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SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING STRATEGY FOR AN
ONLINE ITALIAN LANGUAGE SCHOOL

Project to Universidade Católica Portuguesa to obtain
a Master's Degree in Communication, Marketing and
Advertising

Olga Tabakova

Faculty of Human Sciences

September, 2022



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Abstract

Social media marketing (SMM) is becoming increasingly relevant for all kinds of businesses; in particular it can be fruitful for small and medium enterprises due to its relative cost-effectiveness and opportunities for organic reach. Besides, brand presence and consistency on social media (SM) can raise brand awareness and increase brand trust. The topic of this project is a nascent brand, Allora School, which is an online Italian language school. This project was developed with the aim of creating a SMM strategy for Allora School as it enters the market. There are plenty of different social media platforms (SMPs), however, due to Generation Z being the target audience (TA) of the brand in question, the author chose Instagram and TikTok. The strategy was developed based on a review of the literature regarding branding, SM, peculiarities of marketing to TA and their learning preferences.

In this project, the hierarchy of effects model was adapted to modern day SM and used as a key indicator for SMM design. The exploratory part of the project consisted of observation and benchmarking to gather some insights and nuances to implement in a proposed strategy. The practical part included the overall description of the language school, the innovative platform it uses for storing the materials and conducting interactive lessons for Gen Z learners is provided to give a rationale for the chosen TA, the rationale of the brand name and logo. Finally, there is the explanation of the design of a SMM strategy for Allora School that will serve to increase brand awareness and brand trust, and, consequently, lead to sales.

Keywords: Social media marketing; Instagram; TikTok; Generation Z; Branding; Brand Awareness; Content Marketing; Hierarchy Of Effects Theory.

Resumo

O marketing de redes sociais está se tornando cada vez mais relevante para todos os tipos de negócios, em particular pode ser frutífero para pequenas e médias empresas devido à sua relação custo-benefício e oportunidades de alcance orgânico. Além disso, a presença e a consistência da marca nas redes sociais podem levar a aumentar o reconhecimento da marca e aumentar a confiança na marca. O tema deste projeto é uma marca nascente, Allora School, que é uma escola online de italiano. Este projeto foi desenvolvido com o objetivo de criar uma estratégia de marketing nas redes sociais para a Allora School à medida que entra no mercado. Existem muitas plataformas de mídia social diferentes, no entanto, devido à Geração Z ser o público-alvo da marca em questão, o autor escolheu o Instagram e o TikTok. A estratégia foi desenvolvida com base em uma revisão da literatura sobre branding, redes sociais, peculiaridades do marketing para o público-alvo e suas preferências de aprendizagem.

Neste projeto, o modelo de hierarquia de efeitos foi adaptado às redes sociais modernas e usado como um indicador-chave para o design da estratégia de marketing nas redes sociais. A parte exploratória do projeto consistiu em observação e benchmarking para reunir alguns insights e nuances para implementar em uma estratégia proposta. A parte prática incluiu a descrição geral da escola de idiomas, a plataforma inovadora que ela usa para armazenar os materiais e conduzir aulas interativas para alunos da Geração Z é fornecida para fornecer uma justificativa para o público-alvo escolhido, a lógica do nome da marca e do logotipo. Por fim, explica-se o desenho de uma estratégia de SMM para a Allora School que servirá para aumentar a notoriedade e a confiança da marca e, conseqüentemente, levar a vendas.

Palavras-chave: Marketing de redes sociais; Instagram; TikTok; Geração Z; Marca; Conhecimento da marca; Marketing de conteúdo; teoria da hierarquia dos efeitos.

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List of abbreviations

- CTA – call to action
- CTR – click-through rate
- eWOM - Electronic Word of Mouth
- FYP - For You Page
- IGTV – Instagram TV
- KPI - key performance indicators
- SM – social media
- SMM – social media marketing
- SMP – social media platform
- SME - Small and Medium Enterprise
- TA - Target Audience
- UGC - User Generated Content

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Introduction

Project presentation

Allora School is an online Italian language school based on an interactive and innovative linguistic platform, Edvibe. It plans to enter the Portuguese market with Generation Z as its TA, and therefore, needs to have a SMM strategy alongside the development of branding components, such as identity, logo and name.

There are three parts underlying this research project: marketing, branding, and teaching. However, the teaching part is not reviewed in detail in this project, as it is beyond the scope of the project aims and goals. In terms of branding, the design of appropriate brand identity is described through Kapferer's identity prism. Use of brand name and logo are explained according to the reviewed literature. Internal analysis of the brand in a form of SWOT analysis is performed in order to understand competitive advantage of the company, its weaknesses, opportunities within the market and possible threats.

In order to create and develop SMM strategy of Allora School, the theory on branding, social media (SM) and Generation Z as the TA are reviewed. In addition, the observation of overall user culture on Instagram and TikTok, the SM platforms (SMPs) chosen for the SMM strategy is performed. Sponsored, brand and user generated types of content are also examined. Benchmarking is performed in a form of competitors' analysis to gather some insights and nuances to implement in a proposed strategy.

As a part of SMM strategy, the TA is analyzed through the scope of theoretical informational and statistical data available.

Since Allora School is just about to enter the market, it was decided that the primary focus of the SMM strategy should be on creating brand awareness. Increasing consumer brand engagement and, ultimately, driving leads and promoting conversion are part of the goals of the proposed strategy.

In order to outline content suggestions for the SMM strategy of Allora School, the hierarchy of effects adaptation is used. It is also connected towards general SMM goals of Allora School. Among other things, literature on brand trust and brand awareness and their connection to SMM are reviewed.

Implementation of the strategy, possible scenarios of its outcome, and tactics of working with different results achieved are outlined.

Project aim and goals

The main aim of this research project is to create and develop a social media marketing and branding strategy for Allora School, an online Italian language school. Aside from the main goal, the author intends to explore the impact of social media marketing on Gen Z consumers, the main TA of the brand, with the goal of understanding the advertising effectiveness of the proposed SMPs, Instagram and TikTok, and compare them in terms of statistical data and overall effectiveness.

Moreover, the author plans to review the literature on Generation Z in order to understand the peculiarities of this TA's main characteristics. In addition, it's essential to study the characteristics of this generation in terms of marketing to them, how they tend to use SMPs, specifically, Instagram and TikTok, and most importantly, their learning preferences, as the brand is a language school.

Scope of the project

The focus of this project is the Portuguese audience. Since the aim of this research is to create a social media marketing strategy of an online language school that requires a certain level of technological awareness, only members of Generation Z in Portugal are considered for the project. In order to add value to this project, two of the most popular SMPs used by this generational cohort are studied.

Practical and managerial relevance

The theoretical part of this study focuses, firstly, on a general review of SM and its use. Then it focuses on particular SMPs, Instagram and TikTok, and their distinct features. Moreover, the advertising effectiveness on these platforms is studied in hopes of providing marketers with some valuable inputs on creating and designing marketing strategy through the means of SM, especially for small and medium enterprises.

Identifying an appropriate TA is crucial to the success of the brand. According to Kenan (2022), brands must determine which social media marketing strategies work best for their demographic to establish a devoted following and boost organic traffic and interaction. The use of Instagram and TikTok for the marketing strategy is further explained in chapter 1 of the literature review, which sheds light on traits and characteristics of representatives of Gen Z. The existing studies on the topic of generational cohorts is touched upon as well. In addition, the theoretical review includes useful statistical data about members of Gen Z as SM users overall and in the context of Portugal. Their consumer behavior on these SMPs is

also investigated. Another important aspect of chapter 2 on Gen Z is the description of them as learners and what their learning preferences are. This can be useful not only for marketers who opt to target this generational cohort but for educators, in particular, language tutors and language schools.

This project also considers theory about the development of brand identity, brand logo and name to understand better how to develop the brand's identity and strategy for its proper promotion. Brand awareness is reviewed alongside social media marketing and content marketing in particular to get some insights on how to raise brand awareness and brand recall.

SMM and a well-thought-out strategy for it can help the brand to grow and, at the same time, provide value for the customers through educational content available there (Ariantini et al., 2021; Lambton-Howard et al., 2021). In order to identify best practices of the reviewed SMPs usage and have a marketing campaign with a better performance rate, this study also benchmarked other language schools on these SMPs to learn valuable insights that can, in turn, help to develop this brand and its SM strategy more effectively.

Project Outline

Part I of the project consists of the literature review and includes three chapters, examining social media, Generation Z, and branding. It reviews previous findings from academic articles and papers that are useful for the project.

Part II is the practical part of the project. In Chapter 4, overall school's description is given and the brand identity prism is designed, the proposed mission, vision and values of the brand are outlined, brand name and logo given their rationale, internal current situation analysis is performed. Competitor analysis is included in Chapter 5, after observation part of general user culture on the chosen SMPs and types of content created by competitors. The social media marketing strategy is proposed in Chapter 6, and its implementation and tactics to deal with different case scenarios are described. Finally, the main preliminary conclusions of this project are presented, as well as limitations and recommendations for further research on the topic.

Part I. Literature review

Chapter 1. Branding

Brand identity

Brands are considered to be intangible assets that may be used to produce shareholder value, and seen as symbolic assets (Ekhlassi et al., 2018). Brands assist businesses in managing the difficulties of a highly competitive marketplace by maintaining consumer satisfaction (Ekhlassi et al., 2018). Aaker (1991) defines a brand as “a distinctive name and/or symbol... designed to identify the products or services of one seller or a group of sellers and to separate them from those of rivals” (p. 21). A brand serves to differentiate a product from the competition and facilitate the consumer’s search for product or service information by efficiently conveying the product’s identity and value. This is especially useful in the case of intangible items or services, for which it is more challenging to practically analyze product features and advantages (Hillenbrand et al., 2013). A brand is regarded as successful when consumers associate it with an exceptional product, service, person, or location (Aaker, 1991). Stakeholders co-create brands utilizing diverse instruments such as brand identity, image, and values (Ekhlassi et al., 2018).

Aaker (1996, p. 68) understands brand identity as “a unique set of details” relevant for a particular brand that the brand strategist should endeavor to establish or preserve. Ghodeswar’s definition (2008) is comparable to that of Aaker (1996, p. 68): it defines brand identity as “a unique collection of brand connections” that provide a guarantee to consumers and consist of “core and extended identities” (Ghodeswar, 2008, p.5) Brand identity is also often described as the beliefs and qualities that people relate to a brand, which may correspond with the reality of the items or be artificial (Zaichkowsky, 2010). Besides, Olins (1994) also added that brand identity is derived from a company's purpose, brand value proposition, long-term objectives, market position, and relevance to the values and interests of the TA.

Kapferer’s proposed Brand Identity Prism dissects the notion of brand identity to six correlated elements by analyzing their position between the company (Sender) and customer (Recipient), and vice versa (Kapferer, 2008, p. 183). The categories specified among these locations vary from internal (Personality, Culture, Self-image) to external (Physique, Relationship, Reflection), with several pathways connecting each area (see Figure 1).

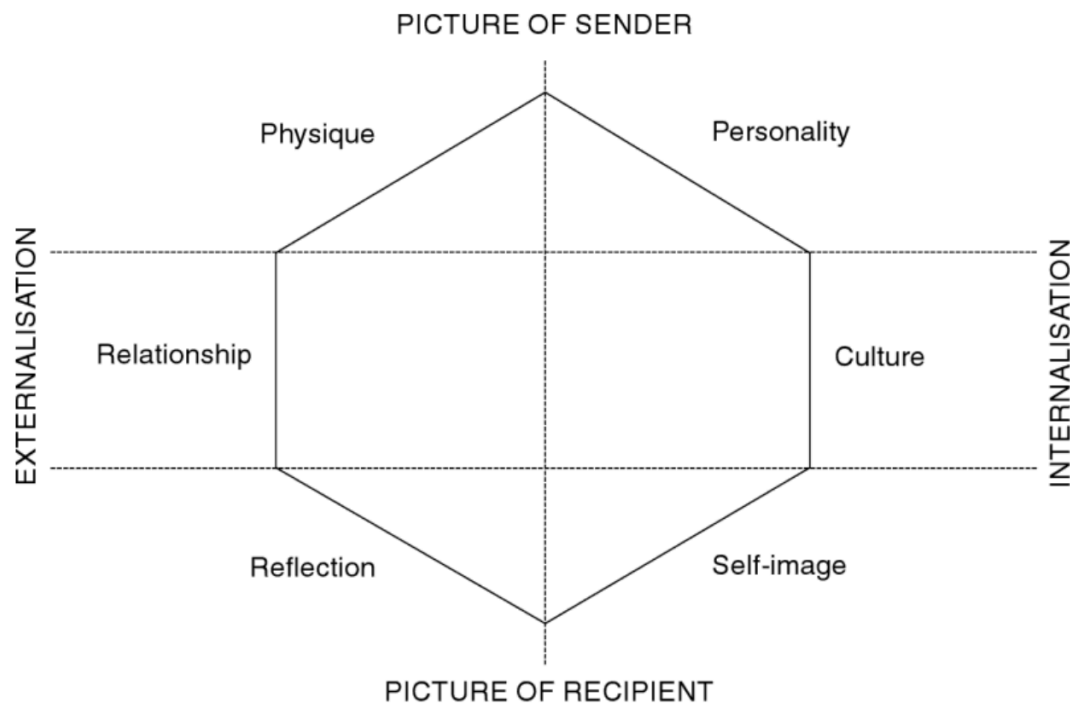


Figure 1. Kapferer's Brand Identity Prism

Brand identity prism is considered to be an effective instrument to analyze a brand since it takes into account the identity a brand wants to convey and the identity the consumers think of it (Ghodeswar, 2008; Ross, 2020), then incorporates them into a unified brand essence (Kapferer, 2008). It helps in determining where to modify brand identity and where to maintain consistency in order to keep the brand relevant (Kapferer, 2008).

A brand identity that is well-defined fosters trust, facilitates distinction from rivals, contains a promise to consumers, and forecasts the organization's future activities (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2012). In addition, it facilitates consumer brand recognition (Baumgarth & Schmidt, 2010) and fosters a link between the brand and the customer through a value proposition based on functional, emotional, and self-expressive advantages (Aaker, 1996). Previous research indicates that markers of brand identity may influence how customers perceive the brand, as well as what they know about it, the level of their brand awareness, and what kind of attitude they exhibit toward it (Alserhan & Alserhan, 2012). Name and logo are the major contributors in conveying a brand's overall image, however other components such as font, symbol and color may also be used to define a brand's identity (Aaker, 1991; Zaichkowsky, 2010). When utilized in tandem, each identifying marker may assist in raising brand awareness and fostering positive connections (Kohli & Suri, 2002).

Brand name

Since the brand name is an element of the brand that can be “vocalized” (Kotler, 1991, p. 442), it is usually the first distinguishing brand component perceived by a customer (Round & Roper, 2015). It is a starting point of the equity “provided to the consumer by the branded entity” (Round & Roper, 2017, p. 2119). It serves as the foundation for all the marketing initiatives and, therefore, is regarded to be the most significant component of the brand (Aaker, 1991).

The brand doesn’t merely serve as a means of identifying the company’s product or service, it encapsulates the company’s values and the big idea behind it (Wänke et al., 2007), has symbolic significance (Keller, 2003), and embodies many aspects of the company’s personality (Keller & Richey, 2006). Consumers’ perception of a brand name can have a significant impact on their decision to make a purchase, thus, businesses invest a significant amount of resources into establishing a name that is appropriate for their brand (Alserhan & Alserhan, 2012). Studies show that customers’ perceptions of a product may vary significantly between the absence and presence of the brand name (Aaker, 1991).

In terms of creating a new brand name, there are several desired characteristics, such as uniqueness, ease of recall and pronunciation, brevity, and lack of any bad connotations above all (Robertson, 1987; Turley & Moore, 1995). Besides, Keller et al. (1998) asserted that a brand name should be meaningful or suggestive, i.e., it should communicate pertinent information about product attributes or advantages. Companies have the option of adopting names based on preexisting or made-up terms (Keller et al., 1998). These names may vary from being very descriptive and self-explanatory to names that in no way hint at the nature or quality of the product or the service (Zaichkowsky, 2010). A made-up name has the advantage of being more versatile in its associations, while a highly descriptive name may be selected to imply that the brand surpasses the competition (Keller et al., 1998; Lerman & Garbarino, 2002)

Researchers have conducted different studies to determine what people consider when they think about a brand (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993). Brand knowledge is defined as “a brand node in memory to which a range of associations are attached” (Keller, 1993, p. 3). Brand knowledge is connected to brand awareness and brand image (Keller, 1993). Brand name qualities can help in spreading and raising brand awareness, since brand name awareness is

a strategic goal for organizations. When a customer can associate a brand to a product or service, brand awareness occurs (Aaker, 1991). Brand awareness is evaluated via recall and recognition (Aaker, 1991). Recognition is considered to be the lowest degree of brand awareness (Aaker, 1991); it corresponds to consumers' capacity to recognize the brand after some past exposure to the brand and a provided trigger.

Consumers' capacity to remember a brand they've already encountered or recall it is the next degree of awareness. Recall is characterized by consumers' ability to recognize a brand when given clues such as the product/service category (Keller, 1993). According to previous studies, when faced with a choice between an unfamiliar brand and one they are familiar with, customers are more likely to choose the latter (Aaker, 1991).

Brand identity components, particularly the brand name, strongly impact consumers' comprehension of a brand's image (Aaker, 1991). Brand image is seen as perception of a brand reflected in customer memory (Keller, 1993). From customers' past experiences with the brand, a plethora of "informational nodes related to the brand node" arise, known as brand associations (Belén del Rio et al., 2001).

Brand associations positively affect brand equity and are essential in differentiating a brand from the competition (Aaker, 1996; Wang et al., 2015). Moreover, they have a favorable effect on customer reaction to the brand and its products and services. Brand associations might influence purchase intentions and behaviors, and consumers' willingness to pay a premium price for the brand's products, services and extensions (Belén del Rio, 2001).

The associations a brand seeks to establish are not always consistent with the consumer's brand image, since each consumer's experience with the brand is distinct (Camiciottoli et al., 2014).

Brand associations encompass product-related and non-product-related features, different kinds of advantages (symbolic, functional and experiential), and brand attitudes (Keller, 1993). Romaniuk and Sharp (2013) state that brand name recall is tied to any information that consumers identify with a brand. So, the greater the number of associations linked to a brand, the more people will remember it.

Researchers claim that brand names impact customer perceptions and can alter the characteristics customers identify with the brand (Aaker, 1991; Keller et al., 1998). It is implied that higher-frequency sounding names may generate ideas of "lightness, softness and quickness" (Klink, 2003). Brand names that include recognizable terms are more likely

to be recalled, therefore brands should generally opt for the use of terms from day-to-day life to facilitate recognition (Ahn & La Ferle, 2008).

Brand logo

Logo is regarded as the most prominent visual expression of brand image (Henderson & Cote, 1998). It serves as the basis of brand identity, which facilitates establishing and maintaining a company's brand image (Balmer, 2001; Van Riel & Balmer, 1997; Van den Bosch et al., 2006). It's also a foundation of direct and indirect nonverbal communication activities, including commercials, packaging, and other promotional items (Henderson & Cote, 1998). Individuals' instant impression of a brand is what comes to their mind when they hear the company's name or see its logo (Gray & Balmer, 1998).

Regarding current competitive marketplace offline and online, the logo, being a crucial component of a brand's visual identity, generates a competitive advantage, boosting customer awareness of a brand (Foroudi et al., 2014). Consumers instinctively interpret the brand's logo, even if they are not mindful about it, and it can lead to altering their attitude and behavior towards the given brand (Saaksjarvi et al., 2015).

A logo can be word-driven and image-driven (Wheeler, 2003). Several font and visual components can form a brand logo, they can be used in combination or independently (Wheeler, 2003). Style and content are predominant aspect to consider when it comes to logo design (Wheeler, 2003). The term "content" refers to the many parts that comprise the logo, and "style" refers to how these elements are grouped and displayed (Wheeler, 2003). Due to consumers' natural search of meaning in logos, content should be the driving force behind logo design (Kohli & Suri, 2002). Visuals are recognized more quickly than words and even indirect encounter with logos may have an effect on consumers (Henderson & Cote, 1998), thus, the logo plays a crucial role in creating recognition, brand awareness and familiarity (Henderson et al., 2003). Since brand logos and brand names are intrinsically connected, they may help customers recall the brand name (Kohli & Suri, 2002). When consumers recollect having seen the logo before it is a logo recognition, meanwhile, when consumers recall the brand name after viewing the logo without the name it is a logo recall (Henderson et al., 2003).

Studies demonstrate how features of logo design, such as colors, may influence consumers' associations with the brand. Orange, the main color of brand logo of Allora School is the

color that's associated with fun, happiness, cheerfulness" as is imaginative and energetic" (Hynes, 2009, p. 550). According to Eva Heller (2021), German color theorist and her studies on psychology of colors, orange is also connected to enthusiasm, vibration.

Orange is a combination of two warm colors: red and yellow. It is a vibrant color; it enhances the positive mood while also associating to attracting customers and creativity. Color psychology assigns the sensation of excitement, friendliness, and dynamism to orange (Heller, 2021, p. 181). Therefore, this color has an encouraging, optimistic, and self-assured tone. When compared to red, orange has the benefit of being more visually appealing (in the sense of intensity). In the case of branding, orange represents innovation, energy, and faith (Hynes, 2009). This color is widely used in businesses that want to portray accessibility and youthful enthusiasm (Heller, 2021; Hynes, 2009). It can also be used to convey adventurous and fun nature of the brand (Heller, 2021). Keller (1993) emphasizes the need of expressing a coherent brand concept via the use of consistent brand identity markers. The author observes that if several indicators do not transmit a consistent message, brand associations may be seen as less appealing (Keller, 1993).

Brand image

Brand image is defined as the combination of beliefs, ideas, and perceptions that a person has about a brand (Kotler, 2001). According to Keller (1993), brand image consists of impressions about a brand as represented by brand associations stored in consumer memory. These associations, if positive, lead to creating a positive attitude toward brand and are connected to brand trust. Given the amount of market competition in general, and in SM in particular, the distinctiveness of brand associations prompts the brands to create a competitive advantage that may be further on utilized as a justification for consumers to pick a certain brand (Kotler, 2001). The distinctiveness of brand associations might diverge from product- or service-related characteristics, functional advantages, or perceived image (Kotler & Keller, 2009).

Brand image is the meaning that customers identify with the brand (Aaker, 1991) and that is kept in their thoughts (Dobni & Zinkhan, 1990). Essentially, brand's image is how a person perceives and interprets a brand's identity, purpose, and values. It may assist customers in identifying their demands and level of brand satisfaction (Hsieh et al., 2004). Moreover, brand image may aid clients in gathering information, differentiating businesses, generating

favorable emotions, and a desire to purchase (Aaker, 1991). Since brand image is the customer's opinion of a brand, the objective of businesses is to establish a positive brand image in the eyes of customers. Marketing strategy may facilitate establishing a favorable brand image by creating a strong association between designed brand identity and desirable brand image (Nandan, 2005). It may be formed if the brand has a distinct proposition, good reputation, is trustworthy, and eager to deliver the finest service (Aaker, 1997; Keller, 1993; Kotler & Keller, 2009). In turn, a positive brand image will facilitate designing customer relationships with the brand that are permanent in terms of retention (Schiffman et al., 2010). Marketers that aim to develop a positive brand image are compelled to utilize social media marketing (Keller, 2013).

In order to facilitate creating brand image, it is necessary to understand what the brand represents, identify the TA through audience research, create brand persona profiles, determine brand's purpose, mission, vision, values, carefully design consistent brand identity (Kotler & Keller, 2009). Some researchers associate brand image with a notion of brand trust (Alhaddad, 2015; Esch et al., 2006; Kim & Chao, 2019). Therefore, a positive brand image promotes consumers' feelings of trust towards the brand, and these consumers are more likely to buy a certain brand (Esch et al., 2006). Developing trust through positive brand image is especially necessary in the case of new brands (Esch et al., 2006).

Brand trust

Brand trust is a key component in influencing client loyalty (Aaker, 1997). It's also sometimes referred to as brand reliability (Delgado-Ballester, 2004). The trust is based on consumer confidence that the brand will prioritize consumer interests. It stems from consumer certainty that the product or service will deliver the promised value (Delgado-Ballester & Munuera-Alemán, 2005). It is also considered to be a crucial aspect since it may raise or diminish the brand's value and provide customers a feeling of belonging to a brand (Aaker, 1997). According to Moorman et al. (1992), trust can influence consumers in purchasing from a brand, implying that a brand can create an emotional feeling with customers, whereas Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán (2005) state that brand trust is a brand's ability to fulfill the interests of its consumers, implying that brand trust is a factor that can make consumers have an emotional bond with the company and make consumers loyal.

Brand trust and social media marketing

Previous studies suggest that social media marketing contributes to the establishment of brand trust (Kamboj et al., 2018), both directly (Gretry et al., 2017) and indirectly (Dwivedi & McDonald, 2020). Saleem & Omar (2015), Susanty et al. (2015), and Seo et al. (2020) also affirm that social media marketing has a substantial impact on brand trust. Consistent use of SM and interacting with the consumers on these platforms helps gaining TA's trust (Gretry et al., 2017; Irshad et al., 2020). According to the statistics, highly visual sites like Instagram and TikTok are more extensively utilized and trusted by the TA of Allora School – Gen Z (Irshad et al., 2020; Francis & Hoefel, 2018; Parker & Igielnik, 2020), therefore, in order to build the brand, gain trust and eventually, create long-term connections with consumers, it is necessary to utilize these channels. The presence on these SMPs should be creative, authentic, and aligned with overall designed brand identity of Allora School (Irshad et al., 2020).

Laroche et al. (2013) stated that brand communities on SM might contribute to the growth of brand trust by enhancing numerous elements of the interactions between consumers, goods, businesses, and brands. Jun et al. (2017) argued that SMM facilitates generating social capital, which has a favorable influence on brand trust.

In order to build trust it is suggested that SM content posted has particular qualities (Casaló et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2020). In terms of Instagram, Casaló et al. (2017) propose that visual storytelling presents interested users with indicators (cues) that may encourage them to interact with the postings further. The indicators of trustworthy content of Instagram are associated with brand engagement, post attractiveness, post popularity, and argument quality (Chang et al., 2015; Yang et al., 2020).

Trust is seen as a significant element affecting customers' engagement with a brand and purchase brand's services or products (Osei-Frimpong et al., 2020). In this sense, brand credibility is seen as a prerequisite for SM brand engagement activities (Van Doorn et al., 2010). Besides, it is empirically proven that enhanced consumer brand engagement on SM, in its turn, motivates a consumer to post electronic word-of-mouth (eWOM), which also impacts brand trust in a positive manner (Lopez & Sicilia, 2014; Srivastava & Sivaramakrishnan, 2020).

Post attractiveness refers to the visual, aesthetical attraction that users experience viewing a post (Ahearne et al., 1999). Post popularity is an indicator of interest in the post. The number of likes, share or comments determines post popularity. When a strong interaction among users and a brand occurs, it may aid in establishing trust in brand (Gefen & Straub, 2003). Popularity of a post might boost a user's belief that the post contains trustworthy information, resulting in favorable reactions to postings. The argument quality of a post is the persuasive power of argument connected with the post (Bhattacharjee & Sanford, 2006), which draws the attention of users and followers and elicits positive cognitive reactions toward the post (Coulter, 2004). Since consumers expect objective product information to make a sensible purchase decision (Wang & Benbasat, 2007), favorable product evaluations often reinforce buyers' first perceptions or previous expectations (Wickens et al., 2021). Although, a negative review might be perceived as more convincing than a positive review (Lee et al., 2009). The visual aspects of the information presented and the comments of other consumers evaluating the information in postings might influence the perception of the product or service quality (Erkan & Evans, 2016). In contrast with Instagram, brand content on TikTok, in order to gain trust of the audience does not have to be necessarily visually attractive, but should be authentic (Hutchinson, 2020; Mhalla et al., 2020), relatable (Araujo et al., 2022), creative (Lee, 2022) and entertaining (Lopes et al., 2022). This difference between the platforms might be connected to the fact that TikTok as a platform is a highly engaging and entertaining medium (Genoveva, 2022; Gesmundo et al., 2022). Post popularity also seems to influence trust in posted content on TikTok, since peer-reviewed content is regarded more trustworthy naturally (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). To foster interaction with the users, brands can pose a call to action (CTA) which includes a question posed towards the audience (Gesmundo et al., 2022). Brand engagement that manifests in form of likes, comments and shares is also important in building trust on TikTok (Genoveva, 2022; Gesmundo et al., 2022).

Brand awareness

Brand marketing focuses mainly on raising brand awareness, recognition and trust (Dabbous & Barakat, 2020; Momany & Alshboul, 2016). Brand awareness is the extent to which consumers recognize, accept, and remember a certain brand (Percy & Rossiter, 1992). Aaker (1991, p. 61) defines brand awareness as the capacity of a prospective purchaser to identify

or remember that a brand belongs to a certain product category. According to Keller (2009), brand awareness reflects consumers' capacity to recall or identify a brand in various circumstances.

According to Aaker (1996), there are four stages of brand awareness: brand recognition, brand recall, top-of-mind brand, and dominant brand. Brand recognition is related to the consumer's familiarity with the brand, while brand recall is the consumer's initial thought of a particular brand when a product or a service mentioned (Farjam & Hongyi, 2015). Being a brand that comes to mind first means being the most recognizable brand in a certain product/service category (Bilgin, 2018).

In comparison with previously mentioned concept of brand image, which is the brand's position in the consumer's mind beyond any markers, brand awareness reflects a brand's tangible indications such as name, logo, slogan and other brand elements.

Brand awareness and social media marketing

Marketers ought to utilize social media marketing in order to spread brand awareness (Keller, 2013). Instagram and TikTok are instances of SM brand communication with entertainment aspects that attract the attention of customers (Merrilees, 2016). Entertaining brand-related content, such as Instagram Reels, TikTok videos, may help consumers recognize a brand and recall it (Ismail, 2017). Consumers are more likely to recognize and/or recall a brand if they have a pleasant experience-related association with the entertainment aspects offered on the brand's SM (Keller, 2013). Moreover, the SMM is more cost-effective, especially for nascent brands and can facilitate consumer's engagement (Trawnih et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020). Thus, it is reasonable to assume that entertaining SM content would increase consumer awareness of the brand and contribute to the development of positive and distinctive brand associations in their minds.

SM provides opportunities to tailor information about brands to satisfy TA's demands since customized responses have a greater impact on grabbing attention than conventional (broadcast) messages (Kim & Ko, 2012; Schulze et al., 2015). As a result, marketers use SMPs to supply customers with information about products, services and brand itself (Ismail, 2017). Brand SM pages that cater to the needs of individual consumers and meet their expectations increase the perceived value and trust in the brand (Rajković et al., 2021). Customized SMM, according to the results of the aforementioned research, may have a

significant impact on raising brand awareness and creating good customer perceptions of the brand (Kim & Ko, 2012).

SM helps brands to connect and engage with customers in a two-way fashion, as opposed to the one-way contact that was previously the norm (Ismail, 2017). Use of SMPs facilitates organization of ad campaigns and events, encouragement of consumers to contribute with user-generated content, make comments and reviews, and follow the brand (Mayrhofer et al., 2020). As a result of the engagement activities on SMPs, consumers are more likely to receive and distribute information about brands which has an impact on consumers' exposure to brand information, and overall brand awareness (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Interactive and entertaining brand pages on Instagram and TikTok influence favorable opinions of the business by encouraging contact between them and their customers (Ismail, 2017). Nguyen et al. (2016) affirms that interactive content helps consumers to learn more about brands' advantages and qualities, which in turn strengthens the brand's perceived value. eWOM is one of the indicators of consumer's evaluation of the brand as brand advances in SMM (Chu & Kim, 2011; Lopez & Sicilia, 2014).

Both Instagram and TikTok are considered to be the SMPs that are essential to increase brand awareness, especially, regarding Gen Z (Djafarova & Bowes, 2021; Genoveva, 2022; Gesmundo et al., 2022). In terms of these SM, the main tools that are considered efficient in raising brand awareness are TikTok videos, Instagram Reels and Stories (Bainotti et al., 2021; Belanche et al., 2019; Geyser, 2022; Gesmundo et al., 2022; Mulier et al., 2021). According to Mulier et al. (2021) the vertical, mobile-friendly, video advertisements, in general, generate the maximum amount of impressions, resulting in greater rate of brand awareness, due to video advertising being able to provide a greater range of options and meet the majority of brand's goals and objectives. Videos may include a greater quantity of information and provide a clearer demonstration of the items or services being offered, resulting in a considerable amount of impressions and reach (Mulier et al., 2021). The disadvantage of generating video commercials is that it might involve more time and a larger budget (Mulier et al., 2021; Geyser, 2022). However, the popularity of video commercials has led to the creation of several tools and platforms that enable marketers to make low-cost, compelling video advertisements. (Dasic, 2021)

In comparison with Reels and Stories, both Instagram posts containing single image and carousel ads generate the most leads and have the highest CTR, increasing traffic, however,

they do not substantially raise brand awareness (Geyser, 2022). In order to measure brand awareness, it's possible to use the insights available on both of the platforms as well as website traffic. Insights have different parameters available, such as the content performance rate, the engagement rate alongside the accounts reached, content interactions. Both direct and indirect website traffic may be used as a statistic to evaluate brand awareness (Momany & Alshboul, 2016). According to Dolega et al. (2021), SM, in general, are a successful means in increasing site traffic. Web traffic discloses the total number of visitors to a website during a certain time period. Further highlighting the relationship between brand awareness and website traffic, the quantitative investigation of the SM-driven website traffic proved that there's a strong connection between both brand awareness and online sales and SM outreach (Momany & Alshboul, 2016). Genoveva (2022, p. 279) stated that brand awareness on 63.5% consists of content marketing, that should engage TA, provide value, be "interesting, attractive...and consistent". It was noted that influencers account only for 21.6% of leveraging brand awareness (Genoveva, 2022, p. 279), this is why the marketing strategy should not particularly focus on influencers involvement at the current time due to the limited budget and it's more appropriate to focus on content marketing.

Content marketing as a social media marketing strategy

Content marketing is defined as a marketing strategy for "creating, distributing and sharing relevant, compelling and timely content to engage customers at the appropriate point in their buying consideration processes, such that it encourages them to convert to a business building outcome" (Holliman & Rowley, 2014, p. 285). According to Content Marketing Institute Content (2022), it is a marketing strategy that opts for developing and delivering useful goods via relevant and consistent content in order to attract audiences. The basic distinction between content marketing and conventional marketing is that the latter emphasizes customer interest above product/service promotion (Holliman & Rowley, 2014). Content marketing contributes significantly to the success of marketing communications. Hutchins & Rodriguez (2018) discovered that harnessing emotion in content marketing might lead to enhanced brand awareness and overall competitive advantage. Besides, content marketing is a technique for a business to regularly publish quality information in order to grow market share and increase favorable reaction, thus, promoting user involvement and

engagement in brand-related activities (Ansari et al., 2019). Content marketing helps people recognize a brand and eventually motivates them to purchase the goods or services offered. Content marketing is not limited to mere brand posts, there can be different types of content utilized by brand, including images, videos, case studies, articles, etc. (Holliman & Rowley, 2014; Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016). Consumers' engagement and participation with the possibilities of providing feedback via multiple channels in the content marketing funnel is an important aspect of generated content which is supposed to be high-quality (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016). Achieving high-quality content production is a continual learning process requiring regular review of material that facilitates audience engagement (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016). One of the fundamental characteristics of this kind of content is that it provides value to clients, as opposed to solely marketing the company's goods and services, therefore, the content must satisfy the demands of the consumer (Hutchins & Rodriguez, 2018). Quality content doesn't center around the items or services provided by brand but rather, assists clients in addressing their problems and providing guidance (Järvinen & Taiminen, 2016; Hutchins & Rodriguez, 2018). Therefore, a brand should be aware of the "informational needs", which can be achieved via gathering customer feedback and monitoring SM of clients in order to deliver relevant and quality content (Hutchins & Rodriguez, 2018). Due to the abundance of SM, in this Project we propose to focus on the SM that are actively used by our TA – Instagram and TikTok. Content marketing on both of these platforms should be strategic, interactive and consistent, as a part of brand's entire strategy and it should carry the brand message and convey brand's value via compelling narratives that allow for humanization of the brand (Du Plessis, 2017). Since users should be able to initiate participation in talks relevant to their life and interests, it is possible to measure the success of the generated content via TA's engagement rate (Du Plessis, 2017; Hutchins & Rodriguez, 2018). Consequently, user engagement is the defining characteristic of SM. On the one hand, the level of user engagement with a brand's post may be seen as an indicator of communication efficacy since it reflects the post's popularity (Lopes et al., 2022). Sharing is the activity that creates the highest involvement (Clement, 2020). Another important thing to note is that having to deal with SMPs requires brand to provide contextualized content due to the fact that the same material might not be effective on different SMPs (Lopes et al., 2022). The content should always have a purpose and objective, i.e. informational, educational or entertaining, and have a measurable goal (Lopes et al.,

2022). Both Instagram and TikTok content should be stated in the marketing strategy. The appropriacy of the content and its right time delivery to TA is crucial (Lopes et al., 2022). One of the aspects of content marketing is communication, which refers to the ways applied to sharing and spreading the content to the TA, has entertaining, educational and informative significance (Lopes et al., 2022). The emphasis of brand narratives should be on satisfying the informational demands of consumers in an engaging and useful manner (Du Plessis, 2017). In order to build consumer engagement, the content must stand out in a meaningful manner despite an abundance of information (Lopes et al., 2022). A CTA (i.e. enroll in an online language marathon, visit a specific webpage to test your level of the language) should be present in the content produced by brand due to the potential of ambiguity. This means that consumers are supposed to understand what exactly they need to do with the viewed material, for instance, sharing the content, contributing to the creation of new content, or altering their viewpoint and behavior toward the company, perhaps turning into brand ambassadors (Du Plessis, 2017).

Video content, such as Reels and TikTok videos have shown to be one of the most successful content marketing strategies (Lou et al., 2019). Instagram and TikTok have been actively used by marketers to share information, develop a content community, enhance consumer brand engagement with users and raise brand awareness (Belanche et al., 2019; Genoveva, 2022; Gesmundo et al., 2022). In terms of content, informational and educational content establish connection with the consumer, whereas entertaining content work well to create emotional bond (Lopes et al., 2022).

Conclusion

A brand is successful when consumers associate it with an exceptional product or service. Name and logo are the major contributors in conveying a brand's overall image. Other components such as font, symbol and color may also be used to define a brand. Designing a well-thought-out marketing strategy may facilitate establishing a favorable brand image by creating a strong association between designed brand identity and desirable brand image. Both brand trust and brand awareness are considered to be important aspects for a new brand to achieve. Instagram and TikTok are considered to be the SMPs that are essential to increase brand awareness. SMM is seen as cost-effective tool, especially for nascent brands, and can facilitate consumer's engagement.

Chapter 2. Social media

Over the previous decade, SM has become an integral part of our everyday life. SM apps have been identified as one of the most efficient implications that have been exponentially engaged in most, if not all, realms of society, i.e., educational sector, commerce, business, politics, etc. (Ekhlassi et al., 2018). The global pandemic of COVID-19 accelerated the use of SM and the importance of SMPs for marketing and advertising (Ali Qalati et al., 2021; Rajković et al., 2021). SM has become a primary means of communication, especially for consumers representing younger generations, for example, Gen Z (Francis & Hoefel, 2018; Moran, 2020; & Igielnik, 2020). This is because SM provides a two-way contact between businesses and consumers, resulting in customers being more connected to the brands in question (Okazaki & Taylor, 2013). The capacity for SMPs to convey material visually, in audio, in text, or through a combination of this content is an additional benefit.

Businesses, including small and medium enterprises (SMEs) are relying more on SMPs for marketing and advertising campaigns, i.e., to raise brand awareness, manage communication, and extend customers' involvement, due to the relative cost-effectiveness of the said campaigns (Trawnih et al., 2021; Wang et al., 2020; Zollo et al., 2020). “Allora School” is a nascent brand, which is just starting its path towards its TA, therefore it's important to consider the cost-effectiveness of using SMPs to create a social media marketing campaign. Another benefit of SM for this purpose is that the SMPs that the author plans to review in this research project also offer an opportunity for organic growth and reach (Mhalla et al., 2020; Pereira, 2019).

In this chapter, the author will focus on reviewing the distinct features of Instagram and TikTok and advertising effectiveness on these platforms. The author hopes this project can contribute some valid insights for other brands that focus on online language teaching, which is especially vital given the rise of interest in online education during post-COVID times (Bailey & Lee, 2020).

As part of the competitive process, different SMPs provide distinct options for marketers to attract and convince customers. There are also plenty of studies on how beneficial it is to make use of these platforms for example, for language teaching of younger generations, and since other language school brands that are more recognized and successful use it, we understand it is also necessary to implement these SMPs in our marketing strategy (Ariantini et al., 2021; Carter, 2022; Lambton-Howard et al., 2021; Lee, 2022).

Instagram

Instagram is recognized as a platform both for individual and business use (Wilkinson, 2018; Van Driel & Dumitrica, 2021). The individual users share audiovisual content with friends and family, while business accounts promote certain products or brands and have access to track impression metrics and engagement tools (Agung & Darma, 2019). This is very convenient due to the possibilities of having statistical insights and data about the advertisement campaigns' performance and overall engagement rate.

Instagram is considered effective with younger audiences in terms of spreading brand awareness and mediating purchase decisions (Belanche et al., 2019). It is used on a regular basis by approximately 2 billion daily active internet users (Statista, 2022b). The success of Instagram is determined not only by its features but due to the fact that the platform allows users to gain popularity and engage with opinion leaders, also identified as “influencers” in the literature (Casaló et al., 2020). Moreover, Instagram's engagement rate is higher in comparison with other SM applications which is important to consider while working on Instagram's marketing strategy since it indicated the number and the frequency of users engaging with the brand (Clement, 2020). A high engagement rate is a useful metric for assessing competition and evaluating the results of SMM campaigns. Due to the fact that the engagement rate is measured according to the number of SM followers a company has, the rates for small and big businesses are comparable. Higher customer interaction is an indication that a brand is producing material of high quality and value (Agung & Darma, 2019; Davcik et al., 2021).

Instagram's features include the following: Feed, Explore page, Stories, Instagram TV (IGTV), Lives, Guides, and Reels. IGTV is intended for video content with a maximum duration of one hour for content producers who are inclined to broadcast lengthier video contents or who desire to save material from live sessions (Instagram, 2022). Similar to Instagram Stories and Reels, IGTV videos have a vertical orientation. According to the Social media marketing Industry Report, just 18% of Instagram users view videos on IGTV, which is a small percentage compared to other video-based SMPs, such as YouTube (Malnik, 2022).

Instagram posts are images and videos that are published to the profile feed. These posts stay on a profile until deleted by the account administrator. When an active user follows a certain

account or sees a boosted post targeting them, the posts are displayed in their feed, the ads are marked as sponsored (De Veirman & Hudders, 2020). Users may also add captions that will be displayed underneath the picture or video. The captions are used for sending a lengthier message, as they allow for up to 2,200 characters (Johnson, 2021). Besides, the posts, unlike, for example, Stories, are “searchable,” meaning it is possible to discover them by using tools such as location targeting and hashtags (Olekhnik & Khilkovich, 2020). Posts enable users to take a strategic approach to branding and design (De Veirman & Hudders, 2020).

Instagram Stories, another tool offered for brands, content creators, and regular users, allows for posting videos and photographs that are only visible for 24 hours. Each story post is limited to 15 seconds in length. Stories are accessible based on the profile’s privacy settings; if the profile is public, followers and those users who just opened or scrolled through might see the Stories (Bainotti et al., 2021). If users choose to save the story post, they may do so via Instagram Stories highlights, which are featured after the bio and before the post feed. When posting to Stories, users interact with a number of interactive components, such as gifs, location tags, and stickers. Users are able to arrange surveys using polls, engage in discussion, and respond with emojis (Tillman, 2021).

Almost 87% of Instagram users actively generate content with the Stories function on a daily basis (McLachlan, 2022). In addition, 58% of users who encountered a brand in a Story express more interest in the brand, and 50% of Instagram users claim to have visited a website to make a purchase after seeing the brand in Stories (Aslam, 2022; McLachlan, 2022). This can be explained by the storytelling nature of this Instagram feature. Storytelling has been demonstrated to be the most effective method of brand communication and telling its own narrative since it gains potential clients’ attention and boosts interest in a brand among TAs (Lundqvist et al., 2013).

Since a person’s likelihood of making a purchase is increased when they have a favorable attitude towards a brand or company, building consumer awareness and maintaining a strong brand reputation within the prospective audience are critical to influencing customer behavior and decision-making (Lundqvist et al., 2013). That’s one of the reasons why Stories are considered a rather efficient tool to engage with consumers and potential clients and to create and maintain a strong brand identity through presence in Stories.

Instagram Reels are short videos, typically of a 15-30 second duration. According to recent Instagram statistics, Reels are one of the platform's most popular features. Reels and TikTok offer many similar features and functionalities, which is why the two platforms are sometimes used interchangeably when it comes to video content (Barnhart, 2022). Whereas TikTok is largely influenced by trends, videos on Reels resemble more “classic” video material that has been styled to match the vertical format (Barnhart, 2022; Mileva, 2022). Many brands used to cross-post material from TikTok when this new feature emerged on Instagram. Later, Instagram declared that the cross-posted content with TikTok watermark will be deprioritized by the algorithm (Barnhart, 2022), thus, the content style was differentiated (Mileva, 2022). Content produced for Instagram Reels tends to be more tranquil, and visually attractive than TikTok, which is more casual (Barhart, 2022; Mileva, 2022). It seems that Instagram users continue to arrange their picture and video contributions to create visually beautiful grids. Consequently, Instagram Reels seems to be more sophisticated and professional than most content produced on TikTok (Barhart, 2022; Mileva, 2022).

Besides promoting a brand, it is also possible to use Reels to create educational, informational, and funny videos. Creating videos on Instagram is as convenient as on TikTok since both platforms have simple video editing tools for user’s disposal. Both Instagram Stories and Reels include a large variety of filters and effects that can be applied by users. As opposed to Instagram Stories, Reels may be multi-clipped, allowing the producer to use available tools to combine diverse sequences, resulting in a more creative video (Hutchinson, 2022). Reels also provide more opportunities for brands to reach more audiences organically, which is especially important due to the general reduction in organic reach and the increase in ad rates, that might make it difficult to balance marketing objectives and budget (Hutchinson, 2022).

Instagram Live is another tool that can be efficiently utilized for marketing purposes. In comparison with other mentioned Instagram tools which seem to be more curated, it is the most unfiltered and dynamic one to engage existing and prospective consumers (Handayani & Sari, 2022). It humanizes the brand, enables real-time conversations with the TA, enables greater engagement with the followers and helps to gain brand trust (Handayani & Sari, 2022).

Since Gen Z students tend to use Instagram as a way of improving their language skills, i.e., it can help them to expand their vocabulary, improve listening and reading skills (Ariantini et al., 2021; Bailey & Lee, 2020; Demir & Sönmez, 2021), Instagram can be beneficial for a SMM strategy of an online language. This goes in line with general traits of Gen Zers, who want to be able to access information instantly and “learn on the go” (Demir & Sönmez, 2021).

Some language schools, as well as private tutors, have already adopted Instagram as their means to promote their work online by showing their potential customers other ways of learning a foreign language, transitioning from a conventional learning model to a blended learning, flipped classroom approach (i.e., learning through the language sketches in the Reels section, word lists in the Feed, and Live meetings where the creators share language learning tips), and even teaching students online using Instagram Live tool.

In Part II of this project report will benchmark some exemplary language schools and teachers in order to identify some of the best practices of language teaching and marketing of language schools and educators on Instagram and give us a clearer point of view regarding our marketing strategy and the contents needed.

Ad effectiveness on Instagram

Advertising is trending towards shorter, more interactive forms, so understanding Instagram tools and implementing them into a marketing strategy is essential (Belanche et al., 2017; De Veirman & Hudders, 2020; Dwivedi et al., 2015; Okazaki & Taylor, 2013). Users expect to be able to analyze the information presented and decide whether to continue viewing the advertisement (Belanche et al., 2019). Instagram Stories, for example, provide value to the advertisement, resulting in a higher click-through rate (CTR) and rate of impressions (Belanche et al., 2019). As Instagram Stories are limited to 15 seconds, ads posted as Stories have the same amount of time to reach prospective customers.

According to Belanche et al. (2019), Instagram Stories seem to have a greater impact on viewers' perceptions of an ad than more static SM formats (i.e., Instagram Posts). This correlates with another study which examined the connection between customer engagement and dynamic visual messaging (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Instagram Stories' self-promotional character causes viewers to be prepared to receive promotional material, whether from a person or a brand (Belanche et al., 2019). Ads that appear in Stories are more likely to have

interactive elements such as AR stickers which are more likely to catch a user's attention than those that appear in the format of a post on Instagram feed (Bainotti et al., 2021; Belanche et al., 2017). This interactivity and dynamic may be advantageous because it often results in higher recognition, information processing, and recall (Chatterjee, 2008). At the same time, less dynamic sponsored Instagram posts imitate and mix with organic, non-sponsored posts, appearing in users' news feeds without interfering with their SM experience (De Veirman & Hudders, 2020).

Another advertising tool on Instagram is Reels. According to the creators, users are more likely to find videos of interest to them from accounts they don't already follow, but that are publishing similar material to what they have looked for or have interacted with previously (Aslam, 2022). Being the newest addition to the variety of already existing advertising tools on Instagram, Reels is renowned for its organic reach and higher engagement (Geyser, 2022; Hutchinson, 2022). It is also considered to be the best tool that a brand can use to reach people who are not currently following its page (Geyser, 2022; Mileva, 2022). Via Reels brands and creators can be discovered by anyone (Hutchinson, 2022). Instagram Reels ads appear as sponsored and are displayed alongside non-sponsored Reels that people are browsing. Due to the vertical format of both Stories and Reels, using these tools allows to occupy the user's whole screen and focus the user's attention only on the presented material (Hootsuite, 2021). Since Worldwide digital research indicates that 98.8% of SM users access SM networks through their mobile phone, therefore, due to the format and time limit, ads through Stories and Reels might capture the users' attention more efficiently than Instagram sponsored posts (Hootsuite, 2021). Besides, according to Kashyap (2022), 40% of Gen Z users prefer Reels and Stories when they encounter sponsored content on Instagram, 27% prefer Instagram posts in a carousel format (which includes multiple photos to swipe through in a single post), 12% prefer ads in a format of post with a single image. Among other things were mentioned horizontal videos (11%), direct messaging (2%) and none of the mentioned above formats (8%).

TikTok

TikTok is a video-centric SMP; the videos on this SMP can be between 15 seconds and three minutes (TikTok, 2022). According to Genoveva (2022), using this SMP may also have a positive effect on brand image. Gesmundo et al. (2022) consider TikTok as one of the most

effective developing SMPs for marketing professionals to contact and engage TAs. TikTok is accessed on average eight times per day with 26 hours' screen time per user per month, which is drastically more than any other SMP (Doyle, 2022). Anderson (2020) indicated that after registering an account on TikTok, users will see an initial interface with a variety of content categories, including education, travel, cuisine, sports, beauty, fashion, gaming, and art. This section may not be essential, but it assists the system's algorithm in determining the sort of material to deliver to users (Anderson, 2020). TikTok only displays a single video at a time, and viewers may swipe up to see the next video. Unless the user swipes up and down or presses the screen to halt the video, it will loop. The video feed – For You Page (FYP) relies on the artificial intelligence-powered algorithm. It is the application's default to open on FYP; users also may limit their feed to just those they follow by tapping the icon "Following" at the top of the screen (Gesmundo et al., 2022; Hutchinson, 2020). Having a large number of followers on TikTok is also not necessary for the "For You" page videos to appear, since visitors are encouraged to watch different content that is presented on the FYP, so every video maker has the opportunity to be recognized by a significant number of people (Novak, 2020). The algorithm behind the FYP is proprietary, however, it is certain that it utilizes different kinds of data such as one's watch time, the kind of material one seems to like, the type of content one appears to scroll through in order to display for each individual user the most relevant material (Bhandari & Bimo, 2022).

TikTok encourages the production of original videos, but at the same time, it permits users to utilize the material of others. The co-produced video based on already existing video must be linked to the original author's content using editing-features such as 'Duet.' Duet is a function that displays the user's video alongside another user's footage. This feature encourages the reinterpretation of another user's material by allowing the co-creation of creative content while maintaining the original author's credit (Lee, 2022). This implies that users may instantly organize their involvement in the creation and publishing by touching the 'duet' symbol (Lee, 2022).

In contrast to Instagram's posts, interactive elements, text and emojis added into TikTok posts are not permanent but appear temporarily while the video plays (Lee, 2022). These characteristics prompted users to develop material for teaching and learning language skills that often need real presentation, such as speaking, pronunciation, and writing (Lee, 2022). The video production capabilities of TikTok allow creators to demonstrate and participate in

virtual teaching through the duet function. This facilitates ‘real time’ learning for viewers via the transmission of knowledge, with the technology allowing texts to ‘pop up’ on the screen at the moment of speaking to emphasize a point (Carter, 2022; Lee, 2022). The rich multimodality of TikTok videos, which have a variety of modes that emphasize visual and audial effects, such as text, sound, and facial emotions highlights the teaching process (Lee, 2022). In addition, it signifies the viewer’s ability to answer or engage with the creator in the same manner as a spoken dialogue, for instance by repeating what the speaker says (Lee, 2022). Consequently, it reflects the use of technical non-language-learning resources (video-editing functions) as a language-learning resource (a video demonstrating pronunciation and speaking skills). In the practical part the author will benchmark some successful language schools and content creators, similar to benchmarking of Instagram’s examples of language school profiles to implement own practices in terms of content for marketing the brand.

Ad effectiveness on TikTok

TikTok is considered particularly useful in terms of creating brand identity online and promoting the brand cost-effectively due to the possibility of organic growth and reach on this platform (Mhalla et al., 2020). The exponential organic reach on TikTok offers brands the ability to increase their visibility and, thus, brand awareness (Gesmundo et al., 2022; Hutchinson, 2020; Mohsin, 2021; Novak, 2020).

Besides the possibilities of organic reach, TikTok also offers a number of useful commercial tools, including business profiles, adverts, which include in-feed advertisements, a creative marketplace (Cyca, 2022). TikTok ads are estimated to reach at least 17.9% of all internet users aged 18 and older (Cyca, 2022). According to Hootsuite Digital Report, TikTok reaches 25% of female users aged 18-24 and 17.9% of men within the Gen Z demographic (Cyca, 2022). In Portugal, TikTok’s ad reach at the beginning of the year was approximately 32% of the Portuguese internet user population, irrespective of age (Kemp, 2022).

In 2021, 53% of advertisers said they were planning to increase their advertising budget directed to this social network due to the fact that 67.9% of users claim to have already purchased a product after seeing a publication in which it appears, even though the presence of brand profiles used to be scarce (Casimiro, 2021).

Hootsuite’s 2022 Social Trends Survey found that 24% of marketers believe TikTok to be helpful for achieving their business objectives, whereas in 2021 only 3% of marketing

specialist regarded TikTok advertising as efficient, meaning that TikTok's perceived ad effectiveness is increasing (Cyca, 2022). It's still rather distant from stats regarding other SM, such as Instagram, whose perceived effectiveness is ranked higher, around 40% (Cyca, 2022). These alterations suggest that the advertising environment is changing, and brands must adapt to meet their clients on each channel. TikTok has developed communities with different interests, including of online education, enabling advertisers to target customers with engaging, relevant content (Casimiro, 2021; Cyca, 2022; Doyle, 2022; Kemp, 2022). Besides, 67% of users said that TikTok motivates them to proceed to purchase, even when they weren't expecting to do so (Cyca, 2022). Moreover, 73% of TikTok users who engage with brands on the SMP report feeling a stronger connection to those businesses (Cyca, 2022).

Hierarchy of effects model

The hierarchy of effects theory is an advertising model that addresses the selling of a product or service via well-structured, convincing advertising messages that are aimed to create brand awareness over time (Barry & Howard, 1990). While an instantaneous purchase would be desirable, businesses using this technique anticipate that customers would need a lengthier decision-making process (Barry & Howard, 1990; Lavidge & Steiner, 1961). Advertisers' objective is to lead a prospective consumer through all six phases of the hierarchy (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961).

The conceptual model of hierarchy of effects was developed by Robert J. Lavidge and Gary A. Steiner in 1961 and may be seen as a term for all linear marketing models and sales funnels (Barry & Howard, 1990; Chakravarty & Sarma, 2018). This model explains how advertising impacts client decision-making in a series of processes from raising awareness to completing a purchase (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961). The hierarchy-of-effects theory's linked behaviors are "think," "feel," and "do," or cognitive, affective, and conative stages (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961; Chakravarty & Sarma, 2018). These stages are further segmented into awareness, knowledge, liking, preference, conviction, and purchase (see Figure 2). The marketer's purpose in this case is to guide customers through all of them (Chakravarty & Sarma, 2021).

When a consumer is informed about a product or service and processes the information provided, the awareness and knowledge (or cognitive stage) phases occur (Lavidge &

Steiner, 1961). The brand information at this stage should be conveyed in a meaningful and logical manner that entices the potential client to learn more and engage with a brand (Wijaya, 2015; Chakravarty & Sarma, 2021).

Customers build sentiments about a brand during the liking, preference and conviction (or affective stage) phases, thus at this point the brand focus should be shifted from a product or a service itself towards appealing to a consumer's values, emotions, preferences, or lifestyle (Chakravarty & Sarma, 2021).

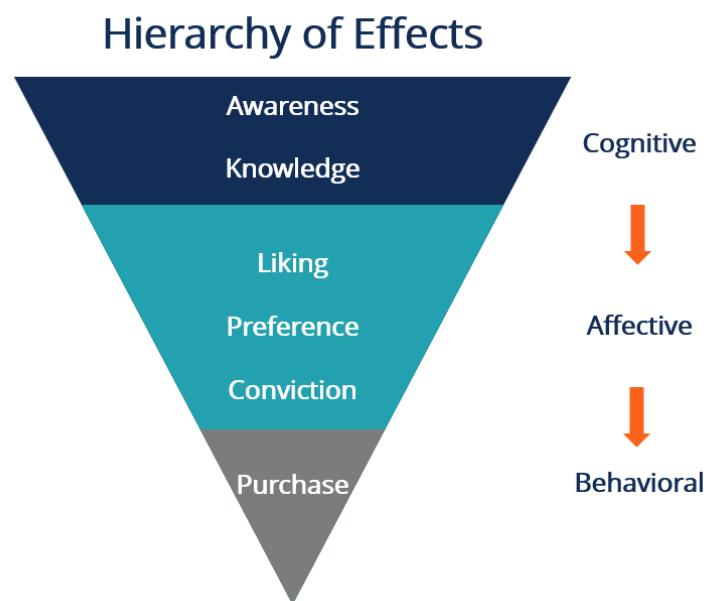


Figure 2. Hierarchy of Effects stages

The last phase of the hierarchy of effects model regard purchase (or conative stage) is concerned with actions (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961). It is when a marketer seeks to persuade a prospective consumer to complete a purchase based on the facts they have learnt and the emotional connection they have built with a brand (Chakravarty & Sarma, 2021). It may include converting uncertainties and doubts about a product or service into action (Chakravarty & Sarma, 2021). Advertisers should try to persuade prospective buyers that they need a product or service at this point, potentially by giving a test drive or a sample item (Chakravarty & Sarma, 2021). Advertisers could also gain their trust by emphasizing the quality, usefulness, and popularity of a product or service (Chakravarty & Sarma, 2021). For this project the model was adapted through an informal subdivision of the theoretical model into the following steps: providing valuable content, optimizing exposure, boosting

engagement, and promoting conversion. This free adaptation of the theoretical model serves to establish a framework and apply this theory to today's SMM and to tailor it to the platforms chosen for the brand strategy. The theoretical framework is also shown in a recurring cycle graphic rather than a traditional funnel since the processes are often followed concurrently and overlap with one another in practice (see Figure 3). The first three steps appear to be connected, in fact, increased exposure will typically cause more engagement, whereas high engagement will likely impact algorithms, creating more exposure. At the same time, relevant content can draw both more engagement and exposure. Increased engagement, interaction with brand on SM and content reach leads to, in its turn, to spreading information and raising brand awareness and, therefore, achieving cognitive stage of hierarchy of effects model.

Through creating material that appeals to the TA and is sufficiently competitive in its market, as well as by interacting with the audience in a manner that builds trust, liking and preference of the brand (affective stage) may be accomplished. At this stage, audience have most likely previously done some activities such as commenting, sharing, or following, and are inclined to progress to conviction and purchase (conative stage).

This is the ultimate aim, where customers are finally captured (cognitive), engaged (affective), and persuaded (behavioral) to convert from Instagram or TikTok to purchase the service provided.

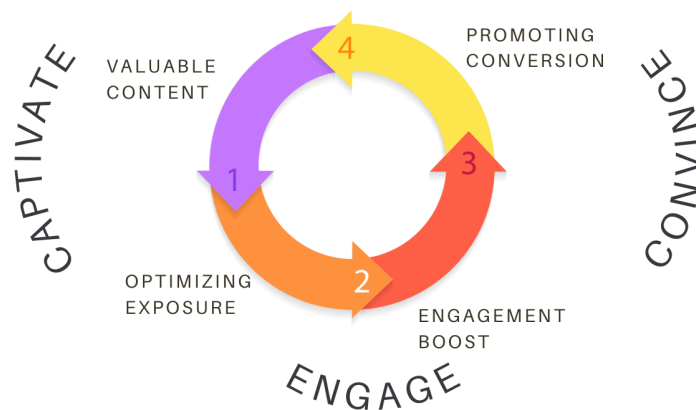


Figure 3. Theoretical framework adaptation

Observation of effective SMM practices on Instagram and TikTok

Observation constitutes of seeing, hearing and grasping crucial events and behavior in natural context (Zikmund et al., 2013, p. 237). Regarding Instagram and TikTok this means viewing the SMPs in a methodical manner while annotating crucial facts relevant to the study's purpose. This facilitates acquainting oneself with the app and its user culture, recognizing key occurrences, and drawing links between the generated content and user engagement.

Throughout the study, the defined SMPs are frequently visited to keep up with advancements such as new trends and app functionalities.

To get a better understanding alongside with realistic user experience, both Instagram and TikTok are seen as general entities. In the case of Instagram, hundreds of posts are seen and studied on the main feed and explore page; in the case of TikTok, the same occurs within the FYP. To obtain a more representative sample, comment sections, user profiles, relevant hashtags, and trends were also browsed.

Benchmarking

Benchmarking is the comparison of one's own brand practices to those of competitors; it serves to gather ideas and improve (Reh, 2022). Because the brand's rivals include other language schools, benchmarking is done research by monitoring competitors' SM activity. This reveals how they handle SMM on these platforms, what sort of content appears to work for them, and ideas to incorporate into the final marketing plan.

The author picked six active accounts from different sized brands and business accounts of educators. This contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of how organizations of businesses operate on SMPs, as well as potential variances in their tactics. Three of the chosen competitors (**Centro Dante Lisboa** - Italian language school that offers both offline and online courses in Lisbon, **Noi Studiamo**, **Canal Italianizando** – educators that offer a variety of online Italian language-related courses for Portuguese-speaking students, are smaller, more comparable companies that provide relevant and feasible information and ideas for the brand. **Fluency TV Italiano**, **Italiano com a Priscilla**, and **Learn Italian with Ale**, four major Italian courses with greater worldwide audiences and resources, were chosen to garner inspiration, nuances and ideas.

Conclusion

Marketers have a variety of tools at their disposal when it comes to reaching out to potential consumers through SM, thus it is critical to have a better grasp on the capabilities of the different platforms for defined TA. Instagram and TikTok are explored here as important platforms in terms of SM advertising reach for the TA of Allora School. Especially TikTok and Instagram's Reels are not yet well-researched in terms of ad effectiveness. Cost-effectiveness and possibility of organic growth reach on these SMPs is clear from previous research.

The Hierarchy of effects theoretical model was reviewed and adjusted for this project in hopes of finding a framework that would be suitable for the modern-day SMM situation and, particularly, to further create an Instagram and TikTok marketing strategy for the Allora School brand.

Chapter 3. Generation Z as the TA

In this chapter, the author will focus on reviewing definitions, general traits and characteristics of the brand's TA: Portuguese Generation Z. The author will also explore Gen Z's SM usage with a goal of understanding the consumer behavior of Gen Z members on SMPs. Gen Z's learning preferences will also be discussed in order to explain the initial choice of this particular generational cohort for our research project. This part of the research would be beneficial for small businesses and brands, specifically, language learning or teaching-related brands, that want to target younger generations and understand their peculiarities better.

Generational cohorts

Inglehart (1977) introduced generational cohort theory in 1977, a decade after Ryder (1965) first described the concept. Strauss & Howe (1992) subsequently defined generational cohorts as groupings of individuals who were born during the same time period and had comparable life experiences and major events throughout their early years. Comparable cultural experiences throughout their formative years resulted in similar beliefs, preferences, values, motivations, and actions (Strauss & Howe, 1992; Schewe et al., 2000). Consequently, a generational cohort may be defined as a group of people who have certain traits and experiences in common (Beldona et al., 2009).

Segmenting market based on generational cohorts, according to Schewe et al. (2000), is considered an effective approach. Norum (2003) implies that age disparities in consumer purchasing habits exist and should be thoroughly investigated by brands.

According to Strauss & Howe (1992), people are classified into five distinct generations - the entire body of individuals born and living at about the same time, most of whom are approximately the same age and have similar ideas, problems, ways of thinking and perceiving the world around them, and attitudes (see Table 1).

Silent generation	Also referred to as the Veterans or Traditionalists, it consists of people born between the years of 1922 and 1945.
Baby Boomers	This generation consists of people born between 1946 and 1964.
Generation X	Born within the years of 1965 and 1980.

Generation Y	Also known as Millennials, the people born approximately between 1981 and 1996.
Generation Z	Approximately born between 1997 and 2012.

Table 1. Generational cohorts (Strauss & Howe, 1992)

Gen Z: traits and characteristics

It's important to consider Gen Z's traits and characteristics in order to better understand which marketing tactics should be adopted on SM to target this generational cohort successfully (Araujo et al., 2022; Djafarova & Bowes, 2021; Francis & Hoefel, 2018; Vieira et al., 2020). Generation Z or Gen Z is a demographic cohort following Generation Y or Millennials. Gen Z is also known as Post Millennials, digital natives, and i-Generation (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). The members of this generation are the first to be born into the digital world (Francis & Hoefel, 2018). Due to early exposure to digital media, Gen Zers are technically savvy from a very early age, this is the reason they tend to avoid straightforward labeling and value individual expressions (Francis & Hoefel, 2018; Glass et al., 2020; Vieira et al., 2020). The possibility to easily access information such as product and service ratings and peer reviews empowers Gen Z consumers to be smart shoppers (Glass et al., 2020). According to Edelman (2021), brand trust is crucial for Generation Z consumers. According to a global survey of 10,000 members of Gen Z, 85% of respondents believe that trusting a brand is significant when making buying choices (Edelman, 2021).

Regarding date and age range definition, researchers have not agreed on a single definition regarding Gen Z. American Generations Report (2014) identified Gen Z as those born between 1995 and 2009. Pew Research Center describes Generation Z as individuals born from 1997 onwards, selecting this date for "different formative experiences" such as emerging technology innovations and social trends, including the universal proliferation of broadband internet connectivity and cellular coverage (Parker & Igielnik, 2020).

According to a global survey of 15,600 representatives of Generation Z, conducted by the IBM Institute for Business Value in 2020, 75% of Generation Z consumers most frequently use their smartphones, and 45% their laptops (Glass et al., 2020). These statistics are relevant in this study since the marketing strategy of Allora online language school, targeting Portuguese Gen Z, is going to be carried out through SM, particularly, through Instagram and TikTok, which are usually accessed through smartphones rather than computers (Glass

et al., 2020). That means that the marketing campaigns carried out for the brand should be mobile-friendly.

In Portugal, Gen Z accounts for 15% of the total population, which constitutes approximately 2.57 million young people and represents a significant layer within generational cohorts, which makes this generation very important in terms of consumer marketing (Vieira et al., 2020; World Population, 2022).

A survey of 381 Portuguese Gen Zers conducted by Deusto Business School (Madrid) in collaboration with public relations firm Atrevia (Lisbon) proposed an analysis with three axes: Z citizens, Z talent and Z consumer (Marketeer, 2022). The Z citizens axis demonstrated that the Portuguese Gen Z believes it is crucial to invest in education and help small and medium-sized businesses in order to reverse the stagnation they perceive to be affecting the Portuguese nation (Vilanova & Ortega, 2017; Moran, 2020). Gen Z is also worried about its future and places a high value on balancing education and work with other aspects of their lives, according to the report (Vilanova & Ortega, 2017; Parker & Igielnik, 2020). Portuguese members of Gen Z were defined as explorative, enthusiastic, and more self-focused citizens (Vilanova & Ortega, 2017).

Another axis reviewed in the study is Z talent. Gen Z does not just aspire to get educated and have a job, instead they aim to get an experience out of it (Vilanova & Ortega, 2017; Moran, 2020). Therefore, Gen Zers prefer brands that reflect their way of seeing the world: connected, transparent, and audiovisual (Vilanova & Ortega, 2017).

With regard to Z Consumer axis, members of Generation Z are often brand loyal, however their ultimate selections may be influenced by other factors: 46.7% believe their decisions are heavily influenced by the sort of goods and services, and 37% by the brands in which they have the greatest faith (Vilanova & Ortega, 2017). The most often cited considerations when making a purchase are a quick response to one's demands, a great brand image, and a company that uses language similar to Gen Z one (Vilanova & Ortega, 2017).

Gen Z and their SM use

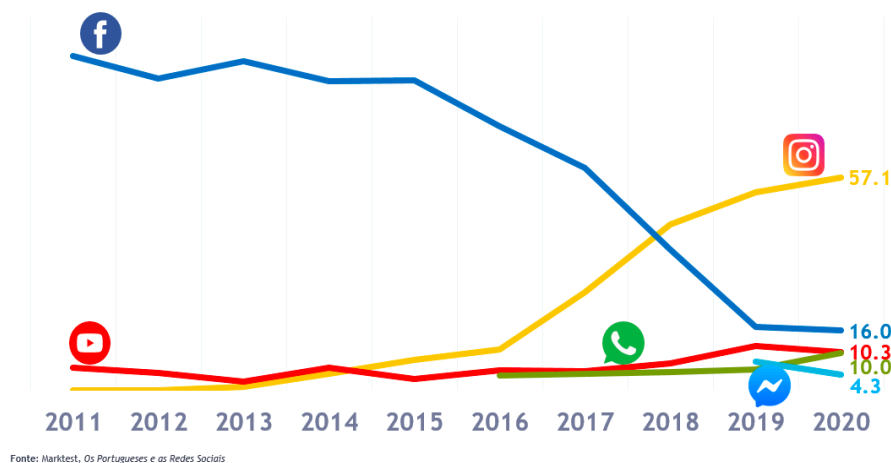
Marketers have been interested in learning more about how SM applications may be effectively used in order to reach younger audiences, specifically, Gen Z and how it affects their purchase behavior (Bilgin, 2018; Djafarova & Rushworth, 2017; Djafarova & Bowes, 2021). This is due to the need to learn more about the main determinants of successful

strategic initiatives, as well as the economic feasibility of such expenses. In this regard, there's a need to understand how effective these particular SMPs are for targeting Gen Z (Araujo et al., 2022; Djafarova & Bowes, 2021; Vieira et al., 2020).

According to the results of a survey by Marktest (Afonso, 2021), the average amount of time Portuguese Gen Zers spend on social networks has increased and accounts for approximately 135 minutes per day on average (Marcela, 2020; Afonso, 2021). The Marktest survey also revealed that browsing social networks has become a daily habit for Portuguese Gen Z, with 97.7% of respondents stating that they do it regularly (Afonso, 2021). 87.3% reported that they check their SM frequently throughout a day, whereas 10.4% stated that they do it once per day only (Afonso, 2021). Almost 100% of participants reported browsing social networks at least once a week (Afonso, 2021).

In regard to Portuguese Gen Z, one of the most popular SM sites is Instagram (see Graph 1). TikTok is also leading in terms of Gen Z users in Portugal, accounting for 1.7 million Portuguese users, with about 34% of users between 14 and 18 years old and 39% between 19 and 24 years old (Cabo, 2021).

Rede social que utiliza com mais frequência - Jovens 15-24 anos



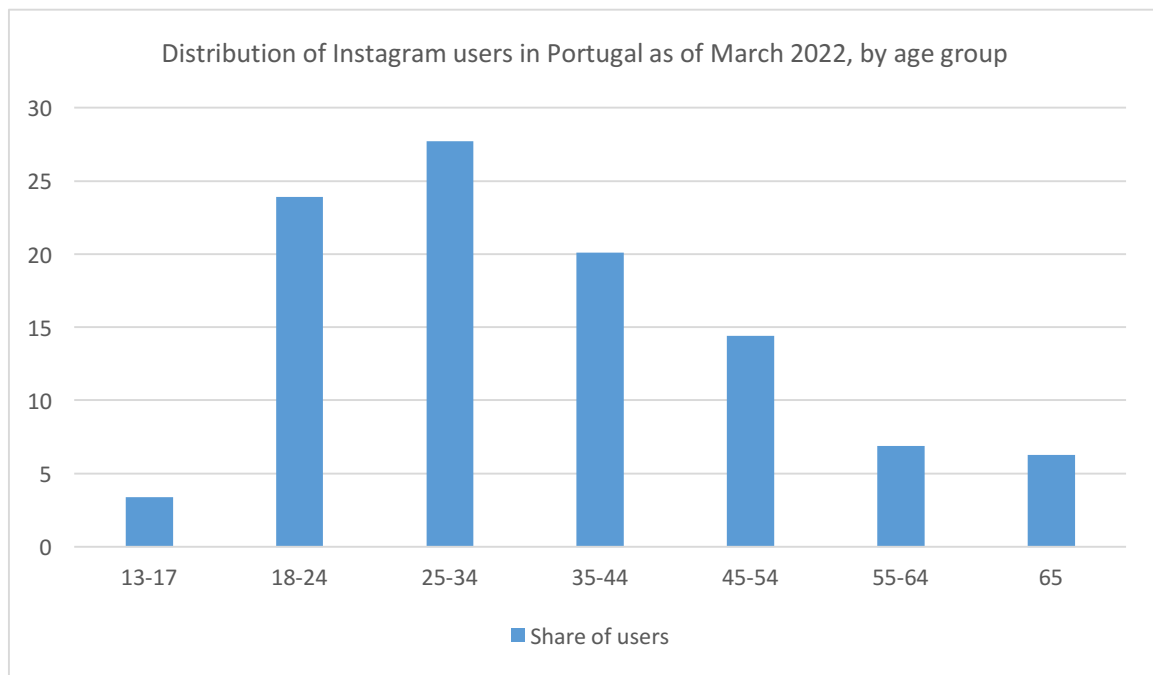
Graph 1. Rede social que utiliza com mais frequência - Jovens 15-24 anos (en. Social network used most often - Young people 15-24 years old), Afonso, 2021.

Portuguese Gen Z on Instagram

According to the Instagram advertisements tool, this social network had 5.4 million Portuguese members at the start of 2022, which equals 53.2% of Portugal's entire population (Gomes, 2022). 59.6% of Portuguese Instagram users are above the age of 13 (Gomes, 2022).

According to Statista (2022a), within the distribution of Instagram users in Portugal as of March 2022, Gen Z accounts for 27%: 3.4% of users between 13 and 17 years old and 23.9% of users between 18 and 24 years old (see Graph 2).

Facebook continues to dominate among the overall population of Portuguese users, but its impact among Gen Z users is rapidly declining, and the platform is losing regular users in the 15-to-24-year-old demographic since 2018. Instagram, on the other hand, is positioning itself as a very relevant platform (Gomes, 2022). Half of the Portuguese Gen Z respondents named Instagram as their primary social network (Gomes, 2022).



Graph 2. Distribution of Instagram users in Portugal as of March 2022, by age group (Statista, 2022a)

Portuguese Gen Z on TikTok

In the Portuguese context, there are around 1.8 million TikTok users, according to the 2020 projections of Azerion Portugal (Azerion, 2020). Statistics show that the majority (76%) of TikTok's users in Portugal are members of Generation Z (Kemp, 2022). TikTok's owner ByteDance's data indicates that TikTok advertisements reached 33% of users aged 18 and over in Portugal at the beginning of 2022 (Kemp, 2022).

In terms of time spent on TikTok, Portuguese users tend to spend more than 2 hours each day navigating through the application (Casimiro, 2021). Ninety percent of TikTok users use the platform more than once every day (Mohsin, 2021). Azerion (2020) reported that

Portuguese users open the app seven times per day to use it. A study conducted by Duarte & Dias (2021) confirmed the information on the activities of Portuguese users on TikTok. Besides, according to Marketeer (2022), 40% of users between the ages of 18 and 24 prefer TikTok and Instagram as search engines.

Much of TikTok's success may be ascribed to its deliberate selection of this younger demographic as its intended audience (Anderson, 2020; Araujo et al., 2022; Doyle, 2022; Gesmundo et al., 2022). Moreover, TikTok attracts this demographic owing to the ease with which it enables its users can "go viral" (any content or media that is extensively distributed through social networks and the internet) since the algorithm of the network gives both existing and aspiring content creators a greater chance of having their videos appear on FYP (Gesmundo et al., 2022; Mhalla et al., 2020). TikTok gives marketers and advertisers a SM chance to develop low-cost, high-value content that enables brands to interact authentically with their audience (Hutchinson, 2020; Mhalla et al., 2020).

Gen Z and their consumer behavior on SM

Gen Z is more inclined than previous generations to interact with companies through SM (Francis & Hoefel, 2018; Vieira et al., 2020; Djafarova & Bowes, 2021; Petrock, 2021; Araujo et al., 2022). Besides, Gen Zers who follow brands on SM are more inclined to buy from companies with a strong SM presence (Dabbous & Barakat, 2020; Petrock, 2021; Araujo et al., 2022).

According to a recent survey by eMarketer and Insider Intelligence, after hearing about a new brand or product, Gen Z individuals between 18 to 24 years old tend to utilize SM to do research, and over half of poll respondents claimed they would use SM to make purchases (Petrock, 2021). The respondents also confirmed buying at least one product or service due to an exposure to brand generated content, user generated content, or influencers affiliated with a brand (Petrock, 2021). This survey corroborates previous research on the topic (Salpini, 2017; Enberg, 2020).

Gen Z anticipates brand innovation and looks forward to co-creation with companies. With an emphasis on visual material (video, infographics), SM became the primary method for conveying advertising information to this generation (Dabbous & Barakat, 2020).

Gen Z language learners' characteristics and preferences

There is a wide range of concerns and subjects that attract Generation Z. They are always up-to-date and are equally curious about issues on a worldwide or local scale (Scholz & Vyugina, 2019). The current generation's way of thinking and learning is quite different from previous generations (Ariantini et al., 2021; Cilliers, 2017; Szymkowiak et al., 2021). The members of Generation Z are distinguished by their familiarity with technological means of communication over interpersonal interaction (Poláková & Klímová, 2019). Since they are accustomed to the use of tech and interactive experiences in their day-to-day life, visual learning methods are considered to be effective because the visual ability of the brain of Gen Zers is more developed (Cilliers, 2017). Thus, teachers should employ rich visual effects to encourage, engage, and educate this generation of learners (Ariantini et al., 2021; Cilliers, 2017).

Gen Z values experiences that allow for quick and frequent content interactions and appreciate being provided with authentic classroom activities and having access to a variety of information sources (Van Eck, 2006). They are described as impatient, fast, interactive and flexible multi-taskers (Cruz & Díaz, 2016). Rothman (2016), on the other hand, disagrees with the term "multi-tasker" and believes that "task-switchers" is more suited to defining this new generation. When it comes to task switching, the present generation outperforms any prior generation. This is offset by Gen Z's adaptability and breadth of perspective (Szymkowiak et al., 2021). They are able to access information, communicate and interact globally (Scholz & Vyugina, 2019).

Online learning has become essential within the education field due to the benefits it offers in terms of accessibility, convenience of choosing the time and place of the class and interactivity (Cheng & Su, 2012), additionally, enhancing students' interest in learning and their ability to retain information (Karabatzaki et al., 2018). Digital learning accomplished via mobile apps or digital platforms provides a "learner-focused self-paced learning environment" that is absent from the conventional teacher-centered classroom model (Szymkowiak et al., 2021, p. 4). This is why they generally prefer to access digital materials over paper-based materials (Cilliers, 2017; Francis & Hoefel, 2018; Szymkowiak et al., 2021).

Gen Zers want to confront problems in a completely immersive environment where they can do their own research, make decisions, and act (Ariantini et al., 2021; Poláková & Klímová,

2019). Consequently, teaching and learning materials should allow for flexibility and interactivity (Poláková & Klímová, 2019).

Gen Zers also appreciate personalized courses, tailored to their needs (Ariantini et al., 2021; Lee, 2022). In terms of online language courses, they may be personalized to each student's particular requirements through combining different classroom activities and formats, varying degrees of materials' difficulty and utilizing a variety of assessment options. Involving students in decision-making of a learning process may assist them in customizing the experience without overloading the course instructors and teachers.

Conclusion

Generation Z is the first demographic group to be born into a digital world. Due to their early exposure to the internet and SM, members of Generation Z are technically adept and aware of the pervasive marketing they face. This research project reviews Portuguese members of Gen Z as the TA of the brand Allora. Thus, the author wanted to reflect on their SM use in order to comprehend their consumer behavior on the SMPs – Instagram and TikTok – chosen for the brand's marketing strategy. This part of the study can be useful for small companies and brands who want to reach younger generations and get a deeper understanding of their traits and characteristics, from both marketing and educational perspective. The three axes analysis of Portuguese Gen Z was reviewed to get better marketing insights on this particular group. The statistical data about Portuguese Gen Z's use of Instagram and TikTok provided a clear understanding of how the target group uses them have also been added. As learners, Gen Zers prefer visual stimulus and personalized learning. They generally opt for digital materials, rather than paper-based ones.

Part II. Project of an online Italian language school “Allora School”

Chapter 4. Designing brand identity of Allora School

Overall brand description and Allora School’s brand identity prism

Allora School is going to be an online language school that offers personalized courses divided by language level and purposes of studying (academic, conversational, etc.), group lessons, speaking clubs, workshops and special courses dedicated to different Italian holidays, festivals and culture in general. The materials and courses of the school are placed on a user-friendly linguistic platform Edvibe (ex. Progressme), which is adapted to any device format: desktop computer, laptop, tablet or mobile phone. This platform is innovative and interactive, and the courses are equipped with a built-in translator and an AI-based dictionary. This is in line with Gen Z’s preferences for digital-based materials.

The content and materials designed on the platform are protected from copying since they cannot be downloaded. The visual materials that are created, i.e. grammar tables, image prompts, are protected with the school’s watermark in the form of a brand logo.

All the submitted student work, besides essays, projects and speaking tasks, are automatically checked on the platform which corresponds to the TA’s description as impatient and fast learners who expect instantaneous results and value experiences that allow for quick content interactions.

Moreover, the designed courses allow for personalization due to the platform’s constructor tool and possibility to add additional materials at any moment. As previously mentioned, personalization in the learning process is valued by the brand’s TA.

Based on the literature review regarding branding and TA, and overall school description, the author proposes brand identity prism as a form of analysis that will serve to create a strong brand identity and facilitate brand awareness (see Figure 4). Even though the company has not entered the market officially yet as a brand and technically does not have customers, this can serve as a good starting point and will serve the brand later on to come back to analyze and make further alterations, with consumer insights. Besides, the analysis of the proposed brand identity can serve to identify gaps between intended brand identity and image projections. It also assists in highlighting when aspects are not cooperating to generate a strong brand identity.

There are external brand characteristics which make part of intended brand identity, for example, physique is fulfilled with brand's overall characteristic as an online language school, logo elements, dominant colors.

The relationships that the brand intends to build with its customers are supposedly welcoming, respectful and friendly because language classes should be a place that the customers feel comfortable with, long-term since a language course usually takes some time to complete irrespective of language studying purposes, open for a dialogue since the courses are designed in order to meet the needs of individual student, therefore, the teachers representing the school should be ready to meet students' desires, adapt the classes for the students' needs.

The reflection of the TA consists of characteristics of Gen Z – young and tech savvy, besides, it is specified that they are learners of Italian language.

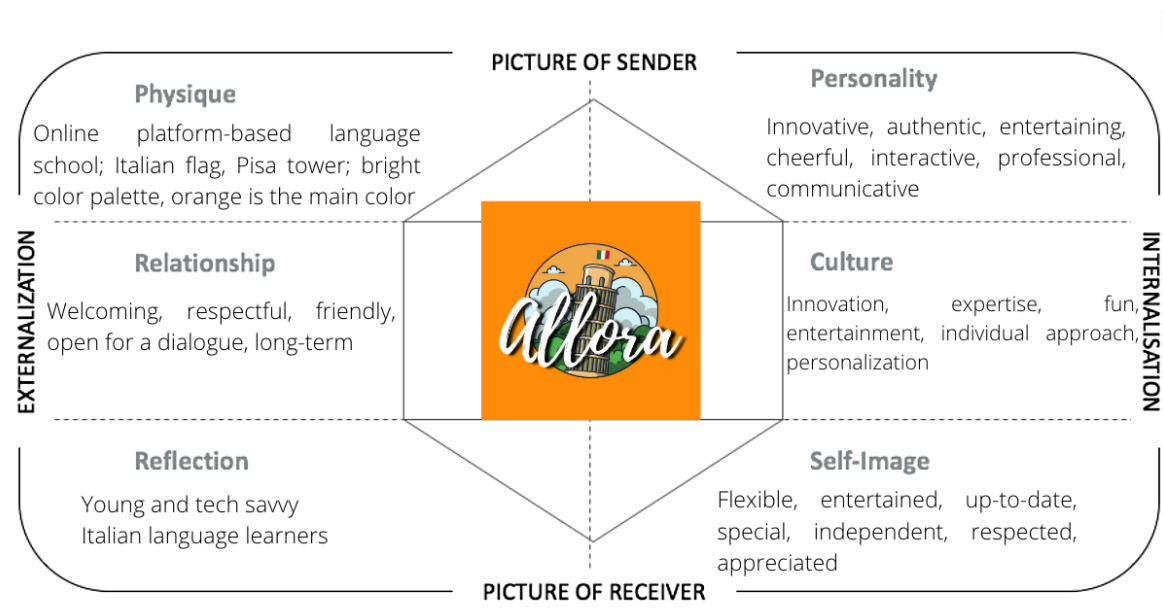


Figure 4. Allora School's analysis through Kapferer's brand identity prism

Internal brand characteristic, for example, brand personality includes description of characteristics and qualities that are essential for the basis of Allora School, being innovative, authentic, entertaining but at the same time professional are among them.

Brand culture reflects on a set of values that Allora School holds, for example, innovation in teaching using an interactive, AI-based platform; expertise – creating professional materials in accordance with teaching methodology and standards.

Self-image of the consumer using the brand is supposed to reflect the following: customers might feel flexible since the classes are available online and can be accessed through

different devices, entertained due to experiencing variety of materials and forms of exercises, up-to-date due to the usage of innovative platform for learning; special due to the personalization of courses, independent due to possibility of accessing course materials and homework at any time, going back to any section studied, receiving an immediate feedback on most of the exercises completed at home in real time; respected and appreciated due to individual approach tailored to one's needs.

Brand's mission, vision and values

Allora School's proposed **mission statement** is the following:

Allora School's mission is to make online language learning fun, entertaining, personalized. We want to help Italian language learners with different language levels – from beginners to advanced ones - to communicate better in this language as well as provide students not only with the cultural knowledge about contemporary Italy, but with real-world skills that can be practiced during Italian classes and conversational clubs.

Therefore, the brand's mission communicates a few aspects:

- brand's purpose is facilitating online language learning which can be seen as boring by some, especially due to the fact that the variety of courses that already exist do not offer interactive classes or teachers that utilize traditional ways of teaching in the online classroom instead of adapting more interactive ways;
- brand's objectives that translate from the mission statement are finding an individual approach for every student through personalization of the courses and lessons; organizing the classes and courses not only based on language contents and materials, but focusing more on real-life related topics and culture of the country;
- key market – Italian language learners with different language levels.

Allora School's proposed **vision statement** is the following:

Allora School creates life-changing opportunities for Gen Z language learners to realize a better future for themselves, to enrich their cultural background and develop life-related skills.

The vision statement in this case relates to a long-term potential effect of the brand in terms of an online language learning.

The proposed **values** of Allora School are the following:

- creating professionally planned language courses;

- personalization of courses depending on the student's needs and preferences;
- focus on contemporary spoken language and on cultural elements;
- communicative approach;
- positive and fulfilling learning environment;
- interactivity and flexibility;
- respectful of individuals and cultural backgrounds;
- prioritizing content and language integrated learning.

Brand name development: “Allora School”

Choosing the name of the brand is “the most significant component of the brand”, therefore, the aim was to create a unique name that would be easy to remember, pronounce and recall. In terms of uniqueness, according to Instituto Nacional da Propriedade Industrial (INPI) within Portuguese market there is no brand registered with this name (see Appendix 1). The legally allowed percentage of similarity to other existing brand names is less than 85%, which also makes it possible to utilize this brand name, since the percentage of similarity does not exceed 50% (see Appendix 2).

Another important aspect regarding a brand name design is that it should be “meaningful or suggestive”. In this case, the author has chosen already existing words for the brand name “allora” and “school”, which is partially self-explanatory, hinting at the nature of the brand and the educational service it provides.

There's also a certain facilitation of the name's recall which can be explained by the combination of these words. First of all, it is already associated with some kind of educational activity, having a word “school” in the name. Secondly, the first word in the brand name, “allora”, has a strong association to Italian language. This is explained by a high frequency of day-to-day use of this word in Italian language.

It's also possible to integrate at least a part of brand name to create a sponsored content for Italian learners, making a slogan with it, whereas some language schools and centers do not have the name adapted for that. For instance, CCAA which is used as an abbreviation for Centro Cultural Anglo Americano is hard to use in marketing because it isn't a word with its own meaning and therefore the marketers only rely on some sound combination or rhythm to create a slogan in this case and facilitate brand name's recall.

The word “allora” is also brief and does not have any negative connotation behind it. From my teaching practice, most students, even at the beginner level, have already encountered this word before or identified it as one of the words they associated with the Italian language. Thus, the brand name itself is potentially easily recognizable and can help future clients – learners of Italian or people who would like to learn it – to have an idea of what the brand is about based on the name alone. This can potentially lead to a certain level of brand awareness within the TA, which manifests in associating a brand to its service. As if any information that customers associate with a brand is linked to brand name recall, the more associations a brand has, the more potential consumers will remember it.

Allora School includes fairly recognizable terms that arise associations related to Italian language and educational activities, therefore, the author assumes this brand name is favorable for the brand equity and awareness, and can facilitate differentiation from other language schools in the market that offer Italian language courses. The author believes that this name can have a positive impact on the client perception of the company and services, too.

Brand logo design

A logo, as a visual expression that helps to generate competitive advantage and boost customer’s awareness of the brand, is a very important part of a brand’s identity. As potential clients have an instant impression of a brand upon seeing its logo, the author’s idea was to create an image-based logo that could have similar associations to Italian language learning as the brand name arises. This way, the name and the logo are interconnected and facilitate recall.

Following the theory on the topic of designing a brand logo, the author has chosen to design a logo that is both image- and word-driven. The choice of a combination of the logo forms was made because a visual component can attract consumer’s attention while the presence of the first part of the brand name “allora” can help customers to recall the brand name (see Image 1).

The logo consists of an orange background, one of the main colors of the brand, it has the leaning tower of Pisa, one of the most notable symbols associated to Italy and one of the most recognizable buildings in the world. It is a cultural landmark and one of the most visited touristic sights in Italy. It fascinates spectators that despite the fact that it is at risk of

collapsing, it has not succumbed to gravity. For the brand it represents a cultural focus that is also present within the courses.



Image 1. Brand logo of Allora School

There's an Italian flag placed on the top of the tower, again reinforcing the association, this way people have a facilitation of connecting the brand to learning Italian and to Italian culture having this visual stimulus presented. In front of the tower and closer to the lower part of it, there's a part of the brand's name – Allora, written over the background image. Since consumers naturally interpret the logo that they see, even if they are unaware of it, this might result in creating the association of the brand logo to Italy, Italian culture or language. The prevailing color of the brand logo is dark orange or, #FF8D07 according to the hex code of colors, and is chosen in accordance with the studied theory about psychological associations to this color, which is explained in detail in Chapter 1 of a literature review.

As if the orange conveys a sense of accessibility in terms of cost-effectiveness, the brand can reflect a sense of friendliness towards the TA of the brand, Gen Z, which is still relatively young and might not necessarily have the means themselves to afford a long-term language course and to frequent it. Usually, the parents of these students are the ones who might be paying for their courses. Besides the sense of accessibility that this color might be attributed to, might also attract the students or young workers who are looking for an online language courses because they might save their time of going to language schools due to many tasks at university and/or workload at an internship. Orange is also the color that radiates fun,

energy and appeals to the extrovert learners. This hue stimulates the senses and fosters exploration and discovery. Therefore, as if the part of the brand's mission is to provide students with the possibilities to communicate in the language that they learn in the real-life situations, the color presented can be associated to the general energy and the mood of the language school, classroom and overall learning experience. The vibrant connotation that is linked to this color is also connected to enthusiasm, and enthusiastic spirit of the online classroom that many students naturally expect from the private course.

Current situation: Internal SWOT analysis of Allora School

SWOT analysis is used in this project as part of a business strategy to assist a nascent brand Allora School and facilitate the identification of its strengths, weaknesses, areas for growth, and potential risks (see Table 2). This analysis is important for a variety of reasons. Mainly, it is a useful tool for identifying methods to promote the company and stay competitive.

Internal factors	Strengths	Weaknesses
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Personalized courses of Italian tailored for the students' needs and preferences; ✓ Holistic language learning, focus on cultural elements; ✓ Speaking clubs and thematic courses (marathons) available; ✓ All the materials are designed professionally, in accordance with proven effective language teaching methods; ✓ The materials available for students are situated on an innovative platform that can be accessed anytime, everything is in one place; ✓ The classes and the materials (classwork, homework, dictionary) can be accessed from anywhere with Internet connection; ✓ Flexible schedule; ✓ Individual and group classes available; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Small budget for marketing and advertising in comparison with big corporations and long-existing language schools; ✓ Lack of staff due to having limited resources at the moment – overwhelming workflow for just a brand's creator – teaching (creating courses), marketing and advertising (developing a SMM strategy) responsibilities; ✓ At the moment, the brand has not been successfully registered legally and hasn't yet passed standardized procedures, there's no certification given for the students that complete the course, although, in the case of Italian, the internationally recognized certification of language levels are available only after passing exams, such as PLIDA, CILS, CELI, ROMA TRE at the Italian embassies,

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Understanding of TA's traits, preferences and way of communication; 	<p>consulates or specific universities, thus, most of language schools of Italian just supply their students with the school internal certificate of attendance and completion of a particular language level.</p>
External factors	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ There aren't any schools available with such a variety of materials/courses offered for online Italian language learning, particularly, in Portugal and for young generations of learners; ✓ There usually aren't exclusively Italian language schools, the usual set of courses available only regards general Italian, Italian grammar and, rarely, conversational Italian, therefore Allora School can fill in this 'market gap'; ✓ Most of language schools do not offer the courses that would be user-friendly and interactive; ✓ Allora School can also potentially have fruitful partnerships with Italian companies in Portugal and universities that do not offer Italian language courses – for the students that participate in Erasmus exchange in Italy, for example. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Big corporations and brands that are more recognized and recalled, they are on top of mind of many customers, thus, are intrinsically perceived as trustworthy, it would take time for a small business to gain this customer's trust, however, in case of Portugal, the majority of language schools are English-focused; ✓ Low-cost Italian courses offered at universities.

Table 2. SWOT analysis of Allora School

Chapter 5. Observation and benchmarking results

Observation stage results

The author was able to get a basic comprehension of the state of marketing on Instagram and on TikTok alongside brand initiatives on these SMPs via observation. The author collected information and got some insights regarding approaches that are likely to succeed and which tend to frequently fail. The author performed an analysis of the user culture of Instagram TikTok users, identified several marketing tactics and instances of effective brand campaigns.

User culture

Regarding both Instagram and TikTok, user interaction with content is quite strong, although the general tendency is that TikTok videos are usually more commented on, engaged with, reposted or duetted. Instagram Reels, as previously said, has just recently added the new feature of Reels that is similar to TikTok in terms of organic reach and overall engagement, and recently, the Reels are more promoted on Instagram and it's possible to see this tendency of users interacting more with posts created with this tool, bringing more engagement to brands and individual users. However, many of the Reels videos produced are copied from TikTok or continue trends originated on TikTok.

Besides video trends on both SMPs, the comment section on TikTok has a significant difference – it has trends on its own. Users utilize specific phrases and slang that become viral and get hundreds or even thousands of likes. Reels in Instagram in this case are slightly comparable to TikTok but do not have this definite distinction from TikTok. Occasionally, people on both TikTok and Instagram have lengthy discussions in the comments. This overall culture of active users is advantageous to companies, since the algorithm recognizes the length of time a user spends in the comment box while the video continues to play in the background on both of platforms. In order to boost interaction, some brands seem to further promote this behavior by participating in discussions or posing an intriguing question in captions and pinned comments. On Instagram, brands usually post a lengthier caption since the Reels videos loop and don't have a pause button, in contrast with TikTok, keeping the user reading the description and gaining more views.

Most of the time, valuable material on TikTok, i.e., regarding tips for language learning is created in a very friendly and relaxed manner, avoiding too much formality and without the

use of elaborate techniques. Some language creators, for instance, can just point out things around them and name them in the target language or create a funny sketch addressing learner's issues in an informal style. On Instagram, it is more common to see creators using professional lighting, a "clean" and organized background, and specific lettering on their videos. This can be explained by the nature of Instagram, which was originally created as a photo-sharing platform, and, therefore, polished aesthetics were and remain a primary emphasis of the platform. In contrast, users on TikTok seem to choose natural and effortless material layout over planned and produced. Since content produced on TikTok doesn't require professional editing, costly equipment or a specific background set, the unpretentious character of user culture reduces the strain and costs of marketing production. In fact, a more casual brand content approach is likely to be better appreciated since it is consistent with the rest of the FYP. Also, some companies may use unique visual cues or motifs that repeat in their content, depending on the intended brand image a company aims to achieve. Instagram requires a more technical approach – a brand needs to invest in the design of different materials such as Posts, Stories and Reels. However, the essential rule for brands on both platforms is to attract the user's attention and facilitate content interaction in the initial few seconds before they scroll or swipe away.

Regarding TikTok, it was also observed that users tend to utilize it as a search engine since the video captions, hashtags and the on-screen texts added on TikTok video inside of the app are searchable.

Instagram and TikTok Ads

The most visible method of marketing on Instagram and TikTok is the placement of sponsored advertisements. On TikTok the ads are shown on the FYP page; on Instagram there are more ads placement options, such as in the Feed, Explore page, Stories and Reels. Instagram offers marketers and brands that have a professional account valuable insights about different metrics, such as the overall performance of the account and its particular ads, follower count, how the audience interacted with certain posts, Stories, videos, Reels, and Live videos. It offers an overview of total followers, the demographics of accounts engaged, and accounts reached with both sponsored and non-sponsored material a brand shared. It is possible to choose a timeline to see the insights available.

In the case of TikTok, it's also possible to obtain a free business account and access analytics to measure performance metrics and audience insights, including engagement rates, follower demographics, and growth statistics through the Advertisements Manager system. Although this project focuses on more organic, creatively driven marketing and advertising tactics due to limited budget of the brand, these paid solutions may be worth investigating since they might be useful in the future to facilitate brand promotion and raising brand awareness. Similar to other high-performing material on TikTok's FYP, ad content should employ humor or inventiveness in order to elicit favorable responses and interaction.

After accessing the TikTok ads library, I've found out that there are no language-related active ads on the platform within the last month in Portugal (see Appendix 3). Mostly brands rely on CTAs used in posted videos, pointing out the website link in their profile where it's possible to obtain more information on pricing and available courses. It's possible to come to the conclusion that language-related businesses in Portugal rely on organic reach. Also, it demonstrates that there's a big market gap on TikTok for advertising language businesses. Regarding Instagram inventiveness, general aesthetic and proposed value are also essential. On both platforms, users seem to be easily irritated by forceful advertising, advertising that includes too much information or outdated techniques (see Appendix 4). As a result, when users encounter brands with one of these ads there are usually no interaction, comments on the ads and few likes, so it further diminishes brand pages' engagement (see Appendix 4). Most effective ads content seems to be characterized by a feeling of genuineness, innovativeness and creativity in ads and provided value. Conventional advertising seems to be rather unpopular on these platforms (see Appendix 5).

Brand-generated content

When addressed properly, brand accounts develop their own content for marketing that seems to be warmly accepted and get a lot of engagement (see Appendix 6). Providing some useful hacks on how to improve listening skills in a foreign language, demonstrating how the classes go, ranking the difficulty of books for students of different reading levels, showing funny situations from teachers' experiences, etc. Such personalized branding is an advantage of smaller brands that facilitate the companies to develop ties with the TAs via so-called parasocial interactions that seem authentic. More empathy is generated by being able to identify the person behind the brand rather than by a nameless machine. TikTok users

like to interact with human-based brands and usually tend to comment and ask for clarification on some pieces of videos that, in the case of language-related accounts, have some cultural information they are not sure of to educate themselves on the topic. This is an example of generating content with direct influence on engagement and conversion (see Figure 3). Another adaptable marketing strategy for TikTok is capitalizing on current trends and developing brand-related, niche versions, such as the use of viral hashtag trends, filters or sounds. On Instagram, there are many language school brands and educators that provide free guides or checklists for a follow in their website linked in a profile which helps to lead more potential consumers to the landing page of the website. Also, there is a common practice to direct followers from TikTok to Instagram with the promise of the brand or educator to give more structured information on the topics presented in TikTok. Another tactic that helps to capture the attention of followers is the carousel format of posts, which keeps the followers scrolling through to get an explanation on a particular topic.

User-generated content

User-generated content (UGC), material that is shared by users on SMPs in the form of reviewing a product or service, sharing positive or negative feedback about it, is also prevalent on both Instagram and TikTok, and is especially common from brands that offer some products. However, there are also some users that share their experience of language learning on apps, rate and rank them, sometimes share their experiences of studying with a particular teacher or school. UGC seems to be perceived as more trustworthy than brand generated content, particularly sponsored brand content. In the case of an online language school, it seems feasible to utilize user generated content such as customer feedback on the course, which many brands and educators do, having their highlights on Instagram with student reviews and occasionally reposting videos of their students that shared positive feedback about them. Regarding Allora School, there's also a section on Instagram and on the website which any user can access and see video reviews of students as well as their feedback in the form of a message. In addition, speaking clubs can be utilized as a form of gathering UGC. Usually, after participating in one, the students post about this experience, most commonly, on their Instagram Stories (see Appendix 7).

Company/ account	Instagram followers	TikTok followers	Likes (TikTok)	Post frequency	Posted content
Centro Dante Lisboa/ @centrodan telisboa	406	15	20 likes	Inconsistent	Promotional posts with course information, prices and discounts, school announcements, occasional grammar posts, cultural posts (Italian cuisine and festivals); videos on Reels are the same that are on TikTok – little amount of these videos and most of them are without good lighting and include gifs or people speaking in Italian and explaining grammar or words
Noi Studiamo/ @noi.studi amo	11,2K	52	605	Inconsistent posting; occasional Reels and Stories	Mostly word lists on different topics (cuisine, weather, toys, work, false friends in Italian comparing with Portuguese) with visual support, Italian grammar with the same style of wordlists, occasionally lifestyle content and use of some TikTok trends, Reels are the same videos that this account produces on TikTok; there aren't any long captions on posts, so users rely purely on visuals on this page
Canal Italianizan do/@ canal_itali anizando on Instagram/ @aprendai talianocom thiago on TikTok	23.8K	37.1K	222.2K	3-4 posts on Instagram every week, 1-3 Reels per month, Stories every day; occasionally 3-4 videos per day on TikTok, overall 3-4 times per week; Stories daily	Mini lessons every day in Stories – with grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, posts parts from YouTube videos on Instagram and TikTok, posts contain vocabulary in context, conversational phrases, grammar exercises with gaps for users to complete – the answers for these tasks are posted on Stories; Stories: life content, mini lessons; highlights of Instagram are organized and facilitate user experience; On TikTok utilizes filters and adapts it for teaching Italian, creates the videos for users to duet – parla con me in Italiano (eng. Talk Italian with me); reads some difficult words and explain the use of some verbs through real life situations and uses it in the sentences
Italiano com a Priscilla/@ italianoco mapriscilla	85.1K	844	4622	Daily on Instagram and TikTok; Daily Stories	Instagram Reels: Italian expressions, comparing similar words and explaining their differences, real life situations – how to order food, etc. Instagram Posts: quizzes, culture-related posts, basic Italian vs real life Italian, Italian with + some famous Italian person and videos with them Utilization of series of posts that have a certain frequency; Stories: lifestyle content, feedback, school and what happens there, course and method descriptions, events, Italy and places TikTok: answering some questions, explanatory videos of how to use some

					words in context, what expressions to avoid
Fluency TV Italiano/@fluencytvitaliano	125K	1202	2381	3 times per week on Instagram; 1-3 times per week on TikTok; Stories daily	Instagram Reels: learning Italian with Netflix, what does Italian have in common with other languages, basic verbs, touristic points, conversational expressions Posts: pronunciation tips, useful phrases, common mistakes Stories: quizzes, ads of courses, lifestyle content, vocabulary, grammar Highlights are organized conveniently for users TikTok: most of the videos are similar to the Reels ones, how to pronounce series, touristic attractions
Learn Italian with Ale/@learnitalianwithAle	125K	158.8K	1.5M	Daily	Instagram and TikTok have similar patterns of videos; in Instagram the content is mostly Reels and Stories; every week there's a free lesson for everyone; Stories: travelling and lifestyle, Italian cities, food, verbs, songs); highlights are conveniently organized and easy to navigate through; TikTok: videos with visual aids – vocabulary such as words from everyday life, i.e. things around me at the beach, verb conjugations, grammar videos with verbs in past, present and future tenses, videos with calls to action – invites to a free lesson, to enroll in a private club (includes flashcards, access to weekly digital magazine, weekly exercises)

Benchmarking: common techniques utilized by competitors

The accounts of competitors were examined to gain insights into how other language-related brands and popular educators approach Instagram and TikTok marketing. The author focused on post content and frequency, key engagement metrics, and other recurrent approaches and tactics (see Table 3).

Table 3. Competitors accounts on Instagram and TikTok [last accessed on August, 25, 2022].

The selected accounts are not exclusively created for Portuguese-speaking language learners due to the low number of language schools in Portugal, especially regarding Italian language learning, that are frequently active on SMPs, in comparison with other countries, i.e. Brazil and Russia. It was observed that those that are Portuguese-oriented and registered in Portugal do not rely on attracting younger generations of learners and use old-fashioned content on their Instagram and TikTok. An example of this is a language school that is a branch of the

international society of Dante Alghieri – Centro Dante Lisboa, which offers both onsite and online classes. Most of the videos they produced do not provoke much interaction with Italian learners, since most of the videos are recorded in a very simple manner, include many generalized hashtags, use old style designs on videos and do not utilize storytelling or lifestyle content that helps to humanize the brand. There appears to be a market gap in Portugal for a language school that would be innovative, include personalized courses and be focused on the tech-savvy generation. Noi Studiamo, for example, also had less consistency and, therefore, less engagement with their posts. Most of the other proposed accounts seemed to have an established, omnichannel SM presence with a rather consistent posting.

Some of the brands seemed to use less formality and more interactivity in their content, such as quizzes, answering questions, creating the content to interact with (i.e., content for duetting on TikTok) (see Appendix 8). Most competitors' uploads were informal TikTok videos, Reels and Stories with humorous elements created in a casual but amusing style. Some of them, such as conversational expressions, learning hacks and tips, and student reviews, were produced around promoting brand materials or the provided courses.

Another common trait is valuable content with visual aids which is similar to all of the language niche on both Instagram and TikTok. Adding lifestyle content to Stories and Reels occasionally helps to “humanize” the brand and facilitate a stronger connection with the TA, fostering a feeling of trust between brands and their audience. Storytelling is also actively utilized by brands with bigger followings, i.e., Canal Italianizando and Learn Italian with Ale. They use storytelling to educate their followers or point out an interesting phrase, word or use it as a form of entertainment. Another common trait of all the reviewed accounts is sharing cultural information.

The brands reviewed do not use influencers and instead rely on produced content. Some of these brands have active ads, i.e., Fluency TV Italiano runs various ads on Instagram. Some of these brands, i.e. Canal Italianizando and Fluency TV Italiano, have their accounts on different platforms, such as YouTube. This helps to increase their SM traffic and get more followers organically by leading them from watching a video on YouTube to following these brands on Instagram and TikTok and vice versa. This also facilitates driving more traffic to their websites since there are more digital touchpoints and locations on SMP where a potential customer can interact with a brand.

Some of these brands offer mini lessons for free – for example, both Learn Italian with Ale and Canal Italianizando have a free lesson every week. This consistency helps to attract more potential customers and gain more followers. In my experience, having free trial lessons and speaking clubs with a possibility to bring a friend for free helps to attract new potential students, since they meet the teacher and have trial access to the platform.

Most of these brands' SMPs serve as landing pages since they include direct connections to company websites. This enables interested people to click on a link in the brand's profile, go to their website, and potentially enroll in the course and obtain some materials. This happens particularly if a CTA is provided. The objective of this is to stimulate conversion (see Figure 3) by convincing the customer to take rapid action, such as clicking a link or the "follow" button.

Observed posts of these brands included CTAs in their postings, descriptions, prompting their followers' response or encourage a sale of the materials created by them, invite the users to participate in a private language club or announce some new information about the course. The author observed the examples of courses and apps proposed by the named competitors and enrolled in some of them. For example, the free trial class offered by the biggest account of those benchmarked offered an old-style class with video of a teacher speaking and sharing PDF from a grammar book (see Appendix 9). Another bigger brand – Fluency TV Italiano – offers its students an app for learning words, besides the video-based classes. The app is based on a grammar-translation method and flash cards (see Appendix 9). Other competitors do not offer their own apps, their classes and courses offered are usually book/PDF-based, i.e., Noi Studiamo, Canal Italianizando, Centro Dante Lisboa (see Appendix 9). Instead of adapting the class for a digital form, they bring a standard, traditional class to an online format which is more adapted for older generations. Italiano com a Priscilla, for instance, offers video-based courses where students watch recorded videos and do exercises in the chat and get feedback.

This benchmarking suggested an existent market gap with little to no Italian educators focused on Gen Z's needs and learning preferences, digitalization and use of innovative platforms with interactive elements or personalized materials.

Chapter 6. SMM strategy for Allora School

Goals of SMM strategy of Allora School and measuring metrics

The proposed SMM strategy is for one calendar year, starting from October 2022 and lasting until October 2023. In this time, it would be possible to see and track the success of the proposed strategy within the chosen market and make necessary changes.

Since Allora School is planning to enter the Portuguese market, there are some goals of SMM strategy and ways to measure their achievement that the author will outline further on. These goals correlate with the proposed classical theoretical model on hierarchy of effects and its cognitive (“think”), affective (“feel”) and conative (“do”) stages. Besides, these goals are explained and tied to the reviewed literature.

First and foremost, being a new brand to enter the market, the overarching business goal would be to grow the brand, therefore, in terms of marketing it is necessary to create and later increase brand awareness among potential customers. The author would like to raise brand awareness by 30% within the given time period.

This goal inherently correlates with the cognitive stage (“think”) of the proposed theoretical framework on hierarchy of effects (Lavidge & Steiner, 1961; Chakravarty & Sarma, 2018). Moreover, the proposed goal correlates to brand awareness being the main focus in marketing efforts (Dabbous & Barakat, 2020; Momany & Alshboul, 2016). Besides, it was also stated that SMM is supposed to be utilized by marketers to create, spread and raise awareness (Keller, 2013).

Since Instagram and TikTok are useful for increasing brand awareness within the brand’s TA, the metrics would be the ones available on these platforms. For instance, one of the metrics would be SM post reach. This metric demonstrates how many people have seen the post whether sponsored or not; it’s also possible to look at the ratio of followers to non-followers in post reach to understand if the material is being shared, performing well in relation to the platform’s algorithms, or both. In addition, it is possible to monitor brand’s average reach on these SMPs, as well as the reach of each individual post, Stories, Reels, IGTV, etc. This also helps to understand what kind of content performs best overall and within the TA in particular. Another metric for evaluating brand awareness would be the number of impressions. It reflects how many times a brand’s content was seen. Due to the possibility that a single individual may see the content more than once, it may be greater than reach. Moreover, follower count and audience growth rate can also be used as a form

of analysis regarding raising brand awareness and its effectiveness. The audience growth rate tracks the number of new SM followers a business acquires over a certain period of time. After a year of following the proposed marketing strategy, the brand will collect all the data available from the period and will analyze if the goal of creating brand awareness and increasing it by 30% was achieved. This could be done through statistical analysis of the data available from Instagram and TikTok or a brand awareness survey among the TA to see how recognizable it has become and how it ranks amongst its competitors. Besides, the theory suggests that both direct and indirect website traffic may be used as a statistic to analyze brand awareness (Momany & Alshboul, 2016).

Increasing brand engagement by 20% within the given time period is another goal of the SMM strategy. This goal inherently correlates with the affective stage (“feel”) of the hierarchy of effects. It also goes hand-in-hand with increasing brand awareness, because a high engagement rate indicates how aware people are of the brand. As a consequence of SMPs engagement efforts, customers are more likely to acquire and spread brand information, which affects consumers’ exposure to brand information and overall brand awareness (Ashley & Tuten, 2015). Brand engagement also indicates the quality of produced content and people’s general reaction to it. Moreover, it is also important in terms of building brand trust on SM as mentioned in the literature review.

The metrics that the author will utilize to measure brand engagement will include Instagram and TikTok post engagement rate, which is the ratio between the overall number of engagements and the total number of impressions. Another indicator that demonstrates brand engagement rate is the number of comments, likes, and shares. Besides, organic mentions of the brand and eWOM can be tracked via the search bar and brand notifications on both Instagram and TikTok. Moreover, as the brand develops in SMM and gains more visibility, presence of eWOM can indicate customer brand engagement (Chu & Kim, 2011; Lopez & Sicilia, 2014), therefore, its presence can serve as one of the indicators of effectiveness of the strategy regarding goal setting.

Finally, another goal for this SMM strategy would be to increase leads by 60% in a year using a lead magnet and a landing page to promote conversions. This could be measured through statistics on sponsored posts on Instagram and TikTok and CTR. This goal inherently correlates with the conative stage (“do”) of the hierarchy of effects.

TA analysis

The three axes proposed for understanding Portuguese Gen Z characteristics more profoundly were: Z citizen, Z talent and Z consumer. The first proposed axis, Z citizen, reviews “the importance of investment in one’s education and support of small and medium-sized business”. Allora School complies with this, firstly, due to it entering the market as a small business and, secondly, language learning is an important part of educational process in the modern marketplace, because it helps students to develop critical thinking, problem-solving and other soft skills. Furthermore, many companies require their employees to speak a foreign language.

Worrying about the future career perspectives and having an education- and a work-life balance also makes part of Z citizen axis. In this case, Allora is also in line with the given marketing research. Since the school is online, students can have classes from any place and device (since the platform is user-friendly for all the devices) with internet access. Besides having the classes with the teacher, students can also access the covered content, the content added for homework and the interactive dictionary at any time, which grants a certain flexibility.

The second proposed axis, Z talents, manifests in aspirations of having “experience” of education and work. In this case, another benefit of Allora School is that the courses are focused not only on language per se, but on culture and history. The main idea is to have a holistic approach to teaching, so the student is ready for a real-life situation and is equipped with the necessary knowledge about the country. This kind of lesson can serve as a way to experience a different culture through the lens of a language itself, music, and contemporary series.

The third and the last proposed axis, Z Consumer, is about considering a company that “uses a language similar to Gen Z one”. In this case, the SMM campaign prepared after observation of user culture of Gen Z on Instagram and TikTok, with the understanding of trends and ways of communicating on the chosen platforms meets these expectations of Gen Z. It was also mentioned that Gen Z consumers are more inclined to interact with brands on SM and ultimately purchase from brands with a strong SM presence, therefore, the brand should have been consistent in its SM use. Exposure to all kind of content regarding the brand, whether it is brand generated, user-generated, or influencer affiliated content generally leads to sales according to previous studies.

This particular generation “values individual expressions” (Francis & Hoefel, 2018; Glass et al., 2020; Vieira et al., 2020), is “more self-focused...and applies quest for innovation to all parts of their lives, including a very important segment of it – education” (Vilanova & Ortega, 2017) and, therefore, would appreciate the personalization of the courses and individual approach in learning a language.

According to Chapter 3 of literature review, the choice of Instagram and Tiktok for reaching Generation Z is justified and corresponds to the statistics of the TA’s use of both of these platforms (Cabo, 2021; Casimiro, 2021).

Both use of these SMPs and Edvibe as a platform that stores the content for language courses are also justified, since these platforms are highly visually-based, which correlates with language learners’ preferences regarding designed course materials with different visual aids, videos, exercises with prominent graphic and interactive features and SM content as TikTok videos with captions, Instagram posts, Reels, Stories.

Allora School Instagram and TikTok general content suggestions

Based on the proposed adaptation of hierarchy of effects framework (see Figure 3) and the overview of brand awareness, brand trust and content marketing in connection to SMM, the author has made some content suggestions for the SMM of Allora School on Instagram and TikTok. These suggestions are adaptable and theoretically could be used by the majority of new language-related companies or educators. Research indicates that achieving success in marketing on the reviewed SMPs involves creativity, flexibility, and experimentation to determine what works best for each individual company. Therefore, there are not exact directions, but rather general guidelines to help Allora School to get started and develop its SM presence steadily.

Regarding the outlined hierarchy of effects framework that consists of interconnected stages: creating valuable content and optimizing brand exposure (cognitive stage), increase consumer brand engagement (affective stage) and, finally, promoting conversion (conative stage), the author outlined further suggestions regarding the content strategy of Allora School on the chosen SMPs. These stages are interconnected, meaning that valuable content usually brings more brand exposure, consequently leading to increase in engagement, while increased engagement drives more leads and, potentially, conversions. The stages of a

classical hierarchy of effects model, in its turn, lie in the basis of the aforementioned marketing goals.

The first section of the content marketing strategy suggestions regarding increasing brand awareness through creating valuable content identifies the essential components and strategies for developing quality content on the proposed SMPs such as value-added content, diversity, trends and visuals. Value-added content is the main content that should be present in Allora School's SMM strategy, since the major part of creating and raising brand awareness consists of content marketing, and more specifically, content that provides value to TA and engages it (Genoveva, 2022). Creating valuable content can help to raise brand awareness and spread the brand knowledge, informing consumer about the existing brand. This way potential consumer learns about the existence of the brand and make a connection from the brand to its product or service. Valuable content creates competitive advantage. It should include brand generated language and cultural content and materials that are unique, diverse, creative, up-to-date and exclusive, and serve to facilitate brand awareness and build TA's trust. In this case, according to literature review creating video content via Reels (Geyser, 2022; Hutchinson, 2022) and TikTok videos (Gesmundo, 2022; Mohsin, 2021; Novak, 2020) can help organic reach and increasing brand awareness. They could include different types of content such as informational, educational and entertaining (Lopes et al., 2022).

Informational content can consist of informing users about brand events, workshops, speaking clubs and cultural events regarding the country of the studied language, educational – language focus, and entertaining to create emotional bond with the users and build brand trust. Besides, examples of exclusive and creative content that Allora School can post to bring value to its potential consumers include infographics regarding types of pizza preferred in Italy connected to the exam preparation (talking about statistical data); explanations of particular words and expressions contextual use through snippet videos taken from films, series, music videos or images with the books. Moreover, the brand can capitalize on recent worldwide news and adapt them to create a meaningful content for its audience, i.e. post a TikTok video regarding the recent death of Queen Elizabeth and explain how to express condolences in Italian, create an Instagram post with different hats that the Queen used throughout her reign and name the colors of them in Italian, adding Stories with interactive quizzes on the topic to check understanding.

Regarding diversity and trends and their brand adaptations, as it was stated above, Gen Zers, the TA of the brand, tend to spend quite a lot of time on chosen SMPs (Cabo, 2021; Casimiro, 2021), therefore, in order to get their attention through valuable content, it should not be monotonous (Vilanova & Ortega, 2017), instead, there should be a room of experimentation. Thus, diversity of the content on SMPs should translate into experimenting with various forms of content material: such as interpreting a song in Italian, sharing language hacks, highlighting common mistakes of Portuguese speakers in Italian and how to avoid them. Using humor and Gen Z slang could add entertainment value to produced content. Besides, the brand should follow current trends, utilize trending sounds, filters and join challenges that arise on Instagram and TikTok and adapt them to the language learning niche. Experimenting with effects such as filters, transitions, should be done to add variety to the material. This is also a way to diversify content in accordance with observed user culture on these SMPs.

Since SM became the key medium for transmitting advertising information to the TA, with a concentration on visual content (Dabbous & Barakat, 2020), the visual characteristics of the created content are relevant, due to its potential impact on the impression of the quality of the product or service (Erkan & Evans, 2016). The importance of the visual aspect of created content is in line with the benchmarking of competitors and their techniques of organizing brand pages on SMPs. Together with the other specified tactics, these steps maximize the effectiveness of Instagram and TikTok marketing for brand awareness and, consequently, lead to brand exposure.

Visuals of both brand pages of Allora School on the chosen platforms should be in line with visual brand identity and have consistent motif, such as brand colors, logo and lettering to assist brand awareness. All kinds of posts on Instagram and TikTok should include captions, in the case of Instagram also covers to integrate the content in the Feed, to provide more context and attract the users' attention.

The second section of the content marketing strategy outlines the important aspects and methods for optimizing exposure and visibility on Instagram and TikTok which follows brand awareness and leads further on to building brand trust. To increase brand exposure, it is necessary that the content resonates with the TA (Vilanova & Ortega, 2017).

In order to optimize exposure through created content the brand should utilize the chosen SMPs frequently and consistently, since each new post is an opportunity to spread brand awareness.

According to benchmarking of competitors and their SM practices regarding frequency, the author came to conclusion that Instagram brand page should have at least 3-4 weekly posts that consists of 1-2 Reels, carousels, IGTV videos or posts; Stories should be uploaded daily. On TikTok the brand should upload at least four-to-five videos per week.

In the case of TikTok each video should include keywords since TikTok also functions as a search engine where all the information added to the video on the platform is searchable (Marketeer, 2022). The keywords can be placed within the video itself, in caption and in comments. In the case of both Instagram and TikTok it is also possible to add a few relevant hashtags to every post to increase its exposure. The posts should include different types of hashtags such as the ones to reach specific audiences, as well as popular hashtags, which commonly appear in the FYP or explore page. Creating own brand hashtag can be used to facilitate user experience on the page, that way materials and content created can be divided into thematic sections, for example #alloraschool_vocabulary.

Cross-promotion can also be used as a means of optimizing and increasing brand exposure, due to its maximization of brand touch points. It can be done through posting videos that communicate some valuable information that is placed on another SMP, i.e. post a TikTok video hinting that there is more information on the given topic on Instagram.

Sounds are another way to increase brand exposure and, therefore, raise brand awareness. Both TikTok and Instagram Reels require adding a trending sound, popular soundtrack, voice over or brand's created sound to increase its algorithmic penetration. If a post does not need sound, it can be uploaded a muted video nevertheless, since it will boost the video's chances of being noticed by placing it in the search results for that sound.

Language is also necessary to consider regarding brand exposure and reach. Even though the TA is Portuguese Gen Z, to increase exposure, all information should be in English. However, it may be useful to utilize location-specific hashtags, such as #aprenderitalianoonline, #escoladeitalianoemlisboa.

The third section of the content marketing strategy outlines the important features and methods for improving and increasing Instagram and TikTok consumer brand engagement.

Increasing engagement can be done through means of storytelling. Storytelling can facilitate raising brand awareness and overall is considered as most successful technique of brand communication since it captures the attention of prospective customers and increases interest in a brand among target demographics (Lundqvist et al., 2013). Besides, storytelling can lead to further interaction with the posts, which increases brand exposure and boosts engagement (Casaló et al., 2017).

For a language school brand, storytelling is also a great way to create valuable content, since storytelling can be used to introduce grammar and vocabulary points, conversational expressions, and so on. Writing thought-provoking or explanatory captions (long ones in the case of Instagram and short but captivating ones on TikTok) with questions or requests to encourage viewers to interact with the material and share it further can also increase consumer brand engagement.

Interacting with TA by liking as many comments as possible and responding to them can also lead to consumer brand engagement and foster brand trust. Incorporating a portion of comments and questions into video answers on TikTok videos, Instagram Reels or Stories can be used as a means to show personification of the brand, its expertise and professionalism clearing up the doubts and questions of the consumers. Interacting with other accounts' posts can also facilitate attracting additional people's attention.

Duetting, function that is currently available on TikTok and on Instagram Reels can be used as a form of engaging the audience, prompting them to duet videos produced by Allora, i.e. inviting the viewers to blind react and guess the word in Italian, utilize quizzes, and create conversations prompts with one part being said by the viewer and another by the brand.

Speaking clubs conducted by Allora School can be used as a means of user-generated content, a form of electronic word of mouth, which can help to spread brand awareness, help the brand grow organically and build trust in it. Leveraging reviews from student that have already completed courses and/or participated in the speaking clubs or have purchased language materials can also positively influence brand engagement and lead to gaining brand trust.

The fourth section of the content marketing strategy outlines the important features and methods for increasing and promoting conversion on TikTok that might translate into sales. This correlates with the last marketing goal outlined in the SMM strategy of Allora School.

Promoting conversion, the ultimate stage at proposed framework and final marketing goal of the SMM strategy can be fostered by adding CTAs to captions and comments to boost conversions and drive traffic to the landing page of the website, linked to the profile. Bio of Allora School should also include a call to action.

According to literature review, in terms of organic leads generating single Instagram posts and carousels are the most effective and have the highest CTR (Geyser, 2022).

Besides, after having performed benchmarking, the author came to the conclusion, that in order to drive leads, lead magnets can be created in a form of free materials, for instance, free Italian language level test where the brand gathers emails of potential consumers willing to have Italian classes, checklist on topics needed for obtaining fluency in Italian that the user can get after having followed the brand account. Free trial class can also be offered as a way to clear doubts of potential consumers and encourage to enroll into the course.

To facilitate conversion, it is also possible to experiment with Instagram and TikTok Ads and evaluate the results through Ad Manager.

Implementation of SMM strategy of Allora School

The strategy will be implemented simultaneously, including two overarching stages of producing content and tailoring it to achieving marketing goals, such as creating and increasing brand awareness and brand engagement, followed by increasing leads and conversions. The brand account of SMP will consist of a mix of content suggested above, mostly including educational, informational and entertaining content.

Educational content will consist of language learning tips, some curiosities about Italian culture, differences in Italian regional dialects, music, vocabulary and grammar in context, i.e., with the use of video clips from movies, useful conversational phrases for students with different levels of language command, Italian language level exam preparation tips and materials, etc.

Informational content will include course-related information, speaking club and course announcements, more about the school, the platform used and personalization of the courses. It will also include calls to action to generate leads and drive traffic, such as an invitation to test a language level for free on the website linked in the bio, enrollment into a free webinar for beginners, or participate in a speaking club.

Entertaining content would include some storytelling, which is great for language learning and provides value for potential students, lifestyle activities and adapting the trends to the brand's niche. All the content provided jointly might help to promote the brand organically, increase its visibility and, therefore, raise brand awareness.

The second part of the implemented SMM strategy would include occasional paid promotional activities, leveraging the user-generated content from speaking clubs, and, potentially, invitation of some smaller scale influencers to promote the brand further, depending on budget, after building a community around the brand, hiring more teaching staff and engaging more potential students, that will already have learned about the brand at this moment. To evaluate promotional campaigns and measure marketing implementation results it would be possible to utilize analytics and metrics tools available on Instagram and TikTok which are also available for organic, non-sponsored posts impressions, engagement rates, and key performance indicators (KPI): the number of clicks and unique visitors, the number of enrollments in courses and speaking clubs.

On the basis of the proposed theory and strategy, following the observation and benchmarking results, the author has already created both Instagram and TikTok accounts for Allora School and tested some of the tools on both SMPs. One of the examples of posts that gather the most amount of interaction and engagement on TikTok was a short video where the author added a "hook" – a caption used to boost engagement, capture audience's interest at the start of the post and provoke followers and viewers to engage with posted content. The video was posted on the 25th of April, a national holiday in Italy that commemorates the victory of the Italian resistance movement against Nazi Germany. It included the sound of a popular worldwide Italian song, "Bella Ciao," which is connected to this holiday, along with a question for the viewers about whether or not they are familiar with the real meaning of this song (see Appendix 10). This video got significant engagement for the size of Allora School's following, which at the time was around 10 followers. The video received more than a thousand views and brought 15 new followers to the TikTok profile of Allora School. A couple of users commented on the video to find out the answer. The explanation video gained slightly more views; it was a lengthier video with some visual aids, captions on the screen that can be used as keywords on TikTok search bar and a speech about the context and meaning of the song. This explanatory video represents a value-added content – new information for some users and viewers gained more engagement in a form

of likes and comments (see Appendix 10). This demonstrated that valuable, meaningful content on cultural topics is appreciated on TikTok and helps to boost engagement. Adapting current trends, viral sounds and effects as part of the strategy also showed some results in the case of TikTok. For example, on the Allora School page I've utilized a line "Now we've got problems and I don't think we can solve them" from a viral audio clip that was taken from Taylor Swift's song "Bad blood". This audio was used by more than 20,000 users on TikTok. It was adapted for language learning situations such as a learner insisting on using grammar-translation method in teaching which is considered to be ineffective and outdated and the teacher disagreeing with it (see Appendix 11). This video got almost 800 views and more than 50 likes.

Another use of a viral sound with which there were created approximately 707,000 clips was adapted by the author to share useful language apps to memorize better Italian vocabulary. This video got more than a thousand views, 70 likes, 30 saves and brought 10 new followers. In another video, a trending filter, "Rotoscope" was adapted through adding CTA – inviting users to follow the page to get useful information about Italian language and learning tips which also brought around 10 new followers and gained more than 1000 views (see Appendix 11). The general idea regarding TikTok is to keep with the strategy and continue to try to grow and reach TA organically, utilizing searchable keywords, location and hashtags.

Regarding Instagram, the author has experimented with Reels, Stories and Posts. In comparison with TikTok, Reels, even being the most effective tool for organic reach failed to show the same result as TikTok and the most performed Reels video reached slightly less than 500 views, 18 likes and a couple of users interacted with it through comment section. This video was composed of pictures of different Italian holiday destinations that changed each other rapidly as a kind of slideshow (see Appendix 12). Most of the Instagram posts that provided value-added content, such as vocabulary posts with voiceover, cultural tips, i.e. how to memorize Italian regions gained significant amount of likes and brought new followers to the page. The latter post reached 134 accounts, including 53 followers and 81 non-followers and 20 accounts engaged. In addition, storytelling was utilized as a form of gaining potential client's attention and boosting interest in the brand, i.e., the video was in a format of a story, demonstrating the difference between two of the commonly used verbs of movement, "andare" (to go) and "venire" (to come) or teaching pronunciation of a rather

complicated sound for non-native speakers, “gl” (see Appendix 13). Both of the videos brought around 10 new followers to the page and received around 30 likes.

On Instagram, the author also experimented with sponsored advertising with a budget of 6 euros for each 3 days of the ad campaign. This ad became the best-performing post of Allora School on Instagram. It included a carousel style post with the explanation of the use of the word “allora” and examples of its use in a contemporary context in a video format. This ad brought 32 followers to the Instagram page, it reached 7,500 people and gained 12,991 impressions (see Appendix 14). Another ad that was promoted with the same budget reached 5,448 people, brought 12 new followers, and 15 saves on the sponsored post (see Appendix 14).

Instagram Stories were not yet used as consistently as they should be, however, the author plans to implement this Instagram tool more to engage with consumers and potential clients and to create and maintain a strong brand identity. Some of the Stories were also added in highlights to facilitate first time profile viewers and provide them with more value. The highlights include sections such as “words”, “classes”, “reviews”, “memes”, “prices”, “certifications” and “hacks” (see Appendix 15). The words section is filled with words of the day, useful everyday vocabulary with voiceovers, its contextual use and interactive quizzes to check the understanding of the new words (see Appendix 15). Classes section showed some interesting moments from classes that were conducted with students of different level of Italian (see Appendix 15).

Reviews were added through both the highlight section and a link in the bio where potential consumers can find longer video reviews from students that studied or keep studying at the courses. The memes section provided some examples of funny situations in Italian with grammar or vocabulary explanation. Prices consist of organized price for different levels of participation at courses. Certifications include the authors teaching acknowledgements, degrees, and international exam results. Hacks provide language learning hacks regarding memorizing words and language studying process. Stories generally showed good number of interactions, however, more effort should be put into creating them every day to constantly keep the audience engaged.

Scenarios and tactics

According to the marketing and implementation strategy there are three possible scenarios and tactical resolutions for Allora School.

Optimistic scenario	Most likely scenario	Pessimistic scenario
The case of a successful SMM strategy launch and implementation, increased awareness, engagement and interaction of users with the brand, building a community around the brand, driving more traffic to the website and obtaining more students to enroll in language courses, to participate in speaking clubs and to buy digital Italian language related materials; more people are aware of the brand. The brand following is grown.	Steady growth of brand and its presence on SM. Getting more people aware of the brand and interested in it. It might be happening for around 6 months, since all SMPs usually require some consistent commitment. Unless the brand or any of its contents become viral it might take around this amount of time to build the following, engage potential customers more and build their trust.	Not steady growth of the brand presence on SMPs, very low level of brand awareness and inconsistent results within a year.
Tactics	Tactics	Tactics
Scale the marketing strategy and branding to target other generations as well, i.e. Millennials. Organize partnerships with some companies, universities, Italian embassy in Portugal to organize speaking clubs and/or cultural events for youth in Italian. Start utilizing other SMPs as means of cross-promotion and reach of wider audiences, i.e. YouTube and Pinterest. Create more courses and digital materials for sell.	After performing weekly and monthly analysis of results and metrics available of implementation of the marketing strategy and overall brand performance on SMPs, maintenance or improvement of SMM strategy in accordance with results. Keep the postings consistent and experiment more with content. At this stage of growth involve more staff, i.e. teachers, speaking club moderators.	This means that there should be a review of a general marketing strategy and created content. Probably, it might be necessary to include influencer marketing. In the case of low budget, there could be a possibility of inviting one or two influencers to study Italian for free and then invite them to provide the feedback. Might be necessary to add more sponsored content to generate leads and drive traffic. Also it could be useful to perform another competitors' analysis at this point and gain valuable insights on what to change.

Conclusion

This project aimed to create and develop a SMM and branding strategy for Allora School, an online Italian language school that is about to enter the market. This strategy was designed based on a review of existing literature and exploratory research – observation and benchmarking. The theoretical review was divided into three main topics: social media, Gen Z as the TA, and branding.

The first chapter included the review of the theory on branding, particularly, creation of brand identity, Kapferer's brand identity prism, brand logo and name, brand trust and social media, brand awareness and its connection to SMM, and, finally, content marketing as one of the SM strategies for raising brand awareness. These theoretical findings were used as a basis to create a brand identity of Allora School and develop a brand logo and name.

In the second chapter two SMPs – Instagram and TikTok – were reviewed. Their use for the marketing strategy of Allora School was justified through the statistics of use of these platforms by the TA, their proven ad effectiveness, potential for organic reach and growth, and their cost-effectiveness, especially for smaller brands. Besides, the Hierarchy of Effects theoretical model was examined and adapted to the modern reality of social media in the hopes of finding a framework fit for SMM and to further develop an Instagram and TikTok marketing strategy for Allora School. This model was broken down into four steps: providing valuable content, optimizing exposure, boosting engagement, and promoting conversion.

The third chapter sought to comprehend the major features and particularities of the TA, Portuguese Gen Z, both in terms of marketing and teaching. The SM usage of the TA was reflected upon in order to have a better understanding of their consumer behavior on the chosen for the marketing strategy SMPs. The choice of this audience for the online language school was justified by the digital competence of this generation due to their early exposure to the internet and SM. It was determined that as learners, Gen Z prefers visual stimuli, and personalized learning with digital-based material rather than paper-based. On the basis of the theoretical insights of learning preferences of Gen Z students, Allora School designed online Italian courses.

Based on the literature review, Chapter 4 included a general description of Allora School and the platform it is based on. In order to identify gaps between intended brand identity and image projections, and generate a strong brand identity, Kapferer's brand identity prism was

used. The practical part also consisted of the proposed mission, vision, and values of the brand. Moreover, the essential parts of brand identity – brand name and brand logo – were designed and justified in accordance with the theory reviewed in Chapter 1.

The current situation of Allora School was evaluated to identify strengths which can provide competitive advantage, weaknesses the brand has to deal with, potential opportunities that the brand could take advantage of, and threats posed for the brand.

Chapter 5 included results of the exploratory part of the project. During the observation stage, Instagram and TikTok were routinely accessed to note some peculiarities regarding user culture on the SMPs, examples of both successful and ineffective advertisements on Instagram and TikTok, uses of brand- and user-generated content. Trends of the use of these SMPs were observed as well to have a deeper understanding of the platforms' functionality and to gain a realistic user experience.

For benchmarking, the author selected six brands and educators on the similar topic to perform a competitor analysis and gain insights and ideas to incorporate into the final marketing strategy. This contributed to a more comprehensive understanding of how other language-related brands and Italian educators operate on these SMPs, the variety of tactics they use in order to promote themselves, what sort of content appears to work for them.

Finally, the marketing strategy for SMM on Instagram and TikTok was proposed in Chapter 6. It included goal setting and measuring metrics, TA analysis, content suggestions, implementation of the SMM strategy, different scenarios and tactics with actions to undertake within every scenario.

To perform the TA analysis, the author examined data from the marketing report conducted by Deusto Business School (Madrid) and public relations firm Atrevia (Lisbon) which was based on three axes: Z citizens, Z talent and Z consumer. These axes were adapted to get a deeper understanding of the TA of the brand, leading to more strategic business decisions, awareness of what products and services are more adapted for this segment of market, and, potentially creating successful content for both organic growth and sponsored ad campaigns. Proposed content suggestions were based upon the literature review and theoretical framework. Implementation included achievement of some experimental results based on the given content suggestions.

Practicality

The author believes that this project to develop a school and the SMM strategy for this school has great potential in Portuguese market. The school also has the potential to become more international in the future since it is based online. In terms of existing competitors in Portugal, there are no brands that focus on younger generations and tailor to their needs and preferences, especially in terms of content produced and materials designed for lead magnets. Besides, there is generally less competition in this field of teaching and language courses, in comparison with English language schools and educators in Portuguese context. As it was observed in the benchmarking, not even larger international schools or educators offer personalized and interactive learning, therefore, there is a gap in the market regarding a school focused on Gen Z needs and learning preferences, utilizing innovative digital platforms and creating interactive material.

Another practical benefit of the school would be personalization, which is rare to encounter at language courses and schools, as they are usually based on student books and a standardized program. In the case of Allora School, there are already some courses designed, however, they are easily adjustable through the platform functionality and constructor that allows for changes to exercises, adapting the lesson for each student and adding additional materials.

In terms of Instagram, the main focus right now would be on Reels, which is at the moment the best tool for organic growth on Instagram utilizing storytelling tactics, using trends' adaptations and creating unique content on the basis of the literature and insights gained after user culture observations and benchmarking. Stories would be utilized for lifestyle storytelling to gain consumers' trust and familiarity with the brand. Posts would serve as a value-driven content.

In terms of TikTok, the focus is on more entertaining content, niche adaptations of trends and effects, using keywords and captions as if TikTok seems to be functioning as a search engine, where all the information added in the video, in the hashtags and in comments is searchable. Besides, it is important to be consistent with posting, as demonstrated by the benchmarked accounts on both SMPs.

Through creating and optimizing speaking clubs, the author intends to leverage more user-generated content that would serve as a brand promotion tool.

Limitations

There are some limitations of the project. First and foremost, there is a human factor which is that the author at this stage of project development is working alone, therefore, there is a lot of responsibility for conducting classes, creating materials, marketing and branding. When there would be more fruitful results in marketing strategy there would be a possibility of hiring more staff to work as teaching and marketing specialists. Besides, the language school is supposed to target only Portuguese Gen Z at the beginning of its marketing campaign, later on after establishing a more significant number of clients, the school could potentially target other generations, such as Millennials.

Finally, budget is also a limitation for the brand to enter the market more rapidly through sponsored content, however, as was mentioned in the literature review, there are ways to grow organically on the selected SMPs. Therefore, the budget for ad creation might be lower at the start of the marketing campaign and gradually become higher after obtaining more clients.

Areas for future research

The project is just a starting point for the brand to enter the market, therefore, it will still require a lot of marketing research in order to establish the brand, raise brand awareness and reach a higher level of brand recognition within the TA. The practical implementation will follow and, as mentioned before, will require constant surveillance with analyzing metrics of brand engagement and reach on Instagram and TikTok. The main practical implication right now is to focus more on producing content for created SM accounts and be consistently present on them, building a community and spreading brand awareness. In terms of theoretical research, there are many topics that could be researched in the future, particularly regarding advertising effectiveness and the proposed TA. One of the topics that was not included in this project is the impact of influencer marketing and eWOM on Gen Z consumer behavior and small-scale influencers in comparison with bigger ones. Another topic that could be further researched, as the brand advances, is building audience trust and turning the loyal customers into brand advocates.

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Appendices

Appendix 1. Search history for the brand name "Allora School" to register the brand at Instituto Nacional da Propriedade Industrial (INPI)

The screenshot displays the INPI 'Serviços Online' search interface. At the top, the INPI logo and 'Serviços Online' header are visible. Below the header, the search type is set to 'Pesquisa por Nome de Marca'. The search criteria are entered as 'Allora School' in the 'Nome da Marca*' field. A 'Pesquisar' button is located below the search fields. The search results are displayed in a table with the following columns: Modalidade, N° do Proce..., Nome da Marca, Data do Pe..., Classificação de Nice, and Senioridade. The table is currently empty, and a message at the bottom right states 'Não existem processos a apresentar'.

Modalidade	N° do Proce...	Nome da Marca	Data do Pe...	Classificação de Nice	Senioridade
------------	----------------	---------------	---------------	-----------------------	-------------

Página 1 de 1

Não existem processos a apresentar

Appendix 2. Search of existing brand names at eportugal.gov.pt

Pesquisa de Nomes Existentes

[Clique aqui](#) para consultar a ajuda relativa às pesquisas de confundibilidade de firmas

Apenas o campo Nome é de preenchimento obrigatório.

Os campos CAE e concelho permitem restringir os resultados da pesquisa caso sejam exibidas muitas firmas.

Nome: * Allora school

C.A.E.:

Se não souber o Código de Actividade Económica [clique aqui](#) para ver lista.

Concelho: - Escolha -

« Voltar Pesquisar »

Resultado da pesquisa por confundibilidade de Pessoas Colectivas (20 mais confundíveis):

NIPC	Número de certificado	Nome	Concelho	Situação	Score
502236213		ALORA-AUGUSTO LOPES RAMOS-COMERCIO IMPORTAÇÃO BRINQUEDOS LDA	Valongo	Definitiva	50%
		NICOLAS SCHOLZ (C)			50%
		AFTER SCHOOL - CENTRO DE ESTUDOS E ATL (P)			50%
		4 SCHOOL (C)			50%
	2022033528	RED SCHOOL ASSOCIAÇÃO	Lousã	Deferido	50%
	2018056913	SUMMER SCHOOL - ASSOCIAÇÃO DE ESCOLAS DE VERÃO	Marvão	Indeferido	50%
515554723		RED SCHOOL ASSOCIAÇÃO	Lousã	Definitiva	50%
513350322		LINEE SCHOOL - ESCOLA DE LÍNGUAS E APOIO ESPECIALIZADO, UNIPessoal LDA	Guimarães	Definitiva	50%
515524778		ACADEMIA DE FORMAÇÃO ESPECIALIZADA, FORMASCHOOL, LDA	Esposende	Definitiva	50%
515613657		TASIS THE AMERICAN SCHOOL IN PORTUGAL, S.A.	Sintra	Definitiva	50%
508731119		MY SCHOOL - ESCOLA DE LÍNGUAS E ESTUDO ACOMPANHADO, LDA	Almada	Definitiva	50%
508003148		PRO SCHOOL - SOLUÇÕES INTEGRADAS, UNIPessoal LDA	Aveiro	Definitiva	50%
508476569		FAFSCHOOL INTERNATIONAL LDA	Fafe	Definitiva	50%
501425810		CITY SCHOOL - ENSINO E FORMAÇÃO PROFISSIONAL LDA	Vila Franca de Xira	Definitiva	50%
517056437		EMT - PARAMEDIC SCHOOL, UNIPessoal LDA	Odivelas	Provisória	50%
513443860		STORY SCHOOL, UNIPessoal LDA	Braga	Definitiva	50%
514525576		OLD SCHOOL CONSULTING - CONSULTADORIA, COMÉRCIO AUTOMÓVEL E IMOBILIÁRIA, LDA	Lajes do Pico	Definitiva	50%
507373871		DOT SCHOOL LDA	Amadora	Definitiva	50%
506632784		SCHOOL KIDS - CENTRO DE APOIO PSICOPEDAGÓGICO E DE FORMAÇÃO DE RECURSOS HUMANOS LDA	Vila do Conde	Definitiva	50%
514140399		SCHOOLAREUS, LDA	Setúbal	Definitiva	50%

Ver lista completa »

Na coluna Score é indicada a percentagem de semelhança entre o nome inserido para pesquisa e os resultados apresentados.

Se o score de semelhança for inferior a 85% a firma poderá ter viabilidade de ser aprovada. Informa-se, no entanto, que o resultado da pesquisa é meramente informativo e não dispensa a posterior verificação da sua admissibilidade pelos serviços.

Esta pesquisa abrange apenas as firmas e nomes comerciais registados na Base de Dados do Registo Nacional de Pessoas Colectivas.

[Clique aqui](#) para verificar a confundibilidade da firma pretendida com as marcas e logótipos registados no Instituto Nacional da Propriedade Industrial.

Appendix 3. TikTok top ads in Portugal for the period from 1/08/2022 to 31/08/2022

Top Ads

Portugal ✓

See high-performing auction ads on TikTok. Let successful cases inspire your creativity. ⓘ

Language Tr... x ▾


Objective ▾

Duration ▾

Last 30 d... ▾

Sort by
Please Select ▾

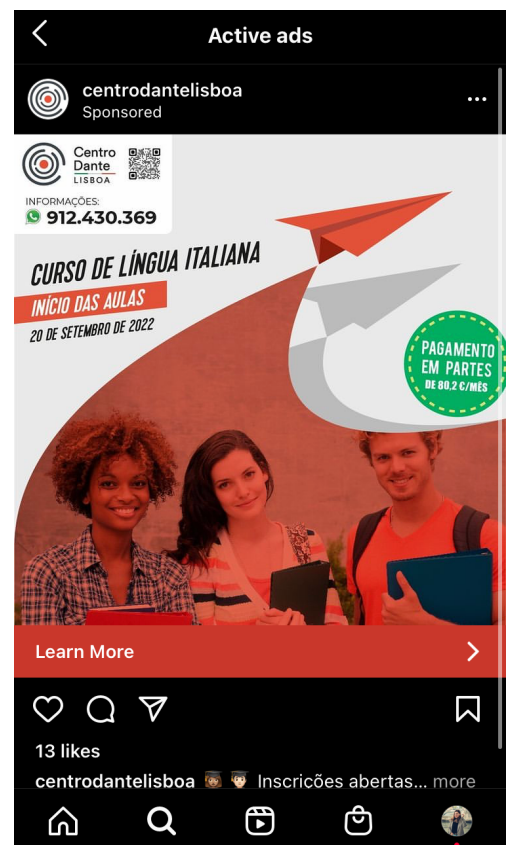
Q Search



No search results found

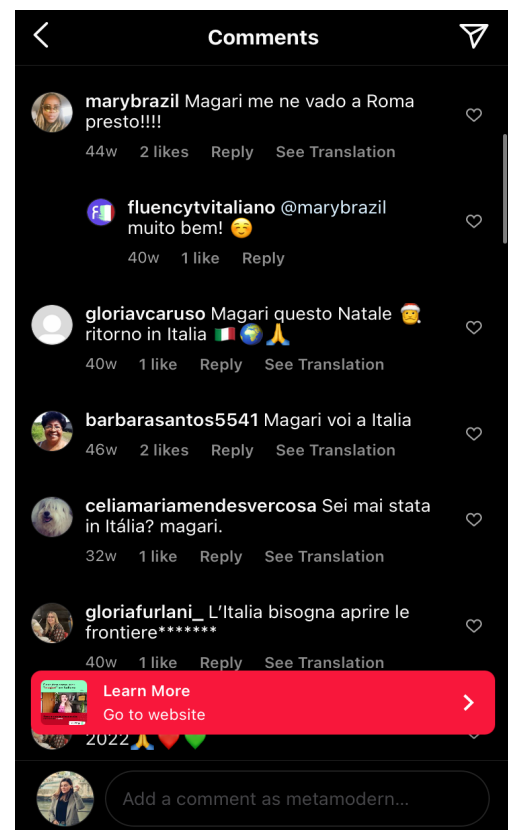
Appendix 4. Bad examples of sponsored Instagram ads

The ads are outdated, do not have encourage the users on engagement, have too much of information included.



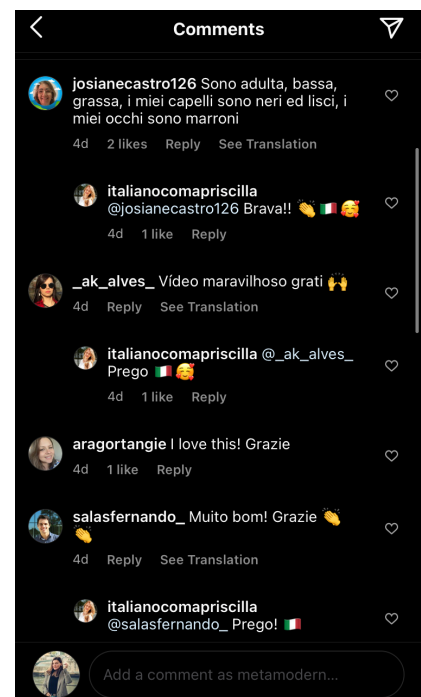
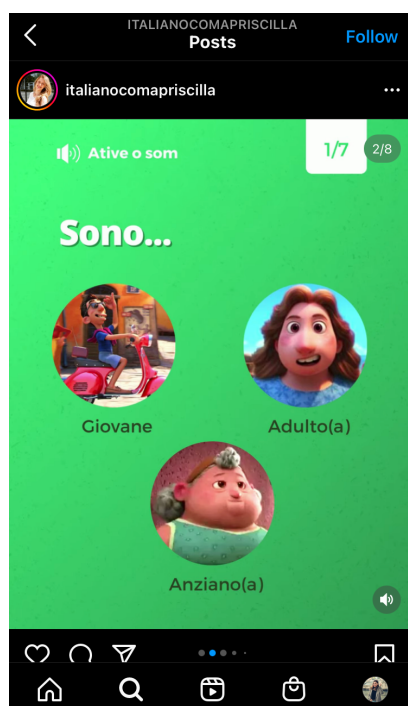
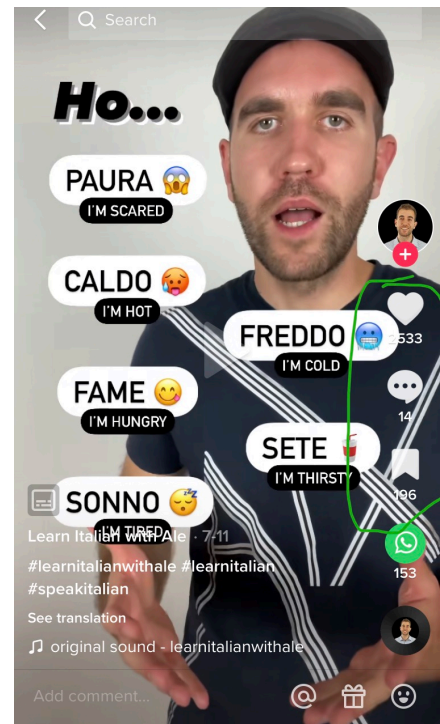
Appendix 5. Good examples of sponsored Instagram ads

Ads that provide value like in this case with a language tip of using the word “magari” in Italian and has a CTA – more information on the Instagram page available. This type of ads usually gets a lot of comments where the users try to incorporate this new word in their vocabulary – increasing brand’s engagement rate on Instagram.

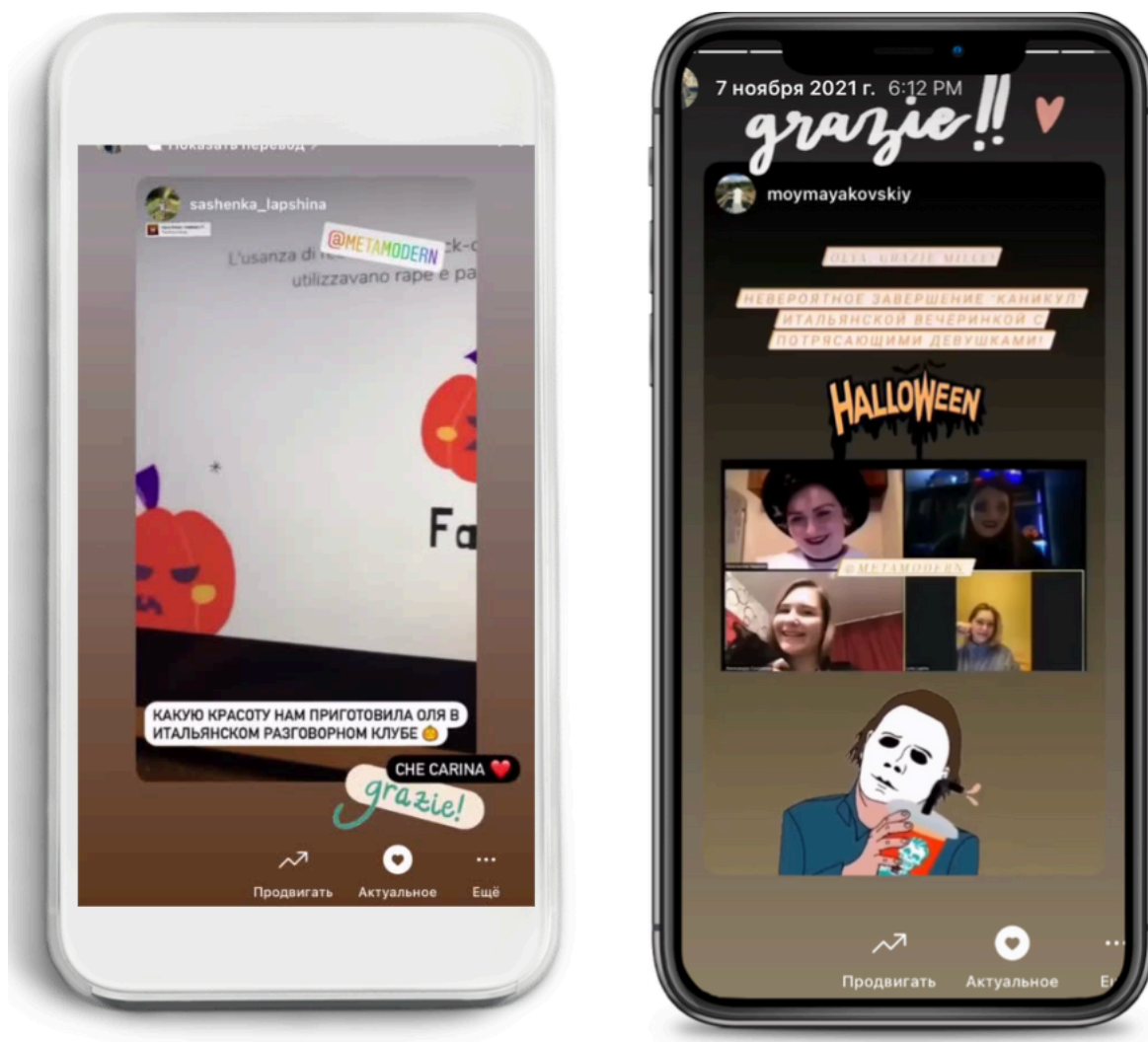


Appendix 6. Example of brand generated content on Instagram and TikTok

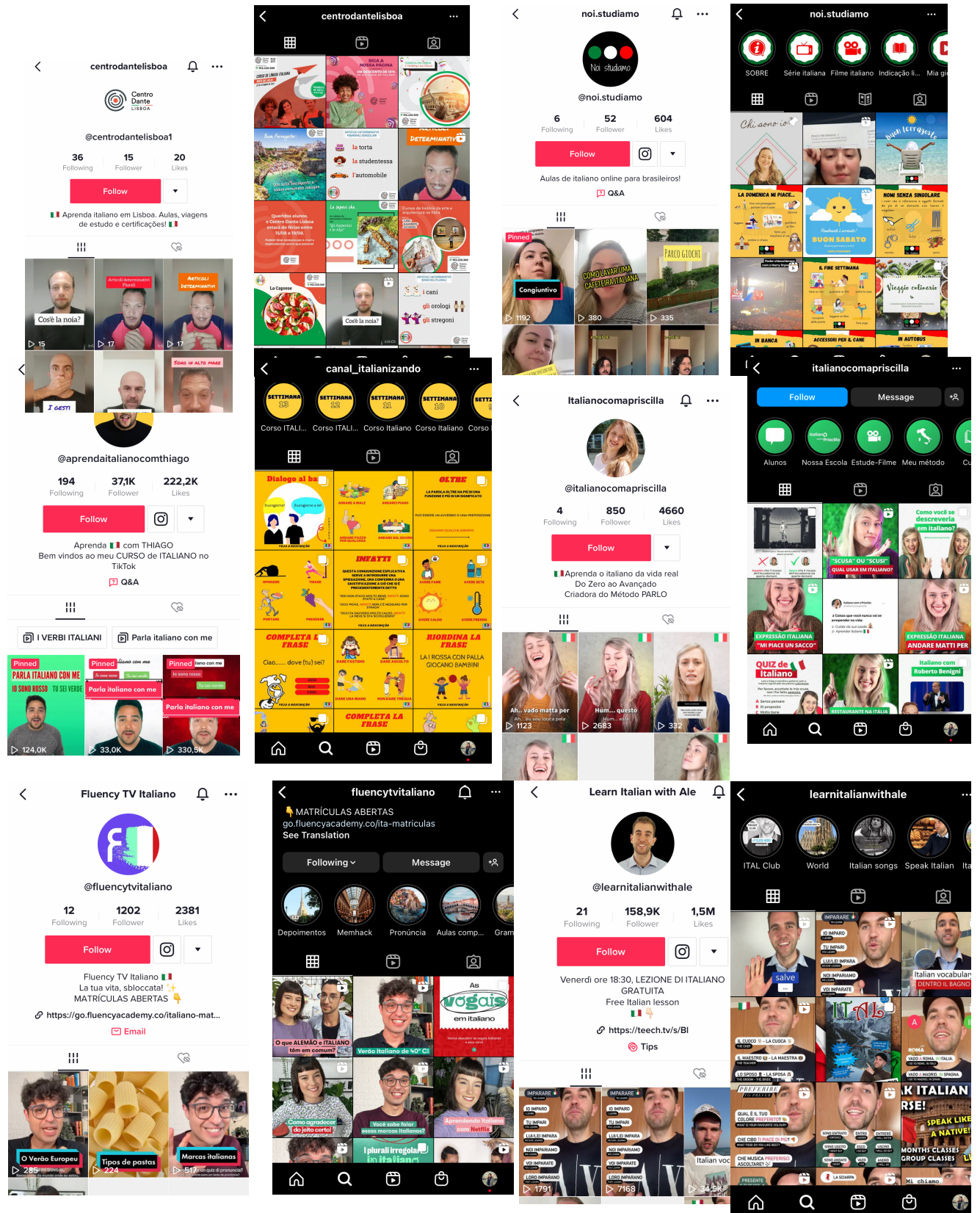
Some examples of brand generated content that performed well, got feedback from users, engagement.



Appendix 7. Speaking clubs as a means of user generated content



Appendix 8. Competitors accounts



Appendix 9. Courses and apps proposed by competitors

teech

Search...

Create Class Log In Sign Up

Per le cose inanimate, invece, il genere è convenzionale, è stato stabilito dall'uso della lingua e va imparato così com'è (il Sole, la Luna).
For inanimate things, on the other hand, gender is conventional, it has been established by the use of language and must be learnt as it is (the Sun, the Moon).

La prima regola importantissima per riconoscere il genere (e il numero) di un nome è quella di guardare la vocale con cui finisce.
The first important rule for recognising the gender (and number) of a noun is to look at the vowel with which it ends.

	SINGOLARE	PLURALE
MASCHILE	O	I
FEMMINILE	A	E

Si tratta di una regola molto semplice, alla quale ci sono però alcune eccezioni.
This is a very simple rule, to which there are, however, some exceptions.

1) Inversione della ...

Recordings Of Previous Classes

Chat

- kirat: pentola
- marie michelle: dolce, crostata, frittelle
- marie michelle: pizza
- marie michelle: no capisco nulla per favore
- marie michelle: ce un problema
- Anna: Bravissima Anna!!!!
- marie michelle: grazie a te
- marie michelle: complimenti
- marie michelle: aguri
- Kirat: Many many happy returns of the day
- Anna C.: Buon compleanno!!
- neyla quevedo: Buon Compleanno Ale
- marie michelle: heureux anniversaire
- Kirat: Ciao
- Adriana: adrucc@hotmail.com

Recordings Of Previous Classes

Learn Italian with Ale – use of a platform Teech for streams of classes with live chats

Fluency TV

Fluency Corporate 192K 1.1M Todas as idiomas Q Busca Meu curso

memhack
App de memorização exclusivo para alunos!

Você nunca mais vai esquecer nenhuma palavra do idioma que está aprendendo, numa experiência na palma da sua mão. É o melhor, sem precisar usar a sua internet!

Disponível no Google Play Baixe agora

Disponível no App Store Baixe agora

Can I have the menu?
Você pode me ver o cardápio?

Fluency TV Italiano example of proposed app – based on grammar-translation and flash cards

Utiliza-se o livro **Al Dente**, de acordo com o nível de cada aluno.

Todos os materiais utilizados em aula são preparados e disponibilizados aos alunos, sem nenhum custo adicional.

O material pode ser adaptado a depender do objetivo de cada aluno.

Ответьте noi.studiamo...

Noi Studiamo – book-based course

Curso 84 нед.

Vamos conversar?
Qual sua dúvida sobre o curso?

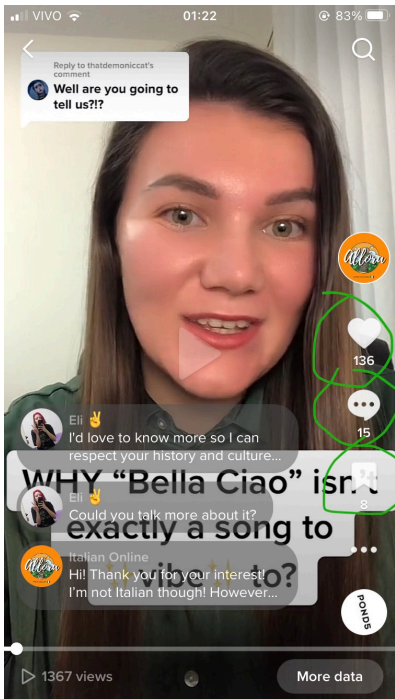
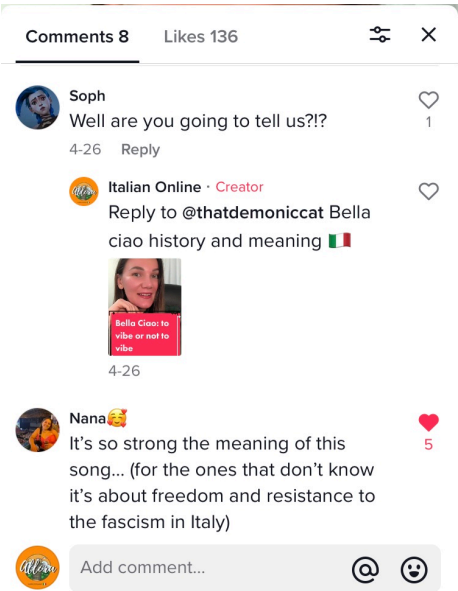
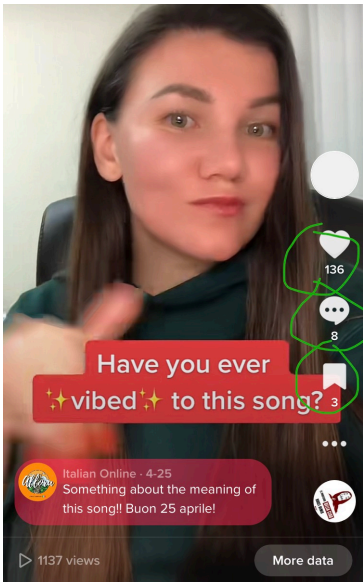
O curso é iniciante ou avançado?

O curso Italiano com a Priscilla é completo, do zero ao avançado 100% online.

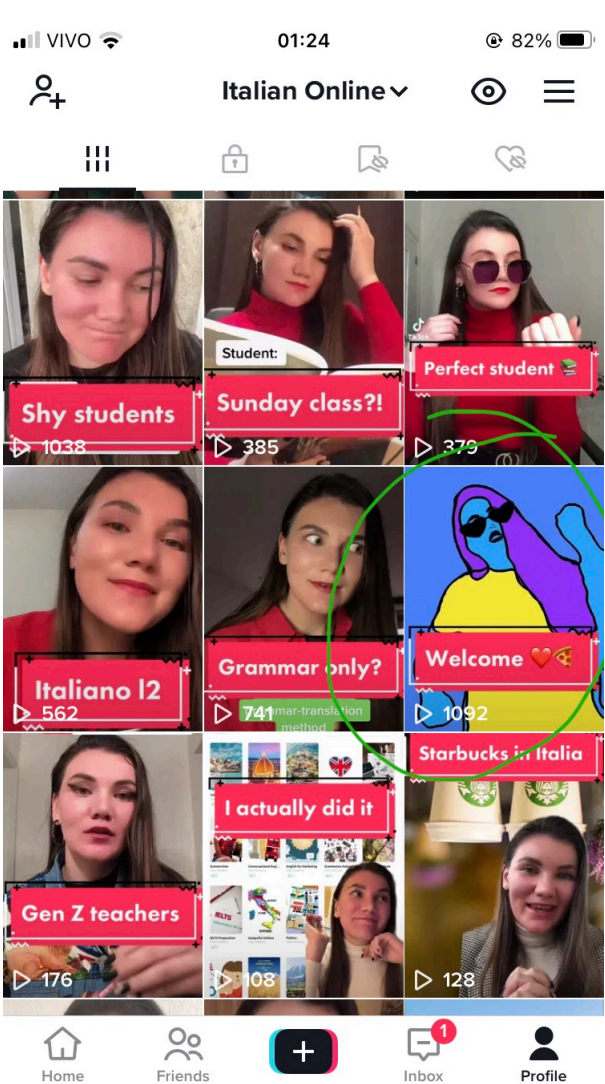
São mais de 200 vídeoaulas, divididas em 5 módulos.

Italiano com a Priscilla offers video-based courses with feedback

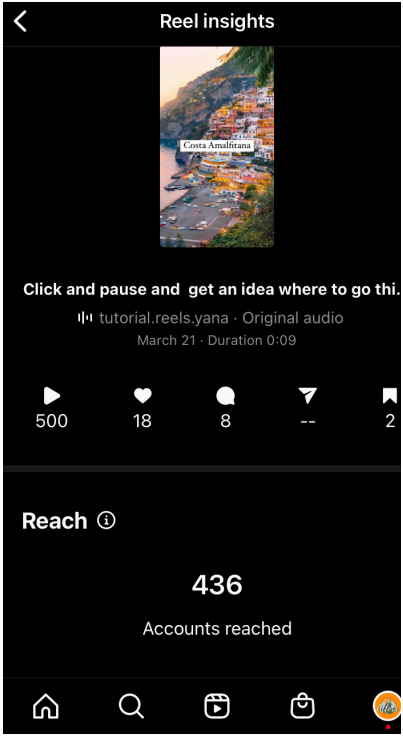
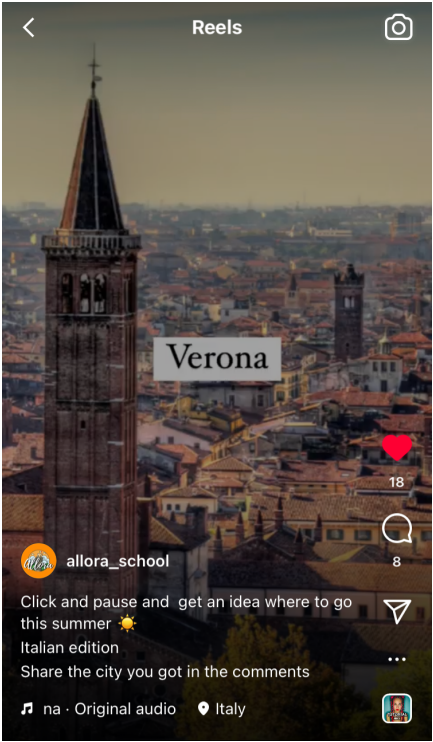
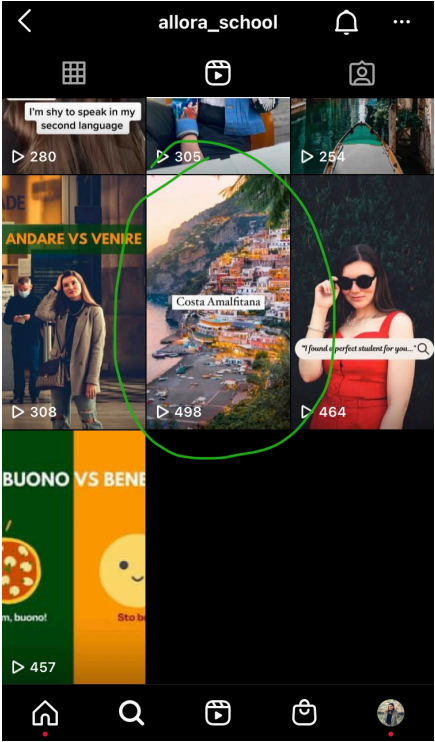
Appendix 10. Examples of TikTok videos School that have shown a good engagement on Allora School page



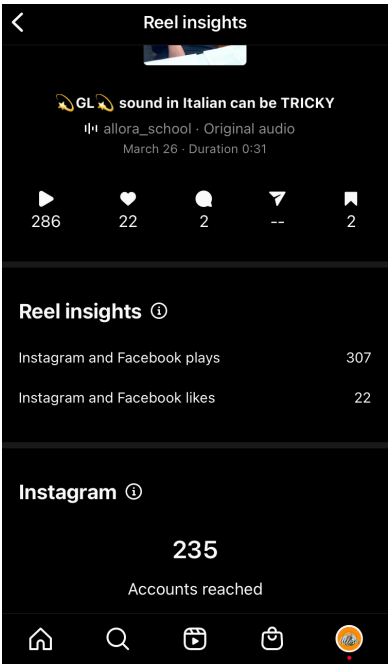
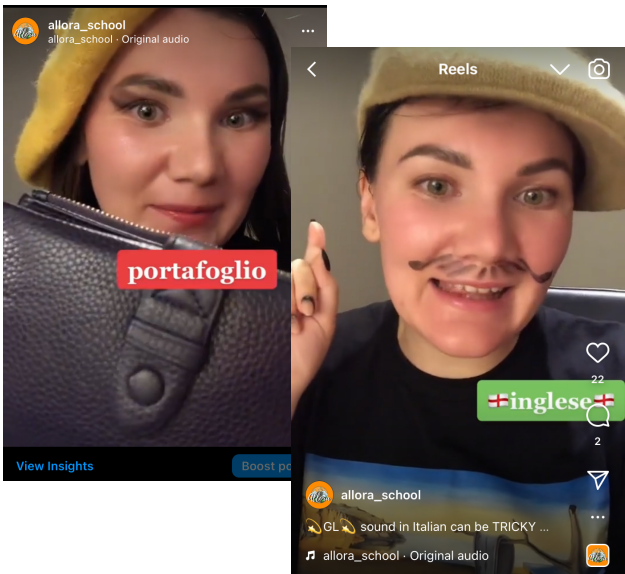
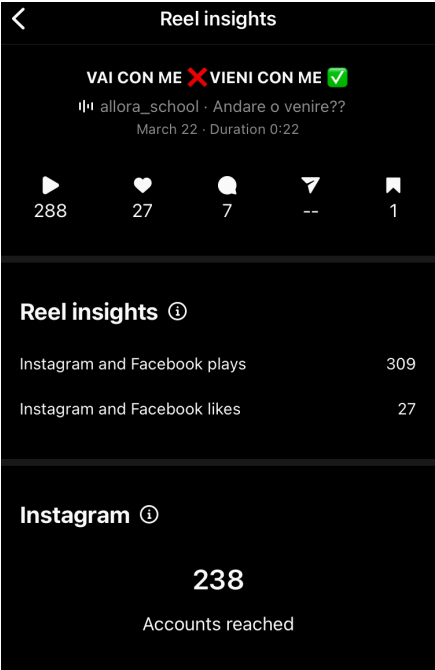
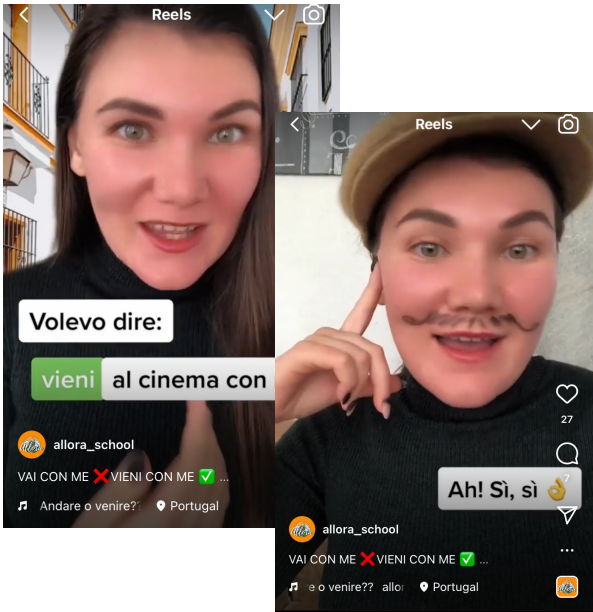
Appendix 11. Capitalizing on TikTok trends and viral effects, i.e. filters



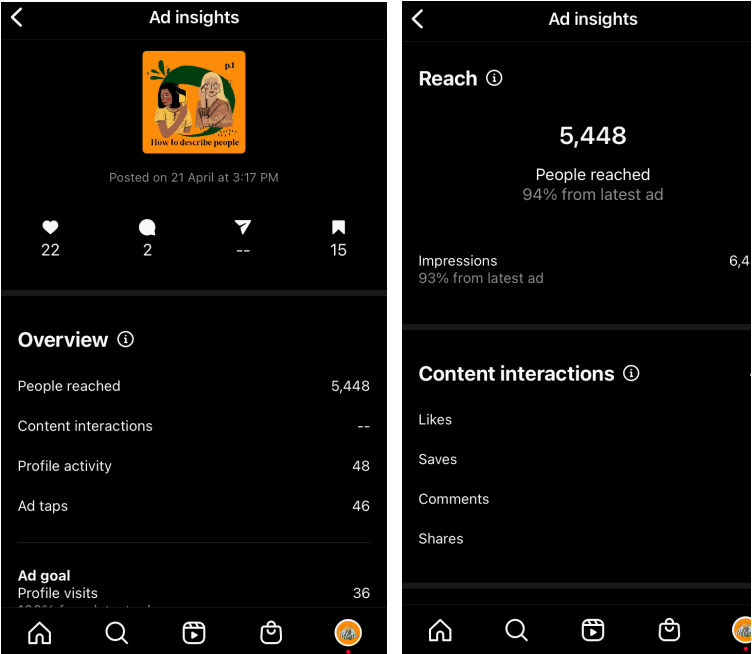
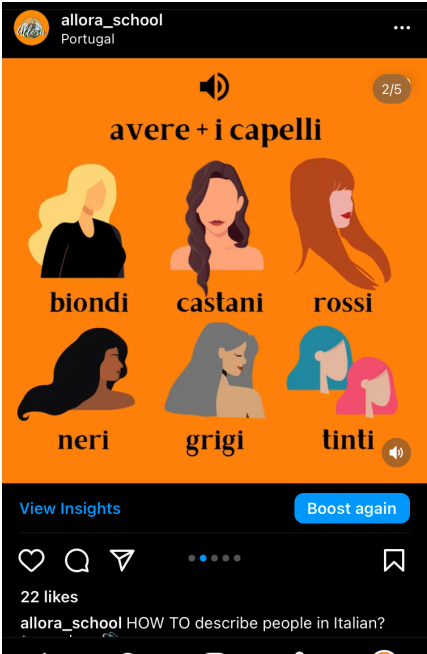
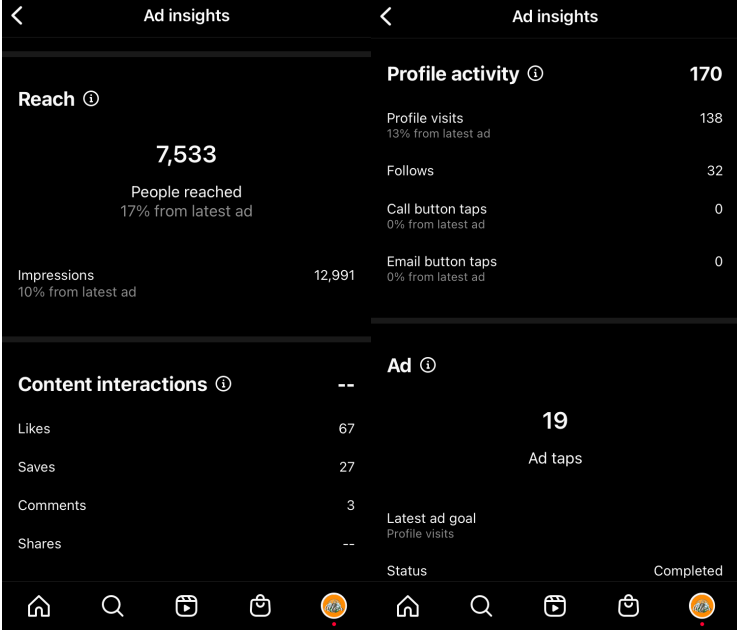
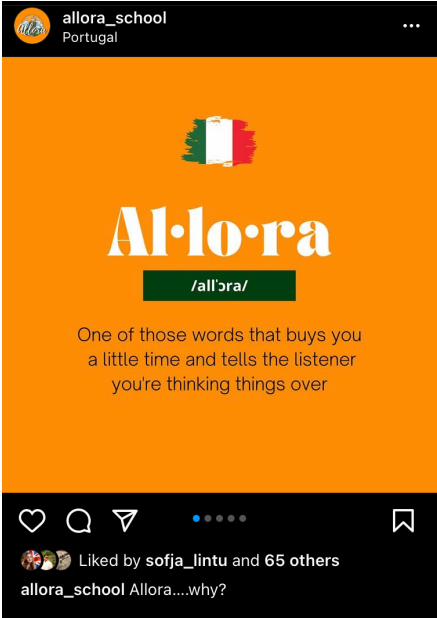
Appendix 12. Instagram of Allora School – best performed Reel



Appendix 13. Storytelling in Instagram posts



Appendix 14. The best performed sponsored posts on Allora School's Instagram



Appendix 15. Stories highlights and some examples of Stories created

