager specialized in digital communication, a creative director of an advertising agency and an event organizer. These profiles were chosen because they represent different points of views and have different roles when organizing marketing events. The brand manager represents the brand's vision and has in mind their communicational and commercial goals; the creative director works directly with clients and

translates those goals into creative communication that is appealing to the target audience; and the event organizer is the person who executes the events. The interviewees profiles were chosen in a strategic way, so that the sample participants are relevant to the research questions that were studied (Bryman, 2012). Since it was a non-probability sample, the results cannot be generalized to a population (Bryman, 2012). The three interviewees were easy to reach because the researcher had previously worked with them in Ecuador. They were contacted directly by the researcher and, after agreeing to the interview, the interview was scheduled. The fact that the interviewees and the researcher were previous work colleagues was beneficial because 'the interviewer and the interviewee share a common scientific background or relevance system [that] can increase the level of motivation on the part of the expert to participate in an interview' (Bogner, Littig & Menz, 2009, p. 02).

All interviewees were physically located in Quito, Ecuador. For this reason, the interviews were held online, with the use of the platform Zoom. The platform Zoom was chosen because it is easy to access, it is free, the interviews can be recorded in audio and image and the interviewees had previous experience using the platform. Even though online interviews are beneficial, they also have several disadvantages, for example the researcher cannot observe in detail the body language of the interviewees (Bryman & Bell, 2019). During the interviews the researcher took notes on paper and recorded the interviews on video.

The interviews were held in Spanish because the interviewees expressed that they felt more comfortable talking in that language. The interviews were transcribed and then translated into English by the author. As suggested by Creswell & Creswell (2018), the researcher tried to memorize the questions, so that the interview felt more natural to the interviewees. Figure 18 illustrates the interviewees, the dates, the duration of the interviews, which lasted around forty minutes each, and the Annex in which the full transcription is located. The description of the profiles of each interviewee, such as their work experience, clients, amongst others, is in each one of the Annexes.

Name of the Interviewee	Data of Interview	Length of interview	Annex in this document (Transcription of the Interview)
G.Mora	17 September 2021	00:36:19	2
C.Aizaga	22 September 2021	00:49:15	3
M.López	07 October	00:40:28	4

Figure 18 - Interview information (Image by the author)

3.2.2.2 Interview design

The researcher did three structured interviews, one with each expert. An interview protocol was written in order to have a guide of the topics and questions to be answered. Given the fact that each profile had different roles when organizing events, the questions varied and were adapted to fit each one of them. The general topics of all three interviews were based on the literature review. When doing the interviews, the researcher varied the order and wording of the questions so that it felt like a conversation (Bryman & Bell, 2019). Additional unplanned questions were asked to follow up on the interviewee's replies (Bryman, 2012). The interview started with an introduction by the researcher indicating the goals of the research, then the researcher asked the interviewees consent in recording the interview. The researcher indicated when the interview was beginning to be recorded and started with the first question of the interview guide. When the interviewee gave their response to the last question, the interviewer stopped the recording and then thanked the interviewee for their participation. The interview protocol was originally written in English, and then translated into Spanish by the author. All interviews were held in Spanish because, as previously mentioned, the interviewees felt more comfortable in that language. Figure 19 articulates the interview guide that corresponds to the brand manager, the creative director and the event organizer. The first set of questions 'About the company/brand/advertising agency' had the goal of introducing the company or brand in which the interviewees work and to get insights about their event practices. The second set of questions 'Events and the Covid-19 Pandemic' focused on understanding the changes and influence that the Covid-19 Pandemic had on the events organized by the interviewees. The questions induced the interviewees to give examples of events that had to be adapted from a face-to-face to an

online format. Besides, the interviewees' opinions about advantages and disadvantages of online events were explored. The third set of questions, 'Engagement', reflected the interactions of consumers in online events from a brand's point of view. The fourth set of questions, 'Evaluation', explored the brand's assessment tools regarding the events, for example the KPIs that were measured or if the events were considered successful or not. The last set of questions, 'Challenges and perspective for the future', investigated best practices, opinions on new technologies (such as Virtual Reality and Augmented Reality) and hybrid events. After conducting the first interview, which was to the creative director, the researcher gained experience and developed more questions on certain topics, such as in 'Evaluation' and 'Engagement'. This is the reason why the interview guides for the brand manager and event organizer explore more questions in the previously mentioned topics.

Topic	**Questions**		
	Creative director	**Brand manager**	**Event organizer**
About the company/brand/ advertising agency	With which sectors do you work with?	Does the brand/company use event marketing as part of its marketing plan?	Do you organize marketing events as part of a brand's marketing plan?
	What is your role as a creative director?	What kind of events does the brand/company usually organize?	What kind of events do you usually organize?
	In the advertising agency, do you work with event marketing?	Are the events that the company/brand organizes mostly face-to-face or online? Why?	Are the events mostly face-to-face or online? Why?
	What is the role of the advertising agency when organizing an event for a client?		
Events and the Covid-19 Pandemic	How did the Covid-19 Pandemic influence creativity in general and how did it influence creativity in marketing events?	During the Covid-19 Pandemic how did you adapt the face-to-face events?	How were marketing events organized during the Covid-19 Pandemic?

	How was the creative process of creating online events during the Covid-19 Pandemic? What were the general steps?	How was the process of creating online events? What were the general steps?	How was the process of creating the events? What were the general steps?
	How did you promote the events during the Covid-19 Pandemic? Did you use paid media to promote the events?	How did you promote the events during the Covid-19 Pandemic? Did you use paid media to promote the events?	How did you promote the events during the Covid-19 Pandemic? Did you use paid media to promote the events?
	How did the Covid-19 Pandemic influence your creative process and the process of your team?	How was the composition of your team when organizing the events?	How was the composition of your team when organizing the events?
	Which platforms did you use to broadcast the events? Do different event platforms influence creativity?	Which platforms did you use to broadcast the events?	Which platforms did you use to broadcast the events?
	Creatively speaking, what are the main advantages and disadvantages of online event marketing?	What are the main advantages and disadvantages of online event marketing?	What are the main advantages and disadvantages of online event marketing?
	During the Covid-19 Pandemic how did you adapt your clients' face-to-face events?		During the Covid-19 Pandemic how did you adapt the face-to-face events?
	What is the role of creativity in changing face-to-face events to online events?		
	For you, what is the importance of creativity in events? How can an event be creative?		
Engagement	How would you assess the consumer's engagement during the online events?	What was the response of the public who attended the event?	What was the response of the public who attended the event?
		How were the attendee's interactions during the event?	How were the attendee's interactions during the event?
		What do you think are the main differences between	What do you think are the main differences between

		face-to-face and online events regarding consumer experience?	face-to-face and online events regarding consumer experience?
			In general, were the public's responses different from a face-to-face event?
Evaluation	How was the evaluation of the event done?	How was the evaluation of the event done?	How was the evaluation of the event done?
		Which were the KPIs you measured?	Which were the KPIs you measured?
		Did you consider the events to be successful? Why? Based on which KPI?	Did you consider the events to be successful? Why? Based on which KPI?
Challenges and perspective for the future	What were the main creative challenges of organizing an online event?	What were the main challenges of organizing an online event?	What were the main challenges of organizing an online event?
	What do you think are the best practices when organizing an online event?	What do you think are the best practices when organizing an online event?	What do you think are the best practices when organizing an online event?
	Now that we are slowly returning to 'normal', will you recommend your clients to organize online events?	Now that we are slowly returning to 'normal', will the brand/company continue to organize online events?	Now that we are slowly returning to 'normal', will the brand/company continue to organize online events?
	What do you think about hybrid events? Do you think hybrid events have the potential of being creative?	Have you thought about organizing hybrid events?	Have you thought about organizing hybrid events?
	Do you think technologies like VR, Augmented Reality and Artificial Intelligence can support creativity?	Have you used VR technology in marketing events? Would you be interested?	Have you used VR technology in marketing events? Would you be interested?
	From a creative point of view, what are the trends you see in event marketing in the future?	What are the trends you see in event marketing in the future?	What are the trends you see in event marketing in the future?

Figure 19 - Interview guide for brand manager, creative director and event organizer (Image by the author)

Chapter 4 – Data Analysis

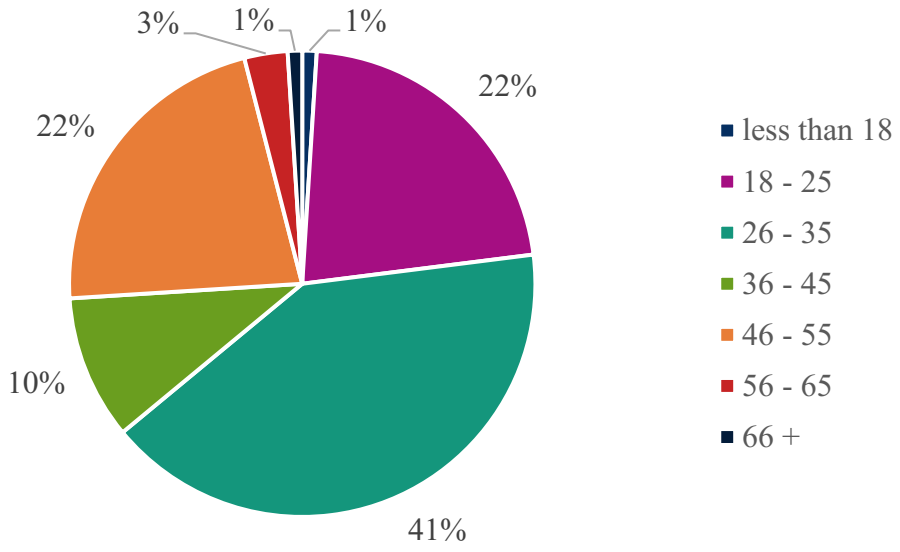
The following chapter focuses on analyzing and interpreting the quantitative and qualitative information gathered in the surveys and interviews. Each dataset was analyzed separately and then, at the end of the chapter, both datasets are integrated.

4.1 Survey

100 valid responses were collected using Qualtrics software. The researcher considered that a valid response is a fully completed questionnaire. The questions were gathered and analyzed with the use of Qualtrics. The survey consisted of sixteen questions.

4.1.1 Data Analysis and interpretation

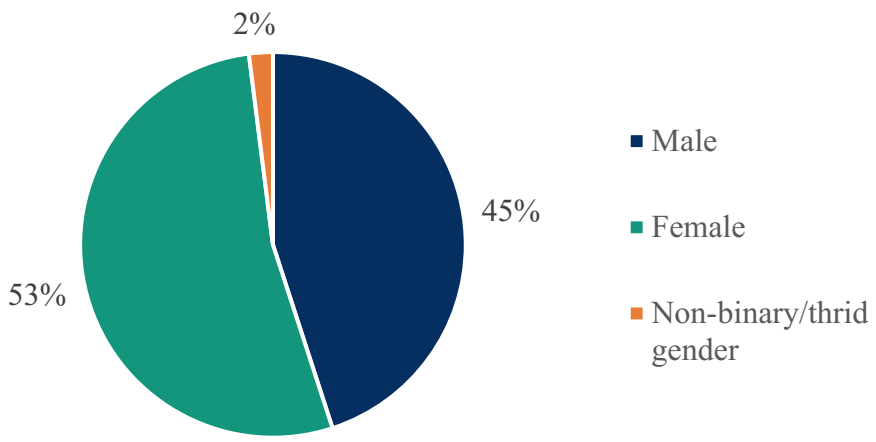
<u>Question 1:</u> Age



Graph 1 – Age (Graph by the author)

41% of the respondents had between 26 and 35 years of age. The age group of 18 to 25 represented 22% of the sample, as well as the age group of 46 to 55, which also represented 22%. The data collected regarding the age of the participants aligns with the sample that was intended, meaning individuals who are studying or working.

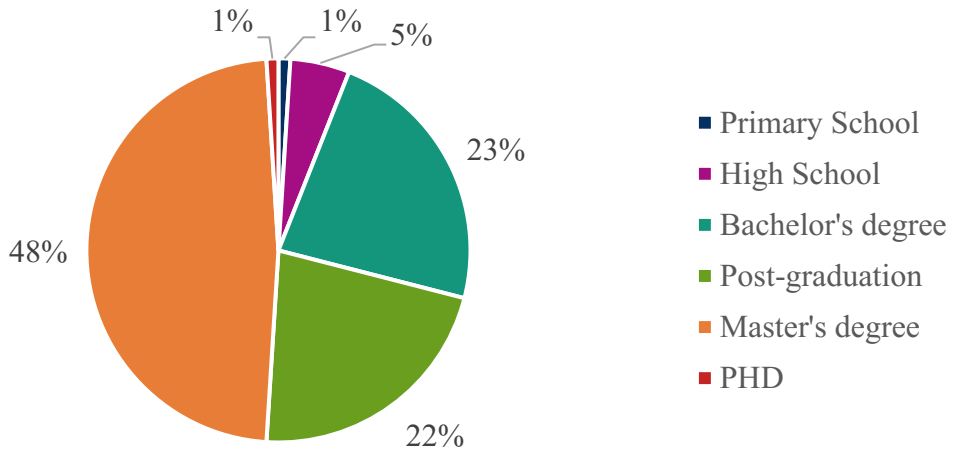
<u>Question 2:</u> Gender



Graph 2 - Gender (Graph by the author)

53% of the respondents identified themselves as female, while 45% identified themselves as male.

<u>Question 3:</u> Education



Graph 3 - Education (Graph by the author)

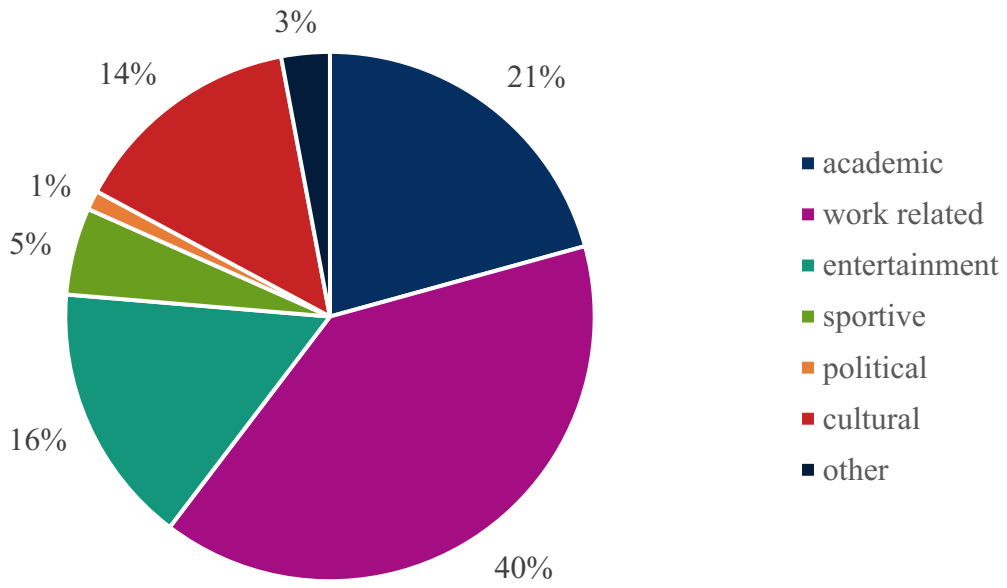
48% of the respondents had a Master's degree, 23% had a Bachelor's Degree and 22% had a post-graduation.

<u>Question 4:</u> Country of residency

Due to the physical location of the researcher, 67% of the respondents located themselves in Portugal. 11% of the respondents had their residency in Ecuador, and 9% in Germany. The remaining 13% of respondents lived in Canada, United Stated of America, Mexico, Austria, Andorra, Italy, Australia, and Cyprus.

<u>Question 5:</u>

During the Covid-19 Pandemic, the majority of the events you attended were….

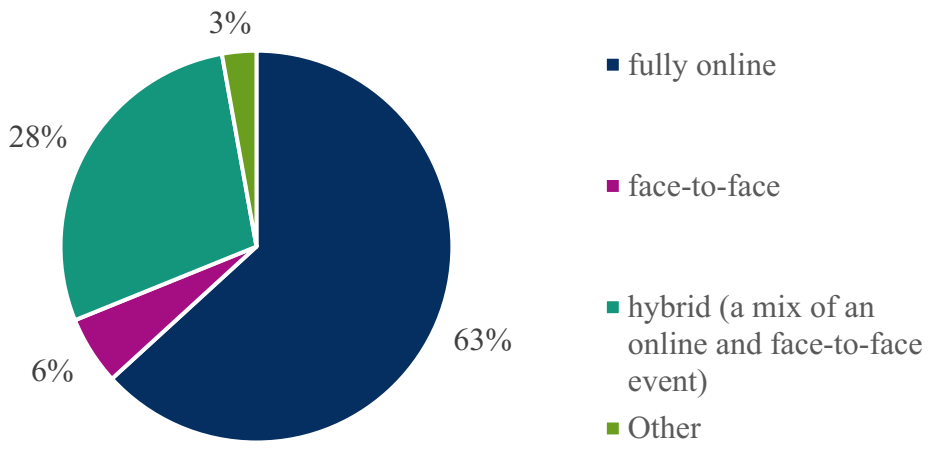


Graph 4 - Question 5 (Graph by the author)

40% of the individuals surveyed attended to work related events during the Covid-19 Pandemic. 21% of the respondents attended academic events, while 16% attended entertainment related events. 14% engaged with cultural events and 5% with sportive events. 3% of the respondents categorized the events attended as 'other', and wrote 'social/familiar events'.

Question 6:

Between March 2020 and April 2021, most of the events you attended were…

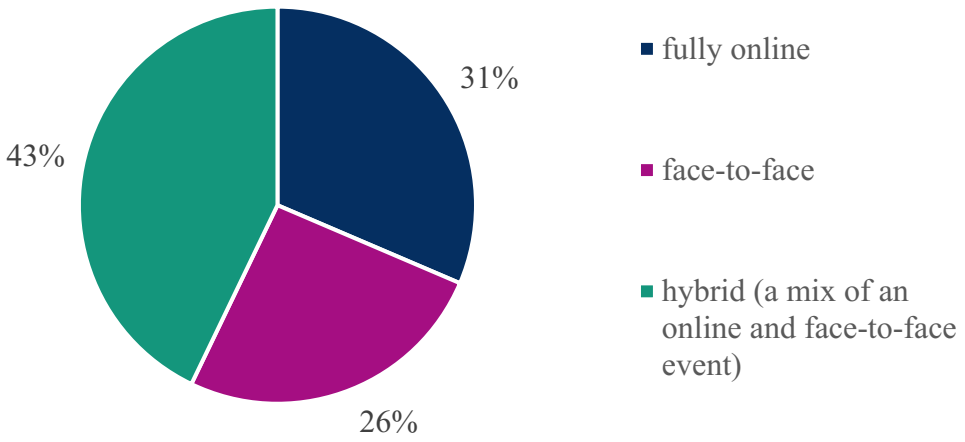


Graph 5 - Question 6 (Graph by the author)

During the first year of the Covid-19 Pandemic, between March 2020 and April 2021, 63% of the respondents attended fully online events. 28% of the individuals attended hybrid events, which are defined as a mix of an online and face-to-face event, and only 3% attended face-to-face events.

Question 7:

Between May 2021 and September 2021, most of the events you attended were….

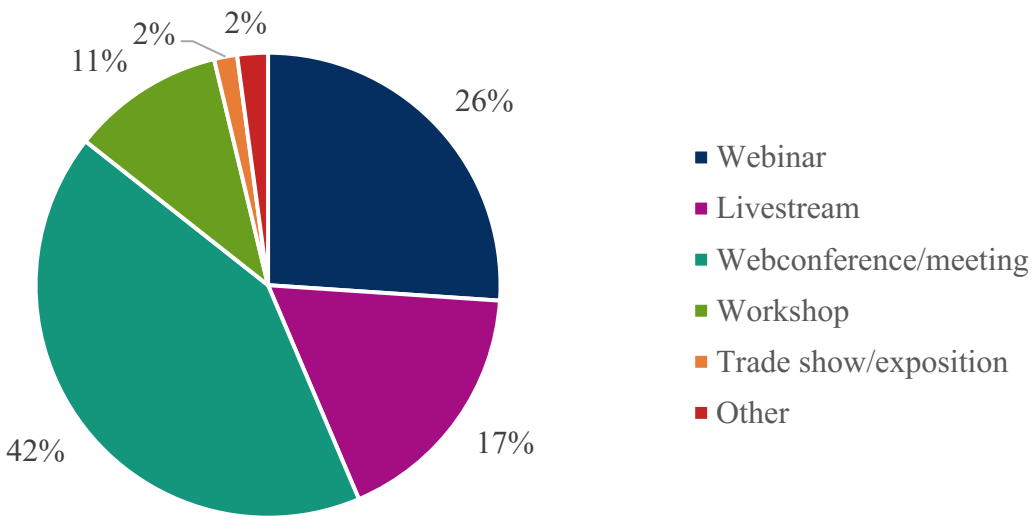


Graph 6 - Question 7 (Graph by the author)

During the second year of the Pandemic, between May 2021 and September 2021 (the date in which the survey was implemented), 43% of the respondents stated that they had attended hybrid events. 31% of the events attended were fully online, and 26% were face-to-face. We can see that the hybrid format grew in 2021, and that face-to-face events, which represented a small percentage in Question 6, were also growing. The growth of face-to-face and hybrid event formats might be explained by the reactivation and politics of reopening of the countries in which the respondents reside.

Question 8:

Which was the format of the online events you attended?

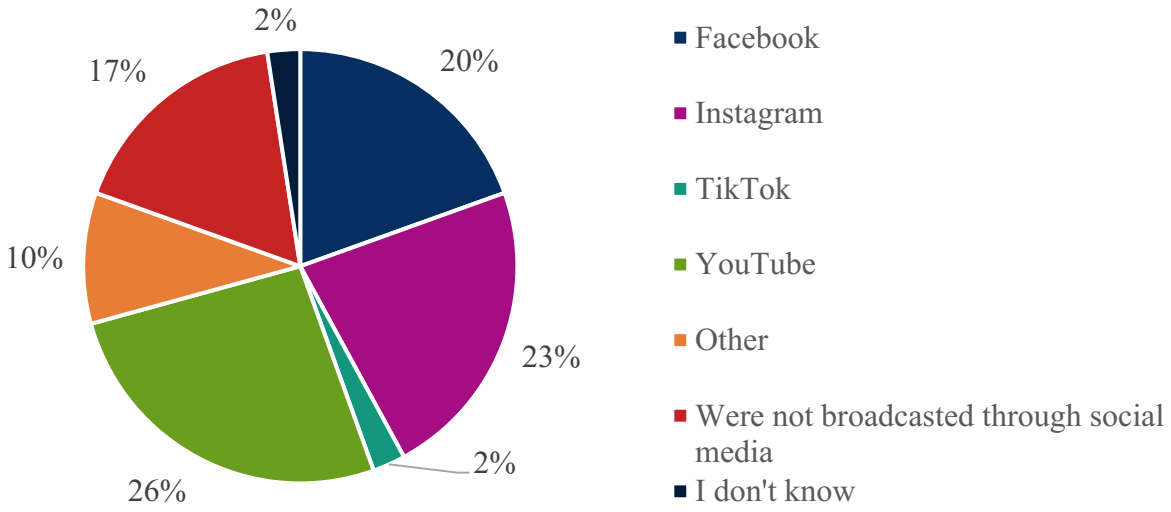


Graph 7 - Question 8 (Graph by the author)

42% of the respondents stated that the online events they attended were in a conference/meeting format. This matches with Question 5, in which 40% of the individuals stated that the events attended were work related. 26% of the sample identified the online event format as webinars, while 17% as livestream. 11% of the respondents attended online workshops and 2% trade shows/expositions.

Question 9:

If the events were broadcasted through social media, which were the platforms used?

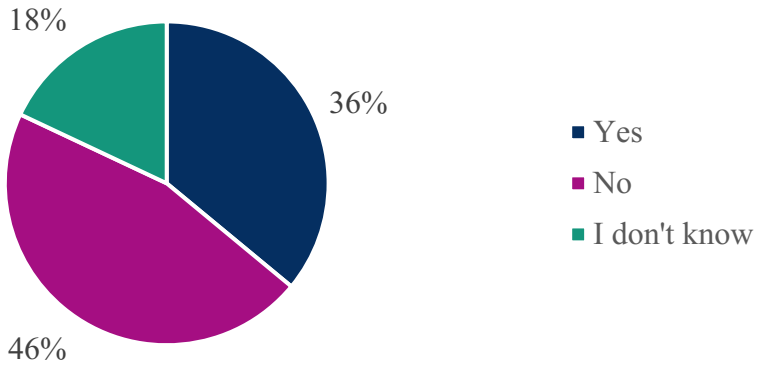


Graph 8 - Question 9 (Graph by the author)

The respondents identified YouTube (26%), Instagram (23%), and Facebook (20%) as the most commonly used platforms for broadcasting online events. 10% of the respondents chose 'other', and identified collaborative software such as Zoom, Google Hangouts, Discord and Microsoft Teams.

Question 10:

Were the events organized by a brand?

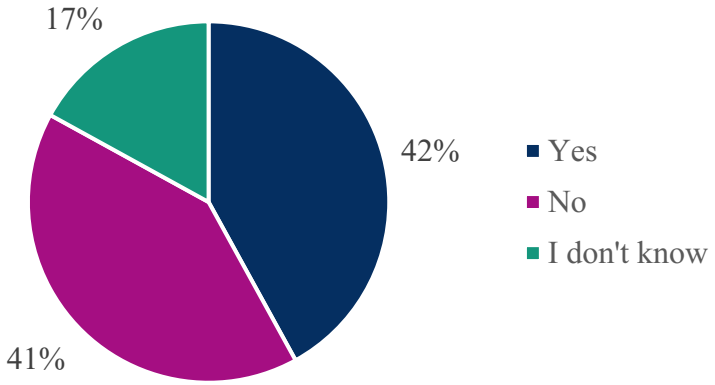


Graph 9 - Question 10 (Graph by the author)

36% of the respondents stated that the events were organized by a brand, while 46% stated that they were not organized by any brand.

Question 11:

Were any brands present during the events?



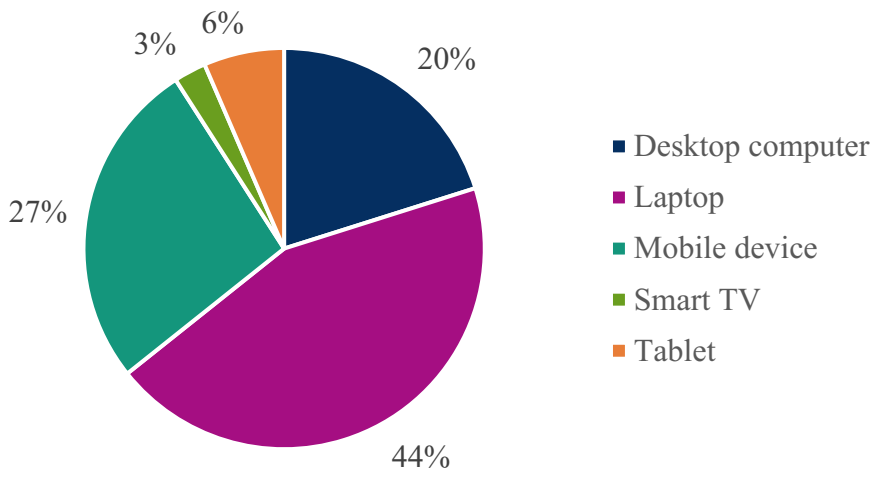
Graph 10 - Question 11 (Graph by the author)

42% of the respondents identified a brand during the event. 41% did not see any brand, while 17% did not know if there were any brands present. Even though the majority of events (see

Question 10) were not organized by a brand, there was a high percentage of brand presence. Brand presence can be branding, images, sponsoring, and other brand related merchandising.

Question 12:

From which device did you attend the majority of the events?

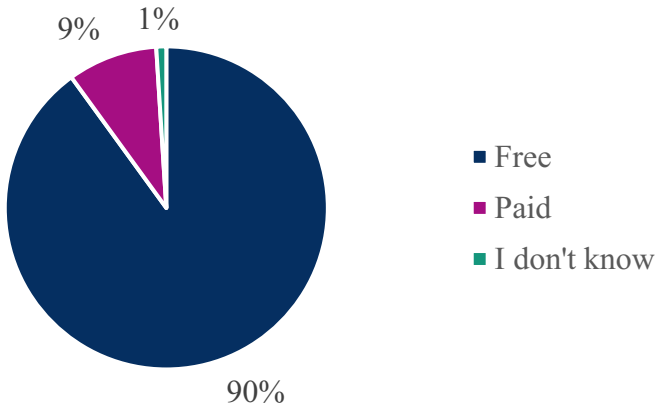


Graph 11 - Question 12 (Graph by the author)

44% of the attendees answered that they used their laptops to watch the events. 27% attended from their smartphones, 20% from their desktop computers, and 6% from their tablets.

Question 13:

In general, the events were …

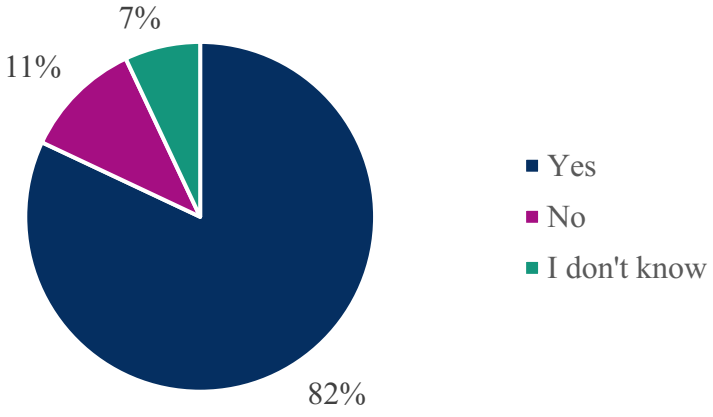


Graph 12 - Question 13 (Graph by the author)

90% of the respondents stated that the majority of events attended during the Covid-19 Pandemic were free of charge. Only 9% of the individuals surveyed stated that they had to pay for the events.

Question 14:

The events you attended were originally face-to-face and, because of the Covid-19 Pandemic, shifted to online?

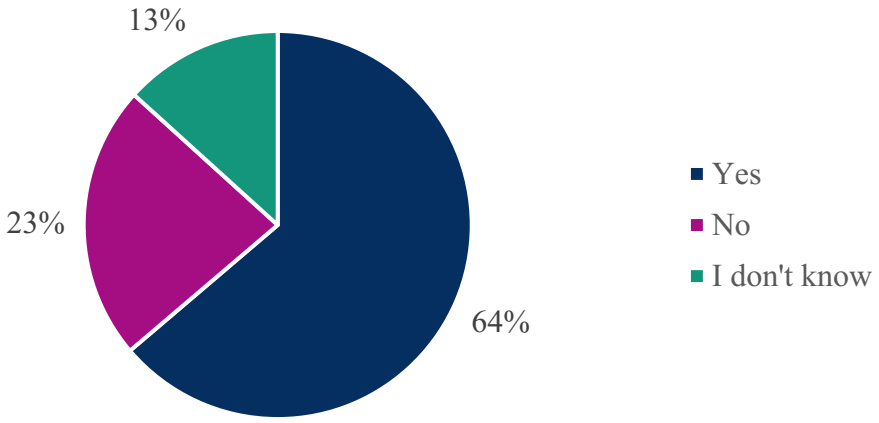


Graph 13 - Question 14 (Graph by the author)

82% of the respondents stated that the events they intended to attend were originally face-to-face but shifted to online because of the restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 Pandemic. This question helped us understand the amount of events that were adapted to a virtual environment.

<u>Question 14a:</u>

Would you have attended the events if you knew they were only to be online?



Graph 14 - Question 14.a (Graph by the author)

Question 14a was a filter question, meaning that it was only available for individuals who responded 'Yes' to the previous question (Question 14). 64% of the respondents said that they would have attended the events even if they were only in an online format. 23% of the respondents did not agree, while 13% did not know.

<u>Question 15:</u>

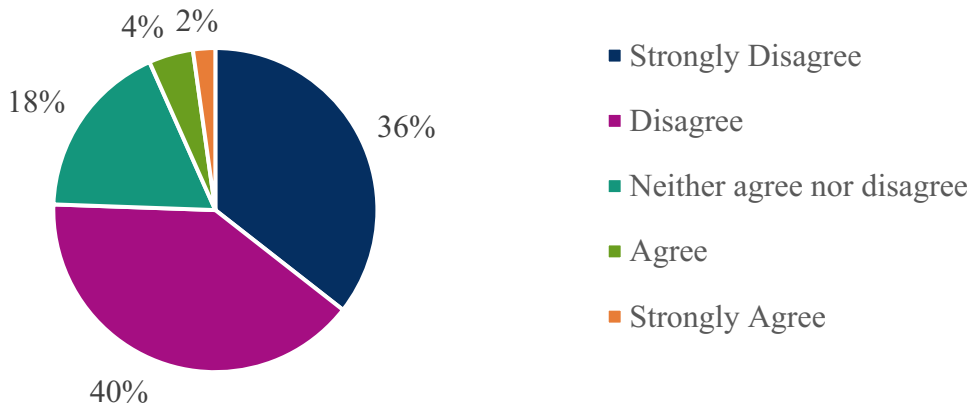
Think about an online event and a similar face-to-face event you attended in the past. Mark the extent in which you agree or disagree with the following sentences.

Question 15 used a Likert-scale to assess the respondent's experience in an online event vs. a face-to-face event. Thirteen statements were presented, and each respondent needed to assess their level of agreement from 1,' strongly disagree', to 5 'strongly agree'. The answer of each

participant was recorded and then the scores for each statement were aggregated to form an overall score. In general, this part of the survey had the aim of assessing consumers experience, in the affective (statements 1, 2 and 3), cognitive (statements 4 and 5), physical (statements 6, 7 and 8), novelty (statements 9 and 10), and social (statements 11, 12 and 13) dimensions (De Geus et al., 2016; Marques et al., 2021).

Statement 1:

I felt more excited in the online event than in the face-to-face event

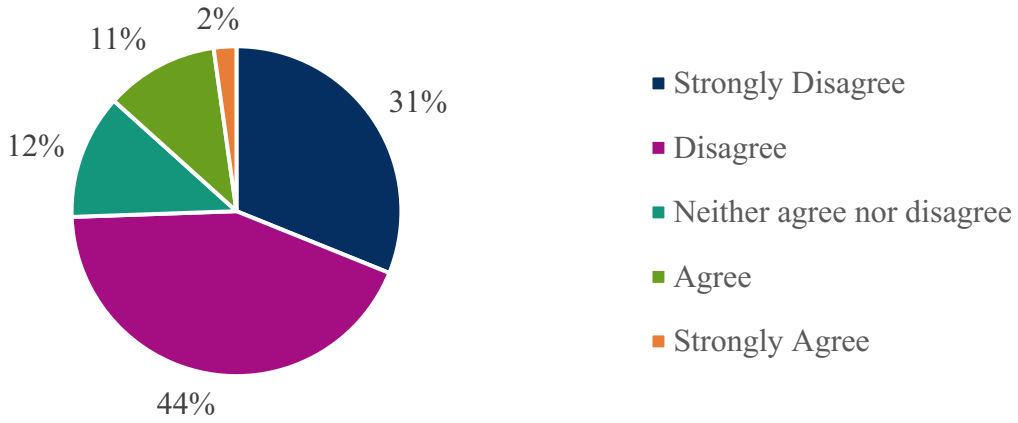


Graph 15 - Statement 1 (Graph by the author)

There is a strong sense of disagreement with the presented statement; 36% of the respondents answered with 'strongly disagree' and 40% with 'disagree`. This means that online events, compared to face-to-face events, did not evoke feelings of excitement. Only a small percentage of respondents, the 4% who marked 'agree' and the 2% that marked 'strongly agree' were more excited about online events.

Statement 2:

I experienced more intimacy in the online event than in the face-to-face event

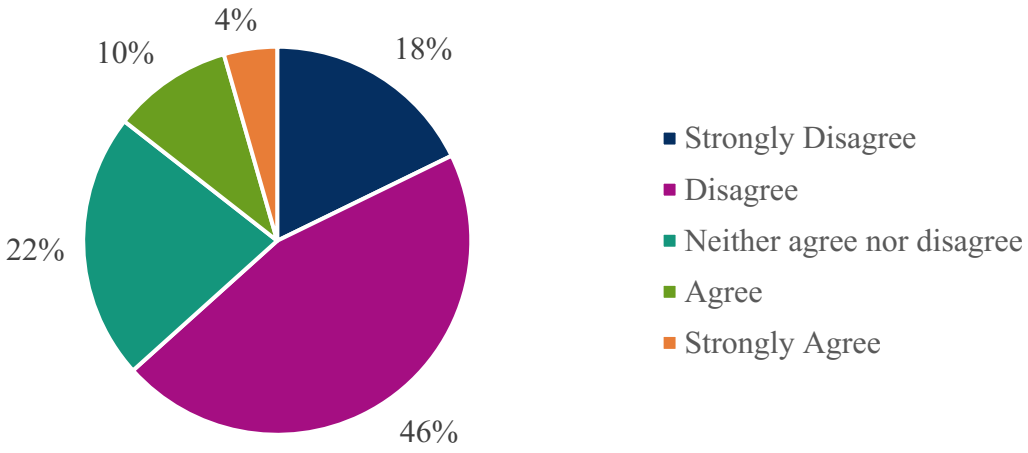


Graph 16 - Statement 2 (Graph by the author)

Overall, there is feeling of disagreement with the second statement, 44% of the respondents stated that they did not felt a stronger sense of intimacy in an online event vs. a face-to-face event. 31% of the respondents stated that they 'strongly disagreed' with the statement.

Statement 3:

I had a stronger feeling of reliving the online event than the face-to-face event (talk about it with others and share pictures on social media)

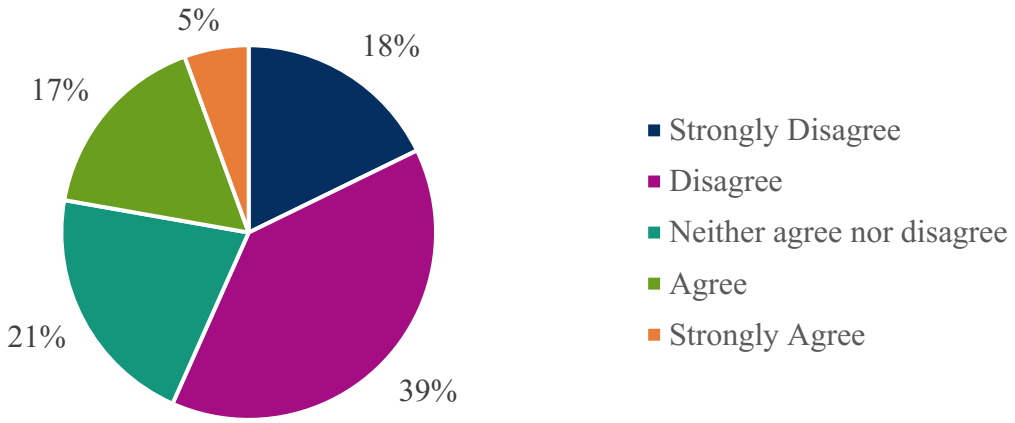


Graph 17 - Statement 3 (Graph by the author)

46% of the individuals disagreed with the statement, meaning that they did not have the feeling of sharing their online experience with others, in comparison to a face-to-face event. 22% of the respondents were neutral about this statement, a possible explanation might be that sharing information on social media depends on the personality traits of each individual.

Statement 4:

I was more intellectually active in the online event than in the face-to-face event

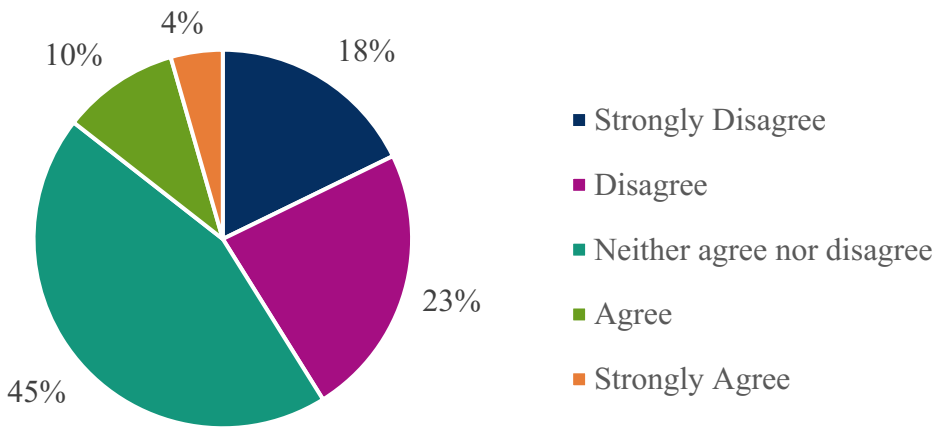


Graph 18 - Statement 4 (Graph by the author)

Graph 18 shows that 39% of the respondents disagree with the presented statement. The majority of the individual surveyed believed that they were less intellectually active in online events vs. face-to-face events during the Covid-19 Pandemic. A 21% of the sample had a neutral feeling, while 17% agreed to the fact of being more intellectually active during online events.

Statement 5:

I learned more in the online event than in the face-to-face event

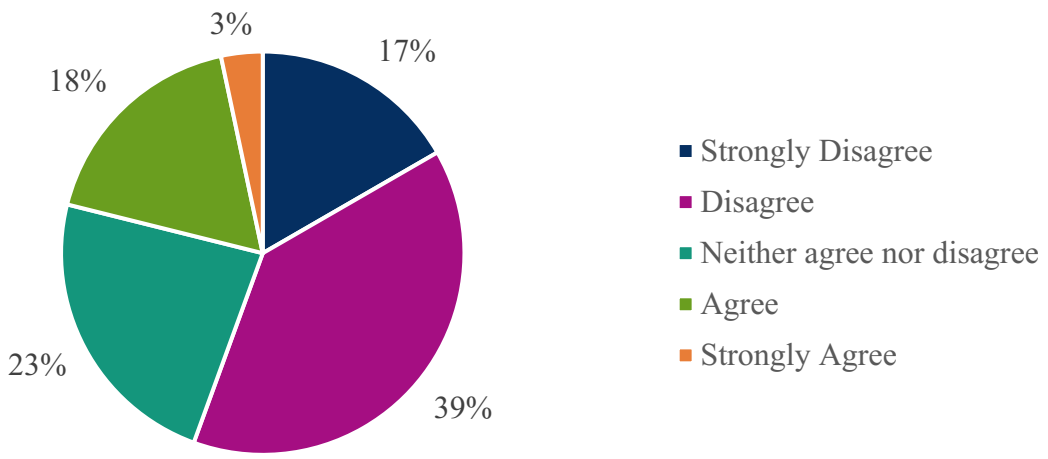


Graph 19 - Statement 5 (Graph by the author)

45% of the respondents felt neutral about learning in online events vs. face-to-face events. In this statement the tendency is negative, meaning that 23% of the respondents 'disagree' and 18% 'strongly disagree'. This means that in general the majority of the individuals surveyed are either neutral or believe they learn more in face-to-face events rather than in online events.

Statement 6:

I was more active in the online event than in the face-to-face event

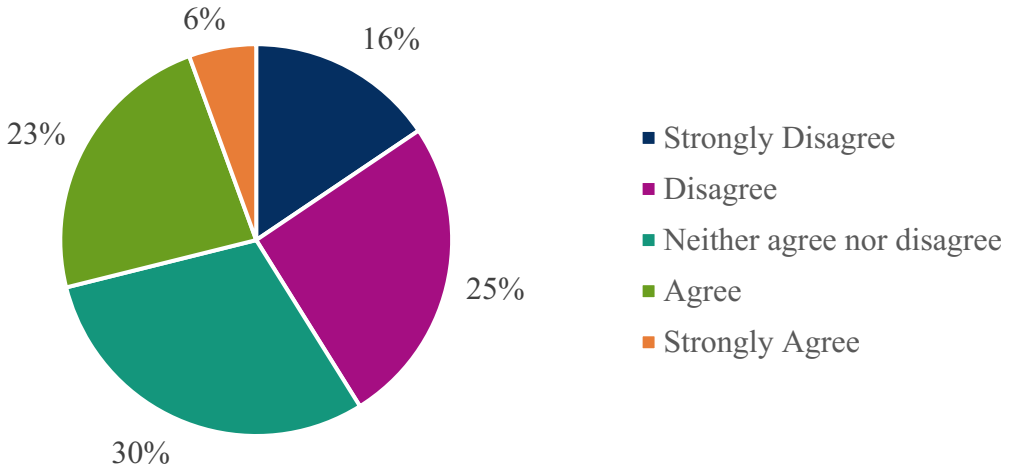


Graph 20 - Statement 6 (Graph by the author)

Graph 20 assesses the physical dimension of consumer experience in events. 39% of the respondents disagreed with the fact of being more active in online events vs. face-to-face events. 17% see themselves more active in online events, while 23% held a neutral position.

Statement 7:

I participated more in the online event than in the face-to-face event

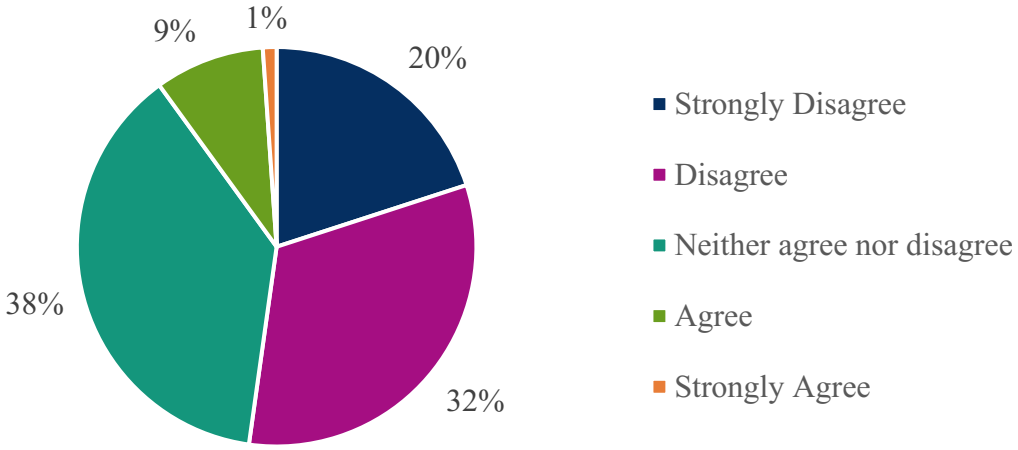


Graph 21 - Statement 7 (Graph by the author)

30% of the respondents held a neutral position about their participation in online events vs. face-to-face events. There is almost an equal percentage of individuals who either agree (23%) and disagree (25%) with the statement. This means that there is a greater polarization around this statement.

Statement 8:

I felt more creative in the online event than in the face-to-face event

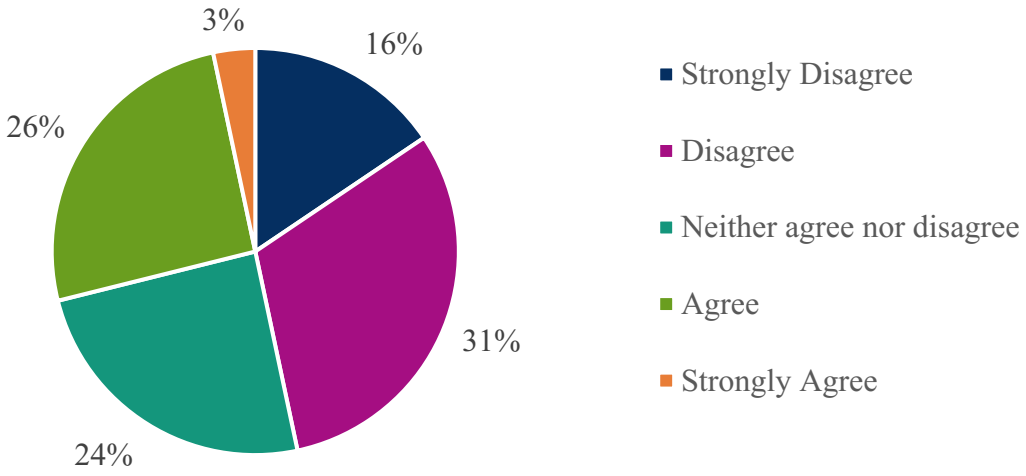


Graph 22 - Statement 8 (Graph by the author)

Regarding the feeling of creativity, 32% of the respondents stated that they felt less creative in online events vs. in face events. 20% of the sample 'strongly disagrees', which in general gives us a sense of negativity towards the statement. 38% of the sample remained neutral, and only 9% agreed.

Statement 9:

I experienced more things unknown to me/outside of my 'normal life' in the online event than in the face-to-face event

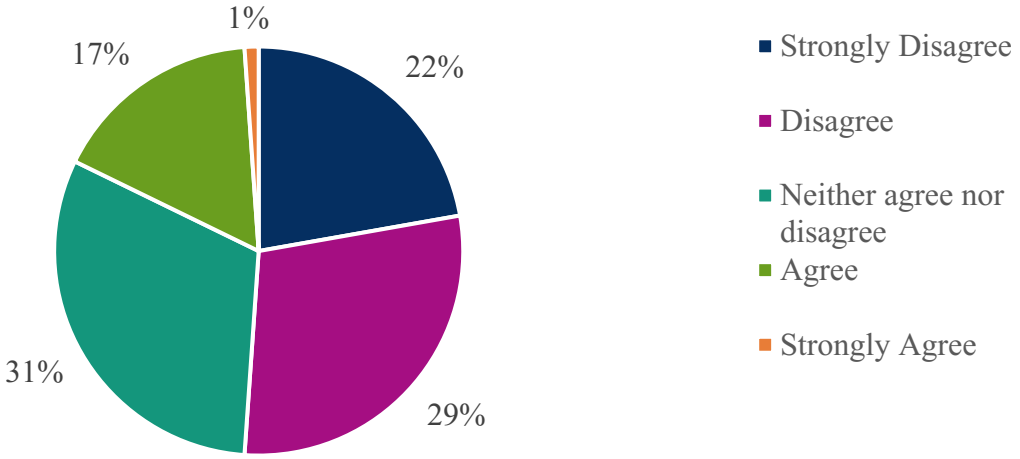


Graph 23 - Statement 9 (Graph by the author)

Graph 23 assesses consumers' novelty dimension. 26% of the respondents felt that in online events they had the opportunity to experience things 'outside their normal life' or unknown to them in comparison to face-to-face events. 31% disagreed with this statement and 24% remained neutral. 16% had strong negative feelings towards this statement. In general, the majority of the sample felt that online events do not provide them feelings of novelty.

Statement 10:

The online event was more unique than the face-to-face event

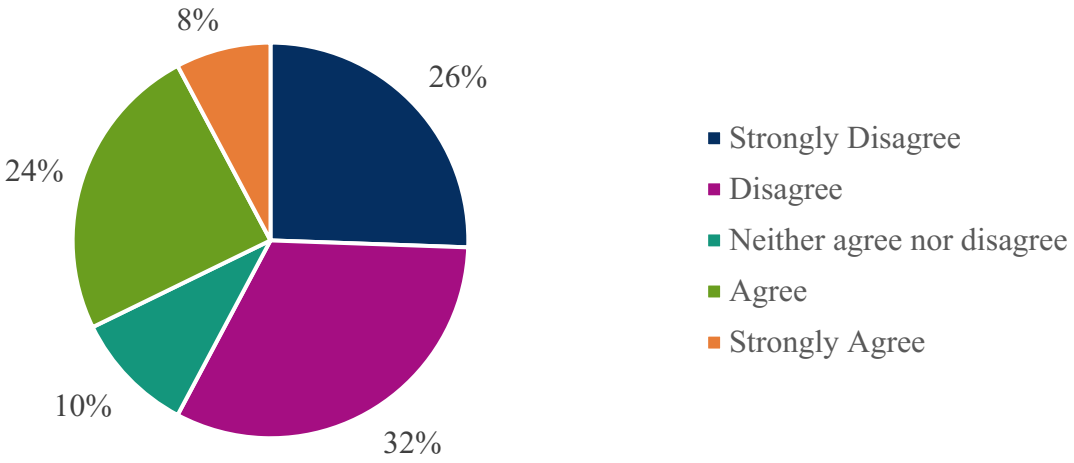


Graph 24 - Statement 10 (Graph by the author)

29% of the respondents 'disagree' and 22% 'strongly disagree' with the statement. Only 17% of the sample experienced uniqueness during an online event. In general, respondents believed that online events were not as unique in comparison to face-to-face events.

Statement 11:

I was more likely to have contact with strangers in the online event than in the face-to-face event

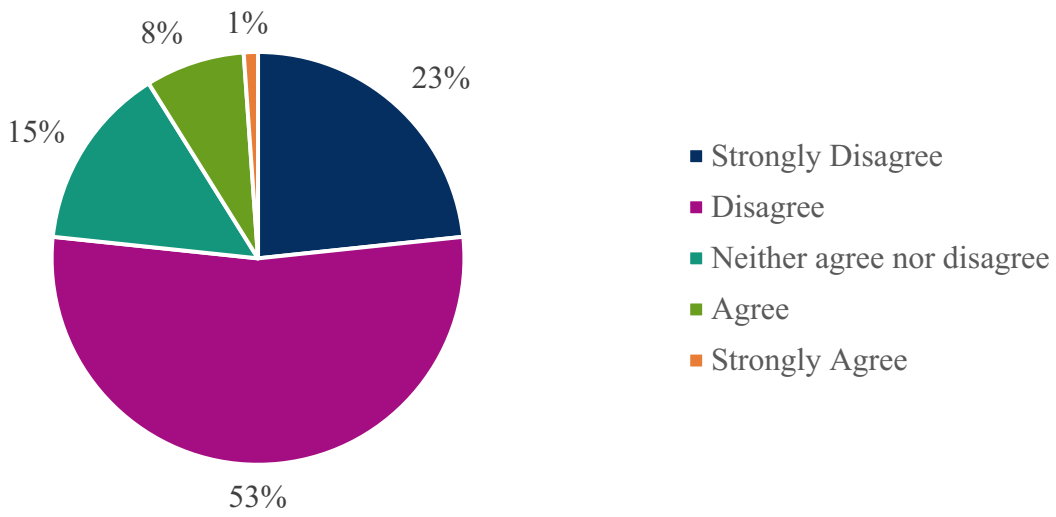


Graph 25 - Statement 11 (Graph by the author)

32% of the sample ‘disagreed’ with statement 11, while 26% ‘strongly disagreed’. This means that the majority of the sample believed that it was easier to engage in contact with strangers during face-to-face events. Only 10% of the sample remained neutral in this statement and 24% agreed.

Statement 12:

I made more acquaintances/friends in the online event than in the face-to-face event

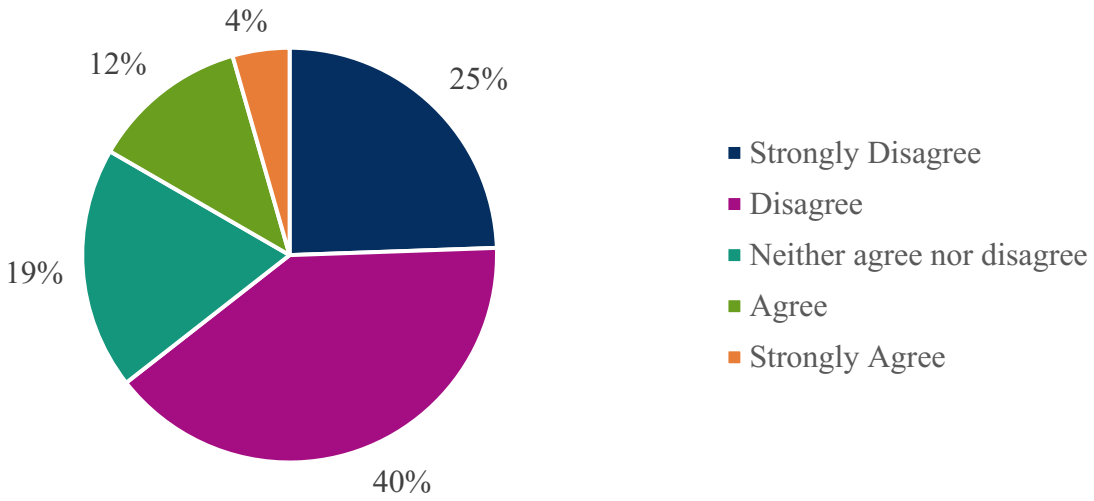


Graph 26 - Statement 12 (Graph by the author)

Around half of the sample, 53% of the respondents, ‘disagreed’ with the statement and 23% ‘strongly disagreed’, meaning that they believe they made more acquaintances/friends during face-to-face events in comparison to online events. These findings are aligned with the fact that physical events are highly social, where people meet to interact with others (Marques et al., 2021). Online events experienced by the sample during the Covid-19 Pandemic were not as ‘social’ as face-to-face events.

Statement 13:

It was easier to meet new people online than face-to-face

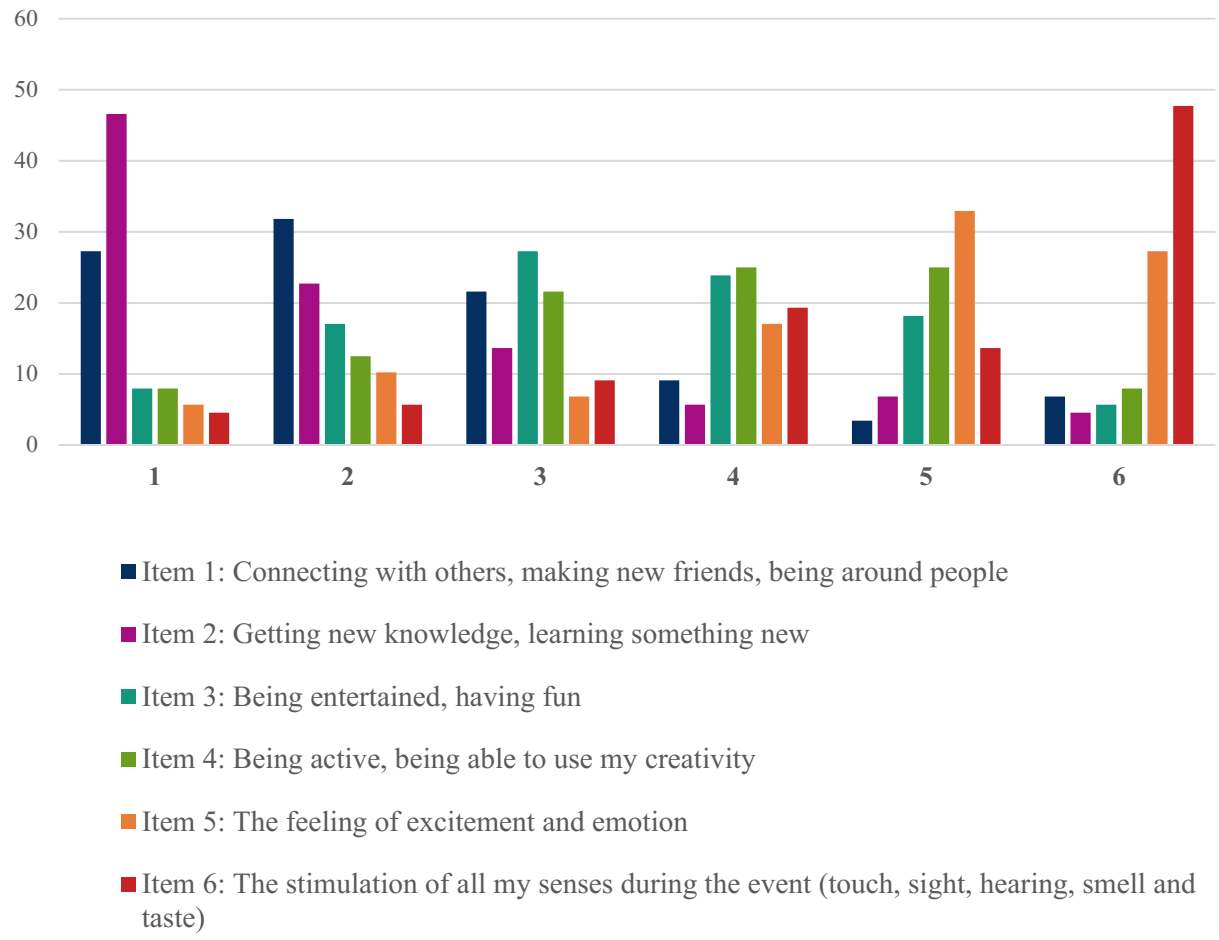


Graph 27 - Statement 13 (Graph by the author)

40% of the sample 'disagreed' with the statement and 25% 'strongly disagreed', which indicated that it was harder to meet new people in online events in comparison to face-to-face events. Only 12% of the respondents found it easier to meet new people in online events, while 19% remained neutral.

Question 16:

What is the most important aspect of attending events? Please drag and drop to rank the following items:



Graph 28 - Question 16 (Graph by the author)

Graph 28 illustrates the distribution of the responses of question 16. Respondents had to rank six items; the first position (1) meant that that item was the most important for the respondents, while the sixth position (6) was seen as the least important item when attending events.

Regarding position 1, 47% of the respondents ranked 'getting new knowledge, learning something new' (Item 2) as their priority, followed by Item 1 'connecting with others…' which represented 27% of the responses.

Position 2 was also disputed between Item 1 and Item 2. 32% ranked Item 1 ('connecting with others…'), while 23% ranked Item 2 ('getting new knowledge…') in this position.
Position 3 and position 4 were disputed between Item 3 ('being entertained…) and Item 4 (being active…)'. A slightly percentage of difference, 27% vs. 22%, made Item 3 rank in position 3, while Item 4 was ranked in Position 4.
33% of the individuals ranked Item 5 ('the feeling of excitement…') in position 5, followed by Item 4 with 25%.
48% of the respondents ranked Item 6 ('the stimulation of all my senses…') in position 6, which is the last position and represent the least important item for the respondents.

For position 1 and position 6, Graph 28 shows that there is a high level of agreement between respondents, which rounds around 50% for items 2 and 6, respectively. Middle positions (3 and 4) show less level of agreement between respondents.

4.1.2 Conclusions of the survey analysis

To sum up, the sample was characterized as following: 53% were identified as female, while 45% were identified as men, most of the sample had a high level of education (either master's degree, bachelor's degree, or a post-graduation) and 67% of the respondents resided in Portugal.

In general, the events attended by the sample during the Covid-19 Pandemic (between March 2020 and September 2021) were mostly work related (40%), academic (21%) and entertainment related (16%). During the first year of the Covid-19 Pandemic (from March 2020 until April 2021) most of the events (63%) were online. During the second year of the Covid-19 Pandemic (from May 2021 until September 2021) there was a growth in hybrid events, which represented 43% of events attended by the respondents. With this data we can assume that, in the near future, hybrid event format will continue growing.

90% of the events attended by the sample were free, and most of the events attended (42%) were web conferences, followed by webinars (17%). This type or formats are linked with work and

academic areas. Livestreaming, which is more related to influencer marketing and product advertising, represented 17% of the events attended by the sample. The sample identified YouTube, Instagram, and Facebook as the social media channels in which most of the events were broadcasted. During the Covid-19 Pandemic 44% of the sample used their laptops to follow the events, while 27% used their mobile phones. The high percentage of laptop usage is also related to the type of events attended, which were mostly work or academic related. Even though most of the respondents identified that the events attended were academic and work related, there was a high percentage of brand presence during the events (42%). 82% of the sample stated that the events they attended during the Covid-19 Pandemic were originally meant to be face-to-face but had to shift to an online format. Although the events shifted from a face-to-face format to an online format, 64% of the sample was positive about attending the online events.

Regarding Question 15, the analysis of the three statements that assessed the affective dimension of the experience concluded that the respondents did not feel affective attachment to online events when compared to face-to-face events. Respondents were more eager to the feelings of excitement, intimacy, and to share their experiences with others when attending physical events. Online events during the Covid-19 Pandemic did not provide such affective experiences for the respondents.

In general, respondents had a negative assessment of online events regarding the cognitive dimension of consumer experience in events. The individuals surveyed felt they learnt less and had less intellectual activity in online events during the Covid-19 Pandemic in comparison to face-to-face events they attended in the past.

The analysis of the statements 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5, which assessed the affective and cognitive dimensions, had a greater percentage of disagreement in respondents, meaning negative feelings for online events. Statements regarding the physical dimension, such as activity and participation in events (statements 6 and 7) still showed negative assessment to online events, but also a higher percentage of agreement, meaning that there is a polarization of responses in this dimension.

Regarding the novelty dimension, around half of the sample thought that online events did not provide as much uniqueness in comparison to face-to-face events. Even though around 25% of the sample felt they could experience things outside their 'normal' life when being online, the majority did not agree.

Out of the five experience dimensions identified by the literature review, the social dimension is the most affected one regarding consumer experience in online events vs. face-to-face events. More than 50% of the sample found it difficult to connect with people, have contact with strangers, and gain new friendships through online events during the Covid-19 Pandemic.

In general, we can state that the most important aspects when attending events are 'getting new knowledge, learning something new' and 'connecting with others, making new friends and being around people'. The cognitive and social dimensions of event experience are vital for respondents and, as seen in question 15, online events lack of these experiences when compared to face-to-face events. The least important aspect identified by the respondents, is 'the stimulation of all my senses (touch, sight, hearing, smell and taste)', which is beneficial for online events since they represent more limitations in this area.

4.2 Interviews

Three interviews were conducted in order to understand the influence of the Covid-19 Pandemic on event marketing, from the brand's point of view. The subjects were chosen deliberately by the researcher since they were identified as key players for their companies or brands when conducting marketing events. The first interview was conducted on 17th September 2021 to G.Mora, a creative director of an advertising agency who works on the creation of marketing events for his clients. The second interview was conducted to C.Aizaga on the 22nd September 2021, who worked as the regional digital director of a pharmaceutical brand that organizes brand events for their potential consumers, who are mainly doctors. In his interview C.Aizaga explains that he was hired by the company when the Covid-19 Pandemic started, specifically to organize online events and webinars for the company. It is important to mention that G.Mora and C.Aizaga work together in the creation of event marketing, since G.Mora's advertising agency manages the pharmaceutical brand in which C.Aizaga works. The third interview was conducted

on 07th October 2021 to M.Lopez, who is an event organizer and communication planner. At the time of the interview, she organized events for a media publisher and film production company, such as movies and series premieres, red carpets, and film festivals. Full transcriptions and translations of the interviews can be found on Annex 2 (G.Mora), Annex 3 (C.Aizaga) and Annex 4 (M.Lopez).

4.2.1 Data Analysis and interpretation

In order to conduct the data analysis of the interviews, data was first recorded, then transcribed in the original language of the interview (Spanish), and then translated into English by the author. The data analysis was done considering Creswell and Creswell's (2018) procedure, which first involves reading through all the data, and then sorting the data in different themes. At the beginning of the qualitative data analysis, it is important to get a general sense of the overall meaning of the information, so that later it is easier to form themes across the data (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). After reading the data multiple times, the researcher started with the coding process, which refers to breaking down the data in different segments which are given names or labels (Bryman, 2012; Meuser & Nagel, 2009). Each of the themes generated should display the perspective of all interviewees and be supported by quotations (Maxwell, 2013). Themes are defined as 'a category identified by the analyst through his/her data; that builds on codes identified in transcripts and/or field notes; and that provides the researcher with the basis for a theoretical understanding of his or her data' (Bryman, 2012, p.580). Repetition across data sources, which is the recurrence of data, is one of the most important aspects for forming themes.

The themes identified by the researcher on the data collected are the following: event marketing during the Covid-19 Pandemic, best practices in online events, and consumer engagement during online events.

4.2.1.1 Event marketing during the Covid-19 Pandemic

The three interviewees agreed that all events during the first year of the Covid-19 Pandemic were transferred to online platforms. G. Mora and M. Lopez state that brands were not ready to transform their face-to-face events to digital events. G. Mora illustrates event organization during the Covid-19 Pandemic as follows:

> '*Before the Pandemic, many of our clients did not see the need to have their digital platform active. They saw it as a long-term goal, but the Pandemic was so overwhelming that customers were forced to improvise and move quickly to digital channels. So, many events that were originally intended to be held in person, had to migrate to the digital world in an accelerated way. Many clients were compelled to adapt to online events in order to stay in touch with their target groups*'.

M. Lopez states that at the beginning of 2020 she had her agenda full of events for the whole year, because she was organizing the premiers of several films. One by one, she received calls from film festivals informing her that they were going to be canceled. Suddenly she was left without any physical events happening. The shootings, productions, and film premiers she had planned were canceled. In a fast pace, and with some improvisation, she had to adapt the film premiers to an online format. Similarly to what G. Mora states on the first interview, she was not ready for adapting the events to virtual platforms. With her team, she first explored several platforms and social media and then decided to do livestreaming in YouTube with several influencers. She states that they learned about managing online events along the way:

> '*Little by little we started to see the best practices. (...) We gave the host a backing for a nicer background, we gave him a more decent webcam. We improved the artwork for the YouTube channel. We also improved the artwork for the broadcasting of the event.*'

Similarly to G. Mora and M. Lopez experiences, C. Aizaga states that the company in which he works was not ready to transfer their event marketing tactics to a virtual platform. C. Aizaga mentions that he was hired as regional digital director because of the Covid- 19 Pandemic. The pharmaceutical company in which he works did not have digital communication and during the Covid-19 Pandemic lost contact with their target audience, which are doctors, for around two to

three months. Before the Covid-19 Pandemic, the pharmaceutical company organized congresses and medical face-to-face events. The physical restrictions imposed during the Covid-19 Pandemic forced the pharmaceutical company to organize online webinars in order to keep in touch with their target audience. Resembling M. Lopez experience, C. Aizaga also explored different online platforms, and after trial and error, chose the one that best fitted the companies' goals and that was easier to use by the target group. Both M. Lopez and C. Aizaga events were, at the beginning, very simple, meaning that they were composed of speakers who, at their own homes, connected to the different meetings and webinars. As event organizers, the interviewees found several difficulties, such as bad quality in the recordings, slow internet connection, bad audio quality, a not appealing background, problems of communication with the speakers, amongst others. After several months of organizing online webinars, C. Aizaga states that 'we were occupying the same resource as the competition or generally any industry. Because webinars were a pretty worn-out strategy'. C. Aizaga improved the events by the introduction of 3D scenarios, which conveyed the images of all the webinar speakers. He explains the development of event marketing during the Covid-19 Pandemic in the following statement:

> '*Now we are recording all our events in virtual scenarios. Now the speaker, wherever he is, for example in the United States, in Argentina, in Spain, wherever, goes to a recording studio in his country. In this studio we record his intervention with a chroma background. Our moderator also records here in Ecuador on a chroma background. Then we put the two signals together and it seems that the two people, the speaker and the moderator, live together on the same stage, which is a 3D stage. We also invest in scriptwriters, both local and in the country where the speakers are located. The recordings are coordinated, so that there is a virtual fist bump, for example*'.

Through the experience gained during the first months of the Covid-19 Pandemic, the three interviewees improved the quality of their online events, for example by hiring third party companies that provided recording studios, sound equipment, designed visually appealing presentations, created animations for the events introduction and closing, amongst others. G. Mora also agrees with the fact that marketing events had to migrate to 'visual creativity'. Since consumers were at home 'sitting in front of their computers with a thousand distractions around them', the event organizer should focus on providing visually appealing experiences on the first place. C. Aizaga states that the pharmaceutical company improved the visual experience by

creating 3D organs that were projected during online talks. The speakers, mostly doctors, who were recording in chroma backgrounds also used the projection of 3D organs to explain different pathologies during the webinars. G. Mora believed that brands that do not have a physical presence, have more difficulties when creating experiences for their consumers:

> '*For example, before the Pandemic one focused on the physical aspect of events; how was the decoration of the venue, how was the lighting, the music, what the ambient was like, etc. On the other hand, in digital events everything has to migrate towards the visual; it has to be visually more striking*'.

During the process of organizing online events, G. Mora and C. Aizaga realized that the invitations for such events should be very appealing in order to attract consumers' attention. In blending physical and virtual aspects, such as physical invitations with augmented reality elements, they discovered that the public was more interested in attending the events, meaning that the attendance rates were higher. Both interviewees agree on the importance of sending physical elements to online event attendees. These elements can be for example a physical invitation, or objects to engage in an online activity, such as games. G. Mora explains that in an online event they implemented gamification in order to keep the attendants' attention; they organized an online bingo with elements sent to the houses of the attendees. The three interviewees state that the main challenge when organizing online events is trying to maintain the attention of attendees during the event. G. Mora states that having elements such as gamification or interactive activities help attendees have a 'feeling of belonging (…) and generate closeness' between consumers and the brand.

The three interviewees agree that, at the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic, all events were transferred to online formats. At the time in which the interviews were conducted, some Covid-19 restrictions were lifted, and brands had the chance to organize face-to-face events again. Because of this fact, the three interviewees agree that hybrid events will start blooming in the event industry. Hybrid events give the opportunity of creating a face-to-face experience to some attendees and a virtual experience for other online attendees. M. Lopez explains that brands are trying to 'on one hand, reach as many people as possible, but on the other hand, not to take away the sensory experience (…), to be able to feel something, to be able to be in a place with real

people. It is very important that we can find a way to mix both experiences'. G. Mora agrees and states that hybrid events may provide convenient options for attendees. According to their needs, they should choose if attending in-person or online. Even though consumers are online or in-person, G. Mora believes that they should experience similar learnings and feelings during the event. C. Aizaga agrees with G. Mora and states that through the Covid-19 Pandemic he learnt that: 'if attendees go to the face-to-face event, they should have a digital sensory experience that makes a difference. And if they attend a virtual event, they must also have a physical experience'. He believes that the Covid-19 Pandemic showed that companies should learn how to captivate both online and in-person audiences. He states that, even though an event is online, consumers must feel that 'there is an event that is real, that they can feel it through something physical. We must have an omnichannel strategy that allows us to think beyond face-to-face and digital'.

The interviewees state that the Covid-19 Pandemic made them realize the advantages and disadvantages of online events versus face-to-face events. Regarding the advantages, the three interviewees agree that online events allow brands to have massive reach at a low cost. Time related issues, such as schedules, are more flexible in online events; attendees can optimize their time connecting from home, anywhere in the world, and in case they miss the event they have the chance to see it on demand. M. Lopez shared that before the Covid-19 Pandemic, press conferences were very time consuming; she and her team could reach around three media outlets per day. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, press conferences were held online and they could do around twenty interviews with the media. Regarding budget and reach, C. Aizaga stated that:

> '*When we held face-to-face events in Ecuador, an event for three hundred people used to cost about eighty thousand dollars. Now, an unlimited event with eight hundred or one thousand participants costs around ten thousand dollars. So, there is a saving of eight times of what it normally used to cost and in addition you make a more massive event*'.

In regard to the disadvantages, the three interviewees state that the main challenge is keeping the attendees' attention during the online events. The distractions of other activities, such as home chores or other work-related issues, tend to distract attendees. The interviewees state that

even though online events optimize time, they might cause attendees to be more distracted and less productive, because they receive stimuli from multiple sources. C. Aizaga also notes the lack of human contact during online events, especially in events that are pre-recorded: 'in these pre-recorded events we lose the human side of being able to contact and ask questions in real time to the speaker'. C. Aizaga states that event attendees are demanding the brand to hold face-to-face events or hybrid events, because they miss social interaction.

For the three interviewees the transition from face-to-face events to digital ones was a cause of stress and uncertainty since they did not feel prepared for the change. Many of the online events held during the first months of the Covid-19 Pandemic (between March 2020 and May 2020) were improvised. This means that the event organizers took face-to-face events and used the same organization for the online version. Online events had the same schedules and structures as if they were in a face-to-face format. Months after the Covid-19 Pandemic started, the three interviewees agree that they created experiences exclusively for online, such as 3D stages and virtual reality elements. M. Lopez exemplifies this feeling as: 'at that time [beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic], as we were locked up, we couldn't do much either. With what we had we went for it'. All three interviewees agree in the fact that they learnt on the way, meaning that, through trial and error, they improved the online experiences of the event attendees and the quality of the events. G. Mora believes that 2020 was 'a year of transition, not only for us, but also for humanity'. In G. Mora point of view, during the Covid- 19 Pandemic:

> '*Companies and marketing, specifically event marketing, [were] seeing how to deal with this, how to adapt. Before, people had to adapt to the market. Nowadays people have so much access to technology, so much information and so much knowledge, that the market has to adapt to the people. The market has to adapt its messages to each and every one of the target groups, minorities and ways of thinking*'.

4.2.1.2 Best practices in online events

Regarding best practices, the three interviewees agree that time management is essential when organizing an online event. Since most event attendees are at home while, watching the events, it is important that the event has short interventions of the speakers and has a clear organization.

The first step, when organizing an online event, is having clear marketing and communication objectives, and defining a target audience. The events should begin on time and end on time because online attendees engage and disengage very quickly due to all the distractions they are exposed to. G. Mora addresses this point as following:

> '*When executing the event, we must summarize in a practical way all the topics that are going to be discussed. There must be a marked order and the speakers must have a short intervention. (...) How do you keep the attention of the attendees? We need to focus on having order and precision in all the topics that are going to be discussed. Make the interventions as short as possible, concise as possible, without rambling around. We need to summarize the topics, make it as practical as possible.*'

The three interviewees believe that it is easier to engage attendees and capture their attention in face-to-face events. Online events, on the other hand, present difficulties because usually attendees engage in other activities while attending the event, such as being on their mobile phones or doing house chores. Therefore, online events should try to be interactive and emotional. G. Mora states that creative events are usually more experiential, but creating experiences also depends on the client's budget. According to G. Mora: 'people don't remember what you say, nor do people remember what you do as a brand, but rather remember what you make them feel.' Brands should promote experiences and not be centered exclusively in communicating about a product or service.

Another best practice commented by the interviewees is providing the event with appealing visual aesthetics. The presentations and information during the event should be visually striking, but at the same time practical. C. Aizaga stated that when the brand did more dynamic and more visually appealing presentations during the webinars, they achieved a higher number of individuals connected. C. Aizaga explained that during the Covid-19 Pandemic the pharmaceutical brand organized almost eighty webinars, which had speakers from different countries around the world. The brand created a virtual 3D stage in which all speakers interacted with each other; every single speaker recorded in a chroma background and then all recordings converged in the 3D stage. Creating this kind of experiential and immersive experiences, in

which ‘users do not feel that we are all apart, but that technology, just as it divided us, is also bringing us together through virtual scenarios’.

C. Aizaga and M. Lopez remarked the importance of testing and getting know the tools in which the events are broadcasted. The attendees, as well as the event organizers, should be comfortable with the technological tools. If they are not comfortable, it is the responsibility of the event organizers to look for an expert who can give assistance before, during, and after the event. The selected tools should also provide a room for interaction between event attendees and the event hosts or speakers. The level of interaction, which varies between chatting, sending reactions, or even asking direct questions to the event hosts, depends on the event goals. Both C. Aizaga and M. Lopez agree that brands should provide on demand content after the event is finished. Events should be recorded and then sent to event attendees. C. Aizaga even suggests to create a platform in which the events of the company can be available on demand:

> ‘*The day after the event, we send the attendees an email, in which we thank them for attending. And in case they could not attend, we give them the option to watch the event on demand. We make the event available on demand for two or three months, depending on the strategy. We can have three hundred attendees live, but the next day or during the following three days, we reach more than eight hundred unique views, just as post-event*.’

G. Mora and C. Aizaga believe that creating experiences through online and offline channels is a good practice. Even though the event organized is online, the brand should engage its consumers also with physical elements. For example, brands could send attendees merchandising or physical objects to engage in activities while the event occurs.
M. Lopez exemplifies this topic as with the following statement: ‘It's those physical details that connect you to the virtual world. Like sending someone an invitation with a QR code, that is, trying to make a mix between physical and digital experiences’. C. Aizaga names this connection between different online and offline platforms as ‘omnichannel’. He states that brands should no longer think only about a digital strategy and a face-to-face strategy as separate elements: ‘digital does not replace face-to-face, nor does face-to-face replace digital, but rather they complement each other’. For him, ‘omnichannel’ is a strategy in which brands reach their

consumers in all channels available, which can be physical, digital or both. C. Aizaga exemplifies the term omnichannel in the following statement:

> '*In an omnichannel strategy, I send a physical invitation and I send a digital invitation. I invite attendees in person and I also invite them virtually. The guests will be able to decide how they feel most comfortable. Obviously, the in-person event will have a limited capacity and the attendees who confirm their attendance first, will have the preference to go in person. And those who do not, will have to do it virtually*.'

Another best practice, named by M. Lopez, is to have constant interaction between attendees and the brand before and after the event. Reminders should be sent by the brand, such as times, links, content, technical issues, etc., in order to establish a conversation. In M. Lopez point of view, it is important to have constant communication with the event attendees in case they have any questions about the online event.

Regarding best practices around the event evaluation, C. Aizaga states that one needs to find out which KPIs generate value for the brand:

> '*You must also know (...) what KPIs you are going to measure before, after or during the event. In the digital world there are so many KPIs; you can measure everything. That is one of the benefits of digital; you can measure absolutely everything. But not all KPIs generate value, so you have to know what data to take into account to create the final report*.

The last best practice commented by the three interviewees is the content quality. Added value is generated by having content that is of interest to the brand's target groups, and by having speakers that are experts in a topic. Event attendees connect to the event because of the content that is going to be shared. For the event to be successful, the content should be original and unique. According to C. Aizaga it should be content that: 'cannot be found anywhere else on the Internet, that it is not on YouTube or in another video'. Concerning content, M. Lopez states that during events, brands should try to create expectation, for example by leaving the most interesting topic at the end of the event. Besides, according to M. Lopez, brands should also manage their online reputation through hashtags and mentions, so that their audience shares their content.

4.2.1.3 Consumer engagement during online events

The three interviewees agree that engaging consumers is one of the major challenges during online events. C.Aizaga states that attendees can interact between them, the event speakers, and the brand, through online chats. At the end of every event there is room for questions and answers, that depending on the event size is done through chat (in large events up to five hundred participants) or directly through the microphone (small events up to eight people). Likewise, M. Lopez states that participants comment during live events and that the engagement is measured by 'seeing how many people connected and the interaction that took place during that period in real time'. If the event invitation is done through an email platform, the KPIs measured by M. Lopez and C. Aizaga are the opening rate, the number of registrations, and the number of people who actually went to the event. C. Aizaga states that the platform they use for online events allows them to assess event engagement through 'audience concentration'. 'Audience concentration' means the number of attendees who were watching the event and did not switch the browser tabs. C. Aizaga states that audience engagement is also measured by the exit percentage of the event, meaning the number of individuals who dropped out during the event. He states that usually engagement rates during the webinars are high, for example, individuals make comments, ask questions etc. But he also notes that: 'the engagement towards this type of events is good in terms of participation, but the human side is missing, a closeness'. In his point of view, social connection between individuals is lost during online events because:

> '*people do not have the ability to look each other in the eye (...) and the speakers, from home, feel like they are talking to themselves, even though there is someone in the back listening to them. It is not the same as when you are in person and you can shake hands, and you ask the speaker or moderator about such and such a topic*'.

M. Lopez agrees with C. Aizaga's point of view and remarks that virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) technology can help close the social gap felt in events. In her point of view, the majority of the audience, including herself, is not yet comfortable using VR or AR due to unfamiliarity with the tools. She recalls a film festival that was organized using AR technology. She states that every participant had an avatar, which they could customize, for example the hairstyle, clothing, eye color, etc. They used the avatar to walk around the event

and engage in conversations with other attendees, which were mostly celebrities and media outlet representatives. She states that this event made her feel uncomfortable because she could not interact properly with other attendants. M. Lopez recalls this AR event as following:

> '*On the one hand there is a technological gap, because many people were stressed because they didn't know how to use the platform. (...) On the other hand, many people got confused because they didn't know how to walk. They wanted to walk forward, and they walked to one side. (...) You would see people, very important people from the media, with their heads twisted or backwards. Or they would talk to you, but with their backs turned. So, it was a very strange thing, really*'.

G. Mora agrees with M. Lopez point of view and adds that VR and AR technology can help enhance creativity. But these tools 'must be explored and socialized with the audience'. Both interviewees believe that VR and AR technologies will be a trend on marketing events in the future, and that consumers will get used to and learn how to use these tools, it is just a matter of time and adaptation.

4.2.2 Conclusions of the interviews' analysis

To sum up, after analyzing the three interviews, we can state that brands were not prepared to shift to virtual environments. Brands had to improvise and organize events in an accelerated way because many did not have digital resources ready. Basically, all face-to-face events were transferred to online formats; events had the same structure and organization as if they were face-to-face. Brands needed to be present in online events in order to be in touch with their target groups. When the Covid-19 Pandemic hit, the interviewees state that their first step was to look for different platforms and, through trial and error, find out which suited best with their business objectives and target groups. Online events' organization had few elements at the beginning of the Covid-19 Pandemic (from March 2020 until May 2020); both speakers and attendees were at home and sometimes the quality of audio and video was not the best. After several months, event organizers improved these features and started investing in elements such as 3D stages, quality equipment, scriptwriting, and visual creativity. Event organizers used augmented reality elements, such as 3D technology, in order to engage with the audience and create more visual impact during the event. The interviewees state that gamification was a way of engaging

consumers during events since interactive activities draw attention of events' attendees. Besides, physical elements, such as merchandising, can be sent to the attendees' homes and be used during online activities. Interactive activities generate a feeling of belonging to the event. C. Aizaga remarks that brands should no longer think about digital or face-to-face strategies as something apart; they both converge and integrate in order to generate consumer's experience.

Interviewees agree that hybrid events will be a trend in the next few years since they are convenient for both event attendees and event speakers/hosts. During hybrid events it is important that face-to-face attendees engage in virtual activities and online attendees engage with physical activities, so that multiple senses are targeted during the event. During the Covid-19 Pandemic, the interviewees felt that the social sphere of events was missing. Events could have interaction between participants, such as comments, or questions in chats, but there is a lack of belonging and closeness that is normally provided by physical elements.
Audience engagement is more difficult to archive in online events because individuals have many distractions; when attending events during the Covid-19 Pandemic they were usually at home and had to engage in other activities, such as house chores, or taking care of their children. The attention to the event competed with the other stimuli, and this is the reason why attendees were difficult to engage during online events.
The three interviewees believed that cost efficiency, time optimization and a greater reach are the advantages of hosting an online event, while keeping the attendees' attention during the event and the lack of social connection are the disadvantages.

The following list comprises the event interviewees best practices for online events:

1. Clear objectives: Having clear communication and marketing objectives regarding the event.
2. Well-defined agenda: Events should have a clear organization, and events attendees must know how the event will fold.
3. Clear target: Define a target audience.

4. Suitable technological tools: Choose a technological tool that fits with the event objectives and the target audience.
5. Master tech-knowledge: Test the technological tools and feel comfortable with them. If event organizers do not feel comfortable with the technological platforms, they should have a technician to help them with possible issues.
6. Structure: Invest in scriptwriting and technological tools that support the event.
7. Precise interventions: Interventions should be as short as possible.
8. Appealing visuals: Invest in appealing visual aesthetics for the event, including presentations by the speakers, backgrounds, animations for the introduction and end, etc.
9. Promote dialog: Interaction during the event should be enabled through chats and comments.
10. Online and offline elements: Physical elements, such as merchandising, should be sent to the homes of the participants for them to engage with the event. Physical elements can also be used to promote interaction during the event, for example in the form of games.
11. Content Quality: Create content of quality to be shared during the event. The content should be unique and original.
12. Innovative technologies: VR and AR technologies can help close the gap of interaction and physical presence. But if used, these tools must be familiar to the event attendees and they should feel comfortable in using them.

4.3 Discussion and interpretation of quantitative and qualitative data

After conducting both quantitative and qualitative analysis it is vital to reflect on the results and check for consistency on both data. The aim of this study was to understand how consumer experience was affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic in marketing events. Through the interviews and surveys, we can see that most of the events organized during the Covid-19 Pandemic were in online format. During the second year of the Covid-19 Pandemic, from May 2021 to September 2021, there was a growth in the organization of hybrid events. Through the surveys and interviews we can state that hybrid events will be a trend in future event marketing, since

they provide the attendants the opportunity to choose the format in which they feel more comfortable.

Regarding consumer experience, both interviews and surveys converge in the fact that the social dimension was the most affected one during online events. The great majority of the interviewees stated that they found it difficult to engage in interactions with others, to make new acquaintances/friends, and to have contact with strangers during online events in comparison to face-to-face events. The interviews support this statement and add that VR and AR technology could help to fill this social gap if the audience is familiar with using them. The interviewees also stated that event attendees were demanding face-to-face or hybrid events because they feel the lack of human interaction; attendees do not have a feeling of belonging or closeness. On one hand speakers/event hosts feel as if they were talking to themselves when conducting online events and, on the other hand, event attendees feel disconnected and prone to distractions. These finding align with Liu et al. (2017), Nordvall et al. (2014) and Marques et al. (2021), who described that consumers want to be part of a greater social context when attending events. Besides, the literature revised marked the importance of co-creation processes and human interactions during events. During the interviews, it was noted that event organization is a co-creational process, in which a number of stakeholders are involved, such as consumers, video and audio recording studios, advertising agencies, amongst others.

Regarding the other event experience dimensions, surveys found that affective, cognitive, physical and novelty experiences were negatively affected during online events in the Covid-19 Pandemic, in comparison to face-to-face event experiences. Interviewees align with the surveys' responses and find it a challenge to engage consumers and promote interactions during online events. During the literature review it was identified that the use of multi-sensory clues can stimulate perceptual experience (Tafesse, 2016). In online events this could be archived through what C. Aizaga and G. Mora described as blending physical and virtual elements during online events.

The most important aspects of attending events identified by the survey are related to the cognitive and social sphere, specifically: 'getting new knowledge, learning something new' and 'connecting with others, making new friends and being around people'. According to both surveys and interviews, these two aspects were lacking during online events held in the Covid-19 Pandemic. The literature revised also supports the fact that cognitive and social spheres are vital motivators for consumers when attending events; consumers wish to gain new knowledge, feel inspired by the events, and meet people with similar interests, in order to exchange knowledge and do networking (Tafesse, 2016). Both social and cognitive dimensions are more present in work-related and academic events, which are the events that the consumers identified during the survey (Getz & Page, 2007).

The conclusions drawn from the in-depth interviews helped identify the main issues that event organization, from a brands' point of view, which are consumer engagement, the lack of familiarity with platforms and technologies, and the lack of social interaction. The survey responses, which represent the consumers' point of view, are aligned with the aspects mentioned during the interviews. Consumers feel disconnected, feel the lack of human and physical interactions, are not excited, nor cognitively inspired by online events. Both event organizers and consumers feel online events during the Covid-19 Pandemic lacked in the social, affective, and cognitive spheres.

The interviews identified several 'best practices' for online events. These aspects can help promoting the consumer experience dimensions that were affected during the Covid-19 Pandemic. For example, the attention to content can help events' attendees feel unique or special and the use of physical or VR/AR elements can improve the physical and novelty experience in online events. Creating content of quality, investing in scriptwriting, and appealing visual aesthetics can improve the affective, cognitive, and physical dimensions. The literature review conducted on best practices (see Subchapter 2.4.3) also suggested similar topics, for example setting goals for the marketing event, specify how the ROI (return of investment) will be assessed, what kind of interactions are expected, and if there is going to be content on demand after the event. Both Chodor (2021) and C.Aizaga (Interview #2) suggest that consumers should

be approached with digital and physical elements. Each digital or face-to-face event should provide its own experience; and a mix of both virtual and physical elements can convey in a richer consumer experience and more interaction. Regarding best practices, it is important to take into account Sox et al.'s (2017) suggestion of creating the online event experience according to the generation of the target group. For example, when events are targeted to baby boomers, the technological tools should be easy to use, content access should be as simple as possible. While with younger generations, such as Generation Y, social network components should be part of the event organization.

Even though the interviewees were physically located and worked with Ecuadorian brands, and most of the survey respondents were in Portugal, both identified the same issues when organizing/attending online events.

4.4 Study limitations and future research

The first limitation of the research is that the survey sample was a non-probability sample, which means that the results cannot be generalized. It was a web survey, meaning that respondents could make possible mistakes or not understand the context of the questions when filling the survey (Franklin, 2008). The study was cross-sectional, meaning that the data was gathered at a specific point in time. Further studies can explore consumer event experience with a longitudinal approach, for example by assessing experience before, during and after the event. A longitudinal study can help researchers understand how event experience develops and changes through time. Another limitation of the study is that survey respondents explored their experience in events that they attended in the past. The recalling of events of the past, both face-to-face and online, can result in memory-base bias. There is no certainty that the survey respondents or the interviewees remember their exact experience in the past. Besides, the Covid-19 Pandemic is widely regarded as a negative occurrence, and the negativity that this specific event carries can affect the interpretations of event experience, specifically during this period.

Another limitation relies on the fact that the assessment tools identified in the literature review, respectively the Event Experience Scale (EES) by De Geus et al. (2016) and the Event Social Interaction Scale (ESIS) by Marques et al. (2021), were developed for face-to-face interactions. In the present literature no tool was found that could assess consumer's experience specifically during online events. It would be interesting to develop such a scale in further research.

Future research could also explore hybrid events; the organization of hybrid events, their implementation, how it affects consumers experience and how is it assessed. There were few academic sources found regarding hybrid events, and most of the available sources were informal or did not have any scientific background. Another interesting topic to be explored is VR and AR technology and their influence on event marketing. These technologies have been studied in relation to digital communities and the gaming industry but have not been widely explored in regards to event marketing. It would be interesting to understand how VR and AR technologies influence consumer experience in different kinds of marketing events, such as trade fairs, expositions, conferences, webinars, amongst others. Future research could explore VR and AR technologies and their relation to social interaction during marketing events. Possible outcomes of the use of these technologies, such as consumer engagement, brand love, word-of-mouth or consumer loyalty, amongst others can be explored.

Conclusions

After concluding the literature review and the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data it is important to review the research goals of this study and find out how they were fulfilled.

The first research goal was *to identify the main theories about consumer brand experience and its relation to event marketing*, which was thoroughly explored in the literature review. Consumer experience is personal and unique, it varies from individual to individual and can be triggered through context and different stimuli, such as multi-sensory, cognitive, novelty, affective, social and physical elements (Brakus et al, 2009). Marketing events are considered to be antecedents of consumer experience and are part of a brand's marketing plan to engage with its consumers (Khan & Fatma, 2017). A positive consumer experience can develop in brand

love, consumer engagement, positive word-of-mouth, consumer loyalty, amongst others (Khan & Rahman, 2015, a; Khan & Rahman, 2015, b). Several scales have been developed to measure consumer experience, for example Brakus et al.'s (2009) scale for a wider context and De Geus et al.'s (2016) and Marques et al.'s (2021) scales for event specific contexts. Literature marks the importance of the social sphere when experiencing events, because individuals seek for belonging, contact, and connection with others (Nordvall, 2014; Nysveen & Pedersen, 2014).

The second research objective was *to understand the impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on brand practices, specifically on events.* Through quantitative (surveys) and qualitative (interviews) research, it was found that brands could not provide consumers with a satisfactory experience throughout online events during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The majority of events shifted to online platforms and brands had to quickly adapt to this new reality. Through trial-and-error brands adapted their face-to-face events to online platforms, and consumers were affected by the lack of stimuli provided by the brands. At the beginning of the pandemic, from March 2020 until April 2021, brands focused only on organizing online events. From May 2021 forwards, brands started developing hybrid events, because consumers asked for this type of blended experiences.

The third research objective was *to assess consumer's brand experience in events during the Covid-19 Pandemic*. The literature review helped to identify two assessment tools; the Event Experience Scale (EES) by De Geus et al. (2016) and the Event Social Interaction Scale (ESIS) by Marques et al. (2021). These tools were adapted and implemented in the survey design, which had the objective to assess consumer experience. In general, survey respondents found that their face-to-face event experiences were stronger in all five experience dimensions, respectively affective, physical, novelty, cognitive, and social dimensions. The most affected sphere in online events was social connection, which was assessed with largely negative insights from consumers. The survey also helped to characterize events during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Most events attended by the respondents were online or hybrid, most were academic, or work-related and half of the events attended had brand presence. Survey respondents agreed with the

interviewees in the fact that they felt a lack of belonging and connection to the event, which caused them to be more prone to distractions.

The last objective of the research, which was archived through a qualitative approach, was *to develop a set of guidelines that will contribute to improve consumer's brand experience in online events.* In-depth interviews with three experts, a creative director, a brand manager specialized in digital communication, and an event organizer, helped us understand that best practices are related to organization, time management, content creation, innovation of platforms, visual aesthetics and interaction. Online events and hybrid events should focus on mixing both virtual and physical elements to engage consumers. If events are face-to-face, virtual components should be added and if events are online, physical components should be sent to the participants. In the interviewees point of view, a mix between online and offline creates consumer engagement.

In conclusion, through this research it has been demonstrated that that brands were not prepared for organizing online marketing events during the Covid-19 Pandemic. The interviewees, as well as the survey respondents were clear in the fact that consumer experience was rather negative; consumers felt that all event dimensions (affective, cognitive, physical, social and novelty) were much more intense in face-to-face events. The main contribution of this research is using a mixed methods approach to understand event experience from two different points of view; the consumer's insight and the event's organizers insight. Taking a mixed methods approach proved beneficial because it gathered the consumers perspective and the brands perspective and found that both have similar issues when attending/organizing online events.

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Annexes

Annex 1 – Consumer's survey (Qualtrics software)
Page 1

CATÓLICA
FACULDADE DE CIÊNCIAS HUMANAS
LISBOA

Hello! My name is Camila and I am developing a survey as part of my Master's degree in Communication Sciences, at 'Universidade Católica' in Lisbon (Portugal).

Due to the social distancing measures imposed during the Covid-19 pandemic, we all experienced changes in our daily routines and many of our activities shifted from being face-to-face to online. The goal of the following survey is to understand how events were experienced during this particular time.

It will only take you 5 minutes of your time and the information provided by you will be anonymous. I am very thankful for your participation!
If you have any questions you can email me at s-jmerino@ucp.pt

Age

- less than 18
- 18 - 25
- 26 - 35
- 36 - 45
- 46 - 55
- 56 - 65
- 66 +

Gender

- Male
- Female
- Non-binary / third gender
- Prefer not to say

Education

- Primary School
- High School
- Bachelor's degree
- Post-graduation
- Master's degree
- PHD
- Other

In which country do you currently reside?

→

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Page 2

CATÓLICA
FACULDADE DE CIÊNCIAS HUMANAS
LISBOA

Think about the events you experienced during the Covid-19 Pandemic and answer the following questions bearing those events on mind.

During the Covid-19 Pandemic, the majority of the events you attended were ....

- ☐ academic
- ☐ work related
- ☐ entertainment
- ☐ sportive
- ☐ political
- ☐ cultural
- ☐ other

Between March 2020 and April 2021, most of the events you attended were....

- ☐ fully online
- ☐ face-to-face
- ☐ hybrid (a mix of an online and face-to-face event)
- ☐ other

Between May 2021 and September 2021, most of the events you attended were....

- ☐ fully online
- ☐ face-to-face
- ☐ hybrid (a mix of an online and face-to-face event)
- ☐ other

Which was the format of the online events you attended?

- ☐ Webinar
- ☐ Livestream
- ☐ Webconference/meeting
- ☐ Workshop
- ☐ Trade show/exposition
- ☐ Other

If the events were broadcasted through social media, which were the platforms used?

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ TikTok
- ☐ Youtube
- ☐ Other
- ☐ Were not broadcasted through social media
- ☐ I don't know

Continuation of page 2

Were the events organized by a brand?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I don't know

Were any brands present during the events?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I don't know

From which device did you attend the majority of the events?

- ☐ Desktop computer
- ☐ Laptop
- ☐ Mobile device
- ☐ Smart TV
- ☐ Tablet
- ☐ Other

In general, the events were ...

- ○ Free
- ○ Paid
- ○ I don't know
- ○ Other

The events you attended were originally face-to-face and, because of the Covid-19 Pandemic, shifted to online?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I don't know

Filter question

The events you attended were originally face-to-face and, because of the Covid-19 Pandemic, shifted to online?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I don't know

Would you have attended the events if you knew they were only to be online?

- ○ Yes
- ○ No
- ○ I don't know

→

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Page 3

CATÓLICA
FACULDADE DE CIÊNCIAS HUMANAS
LISBOA

Think about an online event and a similar face-to-face event you attended in the past.
Mark the extent in which you agree or disagree with the following sentences.

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I felt more excited in the online event than in the face-to-face event	○	○	○	○	○
I experienced more intimacy in the online event than in the face-to-face event	○	○	○	○	○
I had a stronger feeling of reliving the online event than the face-to-face event (talk about it with others and share pictures on social media)	○	○	○	○	○
I was more intellectually active in the online event than in the face-to-face event	○	○	○	○	○
I learned more in the online event than in the face-to-face event	○	○	○	○	○
I was more active in the online event than in the face-to-face event	○	○	○	○	○
I participated more in the online event than in the face-to-face event	○	○	○	○	○
I felt more creative in the online event than in the face-to-face event	○	○	○	○	○
I experienced more things unknown to me/outside of my 'normal life' in the online event than in the face-to-face event	○	○	○	○	○
The online event was more unique than the face-to-face event	○	○	○	○	○
I was more likely to have contact with strangers in the online event than in the face-to-face event	○	○	○	○	○
I made more acquaintances/friends in the online event than in the face-to-face event	○	○	○	○	○
It was easier to meet new people online than face-to-face	○	○	○	○	○

→

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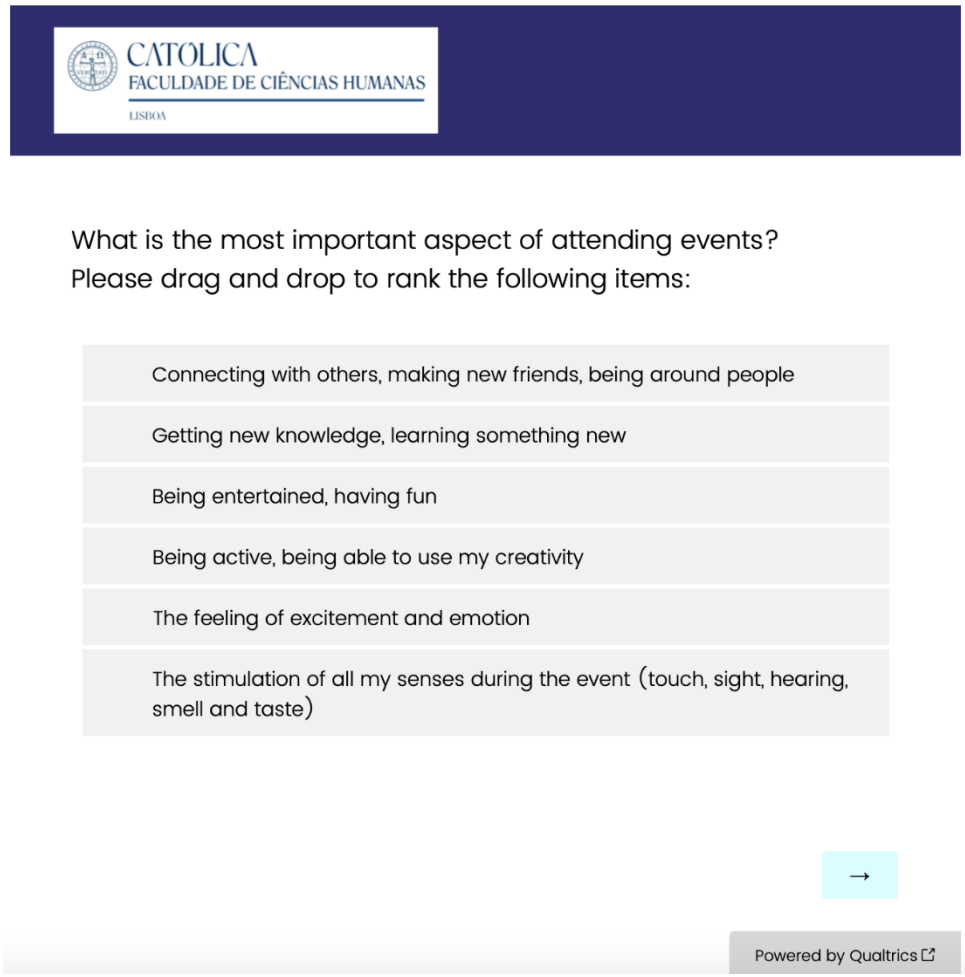
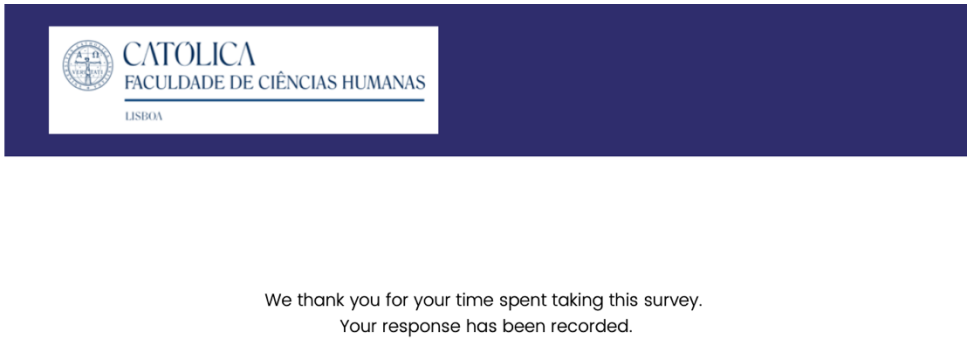
Page 4



Thank you page



Annex 2 - Interview transcript and translation - G. Mora – Creative Director

Interviewer: Julia Camila Bonilla Merino
Interviewee: G. Mora
Date of interview: 17 September 2021
Length of interview: 00:36:19
List of acronyms: IN=Interviewer, GM=G.Mora

About the interviewee: G. Mora is a creative director with 10 years of experience in communication strategy, creative strategy and art direction. At the time of the interview, he worked in an independent advertising agency located in Quito, Ecuador. His portfolio includes companies of the following areas: financial, automotive, FMCG and pharmaceutical.

Speaker	Transcription in original language (Spanish)	Translation in English (by the author)
IN	Lo primero que quería saber es sobre la agencia donde estás trabajando. ¿Con qué sectores trabajan?	The first thing I would like to know is about the advertising agency where you are working. What sectors do you work with?
GM	Ahorita estamos trabajando principalmente con los sectores médicos, específicamente con una farmacéutica. También estamos trabajando con empresas automotrices, con empresas alimenticias específicamente con un tema de jugos, y con empresas financieras.	Right now we are working with the medical sector, specifically with a pharmaceutical company. We are also working with automotive companies, with food companies specifically with a juice brand, and with financial companies.
IN	¿Cuál es tu rol como director creativo?	What is your role as a creative director?
GM	Como director creativo genero internamente un orden en todos los pedidos por parte del cliente. Organizo el proceso interno de la agencia y organizo el rol de cada una de las personas de mi equipo. Con el cliente trato de enfocar bien el mensaje comunicacional, además de pulir y definir los mensajes que ellos necesitan. Busco tener una congruencia con todos los mensajes que el cliente necesita mostrar, tratar que su plan de comunicación y marketing tengan una unidad. Que los objetivos comunicacionales del cliente y sus mensajes respondan a los objetivos de marketing, por ejemplo para cumplir con las ventas que el cliente se propone, la promoción de algunos productos, etc.	As creative director I organize all requests that the client needs. I organize the internal process of the agency and the role of my team members. With the client, I try to focus on the communicational message. In addition, I define and refine the messages that the client needs to communicate. I seek a congruence within all the messages that the client needs to show. I also to try to make their communication and marketing plan have a unity, so that the communicational objectives of the client and their messages respond to the marketing objectives. For example, to fulfill the sales that the client proposes, the promotion of some products, etc.
IN	¿En la agencia trabajan con marketing de eventos?	In the advertising agency, do you work with event marketing?
GM	Sí, en ciertos clientes ha surgido la necesidad de realizar marketing de eventos, por ejemplo en conferencias, lanzamientos de productos, lanzamientos de nuevas plataformas. Entonces, sí, en los últimos 3 o 4 años, y específicamente en este último año, hemos manejado eventos.	Yes. Certain clients have shown interest in event marketing, for example at conferences, product launches, new platform launches. So yes, in the last 3-4 years, and specifically in this last year, we have handled events.
IN	¿Cuál es el rol de la agencia cuando se organizan eventos para un cliente?	What is the role of the advertising agency when organizing an event for a client?

GM	Nosotros como agencia de publicidad tratamos de que esa congruencia de la que te hablé anteriormente, se cumpla también el evento. Que toda la imagen y la comunicación del evento cumplan un mismo objetivo. Que tengan el mismo hilo conductor, el mismo concepto, la misma imagen de la campaña que esté al aire, del estilo y personalidad del producto o la marca. Tratamos de guiar al cliente para que su evento también responda a su plan de marketing y objetivos de comunicación.	We, as an advertising agency, try to ensure that the congruence that I told you about previously, is also fulfilled in the event. That all the image and communication of the event meet the same objective. That they maintain a common theme, the same concept, the same image of the campaign that is on the air. That the style and personality of the product or brand is shown. We try to guide the client so that their event also responds to their marketing plan and communication objectives.
IN	¿Cuál crees que es la importancia que tiene la creatividad en marketing de eventos?	For you, what is the importance of creativity in events?
GM	La creatividad en eventos de marketing es importante porque genera una presencia diferente a la típica publicidad. Porque a mi parecer, la gente no recuerda lo que tú dices, ni la gente recuerda lo que tú haces como marca, sino recuerda lo que le haces sentir. Entonces lo bonito de la creatividad en el tema de los eventos es tratar de impulsar una experiencia, hacer que la gente sienta algo el momento que asiste al evento. Es importante que el evento se enfoquen en transformar a la marca en algo experiencial más que en algo únicamente comunicacional.	Creativity in marketing events is important because it generates a different presence than typical advertising. In my opinion, people don't remember what you say, nor do people remember what you do as a brand, but rather remember what you make them feel. So the beauty of creativity in event marketing is trying to promote an experience, making people feel something the moment they attend the event. It is important that the event focuses on transforming the brand into something experiential, rather than something entirely communicational.
IN	¿Cómo crees que los eventos pueden llegar a ser creativos?	According to you, how can an events be creative?
GM	Los eventos pueden ser creativos impulsando este tipo de experiencias. Los eventos pueden volverse relevantes, no únicamente con el tema de qué se va a decir o qué se va a mostrar, sino en cómo se van a sentir a las personas o a los asistentes del evento. Qué es lo que los asistentes van a llevarse como enseñanza, experiencia o recuerdo en este evento. Indiferentemente del tema que se trate en el evento, que a veces es muy técnicos o muy abiertos, pero siempre hay que tratar de buscar que la experiencia sea empático y emocional.	Events can be creative by driving these kinds of experiences. Events can become relevant, not just in terms of what is going to be said or what is going to be shown, but in how people or attendees of the event will feel. What is it that attendees are going to take away as a teaching, experience or memory at this event? Regardless of the topic that is discussed in the event, which is sometimes very technical or very open, one always needs to make the experience empathetic and emotional.
IN	¿Cómo crees que la pandemia del Covid-19 influenció a la creatividad en general?	How did the Covid-19 Pandemic influenced creativity in general?
GM	La pandemia sí ha afectado bastante a la creatividad porque antes teníamos mensajes muy ambiguos. Ahora, y en los últimos 6 meses que la pandemia ha ido mermando, toda la creatividad se enfoca en mensajes positivos, en tener optimismo y en perder el miedo. Hay muchos mensajes que hablan sobre tratar de recuperar ese ritmo 'normal' de vida que teníamos antes, en tratar de regresar a 'la normalidad'. En la época de pandemia los mensajes creativos eran sobre cuidarse, tener	The pandemic has affected creativity a lot. Before we had very ambiguous messages. Now, and in the last 6 months that the pandemic has been diminishing, all creativity is focused on positive messages, on having optimism and on losing fear. There are many messages that talk about trying to recover that 'normal' rhythm of life that we had before, about trying to return to 'normality'. In the times of the pandemic, creative messages were about taking care of yourself, being

	precaución, ahora son sobre volver a lo 'normal', en tratar de recuperar ese optimismo.	careful, now they are about going back to 'normal', trying to regain that optimism.
IN	¿Cómo crees que influyó la pandemia del Covid-19 en la creatividad de marketing de eventos?	How did the Covid-19 Pandemic influenced creativity in marketing events?
GM	En Ecuador, debido al la pandemia, hubo un volcamiento urgente hacia lo digital. Antes de la pandemia muchos de nuestros los clientes no veían en la necesidad de tener su plataforma digital activa. Lo veían como un objetivo a largo plazo, pero la pandemia fue tan fulminante que los clientes se vieron obligados a improvisar e impulsar de forma rápida el tema digital. Entonces, muchos eventos que originalmente se pensaban realizar presencialmente, tuvieron que emigrar al tema digital de una manera acelerada. Muchos clientes se adaptaron 'a la fuerza' a eventos en línea para poder seguir en contacto con sus grupos objetivos.	In Ecuador, due to the pandemic, there was an urgent turn towards digital. Before the pandemic, many of our clients did not see the need to have their digital platform active. They saw it as a long-term goal, but the pandemic was so overwhelming that customers were forced to improvise and move quickly to digital channels. So, many events that were originally intended to be held in person, had to migrate to the digital world in an accelerated way. Many clients were compelled to adapt to online events in order to stay in touch with their target groups.
IN	¿Cómo crees que la pandemia del Covid-19 influenció en tu proceso creativo y también el proceso creativo de tu equipo?	How did the Covid-19 Pandemic influenced your creative process and the process of your team?
GM	Fue bastante complicado empezar a trabajar, adaptarse y generar un proceso durante el teletrabajo. En la agencia trabajamos como un equipo cercano, todos estamos presentes en el mismo ambiente, entonces las ideas fluyen y la conversación fluye. Pero en el teletrabajo debemos tener más procesos, no se si llamarlos formales, donde por ejemplo debemos llamar a nuestros compañeros para ver si tienen tiempo en sus en sus labores para conversar un rato. Trabajar en casa volvió que nuestras interacciones sean más planificadas y no tan orgánicas como solía ser en la agencia. Muchas veces las ideas surgían a la hora del almuerzo, que es el momento donde estamos relajados. Ahora no, ahora uno tiene que sentarse y enfocarse en trabajar y pensar.	It was quite difficult to start working, adapting and generating a process when working from home. At the agency we work as a close team, we are all present in the same environment, so ideas and conversation flow. When we work from home, we must have more processes. I do not know whether to call them formal, where for example we must call our colleagues to see if they have time to talk for a while. Working from home made our interactions more planned and not as organic as it used to be at the agency. Ideas often came up at lunchtime, which is the time when we are relaxed. Right now one has to sit down and focus on working and thinking.
IN	Supongo que muchos de sus clientes tenían antes eventos que eran presenciales y por la pandemia tuvieron que cambiar esos eventos a un formato en línea. ¿Cómo afectó ese cambio a la creatividad?	I guess some of your clients planned events that were originally face-to-face, and because of the Covid-19 Pandemic shifted to an online format. How was creativity affected by this shift?
GM	Si, nos pasó que algunos clientes tuvieron que cambiar sus eventos presenciales a en línea. Lo importante de los eventos es generar una experiencia, y si uno no tiene una presencia física en general, es mucho más bastante complicado generar una experiencia en sí. Entonces, toda la experiencia tuvo que emigrar a la creatividad visual. Es decir que, por ejemplo, antes uno se enfocaba en la parte física de los eventos; en qué tan adornado estaba el lugar, cómo eran las luces, la música, cómo era el tema ambiental, etc. En	Yes, it happened to us. Some clients had to change their face-to-face events to online. The importance of events is that they generate experiences. If one does not have a physical presence, it is much more difficult to generate an experience. So the whole experience had to migrate to visual creativity. For example, before the Pandemic one focused on the physical aspect of events; how was the decoration of the venue, how was the lighting, the music, what the ambient was like, etc. On

	cambio, en eventos digitales todo tiene que migrar hacia lo visual, es decir, tiene que ser visualmente más llamativo. Por esta razón empezamos a buscar recursos, como escenarios virtuales, escenarios en 3D, música, y en tratar de mezclar todos estos recursos. Es súper complicado generar una experiencia cuando la persona que asiste al evento está sentada frente a su computadora con mil distracciones alrededor suyo. La idea es tratar de que el evento sea visualmente más atractivo. Durante la pandemia, la creatividad sirvió primero para enganchar visualmente al consumidor.	the other hand, in digital events everything has to migrate towards the visual; it has to be visually more striking. For this reason we began to look for resources, such as virtual stages, 3D stages, music, and mix all these resources. It is super difficult to generate an experience when the person attending the event is sitting in front of their computer with a thousand distractions around them. The idea is to make the event visually more attractive. During the pandemic, creativity served to visually hook the consumer.
IN	Durante la pandemia del Covid-19, ¿cuál fue el proceso creativo que ustedes tienen para crear un evento en línea?	How was the creative process of creating online events during the Covid-19 Pandemic? What were the general steps?
GM	El primer proceso interno, sin importar que el evento sea digital o presencial, es definir los objetivos, cuál es el producto a promocionar y cuál es el grupo objetivo o el target. En la ejecución del evento, debemos resumir de una manera práctica todas las temáticas que se van a tratar. Debe haber un orden marcado y las personas que intervengan deben tener una presencia un poco más corta. Como sabemos, en un evento presencial es más fácil controlar la asistencia de las personas; los asistentes están forzados a escucharte, no puede irse del lugar porque están viendo una persona hablar en vivo. En digital es diferente, es más fácil que los asistentes se vayan; ponen mute a su micrófono, se levantan, se van, y así perdimos su atención. ¿Y cómo se logra mantener la atención de los asistentes? Enfocándonos en tener orden y precisión en todos los temas que se van a tratar. Que las intervenciones sean lo más cortas posibles, lo más al punto posible, sin darse muchas vueltas. Tratar de resumir los temas, hacerlo más práctico posible. Yo lo llamo 'creatividad práctica'; tratar de ir al punto, decir lo que tenemos que decir y crear algo experiencial, que a veces se dificulta por temas de presupuesto.	The first internal process, regardless of whether the event is digital or face-to-face, is to define the objectives, what is the product to promote and what is the target group. When executing the event, we must summarize in a practical way all the topics that are going to be discussed. There must be a marked order and the speakers must have a shorter intervention. As we know, in a face-to-face event it is easier to control people's attendance; the assistants are forced to listen to you, they cannot leave the place because they are seeing a person speak. In digital it is different, it is easier for attendees to leave; they mute their microphone, get up, and we lost their attention. How do you keep the attention of the attendees? We need to focus on having order and precision in all the topics that are going to be discussed. Make the interventions as short as possible, concise as possible, without rambling around. We need to summarize the topics, make it as practical as possible. I call it 'practical creativity'; try to get to the point, say what we have to say and create something experiential, which is sometimes difficult due to the clients' budget.
IN	¿Me puedes contar sobre algunos de eventos que ustedes han organizado con los clientes?	Can you tell me about some events you have organized?
GM	Claro, por ejemplo hicimos el lanzamiento de una plataforma digital de un cliente que se llama 'Medicamenta'. 'Medicamenta' es una farmacéutica e hicimos el lanzamiento de su blog, dedicado para médicos, que se llama 'VertisMed'. Originalmente el lanzamiento del blog era un evento presencial, al que iban a asistir médicos cardiólogos, profesores y estudiantes de medicina. Por la pandemia tuvimos que migrar el evento a digital. ¿Y cómo llamamos la atención? Tuvimos	Of course, for example we launched a digital platform for a client called 'Medicamenta'. 'Medicamenta' is a pharmaceutical company and we launched its blog, dedicated to doctors, which is called 'VertisMed'. Originally the blog launch was a face-to-face event, with the attendance of cardiologists, professors and medical students. Due to the pandemic, we had to migrate the event to digital. And how did we attract attention? We

	que generar una campaña de expectativa un poco más fuerte. Para el evento mantuvimos las invitaciones físicas, pero estas invitaciones físicas tenían un elemento de realidad aumentada. Hicimos una invitación física, que al momento de escanearla con el celular, se transformaba en un corazón 3D. Debajo del corazón 3D se leía el texto: '¿quieres saber más? Conoce VertisMed, estás invitado al evento de lanzamiento de nuestro blog'. Al apoyarnos en recursos digitales pudimos generar más expectativa y asistencia al evento digital de lanzamiento de esta plataforma. Para el evento de lanzamiento nos contactamos con una presentadora conocida en la farándula ecuatoriana y desarrollamos un escenario virtual 3D. Todas las intervenciones, que originalmente se habían planificado, se recortaron. Los presentadores tenían pensado en tener intervenciones de casi 20 minutos cada uno, pero para el evento en línea, las redujimos a 6 o 7 minutos por persona. Porque el evento no podía durar más de 20 o 25 minutos. Tener a un asistente frente a su computador por más de media hora es imposible, entonces tratamos de reducir el tiempo. Fue un buen lanzamiento porque cumplió con las expectativas del cliente, tuvo una buena asistencia digital y los médicos estuvieron interesados.	had to generate a stronger teaser campaign. For the event we kept the physical invitations, but these physical invitations had an element of augmented reality. We made a physical invitation, which when scanned with the cell phone, it transformed into a 3D heart. Under the 3D heart there was a text that read: 'Do you want to know more? Know VertisMed, you are invited to our blog's launch event.' By relying on digital resources, we were able to generate more expectation and attendance at the digital launch event for this platform. For the launch event, we contacted an Ecuadorian celebrity and developed a virtual 3D stage. All the planned interventions were shorten. The presenters had interventions of almost 20 minutes each, but for the online event, we reduced them to 6 or 7 minutes per person. Because the event couldn't last more than 20 or 25 minutes in total. Having a person in front of their computer for more than half an hour is impossible, so we try to reduce the time. It was a good launch because it met the customer's expectations, had a good digital attendance, and the doctors were interested.
IN	Durante la pandemia, ¿cómo promovieron los eventos?	During the Covid-19 Pandemic, did you used paid media to promote the events?
GM	Hemos promovido los eventos principalmente en digital. También depende mucho del tipo de evento que tengamos. Para el cliente de 'Medicamenta' normalmente hemos tenido 2 tipos de eventos; eventos privados que son específicamente para médicos, por ejemplo para cardiólogos, y eventos con temas más amplios, para un público objetivo más general. En los dos casos hicimos pauta en digital, pauta en redes sociales, y campañas de mailing con bases de datos. También hicimos marketing directo enviando las invitaciones a las direcciones teníamos en las bases de datos.	We did a digital promotion of the events. But it also depends a lot on the type of event we have. For the client 'Medicamenta' we had 2 types of events; private events that are specifically for doctors, for example cardiologists, and events with broader topics, for a more general target audience. In both cases we made digital advertising campaigns, social media campaigns, and mailing campaigns with databases. We also did direct marketing by sending the invitations to the addresses we had in the databases.
IN	Me parece interesante que en estos eventos tienes un elemento físico, como la invitación, y un elemento digital, como la realidad aumentada. Cuando se juntan los dos cosas se puede conseguir una experiencia interesante; algo físico pero digital al mismo tiempo.	I find it interesting that in these events you have a physical element, like the invitation, and a digital element, like augmented reality. When the two things come together you can get an interesting experience; something physical but digital at the same time.
GM	Sí, ese es el reto. Debemos crear experiencias interactivas, por ejemplo que durante la mañana los asistentes reciban algo físico que les ayude a participar de alguna manera en el evento. Por ejemplo, nosotros hicimos un juego para una	Yes, that is the challenge. We must create interactive experiences. For example, during the morning attendees can receive something physical that helps them participate in some way later in the event. For instance, we

	conferencia interna de fuerza de ventas. La idea era enviar a los asistentes un juego de bingo. Enviamos las cartillas físicas de bingo a las casas de los asistentes, y en la conferencia ellos jugaron bingo en línea. La reunión se volvió interactiva y pudimos mantener la atención de las personas durante el evento.	developed a game for an internal sales force conference. The idea was to engage attendees into playing bingo. We sent physical bingo cards to the attendees' homes, and at the conference they played online bingo. The meeting became interactive and we were able to keep people's attention during the event.
IN	¿En qué plataformas transmiten los eventos?	Which platforms did you used to broadcast the events?
GM	Las plataformas dependen mucho del evento. Cuando son eventos pequeños, de hasta treinta o cuarenta personas, donde se busca interacción, utilizamos Zoom. Para un cliente, que se llama 'Edimca', realizamos capacitaciones vía Zoom. Los asistentes se inscribían, pagaban y se les mandaba el enlace de Zoom para que se unan a la conferencia. Para eventos más grandes manejamos principalmente livestreams por Facebook y YouTube. Es decir, para capacitaciones y eventos más pequeños, personales y personalizados utilizamos Zoom. Y para eventos más grandes usamos YouTube o Facebook.	Platforms depend on the type of event. In case of small events, up to thirty or forty people, where interaction is key, we use Zoom. For a client called 'Edimca' we conducted trainings via Zoom. Attendees signed up, paid, and were sent the Zoom link to join the conference. For larger events we mainly do livestreams on Facebook and YouTube. To sum up, for smaller, personal and customized trainings and events we use Zoom. And for bigger events we use YouTube or Facebook.
IN	¿Crees que la plataforma influencia en la creatividad?	Do different event platforms influence creativity?
GM	Sí y no. Sí, porque en eventos transmitidos por YouTube básicamente tenemos un video que la gente ve, entonces no se puede generar mucha interacción. Por otro lado, plataformas como Zoom, dan la oportunidad de generar sesiones de preguntas y respuestas. Los chats de Facebook y YouTube, no son chats en sí, sino una bandeja donde se copilan los comentarios de la gente, no hay mucha interacción entre ellos. Escoger la plataforma para el evento depende del tipo de evento, el tipo de producto y el tipo de objetivo que tenga el cliente.	Yes and no. Yes, in the case of events broadcasted on Youtube, in which we basically have a video that people watch, so you can't generate much interaction. On the other hand, in platforms like Zoom there is the possibility to generate Q&A sessions. Facebook and YouTube chats are not chats, but tools where people's comments are collected, there is not much interaction between the consumers and the brands. Choosing the event platform depends on the type of event, the type of product and the type of objective that the client has.
IN	¿Cómo miden el engagement de los consumidores durante los eventos de marketing en línea?	How would you asses the consumer's engagement during the online events?
GM	Se mide por cuánta gente asiste al evento. De la asistencia que el cliente tenía planifica, cuántos en realidad vieron el evento. También se mide por el número de interacción de los asistentes, por ejemplo al comentarios. En la agencia también nos fijamos en la participación de los asistentes en las actividades de los eventos. Por ejemplo, en medio del evento se pide a los asistentes enviar un mensaje en forma de juego para que haya interacciones. Se pueden utilizar chatbots e inteligencia artificial para generar más	It is assessed by how many people attend the event. We see the difference between the projected attendance vs. the actual attendance. The number of interaction of the attendees are also assessed, for example the number of comments. We also look at the participation of the attendees during the activities. For example, to increase interaction in the middle of the event attendees are asked to send a message, as in a game. Chatbots and artificial intelligence can be used to generate more

	interacciones. Esto por tema de presupuesto es a veces complicado.	interactions. This is sometimes complicated, due to budget.
IN	Desde un punto de vista creativo, ¿cuáles crees que son las ventajas y las desventajas que tiene el marketing de eventos en línea?	Creatively speaking, what are the main advantages and disadvantages of online event marketing?
GM	La principal ventaja es el presupuesto. Porque no se tiene que alquilar un lugar físico, buscar un animador, ver temas técnicos como el sonido, etc. Otra ventaja es que se puede hacer el evento cuando uno quiera, donde quiera y para las personas que quiera, pueden haber asistentes de otros países. Como desventajas, el problema principal del lado creativo es mantener la atención y hacer que el evento sea lo suficientemente interesante para que la gente se enganche. Como sabemos, toda la gente está en su casa, con su familia, con los hijos. Entonces mantener la atención en el evento versus el ambiente donde se encuentran las personas es lo más complicado. Como te digo, la ventaja es el presupuesto, dependiendo de la magnitud del evento, obviamente. Y la desventaja es cómo mantener la atención y cómo enganchar a tu público durante el evento.	The main advantage is the budget. There is no need to rent a physical venue, hire host, worry about technicalities such as sound, etc. Another advantage is that the event can be held when you want, where you want and for the people you want. Besides there may be attendees from other countries. The main creative disadvantage is keeping the attendees' attention and making the event interesting enough for them to be focused. During online events most people are at home, with their family, with their children. It is challenging because the attention of the event competes with the stimuli of their environment. To sum up, the advantage relies on the budget, depending on the magnitude of the event. And the disadvantage relies on keeping the attention and engaging the audience during the event.
IN	¿Cuáles crees que son los mayores desafíos cuando estás organizando un evento en línea?	What were the main creative challenges of organizing an online event?
GM	Lo primero es mantener la atención del público y tratar de generar el suficiente interés. Hay que tratar de transformar el evento en una experiencia para que no se vuelva un monólogo en donde la gente está viendo básicamente un video, sino que se vuelve una experiencia. Ese es el reto más grande, que el evento se sienta experiencial y que el público no sienta que únicamente está viendo un video en la computadora. Como te digo, es interesante explorar los diferentes recursos que hay en cuanto a marketing directo, marketing en línea, recursos en WhatsApp, Chatbots, etc. El reto es tratar de que las gente tenga una experiencia mientras está en su computadora.	First of all is keeping the public's attention and trying to generate enough interest. You have to transform the event into an experience. It is not meant to be a monologue where people are basically watching a video, but rather an experience. This is the biggest challenge; that the event feels experiential and that the public does not feel that they are watching a video on the computer. It is interesting to explore different resources as direct marketing, online marketing, WhatsApp, Chatbots, etc. The challenge is trying to give people an experience while they are connected to their computers.
IN	¿Cuáles crees que son las mejores prácticas cuando organizas un evento?	What do you think are the best practices when organizing an online event?
GM	Las mejores prácticas son optimizar el contenido, optimizar lo que quieres decir, optimizar los mensajes en cuanto a tiempo y especificidad. O sea, que digas lo que tienes que decir directamente al punto, sin tratar de generar tanta algarabía alrededor de los temas, porque eso genera que la gente pierda el interés. Entonces, lo más práctico que puedes hacer es generar interés por parte de los asistentes de una manera súper directa, súper clara y concisa.	Best practices are to optimize content, optimize what you want to say, optimize messages so they are specific and not time consuming. In other words; say what you have to say directly and to the point, without rambling around, because that causes people to lose interest. The best practice is to be practical; generate interest from the attendees in a direct, clear and concise way.

	En mi experiencia, la mejor práctica es organizar una agenda y un itinerario exacto de lo que vas a hacer en tu evento para que esté súper claro y organizado. Que sea lo más conciso posible.	In my experience, the best practice is to organize an agenda and an exact itinerary of what you are going to do at your event so that it is clear and organized. Keep it as concise as possible.
IN	Ahora que estamos regresando a la 'normalidad', ¿Crees que tus clientes sigan organizando eventos en línea?	Now that we are slowly returning to 'normal', will you recommend your clients to organize online events?
GM	Yo creo que sí, creo que deberían seguir organizando eventos en línea. Pero también depende del tipo de producto que se quiera promocionar. Lo interesante de los eventos en línea es que ayudaron a anichar a los grupos objetivos de las marcas. Porque en eventos en línea, las personas que se conectan son las que de verdad están interesadas. Por otra parte, en eventos presenciales, muchos asistentes iban solo por ver a la gente, a veces solo por la comida. Muchas veces el evento en sí pasaba a un segundo plano. Tenemos que aprovechar la herramienta de los eventos en línea para generar nichos; llegar directamente al nicho de la marca, por ejemplo, en marcas de tecnología o temas técnicos. Durante los eventos en línea, ese nicho que tú tienes al frente, se va a interesar en la marca. En eventos en línea también hay que tomar en cuenta la facilidad para los consumidores. Por ejemplo, eventos de lanzamiento presenciales se organizaban en hoteles, y no muchos consumidores tenían la facilidad de ir, por el transporte o el horario, por tener responsabilidades en casa, etc. Creo que haber este equilibrio entre eventos en línea y eventos presenciales. Desde mi punto de vista, los eventos en línea debe volverse en algo complementario, como un asset más a las herramientas de comunicación de una empresa.	Yes, I think so. I think they should continue to organize online events. But it also depends on the type of product they want to promote. The positive side of online events is that they helped brands define their target groups. In online events, people who are connected are the ones who are really interested. On the other hand, in face-to-face events many participants attended only for socializing, sometimes just for the food. Sometimes the event itself stayed on the background. We have to take advantage of online events tools to generate niches; reach directly to the target audience, for example, in tech brands. During online events, the niche that you have in front of you will be interested in the brand. In online events you also have to take into account the consumers' comfort. For example, face-to-face launch events were organized in hotels, and not many consumers were available to attend, due to transportation, time, responsibilities at home, etc. I think we must have a balance between online events and face-to-face events. From my point of view, online events should become something complementary, another asset to a company's communication tools.
IN	¿Qué opinas sobre los eventos híbridos?	What do you think about hybrid events?
GM	Me parecen interesantes porque le dan facilidad al asistente de tener opciones. Hay veces en que las personas quieren ir a un evento, pero no pueden porque tienen gripe o están en casa cuidando a sus hijos. Entonces los eventos híbridos les dan la opción de seguir desde casa y ver el evento al que quieren asistir. Como asistente, como oyente y como invitado, me facilita la vida. Creo que los eventos híbridos son bastante prácticos. Como organizador, el reto es que las dos personas en los dos tipos de plataformas, ya sea en línea o presencial, tengan una experiencia similar. La experiencia no va a ser la misma nunca, pero debería ser similar. Además deberían tener los mismos aprendizajes, tener los mismos	I find them interesting because they provide options to the assistants. There are times when people want to go to an event, but cannot because they have the flu or are at home taking care of their children. Hybrid events give them the option to follow the event from home. As an assistant, as a listener and as a host, it makes life easier. I think hybrid events are pretty practical. As an organizer, the challenge is to maintain a similar experience for online and face-to-face attendees. The experience is never going to be the same, but it should be similar. Attendees, whether online or face-to-face, should have the same learning and the same feelings.

	sentimientos, sin importar que el evento sea presencial o en línea.	
IN	¿Crees que los eventos híbridos tienen el potencial de ser creativos?	Do you think hybrid events have the potential of being creative?
GM	Sí. Hay que buscar recursos creativos, que a veces pueden ser básicos, con los que la gente pueda interactuar. El público debe tener un sentimiento de pertenencia al evento. Esto se puede lograr a través de juegos u otras herramientas como WhatsApp o mensajes de texto. Con marketing directo también podemos generar cercanía. Por ejemplo hemos tenido eventos donde se entrega a los asistentes merchandising, además al final del evento se les entregaba un código para que sean los primeros en leer artículos exclusivos de una página web. Como la organización de eventos híbridos es algo nueva para nosotros, va a haber muchas veces que fallemos, pero también aprendamos.	Yes. You have to look for creative resources, which can sometimes be basic, for people to interact with. During the event, the attendees must have a feeling of belonging. This can be achieved through games or other tools such as WhatsApp or text messages. With direct marketing we can also generate closeness. For example, we have had events where merchandising is delivered to attendees. In some events, at the end, attendees were given a code so that they become the first ones to read exclusive articles from a web page. The organization of hybrid events is something new for us; therefore we will fail many times, but we will also learn.
IN	¿Crees que la realidad aumentada (RA), realidad virtual (RV) e inteligencia artificial (IA) pueden apoyar a la creatividad en los eventos de marketing?	Do you think technologies like virtual reality (VR), Augmented Reality (AR) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) can support creativity?
GM	Es bueno tener RA y RV como soporte del evento. A veces es complicado por temas de costo y además por la implementación y producción. Son herramientas que ayudan a potenciar la creatividad. Como te contaba antes, para un evento hicimos invitaciones que no eran solo físicas, o solo un email con una imagen, tenían un elemento de RA, que fue un corazón en 3D. La RA y RV son herramientas que deben ser exploradas y bastante más socializadas. Porque hay muchos ámbitos del mercado que todavía son reacios a cambiarse a este tipo de tecnología, porque piensan que es demasiado esfuerzo para algo tan pequeño. Debe haber un equilibrio donde la producción e implementación de RA y RV puedan ser accesible para todos. Así los clientes van a estar más abiertos para probar este tipo de tecnologías.	AR and VR can support the event. Sometimes it is complicated because of budget, implementation and production. AR and VR are tools that help enhance creativity. As I told you before, for an event we made invitations that were not only physical, nor an email with an image; they had an element of AR, which was a 3D heart. AR and VR are tools that must be explored and socialized with the audience. There are many areas of the market that are still reluctant to switch to this type of technology, because they think they require too much effort for something small. There must be a balance, so that the production and implementation of AR and VR can be accessible to everyone. Doing so, customers will be more open to test this type of technology.
IN	¿Uno de los principales problemas con la producción de realidad aumentada y realidad virtual en Ecuador es el costo?	Is budget the main issue regarding the production of VR and AR?
GM	En Ecuador sí. Es bastante caro para el cliente generar los renders en 3D y así la experiencia en general de un evento con realidad virtual. Además muchos asistentes no tienen el dispositivo necesario para acceder a esta tecnología. Por ejemplo, te puede llegar un corazón en VR, pero para verlo necesitas un dispositivo con un sistema operativo IOS actualizado. Muchas personas que pertenecen al grupo objetivo pueden tener un celular más	In Ecuador, yes. It is quite expensive for the client to generate 3D renders and thus the general experience of an event with VR. In addition, many attendees do not have the necessary device to access this technology. For example, you can get a heart in VR, but to see it you need a device with an updated IOS. Many people who belong to the target group may have older mobile phones and cannot

	antiguo y no pueden acceder a la experiencia. Toda la tecnología de VR todavía no está adaptada y no es accesible para todos los mercados. Además el target puede estar compuesto de gente mayor, que no está muy familiarizada con la tecnología y eso a veces genera un poco de conflicto. Por ejemplo, en el tema médico. En el Ecuador los médicos de más experiencia son los médicos más viejos, y los médicos más viejos no están familiarizados con el tema de las tecnologías de una manera tan fácil. Entonces para la invitación en VR que hicimos, tuvimos que hacer un tutorial de cómo ver la invitación y también un tutorial de cómo entrar al evento. Es complicado porque tenemos que educar al mercado y al target. Estamos en una época de transición donde estamos seguros que en el futuro vamos a tener más tecnología de realidad virtual en los eventos, pero tenemos que socializarlas más.	access the experience. VR technology is not yet adapted to all devices and is not accessible to all markets. In addition, the target can be composed of older people, who are not very familiar with technology. That can generate a conflict. This is visible in the medical area. In Ecuador, the most experienced doctors are the oldest doctors, and the oldest doctors are not so familiar with technology. For the VR invitation of the 3D heart, we had to do a tutorial on how to view the invitation and also a tutorial on how to enter the event. It is complicated because we have to educate the market and the target. We are in a time of transition. I am sure that in the future we will have more VR technology in events, but we have to socialize it more.
IN	Desde el punto de vista creativo, ¿cuáles crees que van a ser las tendencias en marketing de eventos en el futuro?	From a creative point of view, what are the trends you see in event marketing in the future?
GM	Creo que el marketing de eventos hay muchas compañías que marcan la pauta. Por ejemplo durante los últimos 5-10 años, los que marcan la pauta de Apple, Microsoft y los eventos tipo gaming, como el 3E. Con respecto a las tendencias, yo creo que se van a globalizar los eventos digitales, que también resulta bueno para el cliente en tema de costos y accesibilidad. Pero también siento que la tendencia se va a volcar hacia lo educativo, en la que la gente se familiarice más con este tipo de formatos. A veces por la accesibilidad a esta tecnología es más difícil porque la audiencia siente una cierta lejanía. Por parte del cliente, se siente todavía el estigma de que estas tecnologías son muy costosas en la producción. Los clientes dicen; 'esto no es para mí, no es para mi empresa porque va a salir demasiado caro'. En cuanto a tendencias, creo que el marketing de eventos está evolucionando bastante. No solo en temas de marketing online, sino también el temas educativo online, que es similar porque utilizan casi las mismas plataformas. Por ejemplo, dar clases en línea es parecido a ir a un evento en línea. Los eventos educativos a veces son mucho mas interactivos y entretenidos que los eventos de marcas, es algo que podríamos aprender y explorar sobre esta área.	In event marketing there are many companies that are trendsetters. For example, during the last 5-10 years, those companies were Apple, Microsoft and gaming-type companies, such as 3E. Regarding trends, I believe that digital events are going to be globalized, which is good for companies in terms of costs and accessibility. I also feel that there is going to be a turn towards education, in which people become more familiar with these types of formats [AR and VR]. Sometimes the lack of accessibility to technology, make audiences feel more distant. On the companies' side, there is stigma that these technologies [AR and VR] require and expensive production. The companies say; "This is not for me and not for my company because it will be too expensive." In terms of trends, I think event marketing will evolve. Not only as online marketing, but also as online education, which is similar because both use almost the same platforms. For example, online education is similar to attending an online event. Educational events are sometimes much more interactive and entertaining than brand events. This is something we could learn and explore.

	Las nuevas plataformas y los nuevos teléfonos te brindan la facilidad de ver un evento desde cualquier parte. Cada vez elementos como las gafas de realidad aumentada son más baratas y accesibles para todos. Estamos en una época de donde la tecnología separa generaciones. Y nuestra generación está justo en la mitad. La generación más vieja que nosotros les cuesta un poco adaptarse a lo nuevo, los más jóvenes están mucho más familiarizados con la tecnología que nosotros. Todas estas personas están lidiando con la pandemia, con el teletrabajo, con estudiar en casa. Este año para la humanidad, no solo para nosotros, es un año de transición. Estamos en una época de transición que nunca se ha visto antes. Las empresas y el marketing en este caso específico de marketing de eventos, están viendo cómo lidiar con esto, cómo adaptarse. Antes la gente tenía que adaptarse al mercado, ahora la gente tiene tanto acceso a tecnología, a tanta información y a tanto conocimiento, que ahora el mercado tiene que adaptarse a la gente. El mercado tiene que adaptar sus mensajes a todos y cada uno de los grupos, minorías y formas de pensar. Pero para eso estamos, para eso nos dedicamos a la comunicación; para tratar de descifrar qué hay en el mundo.	New platforms and new mobile phones allow you to watch an event from anywhere in the world. Besides, elements such as AR glasses are becoming cheaper and more accessible to everyone. We are living in a time where technology sets generations apart. Our generation is right in the middle. Older generations have a hard time adapting to new technologies, while younger generations are much more familiar with technology than we are. All these people are dealing with the pandemic, with working from home, with studying at home. This is a year of transition, not only for us, but also for humanity. We are in a time of transition that we have never seen before. Companies and marketing, specifically event marketing, are seeing how to deal with this, how to adapt. Before, people had to adapt to the market. Nowadays people have so much access to technology, so much information and so much knowledge, that the market has to adapt to the people. The market has to adapt its messages to each and every one of the target groups, minorities and ways of thinking. That is why we are here, that's why we have studied communication; to figure out the world.
IN	Muchas gracias por la entrevista Gabo, no sé si hay algo más que quisieras añadir sobre el tema del marketing de eventos durante la pandemia.	Gabo, thank you so much for the interview. I do not know if you want to add something else about marketing events during the Pandemic.
GM	Los comunicadores somos traductores, tenemos el lenguaje de los negocios, que la gente de negocios quiere transmitir a su grupo y no sabe cómo. Y tenemos el lenguaje del mercado, que habla de una manera muy diferente. Nosotros estamos en la mitad, somos los traductores, somos el puente entre el mercado y las empresas. Y todas herramientas, incluida de marketing de eventos, nos tiene que ayudar a explorar diferentes formas para llegar a nuestros públicos objetivos y que sea práctico tanto como para el cliente, así como para los consumidores.	As communication experts, we are translators. We understand the business language, which business people want to transmit to their group and they don't know how. And we understand language of the market, which speaks in a very different way. We are in the middle, we are the translators, we are the bridge between the market and the companies. And all tools, including event marketing, help us explore different ways to reach our target audiences and make practical choices for the companies and the consumers.

Annex 3 - Interview transcript and translation - C. Aizaga- Digital director and brand Manager

Interviewer: Julia Camila Bonilla Merino
Interviewee: C. Aizaga
Date of interview: 22 September 2021
Length of interview: 00:49:15
List of acronyms: IN=Interviewer, CA=C.Aizaga

About the interviewee: C. Aizaga is a communication strategist, specialized in digital communication with over 10 years of experience. At the time of the interview, he worked as the regional digital director (South America) of 'Medicamenta', a pharmaceutical company.

Speaker	Transcription in original language (Spanish)	Translation in English (by the author)
IN	Quisiera saber sobre la marca y la empresa. ¿La marca utiliza marketing de eventos como parte del plan de marketing?	I would like to know about the brand and the company, does the brand use event marketing as part of their marketing plan?
CA	Yo pertenezco a la empresa 'Medicamenta'. Este es un laboratorio farmacéutico donde el 99% de los productos se venden bajo prescripción médica. Por esta razón, la compañía no puede hacer promoción normal de sus productos. Como los productos se venden bajo prescripción médica, la compañía no los puede promocionar, por ejemplo en redes sociales o en las farmacias. Por ende, la compañía se enfoca siempre en realizar eventos presenciales. Antes de la pandemia la compañía tenía un área donde una persona se encargaba de coordinar todos los eventos, tanto locales como internacionales. Los laboratorios farmacéuticos están acostumbrados a llevar a médicos a eventos internacionales. Entonces, sí existía un área y un plan de marketing para eventos. Calculo que antes de la pandemia la empresa organizaba un promedio de diez eventos presenciales al año en Ecuador, además de diez o quince eventos internacionales.	I belong to a company called 'Medicamenta'. This is a pharmaceutical laboratory where 99% of the products are sold under medical prescription. For this reason, the company cannot do normal promotion of its products. As the products are sold under medical prescription, the company cannot promote them, for example on social networks or in pharmacies. Therefore, the company always focuses on face-to-face events. Before the pandemic, the company had an area where one person was in charge of coordinating all events, both local and international. Pharmaceutical laboratories are used to taking doctors to international events. So, there was an area and a marketing plan for events. I estimate that before the pandemic the company organized an average of ten face-to-face events a year in Ecuador, in addition to ten or fifteen international events.
IN	¿No es permitido promocionar medicamentos bajo prescripción médica al consumidor final en toda América Latina o solo en Ecuador?	Is it not allowed to promote prescription drugs to the final consumer in all Latin America or only in Ecuador?
CA	Depende en gran parte de las normativas gubernamentales de cada país. Pero por el tipo de productos o hacia las patologías que nosotros estamos especializados, siempre te piden que los productos se vendan con prescripción médica. Un médico especialista tiene que recetarte el producto, sino no te venden en la farmacia. Eso nos limita al hacer comunicación. Porque nuestro giro de negocio no se enfoca hacia el consumidor final de manera	It depends largely on the governmental regulations of each country. Because of the type of products or the pathologies we specialize in, it is always required that the products are sold with a medical prescription. A doctor has to prescribe the product, otherwise the pharmacy will not sell it to you. This limits us when it comes to communication. Because our line of business

	directa. Todo lo que hacemos como marketing, estrategia, innovación, se enfoca principalmente hacia el profesional de salud. Los médicos van a ser quienes aprendan sobre nuestro producto, de los beneficios. Y si ellos están de acuerdo, los van a prescribir.	does not focus directly on the end consumer. Everything we do, such as marketing, strategy, innovation, is mainly focused on the health professional. Doctors are going to be the ones who learn about our product, about the benefits. And if they agree, they will prescribe it.
IN	¿Qué tipo de eventos organiza la empresa normalmente?	What kind of events does the brand/company usually organize?
CA	Todos son eventos con un enfoque de educación médica continua. Es decir que los speakers o los temas que se traen al evento son temas relacionados a las patologías. Por ejemplo, organizamos un foro de cáncer de próstata. En este foro se habla sobre la evolución de esta patología, se habla sobre las moléculas que están ayudando a tratarla. Pero no se habla sobre las marcas, no se habla sobre los productos como tal. Se trata de que todo sea marca blanca, que siempre se hable desde la patología, cómo ha ido evolucionando a nivel científico y a nivel de prescripción. Buscamos factores que enriquezcan el desarrollo médico continuo.	We organize events with a focus on medical education. Meaning that the speakers or the topics that are brought to the event are topics related to the pathologies. For example, we organize a forum on prostate cancer. In this forum we talk about the evolution of the pathology, we talk about the molecules that are helping to treat it. But we don't talk about brands, we don't talk about products per se. The idea is that everything should be white label, that we always talk about the pathology, how it has been evolving at the scientific level and at the prescription level. We are looking for factors that enrich medical development.
IN	¿Cuál es el formato en el que realizan los eventos? ¿Son presenciales o también en línea?	What is the format in which the events are held? Are they face-to-face or also online?
CA	Antes de la pandemia, todo era 100% presencial. A raíz de la pandemia, se creó el área de estrategia digital. La empresa tuvo que buscar la forma de llegar a los médicos porque hubo dos o tres meses en los que la empresa desapareció del radar. Justamente porque la empresa no sabía qué hacer, no había un área especializada que les ayude a hacer eventos virtuales. Por esto llegué yo. Yo primero comencé a ver una estrategia de herramientas; entender qué herramienta o plataformas podemos utilizar. Ver cuáles son las mejores opciones para que los médicos tengan una mejor experiencia. Los médicos no son muy afines a la tecnología, son bastante longevos. Para ellos es difícil bajarse aplicaciones como Zoom, bajar cualquier otro complemento, luego instalarlo, hacer un registro, etc. Es muy complicado. Comencé a buscar herramientas que le permitan a uno conectarse solo con un clic, sin formularios o registros. Obviamente es bueno tener formularios y registros porque sirven para entender quién se está conectando, con qué frecuencia. Pero buscábamos una experiencia que fuera fácil para los médicos, con menos clics. La primera parte de mi trabajo fue entender qué plataforma me funciona, después fue entender el	Before the pandemic, everything was 100% face-to-face. Following the pandemic, the 'digital strategy area' was created. The company had to find a way to reach its target audience because there were two or three months in which the company disappeared from the radar. Precisely because the company did not know what to do, there was no specialized area to help them do virtual events. That's why I was hired. I first started to look at a tool strategy; to understand what tools or platforms we can use. See what are the best options for physicians to have a better experience. Physicians are not very tech-savvy, they are quite old. It's difficult for them to download apps like Zoom, download any other add-on, then install it, do a registration, etc. It is very complicated. I started looking for tools that allow you to connect with just one click, without forms or registrations. Obviously it's good to have forms and registrations because they help you understand who is logging in, how often they are logging in. But we were looking for an experience that was easy for physicians, with fewer clicks.

	contexto de cuántos usuarios deben estar con la cámara y el micrófono encendidos. Normalmente traemos cuatro o cinco speakers internacionales. Y a veces las plataformas con navegación web, en las que no tienes que descargarte una aplicación, te limitan para tener hasta tres cámaras y tres micrófonos encendidos. Entonces si quieres que haya una cuarta persona con un micrófono o cámara encendida, uno de los otros tres tiene que apagarla. Comenzamos a tener ese debate constante para encontrar el mejor performance. Luego, como compañía tuvimos que adecuarnos y comenzar a hacer eventos de hasta dos o tres speakers para no tener esos problemas técnicos. Una vez que teníamos claro la plataforma, comenzamos a ver la estrategia de comunicación para invitar a los médicos. Cómo les explicamos sobre el proceso de registro, cuál es el mejor canal para llegar a ellos, etc. En este paso comenzamos a utilizar plataformas de email marketing, con las que tuvimos un gran porcentaje de apertura y de interacción. Pero nuestro canal más efectivo fue WhatsApp. En WhatsApp nuestra fuerza de ventas enviaba mensajes personalizados, directos, que tenían una invitación fotográfica o una cápsula de video con un texto y el link del evento en vivo. Esto hace que la tasa de conversión sea mucho más alta.	The first part of my job was to understand what platform works for me, then it was to understand the context of how many users should be with the camera and microphone on. We usually bring in four or five international speakers. And sometimes platforms with web browsing, where you don't have to download an app, limit you to have up to three cameras and three microphones on. So if you want a fourth person with a microphone or camera on, one of the other three has to turn it off. We started having that constant debate to find the best performance. Then, as a company we had to adapt and start doing events with up to two or three speakers so we didn't have those technical problems. Once we were clear about the platform, we started to look at the communication strategy to invite the doctors. How we explain to them about the registration process, what is the best channel to reach them, etc. In this step we started using email marketing platforms, with which we had a great opening and interaction percentage. But our most effective channel was WhatsApp. In WhatsApp our sales force sent personalized, direct messages, which had a photo invitation or a video capsule with a text and the link to the live event. This made the conversion rate much higher.
IN	¿Cómo fue la adaptación de los eventos presenciales a eventos en línea? Quisiera saber si tal vez tienes algún ejemplo de algún evento que tuvieron que adaptar.	During the Covid-19 Pandemic how did you adapt the face-to-face events? I would like to know if you have an example of an event that you had to adapt.
CA	Claro, te voy a contar la evolución de nuestros eventos virtuales. Cuando iniciamos en julio del 2020 teníamos speakers, por ejemplo, de Colombia. El médico estaba en su casa y como fondo, por detrás, se veía su casa. La host del evento, que es nuestra directora médica, estaba también en su casa con el fondo de la sala o a veces el estudio. Se manejaba esa experiencia donde todo se veía normal. Ocupábamos el mismo recurso que la competencia o en general cualquier industria. Porque el webinar fue una estrategia bastante desgastada. Todas las empresas farmacéuticas o de cualquier industria hacían lo mismo. En esa época no había ninguna innovación. A lo largo de ese año nosotros tuvimos varias innovaciones en cuanto a webinars. Por ejemplo en el mes de diciembre nos preguntamos ¿cómo innovamos, cómo cambiamos para que la	Of course, I will tell you about the evolution of our virtual events. When we started in July 2020, we had speakers, for example, from Colombia. The doctor was at home and in the background, from behind, you could see his house. The host of the event, who is our medical director, was also at home with the background of their living room. We managed an experience where everything looked normal. We were occupying the same resource as the competition or generally any industry. Because webinars were a pretty worn out strategy. Every pharmaceutical company or any industry was doing the same thing. There was no innovation at that time. Throughout that year we had several innovations in terms of webinars. For example, in December we asked ourselves,

	experiencia no sea la misma del típico webinar? En ese momento comenzamos a contratar estudios de grabación para que nuestros anfitriones graben desde un estudio profesional. Por ejemplo, nos uníamos a una señal desde España, donde se encontraba un speaker desde un estudio de grabación, y nosotros transmitíamos la señal con un escenario 3D, con animaciones introductorias. Las presentaciones de los speakers eran más dinámicas, había animaciones. Este tipo de experiencias nos ayudaron a tener una mayor cantidad de registros en nuestros eventos. Obviamente la inversión también es más alta que la de un webinar tradicional. Hay que invertir en estudio, en cámaras, en guion, etc. Ahora estamos grabando todos nuestros eventos en escenarios virtuales. Ahora el speaker, sea donde sea que se encuentre, por ejemplo en Estados Unidos, en Argentina, en España, donde sea, va a un estudio de grabación en su país. En este estudio grabamos su intervención con un fondo croma. También nuestro moderador graba aquí en Ecuador en un fondo croma. Después juntamos las 2 señales y parece que las dos personas, el speaker y el moderador, conviven en el mismo escenario, que es un escenario 3D. También invertimos en guionistas, tanto locales como en el país donde se encuentran los speakers. Se coordinan las grabaciones, para que haya por ejemplo un choque de puños virtual. Con esta experiencia los usuarios no sienten que todos estamos separados, sino que la tecnología, así como nos separó, también nos está uniendo por medio de los escenarios virtuales. La competencia local no tiene este tipo de tecnología. Además nosotros estamos generando foros que duran dos meses, con catorce webinars durante esos dos meses. En estos webinars tenemos speakers en México, España, Colombia, Perú, Argentina y nuestra moderadora en Ecuador. Pero para el asistente parece que siempre estamos en un mismo set. Hemos hecho este tipo de experiencias de innovación tres veces en menos de un año. Ya no organizamos el típico webinar donde los asistentes escuchan información durante una o dos horas. Ahora organizamos foros de dos meses. Obviamente cada charla sigue durando una o dos horas. ¿Cuál es un valor agregado que nos ha ayudado en el crecimiento de nuestros eventos virtuales? Es el aval académico. Nosotros entendimos que los médicos ecuatorianos siempre quieren mostrar sus	how do we innovate, how do we change so that the experience is not the same as the typical webinar? At that time we started to hire recording studios for our hosts to record from a professional studio. For example, we would join a session from Spain, where there was a speaker from a recording studio, and we would transmit the session with a 3D scenario, with introductory animations. The speakers' presentations were more dynamic, there were animations. This type of experience helped us to have a higher number of registrations in our events. Obviously the investment is also higher than that of a traditional webinar. You have to invest in a studio, cameras, script, etc. Now we are recording all our events in virtual scenarios. Now the speaker, wherever he is, for example in the United States, in Argentina, in Spain, wherever, goes to a recording studio in his country. In this studio we record his intervention with a chroma background. Our moderator also records here in Ecuador on a chroma background. Then we put the two signals together and it seems that the two people, the speaker and the moderator, live together on the same stage, which is a 3D stage. We also invest in scriptwriters, both local and in the country where the speakers are located. The recordings are coordinated, so that there is a virtual fist bump, for example. With this experience, users do not feel that we are all apart, but that technology, just as it divided us, is also bringing us together through virtual scenarios. The local competition does not have this type of technology. We are also generating forums that last two months, with fourteen webinars during those two months. In these webinars we have speakers in Mexico, Spain, Colombia, Peru, Argentina and our moderator in Ecuador. But for the attendee it seems that we are always in the same set. We have done this type of innovation experience three times in less than a year. We no longer organize the typical webinar where attendees listen to information for one or two hours. Now we organize two-month forums. Obviously each talk is still one or two hours long.

	credenciales. Por ejemplo, cuándo vas a un consultorio, los médicos siempre tienen expuestos sus títulos, certificados, etc. Nos dimos cuenta que el tiempo que los médicos invierten digitalmente también debe tener ese aval y ese reconocimiento. Por eso nosotros buscamos que todos los webinars o foros cuenten con avales de las mejores universidades, tanto de Ecuador como también de los países de los speakers. Tenemos acreditaciones de la Academia de Bilbao, la Universidad de Centroamérica, de España y de México. Eso genera un valor agregado y hace que la tasa de conversión de asistentes crezca mucho.	What is an added value that has helped us develop our virtual events? It is the academic endorsement. We understood that Ecuadorian doctors always want to show their credentials. For example, when you go to a doctor's office, doctors always have their degrees, certificates, etc. on display. We realized that the time that doctors invest digitally should also have that endorsement and recognition. That is why we seek that all webinars or forums have endorsements from the best universities, both in Ecuador as well as in the countries of the speakers. We have accreditations from the Academy of Bilbao, the University of Central America, Spain and Mexico. This generates an added value and makes the conversion rate of attendees grow a lot.
IN	¿Cómo promocionaron los eventos durante la pandemia del Covid-19?	How did you promote the events during the Covid-19 Pandemic?
CA	En su mayoría utilizamos email marketing y Whatsapp. Intentamos no utilizar redes sociales porque corremos un riesgo porque es un medio masivo. Nosotros tenemos que llegar solo a los médicos. Podríamos hacer campañas segmentadas en redes sociales, con bases de datos. Pero corremos el riesgo de que el médico comparta el evento al público en general. Si pasa esto, pueden haber pacientes que asistan a un evento médico y que se confundan. Cuando haces publicidad en redes sociales pierdes el control porque es muy masivo. Lo hemos hecho y nos ha funcionado, pero hemos visto que también se conecta gente que no es profesional de la salud. Por eso tratamos que la comunicación a este tipo de eventos sea hacia nuestro público objetivo.	We mostly use email marketing and Whatsapp. We try not to use social networks because we run a risk because it is a mass medium. We have to reach only physicians. We could do segmented campaigns on social networks, with databases. But we run the risk of the doctors sharing the event to the general public. If this happens, there may be patients who attend a medical event and get confused. When you advertise on social networks you lose control because it is very massive. We have done it and it has worked for us, but we have seen that people, who are not health professionals also participate That's why we try to ensure that the communication for this type of event is aimed at our target audience.
IN	¿En qué plataformas transmiten los eventos?	In which platforms were the events broadcasted?
CA	Cuando hacemos eventos internacionales donde tenemos de estudios de grabación, lo hacemos a través de Vimeo. Vimeo es una plataforma robusta, porque tiene chat en vivo, encuestas y se puede personalizar la experiencia. Da muy buenos reportes, tiene estabilidad en la transmisión. Vimeo se ha vuelto nuestra plataforma emblema para todos los eventos grandes. Organizamos los eventos pequeños, de cincuenta o ochenta invitados, por Microsoft Teams o Zoom. Estos eventos se organizan cuando una asociación, por ejemplo la asociación de cardiólogos de Quito, nos pide auspicio para que les demos una sala virtual y que convoquemos gente. Ellos no son expertos en ese tema, entonces como nosotros trabajamos con	When we do international events where we have recording studios, we do it through Vimeo. Vimeo is a robust platform, because it has live chat, polls and you can customize the experience. It gives very good reports, it has streaming stability. Vimeo has become our flagship platform for all large events. We organize the small events, for fifty or eighty guests, through Microsoft Teams or Zoom. These events are organized when an association, for example the cardiologists association of Quito, asks us for sponsorship to give them a virtual room and invite people. They are not experts in that subject, so since we work with doctors and we have licenses,

	los médicos y tenemos licencias, creamos salas virtuales para que ellos puedan dar sus charlas.	we create virtual rooms for them to give their talks.
IN	¿Cómo está compuesto tu equipo de trabajo cuando hacen los eventos?	How is the composition of your team when organizing the events?
CA	Nuestro flujo es el siguiente. Dentro de la compañía, tenemos gerentes de unidad de negocio. Estos gerentes de unidad de negocio son los dueños de los diferentes productos. Por ejemplo, el gerente de cardiología tiene diez productos. Cuando los gerentes quieren promocionar sus productos, sin tener que nombrarlos, normalmente hacen eventos. Los gerentes se reúnen con nuestra área médica, que propone los temas para tratar en los webinars y los speakers, dependiendo si el evento va a ser grande o pequeño. Si son eventos grandes se buscan speakers internacionales y cuando son eventos pequeños se coordina con speakers locales. Entonces dependiendo de la complejidad, nosotros decidimos qué plataforma utilizamos. Como te decía, Microsoft Teams para eventos pequeños y Vimeo para eventos grandes. Una vez que el área médica tiene claro la fecha y la hora, me da los datos de contacto de los speakers. Yo coordino con un proveedor y una productora externa en los otros países. Ellos se encargan de coordinar la grabación con el speaker, la grabación en Ecuador. Nos dicen en qué estudios vamos a grabar el evento. Ellos se encargan de la edición, se encargan de subir el video ya editado a una plataforma web y se encargan del formulario de registro. El proveedor externo se encarga del performance del evento como tal, y ellos son unas ocho o diez personas.	Our flow is as follows. Within the company, we have business unit managers. These business unit managers are the owners of the different products. For example, the cardiology manager has ten products. When managers want to promote their products, without having to name them, they usually do events. The managers meet with our medical area, which proposes the topics to be covered in the webinars and the speakers, depending on whether the event is going to be large or small. If they are large events we look for international speakers and when they are small events we coordinate with local speakers. Then, depending on the complexity, we decide which platform we use. As I was saying, Microsoft Teams for small events and Vimeo for large events. Once the medical area is clear about the date and time, they give me the contact information of the speakers. I coordinate with a supplier and an external production company in the other countries. They are in charge of coordinating the recording with the speaker, the recording in Ecuador. They tell us in which studios we are going to record the event. They are in charge of the editing, they are in charge of uploading the edited video to a web platform and they are in charge of the registration form. The external provider is in charge of the performance of the event as such, and they are about eight or ten people.
IN	Desde tu punto de vista, ¿cuáles son las principales ventajas y las desventajas de hacer eventos en línea?	In your opinion, what are the main advantages and disadvantages of online event marketing?
CA	La principal ventaja es que te permite hacerlo de forma masiva a un costo muy económico. Por ejemplo, cuando hacíamos los eventos presenciales en Ecuador, un evento para trescientas personas costaba unos ochenta mil dólares. Ahora, un evento ilimitado con ochocientos o mil participantes, cuesta alrededor de diez mil dólares. Entonces hay un ahorro de ocho veces de lo que normalmente costaba y además haces un evento más masivo. Entonces el principal beneficio con los eventos virtuales es el precio y hacerte masivo. ¿Y cuál sería el contra? Sería el tema de la cercanía. Los médicos son bastante apegados a estar presencialmente. Hoy por hoy nos están demandando y nos están pidiendo que hagamos de	The main advantage is that it allows you to do it massively at a very low cost. For example, when we held face-to-face events in Ecuador, an event for three hundred people used to cost about eighty thousand dollars. Now, an unlimited event with eight hundred or one thousand participants costs around ten thousand dollars. So there is a saving of eight times of what it normally used to cost and in addition you make a more massive event. So the main benefit with virtual events is the price and becoming massive. And what would be the downside? It would be the issue of proximity. Doctors are quite attached to being in person. Today they are

	eventos presenciales o híbridos. Porque ellos necesitan salir de sus casas, salir de sus consultorios. La pandemia también les golpeó porque solo pasaban en los hospitales, pasaban atendiendo emergencias de Covid-19. Y aparte seguir educándose con webinars, con eventos, ya les tenía saturados. Entonces ellos sí piden que busquemos cercanía. Otro beneficio de los eventos virtuales es que permiten tener el control de lo que se hace y de lo que se dice. Si algo no está dentro del guion, o los speakers se equivocaron, podemos repetir o editar. Podemos hacer preguntas preestablecidas de lo que yo pensaría que me van a preguntar los médicos sobre una temática. A veces los speakers están en España. Cuando nosotros vemos un webinar a las ocho de la noche, el speaker está en España durante la madrugada. Como no coincidimos en horarios debemos hacer eventos pregrabados. Y en estos eventos pregrabados se pierde la parte humana de poder contactar y hacer preguntas en tiempo real al speaker.	demanding and asking us to hold face-to-face or hybrid events. Because they need to get out of their homes, out of their offices. The pandemic also hit them because they were only in hospitals, they were attending Covid-19 emergencies. They were also saturated from webinars and online events. So they do seek proximity. Another benefit of virtual events is that they allow us to have control of what is done and what is said. If something is not in the script, or the speakers made a mistake, we can repeat or edit. We can ask pre-established questions about what we think the doctors are going to ask me about a topic. Sometimes the speakers are in Spain. When we watch a webinar at eight o'clock at night, the speaker is in Spain during the early hours of the morning. Since we don't have the same schedule, we have to do pre-recorded events. And in these pre-recorded events we lose the human side of being able to contact and ask questions in real time to the speaker.
IN	¿Cómo fue la respuesta del público durante los eventos en línea, cómo fue el engagement de los asistentes?	How was the public's response during the online events, how was the engagement of the attendees?
CA	Con los eventos tradicionales teníamos una tasa de ciento cincuenta asistentes. Invitábamos a quinientos y asistían ciento cincuenta. Esto luego fue creciendo de acuerdo a las funcionalidades, el performance y al efecto WOW que les dimos a los eventos. Cuando empezamos a grabar en escenarios virtuales, tuvimos un mayor crecimiento: pasamos de ciento cincuenta a trescientos de asistentes. Tuvimos los mismos quinientos invitados, pero subimos a trescientos asistentes. Ahora en los eventos con escenario virtual 3D, con fondo croma, tenemos un promedio de cuatrocientos invitados. Tenemos un ochenta por ciento de asistentes de nuestro público objetivo.	With the traditional events we had a rate of one hundred and fifty attendees. We would invite five hundred and one hundred and fifty would attend. This then grew according to the functionalities, the performance and the WOW effect we gave to the events. When we started recording on virtual stages, we had a bigger growth: we went from one hundred and fifty to three hundred attendees. We had the same five hundred guests, but we went up to three hundred attendees. Now in the events with 3D virtual stage, with chroma key, we have an average of four hundred guests. We have and average of eighty percent of attendees from our target audience.
IN	¿Cómo son las interacciones de los de los asistentes durante los eventos?	How were the attendee's interactions during the events?
CA	Cuando hacemos los eventos grandes, con quinientas personas, habilitamos el chat. Los asistentes pueden dejar ahí sus inquietudes. Hay bastante interacción en el chat, los médicos son bastantes preguntones, siempre dejan sus consultas. En algunos casos, cuando los eventos son 100% en vivo, se pueden solventar las dudas en ese momento. Cuando los eventos son pregrabados, recopilamos	When we hold large events, with five hundred people, we enable the chat. The attendees can leave their questions there. There is a lot of interaction in the chat, the doctors are very inquisitive, they always leave their questions. In some cases, when the events are 100% live, doubts can be solved at that moment. When the events are pre-recorded, we collect the

	las preguntas y se las pasamos al speaker después del evento. El speaker nos envía un email con las respuestas. Después enviamos un banco de preguntas y respuestas a todos los invitados del evento. Así se quedan resueltas todas las consultas que nos hicieron en los eventos grandes. En los eventos pequeños, los asistentes interactúan al final de cada ponencia. Si estamos en un evento en Microsoft Teams con ochenta o noventa personas, después de que el speaker acaba de dar su ponencia, se abre el micrófono. La charla dura una hora y las preguntas van entre treinta a cuarenta minutos. El engagement es bastante alto a nivel de participación, tanto en comentarios como en preguntas.	questions and pass them to the speaker after the event. The speaker sends us an email with the answers. Then we send a bank of questions and answers to all the guests of the event. This way, all the questions that were asked at the large events are resolved. In small events, attendees interact at the end of each presentation. If we are in a Microsoft Teams event with eighty or ninety people, after the speaker finishes his presentation, the microphone is opened. The talk lasts an hour and the questions go for thirty to forty minutes. The engagement is quite high in terms of participation, both in comments and questions.
IN	Desde tu punto de vista, ¿cuáles son las principales diferencias entre eventos presenciales y online con respecto al engagement de los asistentes?	What do you think are the main differences between face-to-face and online events regarding consumer experience?
CA	Yo creo que el engagement se ve afectado porque en los eventos en la línea las personas no tienen la capacidad de verse a los ojos y que te respondan con la verdad. Yo creo que los médicos buscan la verdad porque se topan temas súper delicados, por ejemplo, sobre la pandemia. Hablan sobre la evolución y cómo tratar la pandemia, cómo tratar el Covid-19 con pacientes que sufren de hipertensión arterial. Se escuchan casos bastante tristes de los médicos. Los médicos expositores desde sus casas sienten que están hablando solos, a pesar de que hay alguien por detrás escuchándoles. No es lo mismo que cuando estás presencialmente y puedes darle la mano o el brazo, y le preguntas al speaker o moderador sobre tal tema. Y algo que siempre escucho a los asistentes decir en los webinars es: 'ojalá pronto nos volvamos a ver'. Tanto los speakers como los moderadores, piden que los eventos sean presenciales. Se siente que el engagement hacia este tipo de eventos es bueno en la participación, pero falta el lado humano, una cercanía.	I believe that engagement is affected because in online events people do not have the ability to look each other in the eye and have them respond with the truth. I think that doctors are looking for the truth because they come across very sensitive topics, for example, about the pandemic. They talk about the evolution and how to treat the pandemic, how to treat Covid-19 with patients suffering from arterial hypertension. You hear some very sad cases from the doctors. The speakers from home feel like they are talking to themselves, even though there is someone in the back listening to them. It is not the same as when you are in person and you can shake hands, and you ask the speaker or moderator about such and such a topic. And something I always hear attendees say in webinars is: 'I hope we meet again soon'. Both speakers and moderators ask for the events to be face-to-face. I feel that the engagement towards this type of events is good in terms of participation, but the human side is missing, a closeness.
IN	¿Cómo evalúas si un evento online fue exitoso? ¿Cuáles son los KPIs que se midieron en el evento?	How do you evaluate whether an online event was successful? What are the KPIs that were measured at the event?
CA	Nosotros medimos por varios factores. Primero medimos el performance de la convocatoria. Por ejemplo, si enviamos una campaña de email marketing medimos cuántos emails se entregaron, cuál fue la apertura y cuántos dieron clic para registrarse al evento. De esta forma se mide el canal de email. Para el canal de WhatsApp nosotros hacemos mensajes personalizados con un bitly.	We measure by several factors. First, we measure the performance of the invitation. For example, if we send an email marketing campaign we measure how many emails were delivered, what was the open rate and how many clicked to register for the event. In this way we measure the email channel. For the WhatsApp channel we do personalized

	Como bitly tiene su propio reporte, nos muestra cuántas personas ingresaron a la plataforma y cuántas le dieron clic para registrarse. Yo veo los KPIs de convocatoria; qué canal es más efectivo, email o WhatsApp. Nosotros hemos visto que WhatsApp es mucho más efectivo que emailing. En una convocatoria por WhatsApp consigo quinientos clics, mientras por emailing consigo cien. Es mucho más fuerte la comunicación directa por WhatsApp. Después, cuando hacemos la convocatoria nos medimos por cuántas personas se registraron del universo de invitados. Por ejemplo si invité a quinientos, mido cuántos de esos quinientos se registraron. Cuando es el evento, mido el universo de invitados, el universo de registrados y el universo de asistentes. Por ejemplo, invité quinientos, se registraron cuatrocientos y finalmente entraron al evento en vivo trescientos. Con un factor clave con el que nos está yendo muy bien es el post-evento. Por ejemplo, nosotros por lo general invitamos a los médicos a eventos a las ocho de la noche. A las ocho de la noche nosotros consideramos que el médico acabó su turno, ya no está en el hospital, está en su casa. A muchos de ellos les interesa el tema, y a pesar de que están en el hospital, se conectan y pueden participar del evento. Pero hay otros que no se pueden conectar. Por esto hemos generado una campaña post-evento. Al día siguiente del evento enviamos a los asistentes un email agradeciéndoles por haber asistido. Y en el caso de que no hayan podido asistir, les damos la opción para que puedan ver el evento on demand. Nosotros dejamos disponible el evento on demand por dos o tres meses, dependiendo de la estrategia. Nosotros en vivo podemos tener trescientos asistentes, pero el día siguiente o durante los tres días siguientes, alcanzamos más de ochocientas visualizaciones únicas, solo como post-evento. A los médicos les gusta ver contenido on demand, como en Netflix, cuando ellos tengan disponibilidad y tiempo. Cuando hacemos los foros que duran dos meses, la plataforma te deja ver el contenido on demand. La plataforma está disponible durante un año, para que el médico pueda ver los diferentes contenidos a su necesidad. Nosotros decidimos desarrollar una plataforma, que la llamamos el 'Netflix de los médicos'. Es puro contenido audiovisual, donde en lugar de tener los típicos trailers de una serie o de una película, está un vídeo promocional del speaker. En ese video el speaker te invita a ver el evento, después tienes el evento como	messages with a bitly. As bitly has its own report, it shows us how many people entered the platform and how many clicked to register. I look at the engagement KPIs; which channel is more effective, email or WhatsApp. We have seen that WhatsApp is much more effective than emailing. In an invitation by WhatsApp I get five hundred clicks, while by emailing I get one hundred. Direct communication via WhatsApp is much stronger. Then, when we make the invitation, we measure how many people registered out of the universe of invited people. For example, if I invited five hundred people, I measure how many of those five hundred registered. When the event is held, I measure the universe of guests, the universe of registrants and the universe of attendees. For example, I invited five hundred, four hundred registered and three hundred finally entered the live event. A key factor, which is success for us, is the post-event. For example, we usually invite physicians to events at eight o'clock at night. At eight o'clock at night we consider that the doctor has finished his shift, he is no longer in the hospital, he is at home. Many of them are interested in the topic, and even though they are in the hospital, they connect and can participate in the event. But there are others who cannot connect. This is why we have generated a post-event campaign. The day after the event, we send the attendees an email, in which we thank them for attending. And in case they could not attend, we give them the option to watch the event on demand. We make the event available on demand for two or three months, depending on the strategy. We can have three hundred attendees live, but the next day or during the following three days, we reach more than eight hundred unique views, just as a post-event. Physicians like to watch content on demand, like Netflix, when they have availability and time. When we do the forums that are two months long, the platform lets you watch the content on demand. The platform is available for one year, so that the doctor can watch the different contents according to his needs. We decided to develop a platform, which we call

	tal, con traducción. Entendimos que al médico le gusta ir a los eventos. Ellos quieren tener el control y poder ver los eventos cuando ellos quieran. Esto pasa en toda Latinoamérica; en todos los eventos la gente se conecta on demand. Otro KPI que nosotros medimos en el evento en sí es el porcentaje de gente conectada. Vemos los picos cuando se conecta la gente, desde que se inició el evento con cero y cómo va creciendo y subiendo durante toda la charla. También vemos el porcentaje de concentración de la audiencia. Eso quiere decir cuánta gente en verdad estuvo viendo tu webinar y que no se cambió de pestaña en el navegador web. Por ejemplo si los asistentes fueron a otra pestaña, vieron sus redes sociales. La herramienta que usamos permite ver ese porcentaje de concentración de cuánta gente va viendo tu evento. También vemos el porcentaje de salida; cuánta gente va desistiendo del evento. También medimos las vistas únicas y las vistas totales. Hay gente que le gusta repetirse los eventos. Yo creo que ese tipo de KPIs son claves para medir si un evento exitoso.	'Netflix of doctors'. It is pure audiovisual content, where instead of having the typical trailers of a series or a movie, there is a promotional video of the speaker. In that video the speaker invites you to watch the event, then you have the event as such, with translation. We understood that doctors like to go to events. They want to have control and be able to see the events when they want. This happens all over Latin America; in all events people connect on demand. Another KPI we measure at the event itself is the percentage of people connected. We see the peaks when people connect, from when the event started with zero and how it is growing and rising during the whole talk. We also see the percentage of audience concentration. That means how many people were actually watching your webinar and did not switch tabs in the web browser. For example, if attendees went to another tab, saw their social networks. The tool we use allows us to see the concentration percentage of how many people are watching your event. We also see the exit percentage; how many people are dropping out of the event. We also measure unique views and total views. Some people like to repeat events. I think those kind of KPIs are key to measuring whether an event is successful.
IN	¿Cuáles son los principales desafíos cuando se organiza un evento online?	What were the main challenges of organizing an online event?
CA	Uno de los principales desafíos es la convocatoria. Porque la convocatoria a veces no depende cien por ciento de mi. O sea, yo puedo hacer la campaña, crear el arte, crear la estrategia. Hago la campaña de emailing, con una plataforma automatizada. El problema es con las campañas de WhatsApp. Como WhatsApp no fue creado para ser un canal masivo, sino un canal uno a uno, hacemos que nuestra fuerza de ventas haga el acercamiento al médico. Nosotros le damos a la fuerza de ventas el mensaje listo, la invitación lista, adaptada para WhatsApp. Pero la fuerza de ventas tiene que encargarse de invitar, y si la fuerza de ventas no hace esa convocatoria, pues no hay asistentes. Y eso me ha pasado en dos eventos. Donde el canal más efectivo fue email. WhatsApp tuvo poca este participación porque la fuerza de ventas no compartió el mensaje. A nivel del evento, una de los principales desafíos es la estabilidad de la plataforma. Que el evento no se	One of the main challenges is the invitation. Because the invitation sometimes does not depend one hundred percent on me. I mean, I can do the campaign, create the art, create the strategy. I do the emailing campaign, with an automated platform. The problem is with WhatsApp campaigns. Since WhatsApp was not created to be a mass channel, but a one-to-one channel, we need our sales force to reach the doctors. We give the sales force the message ready, the invitation ready, customized for WhatsApp. But the sales force has to be in charge of inviting, and if the sales force doesn't make that call, then there are no attendees. And that has happened to me in two events. Where the most effective channel was email. WhatsApp had little participation because the sales force did not share the message.

	vaya a caer, de que no hayan saltos. Me ha pasado, en este año he organizado más de ochenta eventos virtuales. De esos ochenta, en tres eventos se fue el internet, se cayó la plataforma, justo Vimeo sufrió un ataque mundial, de lo que me acuerdo. Fue chistoso, porque un miércoles tuve un evento con la plataforma Demio, que era con un proveedor uruguayo. Esta es la plataforma que te contaba que utilizábamos al principio, la que solo permitía tener activas tres cámaras y micrófonos al mismo tiempo. Cuando faltaban diez minutos para que se acabe el evento, se cayó el sitio, se cayó la plataforma de Demio. Fue una falla de tecnología, a veces las plataformas no depende de las personas. Al día siguiente día me pasa lo mismo. El evento que íbamos a hacer duraba originalmente una hora, pero se acabó a los 20 minutos. Esto pasó porque el servidor de Vimeo se cayó. Entonces, ni las plataformas Pro te garantizan que tú sientas que tienes el control propio de esa plataforma. Porque no depende del proveedor, no depende de ti, no depende del internet de tu casa. Se supone que el video ya está en la nube, ya está programado y simplemente tienes que darle play. Pero a veces no pasa. Me pasó con tres eventos de estos ochenta que te digo que he organizado. Nada es perfecto.	At the event itself, one of the main challenges is the stability of the platform. That the event does not fall down, that there are no jumps. It has happened to me, this year I have organized more than eighty virtual events. Of those eighty, in three events the internet went down, the platform fell, Vimeo suffered a worldwide attack, as far as I remember. It was funny, because one Wednesday I had an event with Demio platform, which was with an Uruguayan provider. This is the platform that I was telling you we used at the beginning, which only allowed three cameras and microphones to be active at the same time. When there were ten minutes left before the end of the event, the site went down, the Demio platform went down. It was a technology failure, sometimes platforms do not depend on people. The next day the same thing happened to me. The event we were going to do originally lasted an hour, but it was over after 20 minutes. This happened because the Vimeo server went down. So, not even the Pro platforms guarantee you feel you have control of that platform. Because it doesn't depend on the provider, it doesn't depend on you, it doesn't depend on your internet connection. It is supposed that the video is already in the cloud, it is already programmed and you just have to play it. But sometimes it doesn't happen. It happened to me with three of these eighty events that I tell you I have organized. Nothing is perfect.
IN	¿Me puedes contar sobre algún desafío para mantener el engagement de los asistentes al evento? O sea, cuando los asistentes están frente a una computadora, desde sus casas, ¿cómo se les puede mantener la atención hacia el evento?	Can you tell me about any challenge to maintain the engagement of the event attendees? I mean, when attendees are in front of a computer, from home, how can you keep their attention to the event?
CA	Lo principal es el contenido. El contenido que se haga debe ser muy relevante. Por ejemplo en el caso de nuestra compañía, el área de dirección médica se encarga del speaker y del contenido. Ellos una semana antes del evento revisan toda la presentación, revisan todos los temas que va a tratar el speaker para garantizar que la información que se va a compartir sea relevante y científicamente comprobada. También buscan speakers internacionales. O sea, se tiene que invertir en traer algo bueno. Tener speakers de España o de Argentina, buscar a gente experta que en verdad domine el tema y que traiga temas disruptivos.	The main aspect is the content. The content that is made must be very relevant. For example, in the case of our company, the medical management area is in charge of the speaker and the content. One week before the event, they review all the presentation, they review all the topics that the speaker is going to address to ensure that the information to be shared is relevant and scientifically proven. They also look for international speakers. In other words, they have to invest in bringing something good. Have speakers from Spain or Argentina, look for experts who really master the subject and bring disruptive topics.

IN	¿Cuáles crees tú que son las mejores prácticas para realizar un evento? ¿Tienes algunos ejemplos o tips para organizar eventos?	What do you think are the best practices when organizing an online event? Do you have any examples or tips for organizing events?
CA	Me acuerdo que cuando me contrataron me preguntaron: ¿Sabes hacer eventos virtuales? Y yo dije: 'Sí, sí, claro'. Y yo nunca había hecho un webinar, nada más allá de una reunión de Zoom antes de la pandemia. No sabía lo complicado que es hacer webinars, tener el control, ver el 360 de lo que eso conlleva. Como mejores prácticas te diría que lo primero es tener claro un plan o estrategia de difusión y convocatoria. El segundo punto sería contratar una herramienta que te de soporte, una estabilidad buena y que sepas dominarla. Si tú no eres el experto, debes tener un proveedor que te de soporte. Tener un equipo técnico que te ayude a solventar cualquier cosa que se pueda presentar ese momento. Y el tercer punto sería el contenido. Saber qué vas a decir y que el contenido que vas a compartir sea único, que no se pueda encontrar en cualquier otro lado del internet, que no esté en Youtube o en otro video, sino que en verdad sea un contenido que le genere valor a tu grupo objetivo. Nosotros ocupamos bastante la estrategia de inbound marketing, donde el contenido es lo que predomina en toda la estrategia. Yo creo que eso es lo que te da un valor agregado; tener un buen speaker, que la temática sea interesante para tu público objetivo, tener claro el plan de difusión y tener soporte técnico en la herramienta que vas a utilizar. Además uno debe saber medirse, qué KPIs vas medir antes, después o durante el evento. En el mundo digital hay tantos KPIs, se puede medir todo. Esa es una de las bondades del tema digital; que puedes medir absolutamente todo. Pero no todos los KPIs te generan valor, entonces hay que saber qué datos tomar para crear el informe final.	I remember when they hired me they asked me: 'Do you know how to organize virtual events? And I said, 'Yeah, yeah, sure'. And I had never done a webinar, nothing beyond a Zoom meeting before the pandemic. I didn't know how complicated it is to do webinars, to have control, to see the 360 of what that entails. As best practices, I would say that the first thing is to have a clear plan or strategy for dissemination and invitation. The second point would be to hire a tool that gives you support, good stability and that you know how to master it. If you are not the expert, you must have a provider to support you. Have a technical team to help you solve anything that may arise at that moment. And the third point would be the content. Know what you are going to say and that the content you are going to share is unique, that it cannot be found anywhere else on the Internet, that it is not on YouTube or in another video, but that it is really a content that generates value to your target group. We use inbound marketing strategies, where the content is what dominates the whole strategy. I think that an added value is generated by; having a good speaker, that the subject matter is interesting for your target audience, having a clear dissemination plan and having technical support in the tool you are going to use. You must also know how to measure yourself, what KPIs you are going to measure before, after or during the event. In the digital world there are so many KPIs, you can measure everything. That is one of the benefits of digital; you can measure absolutely everything. But not all KPIs generate value, so you have to know what data to take into account to create the final report.
IN	Ahora que estamos regresando a la 'normalidad', ¿la empresa va a seguir realizando eventos online?	Now that we are slowly returning to 'normal', will the company continue to organize online events?
CA	Sí, vamos a mantener los eventos virtuales. Y también vamos a tener eventos híbridos. Como corporación, 'Medicamenta' pertenece a un grupo que se llama 'Tecnofarma'. 'Tecnofarma' tiene doce filiales. Nuestra casa matriz dio las	Yes, we are going to keep the virtual events. And we will also have hybrid events. As a corporation, 'Medicamenta' belongs to a group called 'Tecnofarma'. 'Tecnofarma' has twelve subsidiaries. Our parent company gave

	directrices que para que en el segundo semestre del 2022 se evalúe si se van a hacer eventos presenciales. La estrategia principal es que todos los eventos de educación médica sean virtuales. Por ejemplo nosotros compramos licencias o membresías para eventos internacionales de médicos. Los médicos estaban acostumbrados a asistir a foros internacionales, por ejemplo a Suiza. Entonces el laboratorio farmacéutico normalmente llevaba a diez médicos a Suiza presencialmente. Son congresos anuales de ciertos temas y los médicos están acostumbrados asistir. Ahora lo que nosotros hacemos es adquirir las licencias para los eventos virtuales, que antes se hacían presencialmente. Pero como te mencionaba, también hay personas que ya nos piden hacer eventos presenciales. Por eso nosotros vamos a tener nuestro primer evento híbrido el 23 de octubre. Vamos a hacer un Summit en el Swisshotel. En el hotel, el evento va a ser presencial para ciento cincuenta personas y otras doscientos cincuenta personas van a estar de manera virtual. Unos speakers van a venir a Ecuador y otros speakers van a estar conectados desde otros países. Vamos a empezar a manejar eventos híbridos porque las personas nos piden este tipo de experiencias. En noviembre tenemos el segundo evento híbrido. Vamos a la ciudad de Manta, donde vamos a llevar a un cierto grupo de médicos a una convención durante un fin de semana y otro grupo va a estar de manera remota. En el evento se va a hablar sobre casos prácticos para médicos. Vamos a compartir la señal de un Instituto de Argentina, donde van a estar los médicos más representativos del tema de Alzheimer en Argentina. Ellos van a dar charlas con pacientes reales en vivo sobre la patología de Alzheimer. Y nuestros médicos en Ecuador, y de algunos países de la región, van a poder interactuar de manera virtual con estas personas. Los médicos de Ecuador van a estar presencialmente en un hotel, pero la señal de la conferencia va a ser compartida desde Argentina. De esta forma van a participar en tiempo real. También vamos a tener médicos conectados de otros países de la región que van a interactuar con los médicos de renombre de Argentina. Como ves, ya estamos manejando eventos híbridos. Y, ¿cuál es la estrategia para estos eventos híbridos? Es no pensar solo en digital, ni tampoco en presencial. Es pensar omnichannel. Yo estoy tratando de meterle ese chip a los gerentes de unidades de negocio. Lo digital no reemplaza a lo	the guidelines so that in the second half of 2022 we will evaluate if we are going to have face-to-face events. The main strategy is that all medical education events will be virtual. For example, we buy licenses or memberships for international events for physicians. Doctors were used to attending international forums, for example in Switzerland. Then the pharmaceutical laboratory usually took ten doctors to Switzerland in person. These are annual congresses on certain topics and doctors are used to attending. Now what we do is to acquire the licenses for the virtual events, which used to be done in person. But as I mentioned, there are also people who are already asking us to do face-to-face events. That is why we are going to have our first hybrid event on October 23rd. We are going to have a Summit at Swisshotel. At the hotel, the event will be a face-to-face for one hundred and fifty people and another two hundred and fifty people will be there virtually. Some speakers will come to Ecuador and other speakers will be connected from other countries. We are going to start organizing hybrid events because people are asking us for this type of experience. In November we have the second hybrid event. We are going to the city of Manta, where we are going to take a certain group of doctors to a convention during a weekend and another group is going to participate remotely. At the event we are going to talk about case studies for physicians. We are going to share the signal of an Institute in Argentina, where the most representative Argentinean doctors are going to be. They will give live talks with real patients about Alzheimer's pathology. And our doctors in Ecuador, and in some countries of the region, will be able to interact virtually with these people. The doctors from Ecuador will be in a hotel, but the conference signal will be shared from Argentina. In this way they will be able to participate in real time. We will also have doctors connected from other countries in the region who will interact with renowned doctors from Argentina. As you can see, we are already managing hybrid events. And what is the strategy for these hybrid events? It is not to think only digital, nor only face-to-face. It is to think omnichannel. I am trying to get that chip into

	presencial, ni lo presencial reemplaza a lo digital, sino que se complementan. En una estrategia omnichannel, envío una invitación física y envió una invitación digital. Invito a los asistentes presencialmente y también los invito virtualmente. Los invitados van a poder decidir cómo se sienten más cómodos. Obviamente que el evento presencial va a tener un aforo limitado y los asistentes que confirmen primero su asistencia, tendrán la preferencia de ir presencialmente. Y los que no, tendrán que hacerlo de manera virtual.	the minds of business unit managers. Digital does not replace face-to-face, nor does face-to-face replace digital, but rather they complement each other. In an omnichannel strategy, I send a physical invitation and I send a digital invitation. I invite attendees in person and I also invite them virtually. The guests will be able to decide how they feel most comfortable. Obviously, the in-person event will have a limited capacity and the attendees who confirm their attendance first, will have the preference to go in person. And those who do not, will have to do it virtually.
IN	¿Cuál es tu opinión sobre los eventos híbridos?	What is your opinion on hybrid events?
CA	Los eventos híbridos son el futuro. Muchas empresas internacionales, que son las que organizan eventos presenciales, están vendiendo licencias para que los médicos asistan virtual o presencialmente. Es decisión del laboratorio farmacéutico, si toma la opción virtual o presencial para invitar a sus médicos. Hacia allá va la tendencia actualmente. A la pandemia aún no la hemos superado. No sabemos si el próximo año o en los próximos dos años la superaremos. No podemos volver a la normalidad de antes, entonces tenemos que convivir con el tema híbrido. Los roles de las compañías y de los estrategas de marketing es pesar en ser omnichannel.	Hybrid events are the future. Many international companies, which are the ones that organize face-to-face events, are selling licenses for doctors to attend virtually or face-to-face. It is up to the pharmaceutical laboratory to decide whether to invite its doctors virtually or in person. That is where the trend is currently heading. We have not yet overcome the pandemic. We don't know if we will overcome it next year or in the next two years. We can't go back to business as usual, so we have to live with the hybrid approach. The role of companies and marketing strategists is to think about being omnichannel.
IN	¿Has usado tecnología de realidad virtual o realidad aumentada en marketing de eventos? ¿Estarías interesado?	Have you used VR technology in marketing events? Would you be interested?
CA	Sí, en el mes de junio de este año lanzamos una plataforma de realidad aumentada. Desarrollamos un módulo con más de veintiún elementos 3D, como órganos, sistemas, aparatos, etc., para la educación anatómica de los estudiantes de Medicina. Mi estrategia es llegar tempranamente a nuevas audiencias, porque el mercado estaba pensando solo en los médicos tradicionales. Y los médicos tradicionales tienen cincuenta o sesenta años. Uno tiene que ver más atrás. Tenemos que llegar desde temprana edad a los estudiantes de medicina, a los recién graduados, a los que están haciendo pasantías. Construimos una plataforma de realidad aumentada donde hay veintiún elementos 3D. Como ellos no pueden ir a clases presenciales, ahora tienen un laboratorio virtual. Aquí en Ecuador hay veintidós facultades de Medicina, pero solo tres tienen laboratorios virtuales. Entonces hay un universo de personas que no tienen acceso a este tipo de tecnología, y nosotros les estamos proporcionando	Yes, in June of this year we launched an augmented reality platform. We developed a module with more than twenty-one 3D elements, such as organs, systems, etc., for the anatomical education of medical students. My strategy is to reach new audiences early, because the market was thinking only of traditional doctors. And traditional physicians are fifty or sixty years old. You have to look further back. We have to reach medical students, recent graduates, those who are doing internships, at an early age. We built an augmented reality platform where there are twenty-one 3D elements. Since they cannot attend classes in person, they now have a virtual laboratory. Here in Ecuador there are twenty-two medical schools, but only three have virtual laboratories. So there is a universe of people who do not have access to this type of technology, and we are providing

	esta oportunidad. Creamos también esta plataforma para los médicos locales, que son speakers y que quieren compartir esto en sus ponencias. Ellos pueden ocupar esta tecnología para proyectar un órgano 3D durante sus charlas. También desarrollamos esta tecnología para que los médicos la ocupen con sus pacientes. Que la visita de los pacientes sea mucho más interactiva, más dinámica, mostrando los órganos. Que los médicos puedan decir a sus pacientes: 'aquí está el corazón, en esta arteria es donde usted tiene su enfermedad'. De esta forma la visita al médico se vuelve más didáctica. Dentro de los eventos virtuales también hemos hecho invitaciones de realidad aumentada. Tuvimos un lanzamiento el año pasado, donde hicimos invitaciones de realidad aumentada. También dentro de los escenarios 3D, proyectamos hologramas y objetos en 3D de órganos mientras el speaker está hablando. Ocupamos bastante tecnología en 3D.	them with this opportunity. We also created this platform for local doctors who are speakers and who want to share this in their presentations. They can use this technology to project a 3D organ during their talks. We also developed this technology for doctors to use with their patients. So that the patients' visit can be much more interactive, more dynamic, showing the organs. That doctors can say to their patients: 'here is the heart, in this artery is where you have your disease'. In this way the visit to the doctor becomes more didactic. Within the virtual events we have also made augmented reality invitations. We had a launch last year, where we made augmented reality invitations. Also within 3D scenarios, we project holograms and 3D objects of organs while the speaker is talking. We use quite a lot of 3D technology.
IN	¿Cuál crees que serían las ventajas de utilizar realidad virtual o realidad aumentada en eventos?	What do you think would be the advantages of using virtual reality or augmented reality in events?
CA	Primero, como industria o como empresa estamos impulsando la transformación digital en los profesionales de la salud. Esta industria es bastante innovadora en el desarrollo de medicamentos, pero es bastante tradicional en el tema de comunicación y plataformas. Los médicos no son muy innovadores hacia el tema de transformación digital. Entonces con el uso de estas tecnologías tenemos como propósito de marca impulsar la transformación digital para que los médicos tengan herramientas que impulsen su desarrollo profesional. Les damos herramientas para que ellos crezcan como profesionales, y nosotros llegamos a su top of mind porque nadie en la competencia les está dando ese tipo de experiencias. Este tipo de innovaciones dan un valor agregado, para que cuando piensen en 'Medicamenta', piensen en realidad aumentada. Que la empresa sea un sinónimo de innovación. Nosotros estamos adoptando tecnologías diferentes y las evaluamos para ver si responden al performance que queremos. Por ejemplo, para los eventos presenciales en noviembre vamos a tener gafas de realidad virtual. Así los ochenta médicos van a tener una experiencia sensorial del Alzheimer. Vamos a mostrar un video 3D con movimiento para que ellos sientan la experiencia que tiene un paciente con Alzheimer. Nosotros, como te decía, buscamos ser	First, as an industry or as a company we are driving digital transformation in healthcare professionals. This industry is quite innovative in drug development, but it is quite traditional in the topic of communication and platforms. Doctors are not very innovative towards the topic of digital transformation. So with the use of these technologies, our brand purpose is to drive digital transformation so that doctors have tools that boost their professional development. We give tools for them to grow as professionals, and we reach their top of mind because no one in the competition is giving them that kind of experience. This type of innovation provides added value, so that when they think of 'Medicamenta', they think of augmented reality. We want the company to be synonymous with innovation. We are adopting different technologies and we evaluate them to see if they respond to the performance we want. For example, for face-to-face events in November we are going to have virtual reality glasses. So the eighty doctors will have a sensory experience of Alzheimer's disease. We are going to show a 3D video with movement so that they can feel the experience of an Alzheimer's patient. As I was saying, we are looking to be omnichannel; to bring digital to face-to-face.

	omnichannel; para llevar lo digital a lo presencial. Buscamos tener un efecto WOW en la experiencia.	We want to have a WOW effect in the experience.
IN	¿Cuáles crees que van a ser las tendencias de marketing de eventos en el futuro?	What are the trends you see in event marketing in the future?
CA	Yo te diría que el tema híbrido se va a quedar durante un buen tiempo. La gente está cansada del webinar tradicional. Creo que todas las empresas, todas las industrias, utilizaron demasiado ese recurso. Todas las personas están cansadas. Los médicos, que generalmente reciben información sobre medicamentos de unos veinte laboratorios farmacéuticos, están cansados del típico webinar. Yo creo que la tendencia es hacer eventos híbridos. Hay que buscar cómo dar una experiencia híbrida a los asistentes. Si los asistentes van al evento presencial, deben también tener una experiencia sensorial digital que marque la diferencia. Y si asisten a un evento virtual, deben también tener una experiencia física. Las empresas tenemos que ver cómo cautivar a las audiencias digitales y cómo cautivar a las audiencias presenciales. Hay también que prestar atención al omnichannel porque a las personas les gusta recibir invitaciones físicas, merchandising del evento, etc. A pesar de que enviar un email resulte más barato, las personas necesitan sentir que existe un evento que es real, que lo puedan palpar a través algo físico. Debemos tener una estrategia omnichannel que permita pensar más allá de lo presencial y lo digital.	I would tell you that the hybrid aspect is going to be around for quite a while. People are tired of the traditional webinar. I think every company, every industry, overused that resource. All people are tired of it. Doctors, who usually receive information about drugs from about twenty pharmaceutical laboratories, are tired of the typical webinar. I think the trend is to do hybrid events. You have to look at how to give a hybrid experience to the attendees. If attendees go to the face-to-face event, they should also have a digital sensory experience that makes a difference. And if they attend a virtual event, they must also have a physical experience. Companies have to look at how to captivate digital audiences and how to captivate in-person audiences. We also have to pay attention to omnichannel because people like to receive physical invitations, event merchandising, etc. Even though sending an email is cheaper, people need to feel that there is an event that is real, that they can feel it through something physical. We must have an omnichannel strategy that allows us to think beyond face-to-face and digital.

Annex 4 - Interview transcript and translation - M. Lopez – Event organizer

Interviewer: Julia Camila Bonilla Merino
Interviewee: M. Lopez
Date of interview: 07 October 2021
Length of interview: 00:40:28
List of acronyms: IN=Interviewer, ML=M.Lopez

About the interviewee: M.Lopez is a communication planner and advertiser. At the time of the interview, she worked as a freelancer in event organization and influencer marketing. She works with film media producer and organizes the events around film and series releases in Ecuador.

Speaker	Transcription in original language (Spanish)	Translation in English (by the author)
IN	¿Las marcas con las que tú trabajas utilizan marketing de eventos como parte de su plan de marketing?	Do the brands you work with use event marketing as part of their marketing plan?
ML	Sí, totalmente. Justamente lo que yo hago es el manejo de talentos, por ejemplo influencers. Ellos trabajan siempre sus redes sociales. Y además trabajo con una gran productora, no es solo una productora, también es una media publisher, que se llama Touché Films. Que es de la división de 2btube de España. Con ellos lanzamos varios productos audiovisuales, entre ellos películas, series, etc. Todo esto precisa siempre de eventos para la socialización. Entonces sí, trabajamos mucho con eventos.	Yes, absolutely. Precisely what I do is talent management, for example influencers. They always work on their social networks. And I also work with a great film production company, it's not just a film production company, it's also a media publisher, which is called Touché Films. It is part of the 2btube division in Spain. With them we launch various audiovisual products, including films, series, etc. All this always requires events for socialization. So yes, we work a lot with events.
IN	¿Qué tipo de eventos organizas para el cliente?	What kind of events do you organize for the client?
ML	Depende. Cuando hablamos de películas, hacemos lanzamientos. Estamos hablando de que al lado del lanzamiento de una película, siempre está a un preestreno, un avant premiere, una alfombra roja, una rueda de prensa, eventos especiales o eventos privados. Eso es cuando hacemos los seriados, las películas. Lo que se hace mucho ahora, y esto pasó a raíz del COVID, es eventos de empresas. Muchas empresas, por ejemplo, tenían sus presupuestos listos para sus aniversarios, para sus festejos, y les tocó volcar todo eso a eventos en eventos online. Entonces como nosotros también manejamos representación de talentos, empezó un boom en contratar a comediantes de stand up comedy, actores para amenizar los eventos ya que no iban a tener los eventos públicos. Entonces, por un lado la parte de los actores subió un poco, pero la de los músicos, creo yo que bajó. Porque la gente prefería	It depends. When we talk about movies, we do launches. In addition to the launching of a film, there is always a preview, an avant premiere, a red carpet, a press conference, special events or private events. That's when we do the series, the movies. What we do a lot now, and this happened as a result of COVID, is corporate events. Many companies, for example, had their budgets ready for their anniversaries, for their celebrations, and they had to turn everything into online events. Then, as we also manage talent representation, there was a boom in hiring stand-up comedians, actors to entertain the events since they were not going to have public events. So, on the one hand, the actors' part went up a little, but the musicians' part, I think, went down. Because people preferred to hire

	contratar comediantes o actores, en lugar de un músicos online.	comedians or actors, instead of online musicians.
IN	Antes del Covid-19, ¿cómo era el balance de tus eventos? ¿la mayoría eran presenciales? ¿O también tenías eventos online?	Before Covid-19, what was the balance of your events like, were most of them face-to-face, or did you also have online events?
ML	Los eventos online eran muy poco. O sea, fue super chistoso porque nosotros justamente antes del COVID, ya teníamos todo el calendario lleno para el 2020. Cami, nosotros habíamos acabado de estrenar 'Dedicada a mi ex', la película más taquillera en la historia del cine ecuatoriano. Esa película la lanzamos nosotros en septiembre del 2019. Y justamente con el lanzamiento de la película y el hecho de que fue la más taquillera, nos empezaron a nominar en muchos premios. Entonces yo tenía la agenda llena como hasta junio del 2020. Teníamos invitaciones a los Royal Awards, a los Ekos Awards, teníamos una invitación al +Cartagena. Íbamos a ir al Brandcast de Youtube en México para lanzar la serie 'Mortal Glitch', que hicimos con Youtube Originals. Yo tenía toda la agenda llena. Y de pronto, fue así como me acuerdo, recibí la primera llamada, la recibí de México, que fue: 'Ana Cris, acabamos de suspender el Brandcast, no se va a llevar a cabo'. Esto era cuando uno todavía no tomaba toda la situación tan enserio. Entonces recibí la primera llamada y pregunté: ¿en serio lo van a suspender?' Y dijeron: 'Sí, lo vamos a suspender'. Al siguiente día se iban cayendo los eventos como fichas de dominó. Entonces, 'Ana Cris, que vamos a suspender el Royal Awards, que vamos a suspender el Eko Awards'. Y así, nos iban llegando los emails de todo lo que se suspendía. Y de pronto, nos quedamos sin nada. Yo me quedé viendo mi computadora y dije: 'Dios mío, me quedé sin trabajo. Me quedé sin trabajo porque no tengo nada que hacer, ya todo se suspendió'. Entonces se suspendió todo. Y claro, luego vino la siguiente etapa en la que hablé con los con los chicos y fue como: 'bueno, no hay eventos, ¿qué hacemos?'. Imagínate, se nos cayeron producciones, teníamos la orden de rodaje para varios sketches que teníamos que grabar. Todo eso se cayó; rodajes, producciones. Ese rato nos preguntamos '¿qué hacemos, qué hacemos?' Y, pues se nos ocurrió empezar a hacer lives. Fue muy chistoso, porque ahí es cuando los lives despuntaron. Empezamos a hacer lives en el canal de EnchufeTV, empezamos a tener invitados especiales. Así que fue una oportunidad para	The online events were very few. I mean, it was super funny because just before COVID, we already had a full calendar for 2020. Cami, we had just released 'Dedicada a mi ex', the highest grossing film in the history of Ecuadorian cinema. We released that film in September 2019. And precisely with the release of the film and the fact that it was the highest grossing, we began to be nominated for many awards. So I had a full schedule until June 2020. We had invitations to the Royal Awards, to the Ekos Awards, we had an invitation to +Cartagena. We were going to go to the Youtube Brandcast in Mexico to launch the series 'Mortal Glitch', which we did in collaboration with Youtube Originals. I had a full schedule. And suddenly, that's how I remember, I received the first call, I received it from Mexico, which was: 'Ana Cris, we just canceled the Brandcast, it will not take place'. This was when one did not yet take the whole situation so seriously. Then I received the first call and asked: 'Are you really going to cancel it?' And they said: 'Yes, we are going to cancel it'. The next day the events were falling like dominoes. Then, 'Ana Cris, we are going to cancel the Royal Awards, we are going to cancel the Eko Awards'. And so, we kept receiving emails of everything that was being canceled. And suddenly, we were left with nothing. I was looking at my computer and I said, 'Oh my God, I'm out of work. I'm out of work because I have nothing to do, everything is canceled'. So everything was canceled. And of course, then came the next stage where I talked to the guys and it was like, 'well, there are no events, what do we do?' Imagine, we dropped productions, we had the shooting order for several sketches that we had to film. All of that fell through; shootings, productions. That time we asked ourselves 'what do we do, what do we do?' And, well, it occurred to us to start making lives. It was very funny, because that's when the lives took off. We started doing lives on the EnchufeTV channel, we started to have

	conectarnos con inflluencers de todo el mundo porque les invitamos a hacer lives. Con eso empezamos a hacer cosas online, empezamos a organizar eventos online, y todo se volvió digital. Eso fue lo que salvó hasta cierto punto todo. Finalmente para nosotros a nivel digital, porque yo más que organizadora de eventos soy publicista, nos terminó beneficiando el hecho de que la gente se volcó a las plataformas digitales.	special guests. So it was an opportunity to connect with influencers from all over the world because we invited them to do lives. With that we started doing things online, we started organizing online events, and everything went digital. That's what saved everything to a certain extent. Finally for us on a digital level, because I more than an event organizer I am a publicist, we ended up profiting from the fact that people turned to digital platforms.
IN	¿Los eventos que empezaron a organizar fueron desde el canal de EnchufeTV? ¿Las organizaciones que organizaban los eventos de los premio, como el que dijiste que es de México, también hacían eventos en línea?	The events you started organizing were from the EnchufeTV channel? Did the companies that organized the award events, like the one you said from Mexico, also organized online events?
ML	En caso de Touché Films, la empresa con la que yo trabajo, yo me encargaba de la organización, de convocar a los talentos, de organizar las fechas, las horas, todo para que el equipo esté listo. Luego nos reuníamos para chequear el guion. Después hacíamos una prueba de sonido. Porque siempre pasa esto de que a alguno no le funciona el internet, está mal iluminado, etc. Teníamos que chequear todo eso y fuimos aprendiendo en el camino. Nos pasaban full cosas y ese rato como estábamos encerrados, tampoco podíamos hacer mucho. Con lo que tuvimos, nos lanzamos. Y luego, sí hubo algunos eventos que al final se terminaron llevando a cabo online. Por ejemplo los Eko Awards. Los Royal Awards no. Los Royal Awards se suspendieron totalmente y ellos ahora lo van a volver a hacer, ya me mandaron la invitación para noviembre de este año, lo van a hacer presencial. Pero ellos no hicieron nada digital. Hubo algunos que sí se subieron a la plataforma digital y otros que prefirieron suspender totalmente.	In the case of Touché Films, the company I work with, I was in charge of the organization, arranging the talents, organizing the dates, the times, everything so that the team would be ready. Then we would meet to check the script. Then we would do a sound check. Because it always happens that someone's internet doesn't work, the lighting is not good, etc. We had to check all that and we were learning along the way. Full things were happening to us and that time, as we were locked up, we couldn't do much either. With what we had, we went for it. And then, there were some events that ended up taking place online. For example, the Eko Awards. The Royal Awards didn't. The Royal Awards were totally canceled and now they are going to do it again, they already sent me the invitation for November of this year, they are going to do it in person. But they didn't do anything digital. There were some that decided to use the digital platform and others that preferred to cancel it altogether.
IN	¿Cómo podrías describir la evolución desde el primer evento que organizaron en línea, hasta alguno de los últimos eventos que han hecho?	How could you describe the evolution from the first event you organized online, to some of the last events you have done?
ML	Ha evolucionado súper rápido. Desde la calidad, por ejemplo teníamos un anfitrión que se conectaba con su webcam. La webcam era de pésima calidad, el sonido era pésimo. Al principio nos costó un poco ver cómo funcionaba la audiencia en el formato digital en vivo. Ver cómo reaccionaban mejor a ciertas cosas en vivo. A veces el anfitrión decía cosas en vivo que no debía decir, se armaba un caos. Luego poco a poco empezamos a ver las buenas prácticas. Les empezamos a decir a los	It has evolved super fast. From the quality, for example we had a host who used his webcam to join. The webcam was of lousy quality, the sound was lousy. At the beginning it was a bit difficult to see how the audience worked in the live digital format. To see how they would react better to certain things live. Sometimes the host would say things live that he shouldn't say, it was chaos. Then little by little we started to see the best practices. We started to

	influencers: ‘oye, por si acaso te van a decir esto, va a pasar esto, ten listo esto’. Al anfitrión le hicimos llegar un backing para que tenga un fondo mas bonito, le hicimos llegar una webcam más decente. Mejoramos las artes del canal de Youtube. También mejoramos las artes de difusión del evento. Al principio fundíamos solo en el canal y las redes de EnchufeTV. Después pasábamos a los influencers para que ellos también lo difundan en sus redes sociales. Al principio no sabíamos cómo vender nuestro contenido con marcas. Buscábamos marcas que se asocien, pero no sabíamos cómo vendernos, no sabíamos cómo promocionarnos. Ahora ya tenemos todo un equipo súper formado. El próximo miércoles tenemos la premier de la última película de EnchufeTV, que se llama ‘Misfit’ y hemos levantado una gran cantidad de auspiciantes para el evento. Es un evento híbrido. Va a ser un evento físico y tiene su parte digital. Ya tenemos súper bien calculado cuál es la parte digital, cuál es la parte física, y cómo hacer que ambas convivan y funcionen. Cómo hacer algo atractivo para las marcas y algo atractivo para los influencers, para que se difunda. Cómo manejarnos con los medios de comunicación, cómo manejar la difusión, etc. Ahora estamos muchísimo más preparados, muchísimo más capacitados y experimentados.	tell the influencers: 'hey, just in case they are going to say this, this is going to happen, have this ready'. We gave the host a backing for a nicer background, we gave him a more decent webcam. We improved the artwork for the Youtube channel. We also improved the artwork for the broadcasting of the event. At the beginning we broadcasted only on EnchufeTV's channel and networks. Then we passed it to the influencers so that they also spread it on their social networks. At the beginning we didn't know how to sell our content with brands. We were looking for brands to partner with, but we didn't know how to sell ourselves, we didn't know how to promote ourselves. Now we have a whole team that is very well organized. Next Wednesday we have the premiere of EnchufeTV's latest movie, which is called 'Misfit' and we have raised a lot of sponsors for the event. It's a hybrid event. It's going to be a physical event and it has a digital part. We have already calculated very well what is the digital part, what is the physical part, and how to make both coexist and work. How to make something attractive for brands and something attractive for influencers, so that it reaches out. How to manage with the media, how to manage the diffusion, etc. Now we are much more prepared, much more trained and experienced.
IN	Ustedes utilizan pauta para promocionar los eventos? Si utilizan pauta, ¿en qué canales?	Do you use advertising to promote the events? If you use advertising, in which channels?
ML	Bueno, eso depende mucho del evento. Algo que empezamos a hacer desde el año pasado fue webinars. Entonces, depende mucho porque tú puedes tener un evento para marcas, un evento quizás solo para para ejecutivos de marketing, como eventos son privados. Otros eventos que son talleres para enseñar cosas a los influencers. Y también eventos públicos. Cuando son los eventos privados, donde invitamos a un cierto número de personas, se maneja mailing con calendarios. Por otro lado, cuando son los eventos públicos, como para el estreno de la película, estamos manejando bastante pauta en diferentes canales digitales, tanto de nosotros como de nuestros auspiciantes.	Well, that depends a lot on the event. Something we started doing last year was webinars. So, it depends a lot because you can have an event for brands, an event maybe just for marketing executives, like private events. Other events that are workshops to teach things to influencers. And also public events. When it comes to private events, where we invite a certain number of people, we handle mailings with calendars. On the other hand, when it comes to public events, such as the premiere of the film, we are handling a lot of advertising in different digital channels, both from us and our sponsors.
IN	¿Cómo está compuesto tu equipo de trabajo al momento de realizar los eventos?	How is your team structured at the time of the events?
ML	Yo estoy liderando la parte comercial de influencers, por ejemplo vamos a hacer un evento y necesitamos que el evento se financie solo. Entonces hacemos la idea creativa, nos unimos al	I am leading the commercial part of influencers, for example we are going to do an event and we need the event to be self funded. Then we do the creative idea, we join the

	equipo creativo para ver cómo hacemos un evento atractivo. Tenemos a una persona de redes sociales, o sea una persona de digital, que es la que ve cómo plasmar esa creatividad no solo a nivel físico, sino también a nivel virtual. A nivel de redes sociales, tenemos a una persona comercial, específicamente financiera para ver números y ver cuánto nos va a costar el evento, cuánto deberíamos pedir a las marcas para poder ganar. También tenemos un talent manager y una persona de PR, que se encargan de las relaciones públicas. Ellos se encargan de ver a quién vamos a invitar, qué medios de comunicación vamos a invitar, a qué influencers, a qué personas. Cómo les vamos a invitar, a través de email, a través de una invitación física. También tenemos un productor que es el encargado de llevar a cabo la logística del evento. A esto se añaden los planners, que son los que se encargan a nivel digital de la pautar y difusión en redes sociales. Las personas involucradas dependen del tipo de evento, en este caso estamos hablando del lanzamiento de una película.	creative team to see how to make an attractive event. We have a social media manager, that is, a digital team member, who is the one who sees how to capture that creativity not only on a physical level, but also on a virtual level. At the social media level, we have a commercial specialist, specifically a financial specialist to look at the numbers and see how much the event is going to cost us, how much we should ask the brands in order to win. We also have a talent manager and a PR manager, who are in charge of public relations. They are in charge of seeing who we are going to invite, which media we are going to invite, which influencers, which people. How we are going to invite them, through email, through a physical invitation. We also have a producer who is in charge of carrying out the logistics of the event. To this we add the planners, who are in charge of the digital level of advertising and promotion on social networks. The people involved depend on the type of event, in this case we are talking about the launch of a movie.
IN	¿Qué plataformas utilizan para transmitir los eventos?	What platforms do you use to broadcast the events?
ML	La herramienta que nosotros utilizamos es generalmente Zoom. También tenemos una persona encargada de las transmisiones en vivo, entonces él se encarga de conectar el Zoom a las plataformas. También hemos hecho eventos a través de Youtube. De hecho, hemos utilizado mucho las herramientas de Google para mailing y calendarios. Hemos utilizado varias plataformas, pero yo creo que la más usada ha sido Zoom, para hacer para hacer los webinars, los eventos, etc.	The tool we generally use is Zoom. We also have a person in charge of live broadcasts, so he is in charge of connecting Zoom to the other platforms. We have also done events through YouTube. In fact, we have used Google tools a lot for emailing and calendaring. We have used several platforms, but I think the most used one has been Zoom, to do the webinars, events, etc.
IN	¿Cuáles crees que son las principales ventajas y desventajas de los eventos en línea?	What do you think are the main advantages and disadvantages of online events?
ML	Como ventajas, el poder conectarnos online nos permite optimizar mejor el tiempo. Por ejemplo, yo ahorita me conecto contigo y cuando terminemos me puedo conectar a otra reunión. Ya no tengo que estarme trasladando de un lado a otro, entonces optimizamos mucho el tiempo en ese sentido. También llegamos a más personas de las que llegaríamos en un evento físico. En un evento virtual yo puedo lograr que se conecte gente de todo el mundo. En un evento físico hay muchas restricciones de distancias, de tiempos y de espacios. Creo que una de las ventajas más grandes es que puedo lograr que se conecte gente de todo el mundo y que se pueda optimizar el tiempo. O sea que ese mismo momento podemos hacer varias	As advantages, being able to connect online allows us to optimize our time. For example, I connect with you now and when we finish I can connect to another meeting. I don't have to be moving from one place to another, so we optimize time in that sense. We also reach more people than we would in a physical event. In a virtual event I can connect people from all over the world. In a physical event there are many restrictions of distance, time and space. I believe that one of the greatest advantages is that I can connect people from all over the world and optimize time. In other words, we can hold several meetings at the same time. For example, when we launched

	reuniones. Por ejemplo, cuando fue el lanzamiento de ‘Mortal Glitch’, fue muy diferente a cuando lanzamos ‘Dedicada a mi Ex’. Cuando lanzamos ‘Dedicada a mi Ex’, yo me acuerdo que nosotros teníamos nuestra agenda de medios. Teníamos una entrevista en la radio, en la FM Mundo, entonces nos íbamos a la radio. Y luego teníamos que ir a Tababela a una sesión de fotos, y luego teníamos que regresar. Imagínate, a veces con suerte alcanzábamos a llegar a tres medios de comunicación al día porque las distancias son largas, el tráfico. Por otro lado, cuando lanzamos ‘Mortal Glitch’ hicimos una agenda de medios por Zoom. Cada medio tenía media hora y en un día podíamos hacer hasta veinte entrevistas. Entonces creo que se optimiza el tiempo, creo que llegamos a más personas. La desventaja es que, si bien optimizamos el tiempo en ese sentido, no sé qué tan productivos somos. Porque también eso nos da chance de hacer varias cosas al mismo tiempo; estoy en una reunión acá, me pongo en silencio y estoy en otra reunión por otro lado, o estoy hablando por teléfono. También se pierde mucho la conexión. Hay mucha distracción, tenemos muchos distractores y eso hace que quizás el absorber lo que estoy viviendo, como el evento, no sea al cien por ciento. Creo que esa es la principal desventaja; que quizás no me engancho tanto como lo haría si estuviera físicamente.	'Mortal Glitch', it was very different from when we launched 'Dedicada a mi Ex'. When we launched 'Dedicada a mi Ex', I remember that we had a media agenda. We had an interview on the radio, on FM Mundo, then we would go to the radio. And then we had to go to Tababela for a photo shoot, and then we had to come back. Imagine, sometimes we were lucky to get to three media outlets a day because the distances are long, the traffic. On the other hand, when we launched 'Mortal Glitch' we made a media schedule for Zoom. Each media had half an hour and in one day we could do up to twenty interviews. So I think it optimizes time, I think we reach more people. The disadvantage is that, although we optimize time in that sense, I don't know how productive we are. Because it also gives us the chance to do several things at the same time; I'm in a meeting here, I put myself on mute and I'm in another meeting somewhere else, or I'm talking on the phone. We also lose a lot of connection. There is a lot of distraction, we have a lot of distractions and that makes the process of immersing myself in what I am experiencing, such as the event, not to be one hundred percent. I think that's the main disadvantage; that maybe I don't get as engaged as I would if I were physically there.
IN	Cuando ustedes hacen los eventos en línea, digamos el estreno de la película, ¿cómo ustedes ven la respuesta o interacciones del público?	When you guys do the online events, let's say the movie premiere, how do you see the response or interactions from the audience?
ML	Depende mucho. Por ejemplo, cuando hicimos cuando fue el lanzamiento de ‘Mortal Glitch’, que ya fue en el contexto de la pandemia. Para ese lanzamiento hicimos primero un visionado con el crew. Se transmitieron todos los capítulos en un solo día, de manera interna solo para el equipo. Me acuerdo que a todos nos llegó un vaso de ‘Mortal Glitch’ con una cerveza para que disfrutemos de la serie. Y claro, como todos éramos parte del crew, estuvimos súper enganchados. Chateábamos entre nosotros y entre episodios salía uno de los protagonistas hablando en vivo y dando las gracias al equipo por su apoyo. Eso se midió viendo cuánta gente se conectó y la interacción que hubo ese rato en tiempo real. Luego, hicimos un webinar para ejecutivos de marketing que era para presentar el caso de estudio del ‘Mortal Glitch’ y de cómo nosotros lo manejamos en la pandemia. En ese caso fue un evento más formal porque ya	It depends a lot. For example, when we did the release of 'Mortal Glitch', which was already in the context of the pandemic. For that launch we first did a viewing with the crew. All the chapters were broadcasted in one day, internally only for the team. I remember that we all received a glass of 'Mortal Glitch' with a beer for us to enjoy the series. And of course, as we were all part of the crew, we were super engaged. We would chat with each other and between episodes one of the main characters would appear talking live and thanking the crew for their support. This was measured by seeing how many people connected and the interaction that took place during that period in real time. Then, we did a webinar for marketing executives in order to present the 'Mortal Glitch' case study and how we handled it in

	era un webinar. Nuestro CEO y nuestro gerente comercial fueron los speakers. En ese caso, los KPIs que manejamos fueron el email, por ejemplo ver el porcentaje de apertura, cuántas personas confirmaron su asistencia y de las personas que confirmaron su asistencia, cuántas finalmente fueron al evento. Esa fue una forma de medir. Otra forma muy efectiva es que al final del evento se les hace una encuesta a los asistentes. Les pides a los asistentes que por favor te llenen una encuesta rápida de sus impresiones del evento. A nivel del estreno, el mejor KPI es el número de visualizaciones. Nosotros estrenamos la serie en Youtube y a la semana ya teníamos casi veinte millones de visualizaciones. Luego vas midiendo de episodio en episodio, si es que se mantiene o si va bajando. Otro KPI para medir el éxito de la serie fueron los medios de comunicación; qué es lo que los medios están diciendo a nivel online, el sentiment, si los comentarios son buenos o malos, etc.	the pandemic. In that case it was a more formal event because it was a webinar. Our CEO and our commercial director were the speakers. In that case, the KPIs we handled were email, for example looking at the open rate, how many people confirmed their attendance and of those people who confirmed their attendance, how many finally went to the event. That was one way to measure. Another very effective way is that at the end of the event you survey the attendees. You ask attendees to please fill out a quick survey of their impressions of the event. At the premiere level, the best KPI is the number of views. We premiered the series on YouTube and within a week we had almost twenty million views. Then you measure from episode to episode, if it is maintained or if it goes down. Another KPI to measure the success of the series was the media; what the media are saying online, the sentiment, if the comments are good or bad, etc.
IN	¿Consideras que los eventos presenciales que ustedes hacían antes de la pandemia eran más exitosos que los eventos que hacen ahora, que son online o híbridos?	Do you consider that the face-to-face events you did before the pandemic were more successful than the events you do now, which are online or hybrid?
ML	Qué buena pregunta. Te diría que depende. Por ejemplo, si me hablas a nivel de las ruedas de prensa, definitivamente para mi son mucho más exitosas online. Las ruedas de prensa online son más exitosas que las ruedas de prensa físicas. Si hablamos a nivel del lanzamiento de una serie, siento que sí hubiera sido mucho más chévere lanzar 'Mortal Glitch' en México en Brandcast de Youtube, que lanzarlo como algo muy simple online. Definitivamente creo que sí hubiera sido mucho más exitoso hacerlo así. Pero creo que ahora simplemente nos tenemos que adaptar a lo que va pasando. Finalmente en el contexto de la pandemia es lo que pudimos hacer e igual nos fue muy bien. Creo que lo importante es adaptarte al entorno, más que nada. Ahora que ya estamos un poco más tranquilos con el tema de la pandemia, y aunque no nos hemos relajado al cien por ciento, todavía hay que tener en cuenta eso. Creo que hoy por hoy un reto muy importante es poder hacer estos eventos híbridos. Poder, por un lado llegar a la mayor cantidad de gente posible, pero por otro lado, no quitar la experiencia sensorial que creo que siempre es importante. Siempre termina siendo muy importante el poder palpar algo, el poder estar en un lugar con gente real. Es súper importante que	This is a good question. I would say it depends. For example, if you are talking about press conferences, definitely for me they are much more successful online. Online press conferences are more successful than physical press conferences. If we talk about the launch of a series, I feel that it would have been much cooler to launch 'Mortal Glitch' in Mexico on Brandcast on Youtube, than to launch it as something very simple online. I definitely think it would have been much more successful to do it that way. But I think now we just have to adapt to what is happening. Finally, in the context of the pandemic, that's what we were able to do and we did very well. I think the important thing is to adapt to the environment, more than anything else. Now that we are a little calmer with the pandemic issue, and although we have not relaxed one hundred percent, we still have to take that into account. I think that today a very important challenge is to be able to make hybrid events. To be able, on the one hand, to reach as many people as possible, but on the other hand, not to take away the sensory experience, which I think is always important. It always ends up being very important to be able to feel

	podamos buscar esa forma de mezclar ambas experiencias.	something, to be able to be in a place with real people. It is very important that we can find a way to mix both experiences.
IN	¿Cuáles crees que son las principales diferencias de los eventos presenciales y de los eventos en línea con respecto al engagement de los asistentes?	What do you think are the main differences between in-person events and online events with respect to attendee engagement?
ML	Sí hay mucha diferencia. Por ejemplo, nosotros estuvimos en el +Cartagena, que es un evento de marcas y ventas. Y el +Cartagena siempre ha sido un evento muy prestigioso en Cartagena, donde va gente muy importante de los medios, la prensa, la publicidad, el marketing, etc. Yo nunca he ido físicamente, justo cuando iba a ir físicamente, pasó el COVID. Pero me comentaban que hay un yate que te lleva de un lado a otro, que tú vas entrando a las diferentes charlas, te registras y puedes hablar con la gente, haces networking y todo. Y el año pasado lo hicieron virtual. Lo hicieron en una plataforma virtual. De hecho, tú elegías un avatar para ti, o sea, tu muñequito. Le ponías el color de pelo, de ojos, con tu nombre y tú caminabas. O sea, con el teclado caminabas en el +Cartagena, entrabas a las salas. Pero sabes que no. Definitivamente no era lo mismo. Por un lado está la brecha tecnológica, ya que mucha gente se estresaba porque no sabía cómo usar la plataforma. Entonces no es lo mismo que tú vayas a un evento, escojas tu sala y ya. En cambio, aquí mucha gente se complicó porque no sabía cómo caminar. Querían caminar para adelante y caminaban para un lado. Era súper chistoso porque me acuerdo que nos enseñaron a mover la cabeza y por ahí veías a gente, personas muy importantes de los medios de comunicación, con la cabeza torcida o hacia atrás. O conversaban contigo, pero de espaldas. Entonces era una cosa muy rara, la verdad. Y yo personalmente prefiero un evento en Zoom, así como estamos tú y yo ahorita, que estar con toda la experiencia animada y caminando por aquí y por allá. Me pareció muy complicado. Quizás también es un tema de acostumbrarnos. Definitivamente, yo creo que si les preguntas a los chicos del +Cartagena, te dirán que no tiene nada que ver.	Yes, there is a lot of difference. For example, we were at the +Cartagena, which is a marketing and sales event. And the +Cartagena has always been a very prestigious event in Cartagena, where very important people from the media, press, advertising, marketing, etc. attend. I have never gone in person, just when I was going to go in person, the COVID happened. But they told me that there is a yacht that takes you from one place to another, that you go to the different talks, you register and you can talk to people, you do networking and everything. And last year they made it virtual. They did it on a virtual platform. In fact, you chose an avatar for yourself, a little doll. You put your hair color, your eye color, your name and you walked. You used the keyboard to walk in +Cartagena, you entered the rooms. But no. It was definitely not the same. On the one hand there is a technological gap, because many people were stressed because they didn't know how to use the platform. So it's not the same when you go to an event, choose your room and that's it. On the other hand, here many people got confused because they didn't know how to walk. They wanted to walk forward and they walked to one side. It was very funny because I remember they taught us to move our heads and you would see people, very important people from the media, with their heads twisted or backwards. Or they would talk to you, but with their backs turned. So it was a very strange thing, really. And I personally prefer an event in Zoom, as you and I are now, rather than being with the whole animated experience and walking here and there. It seemed very complicated to me. Maybe it's also a matter of getting used to it. Definitely, I think if you ask the +Cartagena guys, they will tell you that it has nothing to do with what it was on the past.
IN	¿Cuándo organizas un evento en línea, cuáles crees que son tus principales desafíos?	When you organize an online event, what do you think are your main challenges?
ML	Justamente eso. Lograr que la gente se enganche totalmente. Yo te lo digo ahí a nivel personal en mi canal, en mi canal de perritos. Cuando yo hago los	Precisely that. To get people totally engaged. I tell you that on a personal level, on my channel, my puppy channel. When I do live

	eventos en vivo, siempre busco motivadores. Por ejemplo, siempre dejo como lo más importante para el final, para que la gente se quede enganchada. A veces incluso hago sorteos, hago preguntas para que la gente gane algún premio. Les pido que se registren y siempre voy manejando esta expectativa de 'hay una cosa que es súper importante y vamos a hablar sobre esto, pero lo vamos a hablar más adelante'. Entonces le voy dejando a la gente con esa expectativa. Por otro lado, que los eventos sean cortos, porque la gente cada vez tiene menos paciencia. O sea, las personas se enganchan y se desenganchan demasiado rápido. Entonces el evento tiene que empezar a tiempo. Si tú dices que el evento empieza a las ocho, ya las ocho tienes que estar hablando. Si no comienzas el evento a tiempo o pasó alguna falla técnica, la gente se desconecta, se va a otro lado. Es importante que el evento sea corto, que puedas responder sus dudas. Interactuar con la gente también es súper importante; dar espacio para que la gente haga preguntas. En verdad sí es un desafío muy grande mantener la atención de la gente en los eventos online.	events, I always look for motivators. For example, I always leave the most important thing for the end, so that people get engaged. Sometimes I even do giveaways, I ask questions for people to win a prize. I ask them to register and I always manage this expectation of 'there is something that is super important and we are going to talk about it, but we are going to talk about it later'. So I leave people with that expectation. On the other hand, keep the events short, because people have less and less patience. In other words, people get engaged and disengaged too quickly. So the event has to start on time. If you say the event starts at eight o'clock, you have to be talking at eight o'clock. If you don't start the event on time or there is a technical failure, people get disconnected, they go somewhere else. It is important that the event is short, that you can answer their questions. Interacting with people is also very important; giving space for people to ask questions. It is really a big challenge to keep people's attention in online events.
IN	¿Cuáles crees que son las mejores prácticas para realizar eventos en línea?	What do you think are the best practices for organizing online events?
ML	Algo que nos dimos cuenta ahora que estamos con este evento que va a ser el miércoles que es el premier de 'Misfit'. Fue súper interesante darnos cuenta de lo que las marcas ahora están buscando. Con este evento les dije a las marcas: 'Mira, vamos a hacer la premier en tal cine, se va a proyectar la película en pantalla gigante, van a estar estos invitados, además también va a ser transmitido en nuestras redes sociales con los influencers'. Entonces yo llegué presentando un evento físico. Pensé que vender la idea del evento físico era hermoso porque ya nos permiten hacer eventos físicos, que antes no se podía. Yo pensaba que esto iba a ser wow para las marcas: por fin van a poder estar en un evento físico. Entonces yo venía con la idea de: 'Mira; este va a ser el evento físico y también vamos a tener una parte digital'. Sin embargo, las marcas y ya no querían un evento físico. Ya no lo necesitaban, ya no era importante para ellos. Las marcas me decían: 'Está chévere, pero ¿qué va a pasar en digital? Quiero digital'. Me di cuenta de que en realidad ahora ya no vendemos los eventos como 'Este es un evento físico, que tiene esta parte digital', sino que tuvimos que cambiar el discurso para: 'tengo este evento digital, que también tiene una experiencia física para conectar a la gente'. Por ejemplo, en el visionado	Something that we realized recently with this event that is going to be on Wednesday, which is the premiere of 'Misfit'. It was super interesting to realize what brands are now looking for. With this event I told the brands: 'Look, we are going to do the premiere in such cinema, the film will be projected on a giant screen, these guests will be there, and it will also be broadcasted on our social networks with influencers'. So I came in presenting a physical event. I thought that selling the idea of the physical event was beautiful because they already allow us to do physical events, which we couldn't do before. I thought this was going to be wow for the brands: they are finally going to be able to be in a physical event. So I came with the idea of: 'Look, this is going to be the physical event and we are also going to have a digital part'. However, the brands no longer wanted a physical event. They no longer needed it, it was no longer important to them. Brands were telling me, 'That's cool, but what's going to happen in digital? I want digital. I realized that actually now we no longer sell events as 'This is a physical event, which has this digital part,' but we had to change the discourse to: 'I have this

	que te conté de ‘Mortal Glitch’ creo que fue súper lindo el detalle de que nos manden un jarro con una cerveza para que veamos la película. Eso hace que uno se conecte. Son esos detalles físicos que te conectan al mundo virtual. Como mandarle a alguien una invitación con un código QR, o sea, tratar de de hacer un mix entre experiencias físicas y experiencias digitales. Definitivamente, queramos o no queramos, y le guste a quien le guste, todo se va a lo digital. Tarde o temprano todo se va a ir a lo digital y vamos a tener que irnos adaptando a eso. Creo que es súper importante entender cómo funcionan todas las herramientas y sobre todo asegurarnos de que nuestro público entienda cómo funcionan estas herramientas. La persona que organiza el evento puede saber todo, pero el rato de los ratos, la gente no puede entrar, la gente no tiene link, la gente no sabe. Es súper importante hacer estos recordatorios: ‘No te olvides, nos vemos mañana a tal hora, te mando el link, avísame si puedes entrar, avísame si tienes alguna duda, recuerda que para acceder al link primero tienes que registrarte aquí’. Es muy importante mantenernos en contacto con nuestra audiencia antes del evento para asegurarnos que todo esté en orden. Algo importante en los eventos digitales es el manejo de nuestra reputación online a través de hashtags y menciones. Justamente para que nuestra audiencia pueda compartir, si es que estamos esperando que compartan, su experiencia con fotos. Hablando en términos generales, también es importante grabar los eventos para luego reenviarlos a los asistentes. Cuando se trata, por ejemplo, de eventos educativos como webinars.	digital event, which also has a physical experience to connect people.' For example, at the viewing I told you about of 'Mortal Glitch' I think it was super nice of them to send us a mug with a beer for us to watch the film. That makes you connect. It's those physical details that connect you to the virtual world. Like sending someone an invitation with a QR code, that is, trying to make a mix between physical and digital experiences. Definitely, whether we want it or not, and whoever likes it, everything is going digital. Sooner or later everything is going to go digital and we are going to have to adapt to that. I think it's super important to understand how all the tools work and above all to make sure that our audience understands how these tools work. The person who organizes the event may know everything, but at the moment of the event people can't get in, people don't have a link, people don't know. It is very important to make these reminders: 'Don't forget, see you tomorrow at such and such time, I will send you the link, let me know if you can enter, let me know if you have any doubts, remember that to access the link you must first register here'. It is very important to keep in touch with our audience before the event to make sure everything is in order. Something important in digital events is the management of our online reputation through hashtags and mentions. Precisely so that our audience can share, if we are expecting them to share their experience with photos. Generally speaking, it is also important to record events and then forward them to the attendees. When it comes, for example, to educational events such as webinars.
IN	Ahora que estamos volviendo a la ‘normalidad’, ¿crees que las marcas en general van a seguir haciendo eventos online?	Now that we are getting back to 'normal', do you think brands in general will continue to do online events?
ML	Las marcas ahorita están mucho más enfocadas en digital. Yo creo que es importante mantener siempre el híbrido. Pero ya no ya no hablar de: ‘el evento físico que también será transmitido en redes sociales’. No, definitivamente no. Ahora debemos decir: ‘Mi evento digital, que además tiene componentes físicos’. Hoy por hoy lo que las marcas buscan y lo que la gente quiere es el consumo en digital, combinado con experiencias	Brands are now much more focused on digital. I think it is important to always maintain a hybrid aspect. But no longer talk about: 'the physical event that will also be broadcasted on social networks'. No, definitely not. Now we must say: 'My digital event, which also has physical components'. Today, what brands are looking for and what people want is digital consumption, combined with physical

	físicas. El enfoque tiene que estar en la parte digital.	experiences. The focus has to be on the digital part.
IN	¿Cuál es tu opinión sobre los eventos híbridos?	What is your opinion on hybrid events?
ML	Yo creo que ahorita es lo más efectivo. Como lo que estamos haciendo ahorita en el estreno de 'Misfit', es justamente un evento híbrido. Tiene su componente digital, tiene su componente físico. Va a ser replicado en México, Perú, Bolivia, en todos los países donde se va a estrenar la película. Yo creo que es la fórmula del éxito siempre y cuando se lo maneje con el enfoque digital con componentes físicos, pero lo digital es lo que tiene que primar.	I think it's the most effective thing to do right now. Like what we are doing right now at the premiere of 'Misfit', it's precisely a hybrid event. It has a digital component, it has a physical component. It will be replicated in Mexico, Peru, Bolivia, in all the countries where the film will be released. I think it is the formula for success as long as it is managed with a digital approach with physical components, but digital is what has to prevail.
IN	¿Has usado tecnología de realidad virtual o realidad aumentada en marketing de eventos? ¿Estarías interesada en utilizar esta tecnología?	Have you used virtual reality or augmented reality technology in event marketing? Would you be interested in using this technology?
ML	Lo más cercano que he utilizado fue el +Cartagena. Fue realidad aumentada; uno se creaba su avatar, entraba, veía, etc. De que eso va a pasar, va a pasar. De que tenemos que adaptarnos a eso, tenemos que adaptarnos. Es como cuando empezaron a hacer las transmisiones en vivo hace años. Yo tengo un amigo que hace las transmisiones en vivo y cuando él empezó, él fue el pionero, nadie le hacía caso. Decían: 'para que vamos a hacer transmisiones, si podemos hacerlo físico'. Y mira, ahora a mi amigo le va muy bien. Ahora. Pero cuando fue uno de los primeros en lanzar eso, no le hacían caso. Igualmente, acuérdate que cuando empezaron las redes sociales, al principio nadie quería invertir en eso. Habían muy poquitas agencias, no se sabía mucho, la gente se complicaba mucho. Yo creo que es lo mismo con la realidad aumentada y la realidad virtual. Es algo que nos incomoda. A mi me incomodó mucho estar en un evento así. Se organizó incluso una feria canina virtual en ese formato. Y me acuerdo que nos hicieron una presentación, cada persona tenía su stand y tú podías visitar los stands a nivel virtual y fue un desastre. Fue un fracaso total. Pero yo creo que estas experiencias, estos fracasos no significan que la tecnología no va a funcionar. Esto es lo que va a pasar, queramos o no queramos. El tema es que no estamos acostumbrados y por eso los pioneros ahorita son los que se llevan la peor parte. Son a los que ahorita nadie les entiende o que fracasan. Pero más adelante, con esa experiencia, van a ser los pioneros otra vez. Porque de que vamos allá, vamos allá. Es un tema de adaptarnos, de empezar a acomodarnos con estas nuevas tecnologías. Es un reto para todos, pero es algo que va a pasar.	The closest I have ever used it was in +Cartagena. It was augmented reality; you would create your avatar, log in, see, etc. That it's going to happen, it's going to happen. That we have to adapt to it, we have to adapt to it. It is like when they started to do live streams years ago. I have a friend who does live streams and when he started, he was the pioneer, nobody paid attention to him. They said: 'why are we going to do live streams, if we can do it physically'. And look, now my friend is doing very well. Now. But when he was one of the first to start this, they didn't pay attention to him. Likewise, remember when social networks started, at the beginning nobody wanted to invest in that. There were very few agencies, they didn't know much, people were very confused. I think it is the same with augmented reality and virtual reality. It is something that makes us uncomfortable. It made me very uncomfortable to be in an event like this. They even organized a virtual dog trade show in that format. And I remember that they gave us a presentation, each person had their own stand and you could visit the stands at a virtual level and it was a disaster. It was a total failure. But I think that these experiences, these failures do not mean that the technology is not going to work. This is what is going to happen, whether we want it to or not. The point is that we are not used to it and for that reason the pioneers now are the ones who bear the worst part. They are the ones that nobody understands now or who fail. But later on, with that experience, they will be the pioneers again. Because if we are going

		there, we are going there. It is a matter of adapting, of starting to get used to these new technologies. It is a challenge for everyone, but it is something that is going to happen.
IN	¿Cuáles crees que van a ser las tendencias de marketing de eventos para el futuro?	What do you think will be the event marketing trends for the future?
ML	Justamente creo que la realidad virtual y realidad aumentada. También creo que vamos a llegar al momento en el que los medios de comunicación tradicionales van a perder su protagonismo totalmente. Ya que hoy por hoy estas herramientas nos permiten a todos ser medios de comunicación. Básicamente todos estamos en esa capacidad de transmitir vídeos, de conectarnos con otras personas y mostrarnos en vivo, de llevar a cabo eventos, tanto públicos como privados. Hay un gran espectro y va a haber una gran competencia también. Por ende, cada vez va a ser mucho más desafiante la forma de hacer contenido. Eso es una de las cosas que a mí más me asusta. Imagínate que hoy por hoy se suben tantos videos por segundo en el mundo, que hoy por hoy la recomendación en redes sociales es que en tu video captes la atención de la gente en los primeros tres segundos. Entonces si en tres segundos tu video no impactó, la gente te hace scroll down. Imagínate el nivel de desafío; tienes tres segundos para impactar a alguien, y una vez que ya lo impactaste, cómo haces que se quede contigo. Con tanta distracción que hay. Con todas las distracciones que tenemos, cada vez va a ser mucho más desafiante la forma de hacer contenido. Y cómo enganchamos al público, qué herramientas utilizamos, la calidad. Que cada vez podamos hacer cosas de mayor calidad, pero también de mayor impacto. También quizás el tema del pago, porque hoy por hoy podemos hacer tantas cosas gratis. Pero en algún punto yo creo que vamos a tener que pagar por todo esto. Porque si ya vamos a estar todos online, definitivamente el negocio está ahí. Cobrarnos por transmitir, cobrarnos por los eventos.	I just think virtual reality and augmented reality. I also believe that we are going to reach a moment in which traditional media will lose their protagonism completely. Because today these tools allow us all to be media agents. Basically we are all in that capacity to transmit videos, to connect with other people and show ourselves live, to carry out events, both public and private. There's a big spectrum and there's going to be a lot of competition as well. So it's going to be much more and more challenging to make content. That is one of the things that scares me the most. Imagine, nowadays so many videos are uploaded in the world per second, nowadays the recommendation in social networks is that you should capture people's attention in the first three seconds of your video. So if in three seconds your video doesn't make an impact, people will scroll down. Imagine the level of challenge; you have three seconds to impact someone, and once you have impacted them, how do you make them stay with you? With all the distractions out there. With all the distractions we have, it's going to be much more and more challenging how we make content. And how we engage the audience, what tools we use, the quality. That we can make things of higher quality, but also of higher impact. Also perhaps the issue of payment, because today we can do so many things for free. But at some point I think we are going to have to pay for all of this. Because if we are all going to be online, the business is definitely there. The business is definitely there. We are going to pay for broadcasting, we are going to pay for attending events.