

**VIRAL MARKETING  
HOW DO ALBANIANS PERCEIVE USER  
CREATED ADS TOWARD  
PROFESSIONALLY MADE ADS**

**By,**

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## **Abstract**

The today's technology addicted society is making the world change rapidly with a huge acceleration and marketing is trying to keep up. This is leading companies to use internet as a cheap and easy tool to reach the customers. Being as much artistic as scientific, marketing and especially viral marketing, is a field of many questions to be studied and of a lot of imagination be used. The fast diffusion of internet is refining and changing the marketing techniques. Peer-to-peer referrals have become an important subject and marketers are trying to attain the potential through viral campaigns at the same time as the e-mail viruses and spam have made a disorder of electronic communications. This is making viral campaigns always more challenging.

In this paper there are identified critical factors of viral marketing. These factors consist on the characteristics of the product or service, structure of the campaign, the information conduit (peer-to-peer), the diffusion characteristics and the content of the message. In the paper there is also given a typology which states the differences between commercial viral marketing, unintended viral marketing and social communication viral marketing. Furthermore, some case studies are given to lead to a better understanding of the theoretical framework. The critical factors that are identified are all important and it is crucial to give importance to all of them. In order to have a successful viral campaign, the characteristics of the product or service must be distinguished and the viral advertisement has to be prepared according to these characteristics. The structure of the campaign must be adequate to the product, there must be made room for diffusion by catching the attention of potential buyers and triggering it. Furthermore, the content of the message is crucial and there is a communication process that must be followed. The main question that the paper answer is that: How do Albanians perceive user created ads toward professionally made ads? To find the answer there are considered different factors and six hypotheses were raised. The hypotheses consisted on how attitude, informativeness, quality, credibility, loyalty and viral score were perceived when a user was told that an ad was a user created ad or a professionally made one. It is found that the attitude, informativeness, loyalty and viral score had a more positive perception when the user was told that the ad was user created, while quality and credibility were not clear enough to fully accept the hypothesis that the perception of users was more positive when the ad was user created. It is concluded that the

Albanian consumers are have a positive reaction to viral marketing user created ads. Albanian is catching up with the speed of the rest of the world.

**Keywords:** Albanian consumers, viral marketing, user created ads, professionally made ads

## Abstrakt

Shoqëria e sotme e varur nga teknologjia po e bën botën të ndryshojë me shpejtësi e nxitim të madh dhe marketingu po mundohet të ecë me të njëjtën shpejtësi. Kjo po i drejton ndërmarrjet të përdorin internetin si një mjet i lirë dhe i thjeshtë për të arritur tek klientët. Duke qenë se është po aq artistike aq dhe shkencore, marketingu dhe vecanësisht marketingu viral, është një fushë me shumë pyetje që duhen studiuar dhe me shumë imagjinatë për të përdorur. Përhapja e shpejtë e internetit po ndryshon dhe po përmison teknikat e marketingut. Komunikimi i drejtpërdrejt nëpërmjet dy ose më shumë personave me anë të internetit po bëhet gjithnjë e më shumë temë e rëndësishme dhe personat që merren me marketing po mundohen të fitojnë nga ky potencial nëpërmjet fushatave virale njëkohësisht që viruset nëpërmjet emailit po krijojnë një çrregullim në komunikimin elektronik. Kjo po e bën marketingun viral gjithmonë e më shumë sfiduese.

Në këtë punë kërkimore janë identifikuar faktorë kritik të marketingut viral. Këto faktorë konsistojnë në karakteristikat e produktit ose shërbimit që ofrohet, në strukturën e fushatës, në përcjelljen e informacionit, në karakteristikat e shpërndarjes dhe në përmbajtjen e mesazhit. Në këtë punë kërkimore është dhënë dhe një tipologji që faton ndryshimin ndërmjet marketingut viral tregtar, marketingut viral të paqëllimshëm dhe marketingut viral të komunikacionit. Vec kësaj, janë dhënë disa studime rastesh për të kuptuar më mirë pjesën teorike. Faktorët kritik që janë identifikuar janë të gjithë të rëndësishëm dhe është thelbësore ti kushtosh rëndësi të gjithave. Në mënyrë që të kesh një fushatë virale të suksesshme, karakteristikat e produktit ose shërbimit duhet të shquhen dhe reklama virale duhet të jetë përgatitur në bazë të këtyre karakteristikave. Struktura e fushatës duhet të jetë e përshtatshme me produktin dhe duhet të jetë e përshtatshme për tu shpërndarë me anë të tërheqjes së vëmendjes të blerësve. Për më tepër, përmbajtja e mesazhit është jetike dhe duhet ndjekur një proces komunikimi i parapërgatitur. Pyetja kryesore që kjo punë kërkimore mundohet të përgjigjet është: Si i perceptojnë shqiptarët reklamat e krijuara nga përdoruesit e prodhimeve të një firme kundrejt reklamave të krijuara në mënyrë profesionale? Për të gjetur përgjigjen e kësaj pyetje merren parasysh faktorë të ndryshëm dhe gjashtë hipoteza janë ngritur. Hipotezat konsistojnë në mënyrën si sjellja, informimi, cilësia, besueshmëria, besnikëria dhe viraliteti perceptohen nga njerëzit kur atyre i është thënë që një reklamë është krijuar në mënyrë amatore nga përdoruesit e një firme. Zbulohet se sjellja, informimi, besnikëria dhe viraliteti kishin përjasje me pozitive nga njerëzit kur atyre u thuhej se

reklama ishte krijuar në mënyrë amatore nga përdoruesit e firmës, ndërkohë cilësia dhe besueshmëria nuk dolën me të dhëna të qarta duke bërë që hipotezat se reagimi I njerëzve ishte me positive kur u thuhej se reklama ishte krijuar në mënyrë amatore nga përdoruesit e firmës të mos pranoheshin plotësisht.. Konsumatorët shqiptarë kanë një sjellje pozitive kundrejt marketingut viral dhe reklamave të krijuara nga përdoruesit e prodhimeve të një firme. Shqipëria po arrin shpejtësinë e pjesës tjetër të botës në këto ndryshime konstante.

Fjalë kyçe: Konsumatorët Shqiptarë, marketingu viral, reklama të krijuar në mënyrë amatore nga përdoruesit një firme, reklamave të krijuara nga përdoruesit e prodhimeve të një firme

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my family, without who I wouldn't be here today. They have helped me through different milestones in my life and I hope someday I will be able to repay them.

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Two years ago I graduated from Epoka University in the Bachelor degree. It was a successful path that I choose for my life and today I can see that it came in hand. By being the best university in Albania it helped me to have many work requests. All these could not be achieved by the great work of the staff of Epoka University. Today I work with a great company thanks to the education that I had. Being a part of the Turkish colleges since 8 years old has helped me to be the person who I am and to have a great future. Thinking about all these reasons, I chose to continue my MSc degree at Epoka University. I can see now, I did the right choice. I am at the end of another great year. I sincerely give my thanks and appreciation to all the professors that have been part of my journey. It has been all these years of success of achievements.

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**Ani Barziu**

## **Declaration Statement**

1. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.
2. The program of advanced study of which this thesis is part has consisted of:
  - i) Research Methods course during the postgraduate study
  - ii) Examination of several thesis guides of particular universities both in Albania and abroad as well as a professional book on this subject.

Ani Barziu

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## Introduction

“Change is occurring at an accelerating rate, today is not like yesterday, and tomorrow will be different from today. Continuing today’s strategy is risky; so is turning to a new strategy. Therefore, tomorrow’s successful companies will have to pay attention to three certainties:” (Kotler, 2002)

- “Global forces will continue to influence everyone’s business and personal life.”
- “Technology will continue to evolve and amaze us.”
- “There will be a continuing push toward deregulation of the economic sector.” (Kotler, 2002)

Philip Kotler gives an overview of the situation of marketing where he spells the idea of interaction between globalization, technology and deregulation. The continuing change that he argues about leads to a necessity for continues pre-measures to succeed. The continuing change brought to the risen attention toward viral marketing as a tool which can make the difference and where a firm can rely for “meeting needs profitably.”

About 50 years later the concept of “viral marketing” emerged and this name was established to explain the concept that the ideas spread like viruses, they are fast and devastating. One of the firsts to explain and write about the basic meaning of this term was Doug Rushkoff. Mr. Rushkoff, a media critic, assumed that: “if an advertisement reaches a "susceptible" user, that user becomes "infected" (i.e., accepts the idea) and shares the idea with others "infecting them," in the viral analogy's terms. As long as each infected user shares the idea with more than one susceptible user on average (i.e., the basic reproductive rate is greater than one—the standard in epidemiology for qualifying something as an epidemic), the number of infected users grows according to an exponential curve. Of course, the marketing campaign may be successful even if the message spreads more slowly, if this user-to-user sharing is sustained by other forms of marketing communications, such as public relations or advertising.” (Douglas, 1996)

There are three criteria to be met in order to make viral marketing functional. “Firstly there must be a messenger giving the message and transform it from an ordinary to a viral message. There are three types of messengers: market mavens, who “are continuously ‘on the pulse’ of things (information specialists); they are usually among the first to get exposed to the message and who

transmit it to their immediate social network.” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011) Secondly there are the social hubs, who are “people with an exceptionally large number of social connections; they often know hundreds of different people and have the ability to serve as connectors or bridges between different subcultures.” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011) Also there are the salespeople, “who receive the message from the market maven, amplify it by making it more relevant and persuasive, and then transmit it to the social hub for further distribution. Market mavens may not be particularly convincing in transmitting the information.” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011) The second criterion is that “the message should be interesting enough to be passed on to others who have the potential to spur a viral marketing phenomenon. Making a message more memorable and interesting or simply more infectious, is often not a matter of major changes but minor adjustments.” (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011) The third criterion is the environment, which is very important to make the viral marketing successful. Knowing that people are very sensitive to the environment, some tiny changes in this criterion may be a direct consequence to huge results, especially if the timing and context are at the right time.

Viral marketing in Albania is a field that needs further studies as well as in many countries in the globe. The financial crisis is making firms search for different ways to get profit. Developments in the world indicate that viral marketing is very important in every organization. This is one reason that is being spent more on human capital to take care of the viral aspects of the firms. Ads are very important to sell the product and service and there is an existing literature which suggests that user created ads are getting more crucial, since users are more credible than contracted firms that make the ads. Researchers suggest also that people tend to have a positive attitude toward user created ads, are more loyal to them and they can get viral more easily compared to professionally made ads. This was a good lead to make similar study in the Albanian environment and also to enhance the existing literature.

The main purpose of this thesis is to investigate the differences between user created ads and professionally made ads. To achieve this, the first purpose is to explain and understand what is viral marketing and how does it work. The second purpose is to relate this literature in practice by giving real cases of how the information learned can be used in order to achieve the main goal of the firms. By capturing these information, the final purpose of this thesis is to look at the differences between user created ads and professionally made ads. There is a study conducted for Albania in this case.

This study has significance due to the fact that it is innovative and it may be the first one done on this topic in Albania. It is important because it explores whether users give attention to these types of ads and if yes, how they perceive it. By having a data base with this information, firms can edit their marketing campaigns and get different results of what they have forecasted and change their targets.

Large companies in Albania, usually, are giving more importance to online marketing. Adapting successful cases from abroad is a good point to start on but it is not always enough. The study is important because user created ads may be an interesting and practical alternative choice to differentiate and understand better customers'.

The objectives of this research will provide the path to reach the aim of the research.

- Analyze the existing literature on viral marketing.
- Identifying factors that make viral marketing work.
- Understands real cases of being successful in viral marketing.
- Investigating how user created ads and professionally made ads are perceived in Albania.
- Investigate how the differences between user created ads and professionally made ads can be implemented in a company strategy in Albania.

There are different research questions that are answered through-out the paper. Considering that this branch of marketing is always expanding by new and innovative studies there are many questions which arise. The questions that are answered in this paper are:

- What is the importance of viral marketing?
- How can you succeed with viral marketing?
- How can you make a successful viral marketing campaign?
- What is the difference between user created ads and professionally made ads?
- How do Albanians perceive user created ads and professionally made ads?
- Do people in Albania have a more positive attitude toward user created ads?
- Do people in Albania find user created ads as more informative?
- Are people in Albania more loyal toward user created ads?
- Do user created ads go more viral?
- Are user created ads more credible than professionally made ads?

Existing literature is giving more importance to user created ads as a tool to market the product of service. There are six hypotheses raised in order to test the perception of Albanians toward user created ads and professionally made ads.

H1: The consumer attitude toward an ad which is user created is more positive than when it is professionally made.

H2: If an ad is perceived to be user created the recipients will consider the ad more informative

H3: User created ads are perceived to have higher quality than professionally made ads

H4: User created ads are perceived to be more credible than professionally made ads

H5: User created ads are more likely to become viral than professionally made ads

H6: User loyalty is higher when an ad is perceived as user created.

Before testing the hypothesis, there is done a validity and reliability test through Cronbach Alpha coefficient. Then there is done a test of normality to see the correlation of the variables through Pearson's correlation. In the end the hypotheses testing is done through the ANOVA table, by comparing the means and taking in consideration the significance level. The data was obtained from individuals of different age groups by means of a questionnaire.

## **CHAPTER 1 - Literature review**

### **1.1 Viral marketing definition and development**

“Viral marketing is a marketing technique that use pre-existing social networking services and other technologies to attempt to generate increases in brand awareness through self-replicating viral processes, analogous to the spread of viruses or computer viruses.” (Howard, 2005)

With the internet being a necessity rather than a luxury, nowadays there is lot to find out in the marketing world. The crucial principle, which emerged this century, as the word of mouth is leading marketing to the new strategies which are all based on the internet and one of these strategies is viral marketing. The whole idea of viral marketing is the transmission of messages through a bunch of different internet channels by peers.

Many people agree to the idea that the start of viral marketing was with the tag line of Hotmail advert “Get your private, free e-mail from Hotmail at <http://www.hotmail.com>.” (Porter & Golan, 2006). This is accepted as the beginning of viral marketing because the result of that tag line was the fast widespread flow of Hotmail. “What Hotmail did was adding this tag line to every email which was sent from any hotmail account and in this way the tag line was passed from existing hotmail members to the receivers of these emails and, at that time, this looked like the spread of viruses, basically is the same idea.” (Porter & Golan, 2006) . From this example the concept of viral marketing was created. For many other people, who have studied marketing, the term viral marketing is a new way to call the world of mouth effect or just a new way of interpretation. As it is explained below, in this paper viral marketing will be a method to deliver, transmit or spread messages among persons which can forward or filter these messages to many peers which may show an interest on it. Both of the communication styles, formal and informal, are used for the transmission of the messages but usually the informal style is used more. Some places or channels where messages are spread may be chat rooms, different forums and social networks. The message itself can take different forms as images, text, animations, PowerPoint files and many others. YouTube is another example of a powerful way to spread and share videos. The Importance of YouTube as a channel was demonstrated when “Google bought it in

2006 for 1.65 billion USD.” (BBC, 2006) .One important benefit of viral marketing is that it can be measured accurately. In web based channels like social networks or subscription places, you can measure how many people saw the message and how effective was the message by simply looking at the comment section.

## **1.2 Viral marketing and traditional word of mouth**

The definition of Word of mouth can be: “the informal, ad hoc communication between individuals concerning products and services” (Bayus, 1985). There are two results of this communication, which is directly affected by the satisfaction level. “The results can be negative or positive” (Evans, Foxall, & Jamal, 2009). The main aspect of word of mouth is that the sharing among individuals and the information transmission is always fast and rapid. An interesting fact is that people react more to the negative messages delivered from word of mouth rather than the positive messages. “Some researchers found out that 90% of dissatisfied consumers do not buy products from a company which is affected by negative word of mouth. In addition, these people will communicate the dissatisfaction to at least nine people and about 13% of them will deliver this message to thirty people or more” (Solomon, 2003).

“The traditional word of mouth where internet was not used as a channel is far less effective than the internet word of mouth communication” (Helm, 2000). When the influence is significant the internet word of mouth is a more focused medium because it can communicate the view to the social sphere, friends, family or colleagues and so on. Perfect examples of places to deliver the messages are Facebook, Twitter or in other words the social networks. Gradually this communication can increase the audience and can become a message that can be delivered in a global scale. Moreover, the content will always remain same, while “in the traditional word of mouth that message could be changed or filtered during the direct communication from one person to another” (Helm, 2000).

### **1.2.1 On-line and Off-line**

Both of these techniques, on-line and off-line, are techniques integrated in viral marketing through word of mouth and word of mouse. The difference between word of mouth and word of mouse is that firstly people communicated the positive thing about a product or company to friends or family by the communication mouth to mouth. Now that much of this communication happens online in the internet, this notion is being substituted as word of mouse. A good example

of traditional word of mouth is communication companies that offer lower prices if customers talk to each other within the same paying plan. In Albania the four communication companies practice this and have an aggressive marketing at this point. Almost the same idea exists for viral marketing campaigns, but they also do exploit the efficiency of the internet so that people can connect and communicate in a fast way in a global network.

“A discount at the bricks-and-mortar outlet can be an off-line benefit and a motivation to spread the word. Also off-line activity as receiving packages can be very beneficial. Amazon encourages its customers to send a book as a gift to their friend. When friends get the book, on the delivering package is written amazon.com service” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001). “Christina Aguilera used also an integrated strategy. What her marketers did was identifying teams of influential teens and gave to them free music samples and added to them different incentives as discounts of free tickets. Later these teams evangelized for Christina in e-mails, school, chat rooms and shopping malls” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001).

### **1.3 Positioning and research streams**

A number of marketing domains are extended by viral marketing. “Viral marketing can also be categorized as a stealth marketing technique, which is a recent proposition within marketing that relates viral marketing with brand elements of traditional marketing and advertising” (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004) (Porter & Golan, 2006). Considering that there are many new marketing streams, viral marketing can be positioned in the category of e-marketing domain. Another important domain that viral marketing can be put into is the marketing communication. “This domain deals with the importance of the message spreading and its viral characteristics” (Welker, 2002). “Viral marketing tries to build an environment where consumers and customers transmit messages without the participation of the original source, while in conventional communication marketing it directly addresses the consumer. As a consequence viral marketing can impact the behavior of consumers by affecting their attitudes, views, perceptions and is a key element in the promotional mix” (Kirby & Marsden, 2006). Despite this, the heart of the viral marketing is still the traditional marketing, which nowadays is simplified by the internet.

There is evidence that suggests that theoretical and empirical contributions are made from four rising research streams which are: “consumer to consumer viral marketing, viral marketing comparisons, marketing positioning and communications media. Consumer to consumer

marketing deals with issues in the consumer areas like consumer loyalty or consumer value. Marketing comparisons study different marketing variables in terms of marketing techniques like TV advertising. Marketing positioning deals with finding the positioning characteristics and driving conclusions for the domain of viral marketing. The media communication is concerned with transmission models like e-mails” (Phelps, Lewis, Mobilio, Perry, & Raman, 2004).

#### **1.4 Advantages and benefits of viral marketing**

There is a high attention which is given to the viral marketing in the management and computer literature and this means that potential benefits can be driven. “One of the most important benefits of viral marketing is the low cost needed for it” (Dobele, Toleman, & Beverland, 2005). In other words it is inexpensive if it is compared with different marketing campaigns or advertisement. Another benefit is the time needed for it and its speed. “Message can reach big audiences within a short time period and these messages move at really fast speed” (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004). In this way, adaptation of marketed products or services is also boosted. One of the downsides is that viral marketing uses “peer to peer transmission, which is a mass audience marketing method which overcomes privacy and legal regulations since messages are unsolicited and may be considered as spam” (Dobele, Toleman, & Beverland, 2005). Electronic spamming is the use of electronic messaging systems to send unsolicited bulk messages (spam), especially advertising, indiscriminately. “While the most widely recognized form of spam is e-mail spam, the term is applied if (A) the recipient's personal identity and context are irrelevant because the message is equally applicable to many other potential recipients; and (B) the recipient has not verifiably granted deliberate, explicit, and still-revocable permission for it to be sent” (Spamhaus Project, an international nonprofit organization , 2016). Moreover, viral marketing can reach substantial audience through different social contacts and marketers can take advantage through effective marketing.

In table 1 there is a list of potential benefits of viral marketing that are mentioned above.

**Table 1 - Potential benefits of viral marketing**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Benefits</b>
Financial	Inexpensive
Diffusion speed	Reaches audiences within a short period of time, rapid, fast diffusion, boosts adoption speed, exponential
Peer to peer transmission	Transmission Voluntary by sender
Audience reach	Access to diverse audience through social contacts, more effective targeting

Source: (Dobele, Toleman, & Beverland, 2005)

### **1.5 Disadvantages and risks of viral marketing**

There are also risks that marketers face when using viral marketing campaigns. “The most significant risk is the lack of control in the viral marketing campaigns. This happens because it cannot be controlled the content of the transmission as it gets spread and it may even be categorized as a spam as it is explained before” (Dobele, Toleman, & Beverland, 2005) (Helm, 2000). “Some other draw backs are the negative word of mouth that gets spread and this leads directly to a product boycott, negative brand image, unfavorable sites and negative attributions to the company or products” (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004). There is a gap also in the legal terms and standards for viral marketing. In addition, the most significant risk may be that customers or consumers may feel used or exploited and may view the viral marketing campaign as a negative aspect in terms of their privacy.

In table 2 are given the potential risks of viral marketing

**Table 2 - Potential risks of viral marketing**

<b>Category</b>	<b>Risks</b>
Consumer dependency	Consumers may want something in return to spread the message
Lack of control	Difficult to control, specific loss of audience and content. There may be lost the control of timing. There may be no control over information distributed due to filtering on incomplete messages or distortion. Lack of control in the adverse selection of customers
Negative impacts	Hate sites, negative perception of brands, unfavorable word of mouth, negative brand image, boycott and so on.
Ethical standards	Privacy concerns, emerging ethical issues, consumers feel exploited.
Legal standards	Legal issues to be considered

Source: (Kaikati & Kaikati, 2004) (Dobele, Toleman, & Beverland, 2005) (Helm, 2000)

### **1.6 How does a message become a virus?**

“The basic principle to make the strategy of viral marketing successful is that this strategy must have a viral element inside it from the starting point” (Godin, 2000). The technical aspects must be ready for implementation and must be developed. The marketer has to have an idea or understanding of how to put the concept of the product within its target audience. This audience has to be set with the necessary tools in order to spread the message about the product that is marketed. Viral marketers, in order to create a buzz for the product or service they are marketing, have to start with a product or service that gives an emotional response, causes conversation, because it may be contagious for example and, as more people use it , the product may become more useful and/or creates visual curiosity. In order for the target audience to engage in the

marketing campaign there must be also some personal benefit for them, which should be insured by the marketer.

Steve Juvertson, a famous Venture capitalist says: “Viral marketing is more powerful than third-party advertising because it conveys an implied endorsement from a friend” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001). “For this reason, companies should personalize their referral e-mail so that it shows clearly, particularly in the subject line, that it is coming from a friend” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001). There are some researches which state that emails which are sent from friends are always more likely to be opened rather than other emails because the source is credible to the receiver of the email. Len Short, executive vice president of advertising and brand management at Charles Schwab says: “Just 1 percent of Web site visitors click on banner ads, but between 5 and 15 percent of those receiving viral messages click through or follow the links. The idea that, a critical part of marketing is word of mouth and validation from important personal relationships is absolutely crucial. Unfortunately most marketers ignore it” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001).

There are two ways to spread the viral message: automatically or intentionally. When the consumers find the service convincing, they spread the buzz and communicate it to other people. The marketing message is spread automatically by individuals when a viral component is built in the use of the product, delivering the message when they use the service to communicate with family and friends. An example can be the website Passthison.com which relies on electronic greeting cards and games to attract users. “This page has 6.7 million users and these users can send a red heart to their affection persons after giving to the page their marketing information and email addresses. Users also must ask the social friends to use the service so that they can receive the personal greeting. Then there is sent encouragement to the new customer to use this service” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001).

There is small group of people, within the target audience who are really influential. They are called as e-fluentials" or "cyber evangelists" and are credible, high-profile persons. Other names attributed to them are "network hub" and "sneezers” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001). They are called as influential based on the theory that every successful idea before being spread to the masses is first embraced by a small group of people. Such people are called as "adoptive connected chat leaders", according to Pete Abel and Marianna Deal, senior partners at the marketing firm Fleishman-Hillard, because they are connected to the community in a strong way, they are early

adopters and are credible. According to Deal and Abel, a marketing campaign should be “a rifle, not a shotgun”, where is created and sustained e strong relationship with some key people, who can be a few thousand, and make them a valuable workforce that doesn’t get paid. These people influence about 66% of online users, have influence on about eight people with authority and are about just 8% of internet users. To make this category of people as your workforce there is needed an incentive to motivate them. The incentive may be financial but is more effective if the incentive has a relationship with the product. Some incentives of motivation can be:

- “Provocative or fun stimuli – like humor, contests or controversy.
- Concerning an issue – good example can be an activism issue which affects general public like environment.
- Cultural capital –being a trend spotter
- Monetary incentives – like coupons or discounts
- Free goods – such as email addresses” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001).

The benefit in viral marketing should constitute of network scale and effect and there must be a positive network externality, which should be increasing and should be created by a high amount of users. “A perfect example for this can be the email, which directly impacts on the value of the product. It becomes even more beneficial if the number using emails increases as well. The real value of network gets higher with a higher number of participants. The products and services are successful when they exploit the power of these externalities and become as a consequence buzz products. A good example can be Napster, which can be beneficial only if friends use the service too, so customers are interested in referring the services of Napster to their friends” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001). Napster, which is an online music downloading service, is a perfect example of network effect of scale and scope, making it a buzz product. Napster was marketed in the very beginning to an audience with a big amount of spare time and who liked new music and downloading them with a high speed internet connection, typically college students. These elements made buzz marketing and formed an important database of songs that established a larger benefit for other uses. “The positive effect of Napster was so big that it had negative externalities. The technology departments of universities banned Napster because it slowed down their connection and it became such a big problem that Napster itself considered to close, in this way risking to lose all the profits” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001).

Basically, the two branches that viral marketing relies on is the power of social network and the human psychology, taking advantage of the influential hubs of the social networks to create a buzz. A good sense of the audience, how the audience communicates with each other and the technology they use are three factors marketers must know to succeed. A good example of this is the game Trivial Pursuit, which used prominent network hubs and product giveaways for promotion. They putted a radio DJ to ask questions from Trivia from the game on the radio, and the radio listeners who answered correctly received the game for free. Another thing they did was distributing sample cards in bars and in spring hangouts and mailed the game to celebrities that were mentioned in the game. The end result was more than twenty million copies sold with almost zero cost of advertising.

“There was a survey made by IMT strategies firm, which is an e-business strategic firm, that found out 70% out of 400 companies, which were surveyed, took part in viral marketing in different scales. What else was found was that viral marketing campaigns, which were successful, were not just random projects, but were part of the company’s larger strategy of marketing” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001). The idea is that viral marketing should be considered the same way as the overall marketing of the firm. There are things that should be considered in both situations like the target customers, nature of industry, technology used, quality of the message and many others.

The technique used in viral marketing is very essential and to choose the best technique, marketers dealing with viral marketing need to consider the target customers and how would they want to hear and transmit the information. The social networks are important to be analyzed. Moreover how word of mouth is spread is very important too. “The person who was the head of the IMT survey was Marc Feldman and he explained that viral marketers need to understand at what life cycle are the customers they are targeting and if they are ready to play the role of an advocate for the company” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001).

There are some industries that are far more convenient to be used for viral marketing. These industries may include music, entertainment, software or internet. In these industries passing the information is easier and more influential. According to some analysts, e-commerce and entertainment are the best or most successful fields in viral marketing. The products that are sold

virtually are the most appropriate for virtual marketing and firms need to create a buzz for them because it is a critical part of the marketing strategy.

In general, if there is an artificial viral marketing campaign, it will not work. By artificial it is meant that there is no possibility to build up a viral marketing campaign that has even a tiny part of the success that spontaneous spreading has. Viral marketing is much more about fate than planning and people are able to know when this campaign is artificial. Sandeep Krishnamurthy, professor at University of Washington says: "It's an organic beast. The more you structure it, the more it breaks down. The marketing message has to be worthy of being passed along. It has to be a genuine service that people need" (Thevenot & Watier, 2001). The author of the book "Unleashing the Ideavirus", Seth Godin argues that businesses rather than using viral marketing campaigns as marketing gimmick, should build their products around a viral campaign. He says: "I think products that aren't engineered at the genetic level to be a virus will have disappointing results with viral marketing" (Godin, 2000).

In addition, there are also personnel and technological considerations. Before starting the campaign, companies need to make sure that the target audience is online and they do have the hardware and software needed to receive the message and then spread it. One other thing that needs to be concerned is scalability. Companies using viral marketing have to be ready for server scalability and this may lead to be forced by an inability to hire people who are qualified to handle the expanding and the growth of the company customer base.

However, there are many mistakes that are made by marketers that create a viral marketing campaign inside the business plan. The most common mistake is charging a fee in a case when the benefits of that product or service are not easily identified. If the user base that the product relies on is large and beneficial, then this product should be given at low cost or for free. The fee should be introduced when the customer base is large enough, and this fee should be charged for the features added to the product, not the basic product which was before acquired for free from customers. In other words, the buzz needs always to be there and this is done when marketers sustain it by keeping users involved in promotion of new features or product development. In this way customer satisfaction is achieved.

## **1.7 Making viral marketing work**

According to the famous joint paper of Milkman and Berger, the reason that online contents go viral was due to three factors:

- “It was useful
- It was positive, positive topics or issues
- It evoked strong feelings”

(Berger & Milkman, What makes online content go viral, 2014).

In Berger's book “Contagious: Why things catch on”, he gives several steps to examine several viral contents.

### **1.7.1 Social currency**

“People love when they are complimented in different ways. By saying to them they have a good opinion, good taste etc., it is noted that the customer service stories are the viral stories that circulate more and are shared more clearly because these stories make firms look good” (Berger, Contagious: Why things catch on, 2013).

### **1.7.2 Triggers**

“There are triggers that make people talk about a company, a product or a brand. Once the trigger is found it is easy to become viral. According to Berger it is surprising to know how much people talk about brands. The main reason is because they have common triggers” (Berger, Contagious: Why things catch on, 2013).

### **1.7.3 Emotion**

Berger says: “when we care, we share” (Berger, Contagious: Why things catch on, 2013). It is easy to understand that as far as the viral cause a strong emotional feeling, positive or negative feeling. One surprising finding was that online content didn't “care” or didn't focus on emotions like sadness.

### **1.7.4 Public**

People need or want to look at others in order to do something so that to embrace it. A good example can be churches that put money before they pass the donation plate around in order for

the donators to see the bill placed in and pass their donations based on what is in this plate. So people sometimes “fake it before they make it” (Berger, Contagious: Why things catch on, 2013).

### **1.7.5 Practical value**

“Practical news has been proven to be very easily shared by people, the reason is that people love news that can be helpful to other, in this way they look good to others” (Berger, Contagious: Why things catch on, 2013).

### **1.7.6 Stories**

“It is easy for people to get wrapped up in a good story. So if you have a story and all want to see the next episode, you will have a viral success. Transportation leads to persuasion” (Berger, Contagious: Why things catch on, 2013).

## **1.8 Future of viral marketing**

It is certain that the privacy concerns will be legislated in the future and is certain too that it will affect viral marketing, since this marketing makes use of personal information. On the other hand a part of the solution may be if people explicitly accept to include promotional materials in their emails or web sites, in exchange of something, most probably a financial incentive. Almost all stores pay out only for the sales, and do not consider paying the fact that their name and logo is putted in thousand of web sites for free. Moreover, they intend to get their logo in millions of emails too. The future of viral marketing seems targeted also at the e-fluential people. As online communities always expand, the importance of controlling these communities will make these influential people online a crucial part of the business. According to Seth Godin, in his book “Unleashing the Idea Virus”, “Ideaviruses” is a type of a marketing plan that incorporates traditional word of mouth with viral marketing and establishes strategies that create, encourage and feed ongoing customer conversations about a product. Most’ ideaviruses’ are communication based and force the customer to promote the product simply by using the product (evite.com, for example)” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001).

## **Chapter 2 – Viral marketing case studies from literature review**

In this chapter there are going to be explained real case studies of what was explained in chapter one. There are different tactics that marketers used for viral marketing. Some of these tactics are explained and give a better insight of the viral campaigns.

### **2.1 Critical factors of campaigns**

There are five important issues that influence viral marketing campaigns. These issues are the content of the message, the characteristics of the service or product, the peer to peer information transmission, the characteristics of the spread and the structure of the campaign.

The structure of the campaign encourages the activity of viral marketing and deals with the legal and ethical issues. If ethical issues rise during the campaign, there are negative consequences and there will be a negative outcome. There are also some products and services that are not suited or less suited for viral campaigns depending on their characteristics. The idea when the message is spread is that the receiver becomes or converts itself in another transmitter. The message transmitted can give to the receiver imagination, entertainment or it can intrigue him or her. Other factors for the success of the campaign are the characteristics of diffusion: the speed, the audience and the exponential spread. Another factor is the peer to peer message transmission that depends on the technology used and the channels of communication. One more crucial factor is the credibility of the sender.

Table 3 illustrates these factors, their specific aspects and some example questions to be asked in these situations.

**Table 3 -Factors, their specific aspects and some example questions to be asked in different situations.**

Critical factors	Specific aspects	Example questions
Message content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ease of use</li> <li>• Engaging</li> <li>• Imagination</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Is the message easy to use?</li> <li>• Does it have a high visibility?</li> <li>• Does the message engage both the transmitter and receiver?</li> <li>• Is the message imaginative?</li> <li>• Does the message offer fun &amp; intrigue to transmitter and receiver?</li> </ul>
Diffusion characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Speed</li> <li>• Audience reach</li> <li>• Exponential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the message spread at a very rapid pace among audiences?</li> <li>• Does the message reach a wide and the right audience?</li> <li>• Does the message spread exponentially among audiences?</li> </ul>
Campaign structure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal &amp; ethical issues</li> <li>• Viral activity encouragement</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does the campaign follow legal requirements?</li> <li>• Does the campaign adhere to ethical standards?</li> <li>• Does the campaign encourage viral marketing activities?</li> </ul>

Peer to peer information conduit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Channels available and used</li> <li>• Technology used</li> <li>• Source credibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What communication channels are available to message transmitters and receivers?</li> <li>• What channels do transmitters use to transmit the message?</li> <li>• What technology is available to message transmitters and receivers?</li> <li>• What technologies do transmitters use to transmit the message?</li> <li>• What technologies do receivers employ to get messages?</li> <li>• How credible is the message transmitter to the message receiver?</li> </ul>
Product characteristics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suitability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are the products and/or services marketed suitable for a viral marketing campaign?</li> </ul>

Table 4 gives the risks categories and their critical factors

**Table 4 - Risks categories and their critical factors**

<b>Risks categories</b>	<b>Critical factors</b>
Ethical standards	Structure of campaign
Legal standards	Structure of campaign
Dependency of consumers	Diffusion characteristics, peer to per information transmission
Negative impacts	Message content
Control	Diffusion characteristics

As it can be seen in table 4 the structure of the campaign coexists in the ethical and legal standards risk categories. The diffusion characteristics deal with control and consumer dependency problems. In addition, the message content may risk of not having the intended impact that it was created for. In this chapter there are going to be real examples of these risks.

The next table gives the benefit categories and the contextual critical factors. As it is seen, the financial benefits have no influence on the contextual critical factors. The peer to peer transmission is a contextual critical factor for itself. The audience and diffusion speed have contextual critical factors of diffusion characteristics.

**Table 5 - Benefit categories and the contextual critical factors**

<b>Benefit categories</b>	<b>Contextual critical factors</b>
Financial	No influence
Peer to peer transmission	Peer to per information transmission
Audience	Diffusion characteristics
Diffusion speed	Diffusion characteristics

## **2.2 Campaign Case Studies**

### **2.2.1 Social viral communication**

To give a clear explanation of social viral communication, the following example is given. In the final of football world cup, which was organized in Germany in 2006, a curious episode took place during the event. The Captain of French team at that time, Zinedine Zidane hit with head the Italian defender Marco Materazzi in front of millions of eyes who were watching that match worldwide. During this event, the referee sent Zidane off the pitch and in the end Italy became World Champion in a penalty shoot-out. Another curious occurrence happened directly after Zidane hit the Italian player. “One hour was enough time for the Italian graphic designer Alberto

Zanot to create a game which spread in a tremendous speed all over the internet. The game consisted in using the mouse movements and clicks to make Zidane hit the players as he did in the match. Zanot firstly emailed the game to his friends and this was enough to start a viral marketing campaign. The next day, the game was used 1.5 million times” (Heffernan, 2006). The game was an example of the critical factors of a fast, wide and exponential reaching diffusion.

The viral channels used for this game were peer to peer transmission by online communities and e-mails. What happened was that Alberto firstly sends to friends via emails a copy of the game and these friends send it to their friends and posted it in online communities. After 3 months there were many online resources from a simple search in Google for the Zinedine Zidane game. In this way, a second criterion of viral marketing is achieved and this criterion is peer to peer information conduit.

Moreover, the game had also a message that was transmitted in it. Even though the game is very simple with basic graphics it has two purposes that were intended from its developer. “Firstly it aims to entertainment and secondly it intends to comment a news event, since it is categorized as a news game” (Frasca, 2007). Anyway there were added different features to the game among time. Firstly, it was added a score and a timer. Later on other features were added. As a conclusion this game satisfies the message content factor of viral marketing.

In addition, the game can easily be transmitted over internet and this means is suitable for viral marketing. The game also motivates recipient action as the receiver is motivated to play the game since the game is funny and easy to use. The game also reached a large cover in different types of media news and became a topical event that promoted transmission through this connection with the news. So, the appropriate product requirement of viral marketing is satisfied.

It is important to note that no legal issues were raised against the game in all its campaign. Anyway personal rights and infringing image issues can rise since the image of two players is used. Another unknown is that if the “Federation Internationale de Football Association (FIFA) regulations of copyright laws have been breached, FIFA can take actions against the game. “An important feature of this game is that it went on for a short time, so it was a short campaign structure” (Frasca, 2007). Concerning the ethical issues, FIFA did not have any participation in the message that was developed and during the process of transmission. The only issue regarding

the ethical aspect is that there is a presence of violence inside the game, which may be disturbing for many groups.

Overall, the viral communication in the game developed is clear. It contains messages about events, organizations and brands. The parties that have to do with the game can benefit from it and its communication. The main issue may be the lack of control regarding the game. A negative aspect is that news-games are short lived due to the decrease of the buzz and the related news while time passes. Even though the game was not released for commercial purposes, it is really clear how powerful viral marketing can be, in both commercial and non-commercial use.

### **2.2.2 Unintentional viral marketing**

The following case is an example to see how unintentional viral marketing is created. In 2006, BBC released a video about how to make a pancake on its news website. “The video was made by a first year student in a university in United Kingdom (UK) and was uploaded on YouTube in 2006, before it was shown on BBC” (BBC, 2006). The video was shown to about six million viewers in “Good Morning America” program on ABC channel, and was also shown in most famous TV channels in United States, UK, Australia etc. “In 2006 the video reached 1.2 million views in YouTube” (BBC, 2006). This large number of people who watched the video is an example of how this kind of videos can be used for viral purposes. The basic criterion of viral marketing is met since the video diffusion speed was fast and exponential, reaching a wide number of audiences. In three days the video became the YouTube hottest week video. “With the 700.000 hits before the video was shown in BBC, it became a buzz with an exponential diffusion” (BBC, 2006). Despite the diffusion speed slowed down, it still remained popular and had reached 1.4 million views in the first days of 2007.

In this video, there are not known the exact channels available, leveraged and used for the transmission of information, which is a critical factor in viral marketing. Anyway, the publication of the video in YouTube started the diffusion process. The large number of viewers made it a buzz. This exponential diffusion was fuelled successfully when it captured the attention of ABC’s Good morning America and BBC website.

The content of the video was based in sound and vision that showed how to make a pancake with a pancake song playing that was made specifically for the video. The song was a great success too. The making pancakes message in the video was fun to watch, intrigues with its simplicity and is engaging.

What the video did unintentionally was promoting the products which were used to make the pancake. In the video there is also shown a person, whose face and identity is not shown who makes and then eats the pancakes. The evidence is that many companies have benefited from a free promotion in engaging people in making pancakes. It is not proved however that the video resulted in the increase in sales of specific products and has influenced consumers to behave toward using more these products. The video gives to the products a positive connotation of marketing and increases the loyalty and awareness of the products.

In the end there are no ethical issues related with the video since there was no identifiable commercial reason for producing the video. However, in the case of legal issues there may be some problem since it is likely that the owners of the brands showed in the video were not aware that their product was used for this specific video. With the huge success of the video online and in the press there was free advertisement for the brands seen in the video and all this happened without their engagement. It is unclear however, if the companies would have wanted to participate in the production of the video and this shows how much firms lack in control of viral marketing. Even though that the buzz created was positive for the brands, it is not sure if it will be always the same case.

### **2.2.3 Commercial viral marketing**

Commercial viral marketing is a viral campaign with a clear and distinguishable commercial scope. In this part it is going to be explained the Fat Wallet Company which deals with pricing and discount information for online shopping. The company produced a promotional video where it advertises the services that it offers with a slogan named “Pocket the difference”, and it launched the video in YouTube as in the previous case. The video had more than 25 000 views in 3 months, while today is over 50 000. Statistically, this number is a considerable number when the video is commercial, so in this case the first characteristic of speed of diffusion is reached. Fat Wallet Company commissioned the student who became famous with the Pancake video to develop its own “Pocket the difference” video and by this the source credibility was high due to

the success of the Pancake video. Since people were interested on the video, the message that Fat Wallet wants to send is spread. This is a typical example of peer to peer network function.

The video on YouTube was linked also with the Fat Wallet website and even if the video was clearly commercial, both the organization covering the cost of the video promotion and the producer were open on this issue. A positive fact was that the comments in the Fat Wallet website and YouTube expressed positive feelings for this directness. The viewers liked the content, the message delivered, liked the music in the video and found it entertaining as most of the comments said. This way another characteristic if fulfilled, the message was worth to be spread.

As it is explained among the paper, a video produces a buzz and it is proved that it is an effective method of communication. There is an ease of electronic transmission online and this is suitable for viral marketing. This means that there is a key advantage in transmitting viral marketing messages. In addition, by using peer to peer network it is ensured that the video reaches the intended audience and it also decreases the chances of lack of control during the transmission process. Considering the fact that Fat Wallet paid for this advertisement, the content of the message was in full control of them. Moreover, there were no legal issues as copyright since the content of the video was fully original.

#### **2.2.4 The first widely released movie marketed primarily by internet**

This case is considered a marketing special case because it is a classic example of spreading a virus and a perfect example for this buzz generation. It all started among the first years of the development of the idea of viral marketing, during 1999. “At that time, two not known filmmakers, Daniel Mynick and Eduardo Sanchez, directed and wrote an artificial documentary about three students which were supposed to be filmmakers” (Schneider, 2008). These students disappeared when they were searching for proof of the existence of a “mythic” or “legendary” witch in lands of western Maryland, or more exactly the Appalachian foothills. The film was named The Blair Witch Project. “The two filmmakers had a budget of less than 100,000 US Dollars. Artisan Entertainment, the distributor of the film, bought the rights of the movie in an all-night bidding session for 1 million US dollars in the Sundance Film Festival. Artisan

Entertainment limited its marketing expenses to 1.5 million US Dollars while they wanted to maximize the film's success" (Schneider, 2008).

Since it is a horror film, there are many levels of response to the strong emotional feelings. In addition, the film's handheld, unstable and low budget production values, generates a refined Hollywood production and creates its own emotional response. While the movie's story began, it was found that the viewer's started to identify themselves with the characters' fear, which is an example of the emotional response. This led the viewers to discuss with each other about the film and it was a way of experiencing unity with a larger group. The idea is that the viewers have no tangible profit by using a network scale effect in the group but they experience for sure an injurious effect of being out of the story.

One thing that was essential to the setting of the film was the Hollywood concept of backstory. Backstory means a history of the characters in the film. "Before the film was released the filmmakers created and launched a website with the domain [www.blairwitch.com](http://www.blairwitch.com) where anyone could find information regarding the film. As soon as Artisan Entertainment took the right to operate in this website, they managed to develop it into an extremely effective marketing platform by moving the traditional materials of the film's history of characters into the company's web site. The marketing team of Artisan Entertainment posted some pieces of evidence on the original web site which was the first effect of exaggerating the myth of the Blair Witch Project and this evidence had the following content: police reports which looked like authentic ones but were fictional, journal entries by one of the characters in the film and a legend dating to the 18<sup>th</sup> century about the Blair Witch, that was fictional" (Schneider, 2008).

The website was updated each week by Artisan Entertainment. Each week new information or features were added. In this way, a kind of suspense was created and visitors came back to the web site frequently making it very popular in the web with an average view per day of 2 million. In addition, every six weeks a trailer of the film was launched. In total they launched 3 trailers with about 30 seconds each. Moreover to complete the marketing mix that they created, there were added different promotional items. These items consisted of:

- "There was a book published with the title *The Blair Witch Project: A Dossier*" (Schneider, 2008). The book was intended to look like the result of an investigation by a detective whom was supposed to be hired by families of those students that were missing.

- “It was published a soundtrack CD which was marketed as a reproduction of the cassette in one of the abandoned cars of one of the characters in the film. The cassette was meant to be recorded just for the drive to the Blair Woods and was a list of favorite songs of one of the characters” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001).
- It was released a fake or mock documentary with the title “Curse of the Blair Witch” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001). This mock documentary was created with the cooperation of Sci-Fi Channel. This documentary was not an ordinary one because it considered the legend of the Blair witch and it used footage from the production of the original film. In addition, it was created a parallel between reality and myth. By letting the viewers identify themselves with the characters of the film, it strengthened the theme of the film and it created a marketing buzz. The mock documentary was shown on Sci-Fi channel just four days before the original film was released.

These three items, together with some other ones, generated more questions about the film that couldn't be answered, creating a large curiosity, one of the characteristics to make viral buzz as it is explained in the other cases too. The legend of the Blair witch was reinforced in this case and it was never told clearly that the film was a total fiction, a very important point in the huge buzz that was created from these items. The idea of these promotional items was that the film was worth of creating a documentary about it, giving to it more importance and rumor. The websites and the items that created this buzz were like an introductory version of the product, which was the film.

The word of mouth effect was not forgotten also by the Artisan Entertainment. They spread the virus also offline and for this method there were arranged street teams of young teens, who were influential groups. These teens went into places of potential target market like coffee houses or clubs all over the country. In these places they asked people about the Blair witch, what they knew about it, and delivered handouts of the Blair witch based on the myth. “There were also posters in the walls of the country about the three missing students. These posters looked really realistic. On student campuses there were special screenings held to generate a huge buzz in this social group” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001).

The release date schedule of Artisan Entertainment reinforced the buzz too. “The company decided to maintain this buzz by restricting the releasing of the film on only 24 markets and 27 screens and chose the theater for this film, which was made to strengthen its marketing strategy” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001). Moreover it was decided to pick the art house theaters, which are famous for showing documentaries and other films instead of Hollywood works. Once more they remained persistent on the buzz.

“The first two days that the film was shown on theaters it covered the expenses of the Blair Witch Project. It was calculated that the film earned 56,000 US Dollars per theater being showed in its first two days. At that time, a movie that was the best in terms of released prints, hardly earned about 9.000 USD per theater. The calculations show that during weekend there were spikes of sales which are typical in fact for movie sales. When the Blair Witch project was released on July 16, 1999 it was shown only in 27 screens. Two weeks later there were 1101 screens showing it” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001).

“In the first week it achieved earnings of 29.2 million US dollars and considering the fact that during this week the movie “Runaway Bride” was released with Richard Gere and Julia Roberts starring in that movie and Gary Marshall as director” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001). These three people became famous for the bestseller romantic comedy *Pretty Woman*. If these two films that were released in the same week were compared, “Runaway Bride had a marketing budget of about 70 Million USD and the two main actor starring took a salary of about 17 million USD each for this movie” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001). On the other side, the cast of Blair Witch project was completely unknown and the salary given to them is far away from these amounts. Anyway, “the Blair Witch Project entered in the top ten grossing films of that year and earned 136.2 million USD in two months after its release” (Thevenot & Watier, 2001). It was the most profitable film and when compared with *Runaway Bride*, which was a huge success that year, the difference in percentage was really high.

For nine weeks consecutively the Blair witch project stayed in top – ten movies rank and this demonstrates how successful the marketing campaign was. There was created a brand image around the myth of the Blair witch and there was also the brand image of Artisan Entertainment itself as it took the credit for bringing the audience to the Blair Witch Project.

In terms of viral marketing, its powerful force was seen but there were some credibility problems in this case. Some industry insiders claimed that friends of the filmmakers were used to generate a buzz that was as real as the film story. There were multiple websites or fan site created of the film before it was released that were suspected to be opened from the friends. Two of the creators of these fan sites even went on a Sci-Fi channel show as the two anthropology students who discovered the three students' film footage. So a question of credibility of viral marketing arises in this case, since later it got known that the footages were fake as the story itself was an invention. Anyway compared to other tradition media, viral marketing on the web is much more effective to generate interest. "Some months before the film was released, MTV channel ran a story on the site that was created about the witch myth and this led to a success in reaching the Artisan' target markets, who were 13 to 25 years old persons" (Thevenot & Watier, 2001).

As a conclusion, it was created an enormous box office which is a proof of the successful marketing strategy implemented and which created a new branded franchise of entertainment products. "There were 11 books released for this event, a trilogy of video games, a documentary and there were more than 150 licensed products which included props, costumes for holiday shoppers, posters and action figures" (Thevenot & Watier, 2001). Actually the marketing campaign of the film encourages people to buy DVD and unlock the games they offer. Customers must return to the website each week to find the clues to unlock it. The problem is that there are no rewards for unlocking the game which is a sign of failure in the future of the buzz if people do not profit something. On the other hand, although Artisan Entertainment made a remarkable viral campaign of the first film, it is uncertain if it could ever duplicate the effort. This happens because sometimes consumers grow suspicious of viral marketing especially in the cases when the buzz is really huge in the internet. In this case the buzz starts disappearing in a short period of time as it happened with The Blair Witch Project.

### **2.3 Summary analysis of cases**

All the viral marketing campaigns cases mentioned above show different characteristics and aspects that lead to success in viral marketing campaigns. In the first case it is shown how personal desire to make social interaction can provoke the interest of users and spread the virus in a quick way. In the second case it is described how one video can unintentionally become a marketing channel even if the idea of the video was to be an entertainment video. In the third

case it is explained how firms may try to exploit viral mechanism in its own benefit and to promote its services. The last case is a detailed one where lot of characteristics, features and examples are used or may be used to take maximum potential from the environment that the firms tends to be part of. In the last case almost all the mechanisms that are explained throughout the paper are a part of it.

In the table below there is an analysis of the cases explained in this chapter. There are three diffusion characteristics that are connected or fulfilled in unintentional viral marketing and social interaction. These characteristics are speed, exponential and reach of audience. When it is considered the commercial campaign, which are seen at the third and fourth case, it is not clear if its spreads in high speed or it is spread exponentially. However, it reaches the targeted audience due to the fact that on both cases the video was put in the website of the producer of a successful unintentional marketing campaign and it was commissioned. Even though online communities and emails are key parts in a social interaction campaign, the evidence in the cases is that a video in YouTube was spread into different news coverage and notification of emails in the unintentional viral campaign. The peer to peer information channel in the commercial campaigns uses the peer to peer of the producer network on YouTube, the organization website, forums and emails for spreading the virus. Since in all the videos it seems that origin and intention are not hidden by the source, the sources are all credible. In the characteristics of message content, unintentional viral marketing, commercial viral marketing and social interaction fulfil the identifying criteria, which in this case is imagination. The campaigns or the commercials described in this chapter are all fun, easy to use, imaginative and all these types feature services and products. The four campaigns inspire viral activity in different ways but are always successful. As said before, it is not clear if there are legal and privacy concerns in some parts of these campaigns. There are areas in the social network campaigns which seem grey areas for the law. Unintentional viral marketing, on the other hand, has also a grey area in the ethical issues. These issues may become potential legal issues also, if there is a referring to brands that are protected by trademarks. On the contrary, in commercial campaigns there are no legal or ethical issues found since the producers study these cases to avoid problems.

When it is considered the control of the viral campaigns is never easy. “In the context of controlling the viral campaigns the phenomena changes rapidly and it very powerful, has a short timeframe, and has a critical word of mouse during the spread of the message” (Skrob, 2005).

“The web serves as an online channel and puts all the online users in the centre. The willingness of these users to share the message with people they know and interested persons makes up the strength of the web” (Skrob, 2005). “It needs to be known by firms that consumer behaviour, during a tradition word of mouth effect, is affected by many conditions that may be positive and negative. Such examples are perceptions, awareness, behavioural intentions, expectations and attitudes” (Buttle, 1998). The impact of a medium is higher when it is compared with advertisements in context of raising awareness during a product innovation. Despite all the information that is described in this paper, still the viral marketing area need a lot more study, that it has actually, to be understood. The table below is derived from a literature synthesis.

**Table 6 - Viral marketing aspects for social interaction, unintentional interaction and Commercial Campaigns**

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Aspects</b>	<b>Social interaction (1<sup>st</sup> case)</b>	<b>Unintentional viral marketing (2<sup>nd</sup> case)</b>	<b>Commercial Campaigns (3<sup>rd</sup> &amp; 4<sup>th</sup> case)</b>
<b>Diffusion</b>	Speed	Yes	Yes	Not clear
	Exponential	Yes	Yes	Not clear
	Reach of audience	Yes	Yes	Potentially
<b>Peer to peer information delivery</b>	Technology and channels available, combined or used	Email & Forums	Youtube Emails News	Organizations website Email Forums YouTube
	Credibility	Original source credible (designer in this	Original source credible (student in this	Original source credible (clearly commercial)

		case)	case)	
<b>Content of message</b>	Fun	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Imagination	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Engaging	Yes	Yes	Neutral
	Ease of use	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Product characteristics</b>	Suitability	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>Campaign structure</b>	Encourages viral activity	Yes	Yes	Yes
	Legal & Ethical Issues	Potential concerns & issues	Yes	No

## **Chapter 3 – User Created and Professionally Made Ads**

### **3.1 Background of the study**

As explained throughout the thesis, viral marketing is getting more crucial for marketers and the creation of internet ads is getting more importance in order to succeed in a viral campaign. In this study it is aimed to explain the difference, if there is any, in the attitude and perception of ad videos if they are made from a user of the brand that is marketed or if it comes from the brand itself that is marketing its product of service. This way it is going to be seen also if the ad is passed more frequently if people believe that the ad is user created.

In this study there will be distributed questionnaires to 100 participants. Then, these participants are going to watch two videos randomly and after watching the videos they are going to answer the questions. The two videos are from Vodafone Albania, which is a professionally made video, and ICF youth Albania, which is user created video.

The ICF youth video is a user created ad in which members of the community try to promote the activities in their community. The video starts with a group of teenagers, where in front of the camera; they are asked some questions about the major of Tirana at that time. They seem they do not know anything. After that they are asked if they know anything about ICF Youth Albania and the answer by showing photos from their telephone screens of all the activities and ideas of the group. It is easily understood that the video is not professionally made. A lot of people like the idea of not professionally made videos because they give a more real picture of what is advertised and this video is a clear example.

The Vodafone video is a professionally made one. The video starts with a guy who has just come out of bed in the morning and starts his day. Then all his day is shown in the video and the main idea is how youth generation spends a normal day in different activities and how they share many moments with each other by sending videos or photos and keeping in touch all day. Then this guy ends his day and goes back to bed and the Vodafone logo appears. The main idea is that how Vodafone Club, which is the Vodafone community, helps people keep in touch and demonstrates how fun and large this community is.

It is very crucial to note that **the two advertisements will not be compared to each other.** There is no comparison between ICF youth and Vodafone. **The judgment of the people based on the perception of the video if it user created or professionally made one, is what is being compared.**

### **3.2 Empirical studies and the conceptual methodology**

“A research is considered as a plan that includes many procedures in which the aim is to collect and elaborate data. There are three types of research methods: qualitative, quantitative and mixed. For this topic there will be used the quantitative method” (Creswell, 2009). According to *Creswell* again, “the quantitative method is a type of research that is focused on the exploration or the understanding of individual behavior or individual attribution toward a social problem” (Creswell, 2009).

“The purpose of the research design method is to develop a plan or structure in a manner appropriate to increase the validity of research results” (Creswell, 2009). “A method of research design serves to realize the objectives of the research for the target population by the population as a whole” (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). The authors explain clearly the purpose and the reason of a research as the one that is conducted in this paper.

After reviewing the literature and presenting the conceptual model, the third chapter describes the methodology used to gather the data and to answer the main research questions. To accomplish this study it is used a methodology that consists in the combination of primary data with secondary ones. Also, a long series of other secondary sources, in the form of academic literature, or other publications have been utilized, which address important concepts on each person’s judgments regarding user created ads and professionally made ads, which have served to build the hypotheses and the theoretical model that it is tested.

There is conducted a primary research by obtaining information from individuals of different age groups by means of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was distributed in paper format, based on the scope of the topic, which aims to assess the behavior and attitudes of individuals to the display of marketing messages online. This method of obtaining data will affect in having a higher validity from the questionnaire.

In order to build a valid and effective questionnaire, it has been considered some other questionnaires that were conducted before in different countries for similar aim or field of research. It mainly helped in the process of designing the questionnaire. Specifically it was taken in consideration that the questionnaire should not be too long and the words used were as clear as possible in order to not confuse the question asked. Furthermore, some techniques and measures were taken in consideration taken during various stages of conducting a survey.

Finally, comments or suggestions received showed that this method of search could be used successfully. The questions that the questionnaire contains have been adapted from the appropriate literature with the variables used in the model that it was built. The questions are organized into sections, depending on the factors that should be taken into account in this study. Adopting the questionnaires, or the research in the literature for the simplified models of their focus group in which the questionnaire would be implemented, substantially influenced the final results. It is very important to underline that this study focuses on the difference in attitude toward user and professionally created ads and not in the differences in the ads themselves.

### **3.3 Building the questionnaire**

The tool used for the gathering of data was a Semantic differential scale questionnaire of seven points. There is a specific reason why just seven points were used. It is generally known from existing literature that respondents might avoid using farthest response scales. However from the responses that were taken, it was seen that respondent had no problem in using the extreme scales. The seven point scale was also chosen because, if it was conducted a five points scales questionnaire, the respondents would have less options in order to show their idea about what they were asked. On the other hand if it was a conducted a ten points scale questionnaire it would make it more difficult to the respondents to differentiate the scores.

The first part of the questionnaire is made from questions which get demographic data about gender, age, profession and degree of education. The second part of the questionnaire tries to get the attitude of the respondents toward advertising. The third part is the most important one since the primary target in this analysis is to find out the perception of Albanians toward user created and professionally made ads. There were chosen two different advertisements. For the user created ads it was a chosen the ICF youth Albania, which is a community in which youth

generation joins in different activities in order to find their passions and express their values. This ad was made by members of the community whose intention was to promote their youth community. For the professionally made ad it was chosen a Vodafone Albania advertisement. This ad was chosen because it also deals with communities, in this case telecommunication communities. The ad is professionally made with the scope of attracting more people to the Vodafone community. The third part of the questionnaire starts with getting the opinion of the people about the different categories of the ads, youth communities and telecommunications communities. Since both ads deal with communities it should be easier for the respondents to concentrate on the overall opinion how do the ads appear to them rather than on what is promoted in the ads. In addition, there are same questions conducted for both of the ads which will try to get the difference in perception for both of the ads.

There is a detailed description of the purpose and the objectives of the questionnaire, reducing the errors in the perception of the respondents. Some of the first completed questionnaires were used as samples to test the validity and the reliability of the questionnaire, in order to reduce the possible errors in the wording of questions.

There are also ethical considerations to consider while building the questionnaire. As it is stated in the first paragraph of the questionnaire:

- The information asked in this questionnaire is for the only purpose of conducting a study based on viral marketing in Albania
- The information taken will be confidential
- The information taken will not be used for any other purpose

### **3.4 Data collection and analysis**

To process the collected data the SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Science) 20 computer version was used. This is a program used to process statistical information to achieve the results set out in the objectives section. To start the analysis, it took an early elimination of some data in order to reduce possible human errors.

The data was collected through personal interviews. The participant interviewed was guided all over the process to eliminate possible bias. The process was done in public premises and at

different time. The participants were chosen occasionally and everyone who was willing to take part was given the questionnaire. In total there were 100 participants which participated in the questionnaire. The participants were almost equally distributed in gender, where 56% of the participants asked were females and 44% were males as it is seen in the table 7.

**Table 7 - Gender of the respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	44	44.0	44.0	44.0
Valid Female	56	56.0	56.0	100.0
Valid Total	100	100.0	100.0	

It is important to mention that the target population was focused on youth generation, considering that in Albania was more efficient due to the familiarization of the target group to viral marketing. From the general statistics that are given in table 8 it can be observed that the participants' age ranges between 18 and 33 years old. Out of this range 72% were people in the age range 18 to 26, which demonstrates the idea to focus on youth generation.

**Table 8 - Age of the respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 18	9	9.0	9.0	9.0
Valid 19	5	5.0	5.0	14.0
Valid 20	9	9.0	9.0	23.0
Valid 21	7	7.0	7.0	30.0
Valid 22	6	6.0	6.0	36.0
Valid 23	12	12.0	12.0	48.0

24	8	8.0	8.0	56.0
25	8	8.0	8.0	64.0
26	8	8.0	8.0	72.0
27	5	5.0	5.0	77.0
28	6	6.0	6.0	83.0
29	5	5.0	5.0	88.0
30	5	5.0	5.0	93.0
31	1	1.0	1.0	94.0
32	4	4.0	4.0	98.0
33	2	2.0	2.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

In addition, considering the age of the respondents that is a phase of transition from education to employment, some of them were employed and some were continuing their education. To be precise 59% of them were employed and 41% were students as it can be seen in table 9.

**Table 9 - Profession of the respondents.**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Student	41	41.0	41.0	41.0
Valid Employed	59	59.0	59.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

The degree of education was also a question in the questionnaire in order to get a better picture of the respondents. Even though most of the people were with high education degree, the difference is very small with the participants with middle education. Respondents with high education degree were 52%, while respondents with middle education were 48% as it can be seen in the table 10. This also shows a view of the education in Albania, where a good part of the population does not continue high degree of education for several reasons.

**Table 10 - Education of the respondents**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
High	52	52.0	52.0	52.0
Valid Middle	48	48.0	48.0	100.0
Total	100	100.0	100.0	

In part two of the questionnaire there are four questions about advertising. These questions do not have any implication if the results of the study, but they are there in order for the respondents to get familiarized with the topic of the questionnaire. In part three, before the respondents watch the video and answer the question about it, there are four questions which try to introduce the respondent with the topic of the video. Respectively, youth communities for ICF youth video and telecommunication communities for Vodafone. Again in this case, these questions do not affect the results of the study and do not have any implication apart of what mentioned before. The questions of the questionnaire can be seen in Appendix B.

As it is mentioned before there were 100 participants who completed 200 questionnaires. In order to get the results of what it is tested in this analysis, the questionnaire was separated into two sets. Since it is focused to get the difference in attitude of professional and user made ads, in one of the sets one ad is said to be professional before the participant watches the video and the other ad is presented as user made. For example in the first set the ICF youth Albania video is presented as professionally made and the Vodafone Albania ad is presented as user made. Meanwhile in the second set, which is given to a different participant, the ICF youth Albania video is presented as user made and the Vodafone Albania ad is presented as professionally made. So this means that the two sets consist of 50 respondents each. It is important to say that **the type of ad is written before the participant watches the video.** In this way it can be found the difference in perception of the type of the ad and not the difference of the ads themselves. Thus, the first set has 50 respondents which give 50 questionnaires that present ICF youth Albania as professionally made and 50 questionnaires that present Vodafone Albania as User made. The vice versa happens with the second set. This is why there are 200 questionnaires in total.

There are different statistical methods used for the analysis of the data obtained from the questionnaires distributed. These methods include multiple regression, descriptive analysis and other statistical tests. The numbers that were collected were written in excel spreadsheets and they were entered in the SPSS computer program for further processing.

To be more specific the methods used were:

- Test of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient; to test the reliability and validity of the research.
- Pearson correlation; to test the correlation between the variables
- Hypotheses testing; to test the hypotheses' acceptance

### **3.5 Validity and the credibility of the research**

“Using the questionnaire as a method for data collection has its advantages and disadvantages. The main concern in the use of questionnaires is dealing with the assessment of their validity and reliability” (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). According to the American Psychological Association the questionnaire's measuring units must demonstrate content validity, validity regarding the criteria, construct validity and internal consistency. “The first three criteria are related to the assessment of internal validity of the questionnaire, which indicates the ability of the questionnaire to measure what the applicant intends to measure” (Saunders, Lewis, & Thornhill, 2007). Content validity refers to the extent to which the questionnaire provides adequate coverage of the investigative questions. One way to achieve this is the use of a panel of individuals to assess the questionnaire. The validity of the criteria is related to the ability of the questions to make adequate provisions. For this purpose it can be used the statistical analysis of the correlation. “Reliability refers to the degree to which an assessment tool produces stable and consistent results” (Phelan & Wren, 2006). Reliability (reliability testing) has to do with whether or not the questionnaire will produce consistent results at different times and with different choices. One way to evaluate it is to measure the internal consistency, for example by calculating Cronbach alpha. “This indicator uses the correlation between units to indicate whether different questions within sections measure the same attribute or dimension” (Bryman & Cramer, 2005). In the data collected from these questionnaires, Cronbach alpha coefficient was calculated to measure the internal stability of the questionnaire. According to Malhotra, “if the estimated coefficient value is less than 0.6 this indicates a small validity. On the other hand 0.6 to 0.8 states a high validity and over 0.8 provides a very high validity” (Malhotra & Birks, 2006). The calculated value of the Cronbach alpha for the questionnaire is 0.706 (acceptable consistency), as it can be seen in table 11, making valid the usage of the questionnaire's responses.

**Table 11 - Cronbach's Alpha**

Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items
.709	.706	7

### **3.6 Test of normality**

“The test of normality assures that the data is in compliance with the statistical assumption of multivariate techniques and the method used to test the normality is correlation analysis” (Field, 2009). Correlation indicates the extent of which variables vary together. A positive correlation between variables means that an increase in one variable will result in the increase of the other variables which are positively correlated to it. A negative correlation means that an increase in a variable will result in the decrease of all the variables that are negatively correlated to it. The amount of increase or decrease always depends on the level of the correlation between the variables.

For correlation measurements it has been used the Pearson correlation. This type of correlation gives results ranging from  $-1$  to  $+1$ . A value of  $+1$  means a perfect positive correlation. A value of  $-1$  means a perfect negative correlation. The results of the Pearson correlation are given in the table 12:

**Table 12 - Pearson Correlation**

		Credibility	Category	Loyalty	Viral	Quality	Informative	Attitude
Credibility	Pearson Correlation	1	.261**	.021	.085	.423**	.210*	.327**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009	.833	.401	.000	.036	.001
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Category	Pearson Correlation	.261**	1	.075	.366**	.154	.277**	.462**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009		.461	.000	.127	.005	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Loyalty	Pearson Correlation	.021	.075	1	.217*	.114	.198*	.203*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.833	.461		.030	.258	.048	.043
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Viral	Pearson Correlation	.085	.366**	.217*	1	.182	.213*	.693**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.401	.000	.030		.070	.033	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

Quality	Pearson Correlation	.423**	.154	.114	.182	1	.259**	.436**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.127	.258	.070		.009	.000
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Informative	Pearson Correlation	.210*	.277**	.198*	.213*	.259**	1	.193
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.036	.005	.048	.033	.009		.054
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100
Attitude	Pearson Correlation	.327**	.462**	.203*	.693**	.436**	.193	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.000	.043	.000	.000	.054	
	N	100	100	100	100	100	100	100

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

As it seen in the table there are no negative correlations between our data, so if there is a change in one variable we will observe the same change in the other variable. The degree of change varies according to the degree of the correlation between the variables. For example if we take the variables of Attitude and Viral we observe a high correlation of 0.693. This means that a change of the attitude of a person toward an ad will directly impact the viral spread of that ad. In other words if a person likes the ad, there is a high chance that he will spread the ad more and make it viral.

As we can observe from the table, all the correlations between the variables are lower than 0.8. Thus it is assured that there is no risk of multicollinearity in the correlation of our variables.

### **3.7 Hypotheses testing**

In this part it is going to be used the ANOVA table to test the hypotheses. In this way there are compared the two types of ads. Firstly the means of the group are compared, which are given in the ANOVA table. “If the group means differ in a significant way the null hypothesis can be rejected” (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010).

The different groups of observations are divided by the independent variables that are presented in the ANOVA table. The groups mentioned are user created and professionally made ads. The data that it is gathered is divided into two parts so that we examine separately the hypotheses for ICF youth Albania and Vodafone Albania. This is done to augment the validity and reliability of the research. In this way, if the results are congruent for both companies, it can be generalized to the product or firms that fall in the same category. There are some conditions to be fulfilled to get valid results out of ANOVA. “These conditions comprise that there must be 30 or more independent observations, the dependent variable must be scaled and this scale must apply to the independent variable” (Zaiontz, 2013).

#### **3.7.1 Attitude toward ad**

The first hypothesis is:

H<sub>0</sub>: there is no difference of attitude in the means of the two groups (user created or professionally made ads)

H<sub>a1</sub>: The consumer attitude toward an ad which is user created is more positive than when it is professionally made.

According to the safety coefficient, for a bond to be valid the value of sig. should be less than the significative value of sig. = 0.05.

For the ICF youth Albania the values of sig=0.00 as it can be seen in the ANOVA table below. This means that there is a difference in the attitude of the respondent when the respondent has been told that the ad is user created. As it can be seen in Appendix A in table 1, the mean for ICF when the respondents believes that is an user created ad is 5.0673, while the mean when the

respondent believes that it is professionally made ad is 4.0208. This means that the respondents preferred the ad even more when they believed that it was a user created ad.

**Table 13 - ANOVA of Attitude for ICF**

	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	27.334	1	27.334	50.548	.000
Within Groups	52.994	98	.541		
Total	80.328	99			

For the Vodafone Albania the value of sig=0.02 as it can be seen in the ANOVA table below. This means that there is a difference in the attitude of the respondent when the respondent has been told that the ad is user created. As it can be seen in the Appendix A in table 2, the mean for Vodafone when the respondents believes that is an user created ad is 4.6563, while the mean when the respondent believes that it is professionally made ad is 4.2885. Even though the difference is not that large, this means that the respondents preferred the ad even more when they believed that it was a user created ad.

**Table 14 - ANOVA of Attitude for Vodafone**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	3.376	1	3.376	5.584	.020
Within Groups	59.251	98	.605		
Total	62.628	99			

The results taken from both ads lead to the conclusion that we can strongly accept the alternative hypothesis, which suggests that the:

Ha1: The consumer attitude toward an ad which is user created is more positive than when it is professionally made.

### 3.7.2 Informativeness

The second hypothesis is:

H<sub>0</sub>: there is no difference of attitude in the means of the two groups (user created or professionally made ads)

Ha2: If an ad is perceived to be user created the recipients will consider the ad more informative

For the ICF youth Albania the values of sig=0.00 as it can be seen in the ANOVA table below. This means that there is a difference in the attitude of the respondent when the respondent has been told that the ad is user created. Respondents think that the ad is more informative when it is user created. As it can be seen in the Appendix A in table 3 The mean for ICF when the respondents believes that is an user created ad is 5.62 while the mean when the respondent believes that it is professionally made ad is 4.35. This means that the respondents thought that the ad is more informative when they believed that it was a user created ad.

**Table 15- ANOVA Informativeness for ICF**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	39.703	1	39.703	59.597	.000
Within Groups	65.287	98	.666		
Total	104.990	99			

For the Vodafone Albania the values of sig=0.00 as it can be seen in the ANOVA table below. This means that there is a difference in the attitude of the respondent when the respondent has been told that the ad is user created. As it can be seen in the appendix A in Table 4, the mean for Vodafone when the respondents believes that is an user created ad is 5.35, while the mean when the respondent believes that it is professionally made ad is 4.29. This means that the respondents thought that the ad is more informative when they believed that it was a user created ad.

**Table 16- ANOVA Informativeness of Vodafone**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	28.348	1	28.348	48.187	.000
Within Groups	57.652	98	.588		
Total	86.000	99			

The results taken from both ads lead to the conclusion that we can strongly accept the alternative hypothesis, which suggests that:

Ha2: If an ad is perceived to be user created the recipients will consider the ad more informative

### 3.7.3 Quality

The third hypothesis is:

H<sub>0</sub>: there is no difference of attitude in the means of the two groups (user created or professionally made ads)

Ha3: User created ads are perceived to have higher quality than professionally made ads

For the ICF youth Albania the values of sig=0.00 as it can be seen in the ANOVA table below. This means that there is a difference in the perception of the respondent when the respondent has been told that the ad is user created. As it can be seen in the Appendix A in table 5, the mean for

ICF when the respondents believes that is an user created ad is 5.44 while the mean when the respondent believes that it is professionally made ad is 4.44. This means that the respondents perceived the ad as more qualitative when they believed that it was a user created ad.

**Table 17 - ANOVA Quality for ICF**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	25.201	1	25.201	42.116	.000
Within Groups	58.639	98	.598		
Total	83.840	99			

For the Vodafone Albania the values of sig=0.421 as it can be seen in the ANOVA table below. This means that there is no difference in the attitude of the respondent when the respondent has been told that the ad is user created. As it can be seen in the Appendix in table 6, the mean for Vodafone when the respondents believes that is an user created ad is 4.67, while the mean when the respondent believes that it is professionally made ad is 4.54. Also the difference in the means is very small.

**Table 18 - ANOVA Quality for Vodafone**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.410	1	.410	.653	.421
Within Groups	61.590	98	.628		
Total	62.000	99			

The results taken from both ads lead to the conclusion that we can partially accept the alternative hypothesis due to the fact that the alternative hypotheses for Vodafone cannot be accepted.

### 3.7.4 Credibility

The fourth hypothesis is:

H<sub>0</sub>: there is no difference of attitude in the means of the two groups (user created or professionally made ads)

H<sub>a4</sub>: User created ads are perceived to be more credible than professionally made ads

For the ICF youth Albania the values of sig=0.00 as it can be seen in the ANOVA table below. This means that there is a difference in the perception of the respondent when the respondent has been told that the ad is user created. As it can be seen in the Appendix in table 7, the mean for ICF when the respondents believes that is an user created ad is 5.35 while the mean when the respondent believes that it is professionally made ad is 4.35. This means that the respondents perceived the ad as more credible when they believed that it was a user created ad.

**Table 19 ANOVA Credibility for ICF**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	24.562	1	24.562	47.431	.000
Within Groups	50.748	98	.518		
Total	75.310	99			

For the Vodafone Albania the values of sig=0.347 as it can be seen in the ANOVA table below. This means that there is no difference in the attitude of the respondent when the respondent has been told that the ad is user created. As it can be seen in the Appendix in table 8, the mean for Vodafone when the respondents believes that is an user created ad is 4.90, while the mean when the respondent believes that it is professionally made ad is 4.75. Also the difference in the means is very small.

**Table 20 - ANOVA Credibility of Vodafone**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	.531	1	.531	.893	.347
Within Groups	58.229	98	.594		
Total	58.760	99			

The results taken from both ads lead to the conclusion that we can partially accept the alternative hypothesis due to the fact that the alternative hypotheses for Vodafone cannot be accepted.

### **3.7.5 Viral score**

The fifth hypothesis is:

H<sub>0</sub>: there is no difference of attitude in the means of the two groups (user created or professionally made ads)

H<sub>a5</sub>: User created ads are more likely to become viral than professionally made ads

For the ICF youth Albania the values of sig=0.00 as it can be seen in the ANOVA table below. This means that there is a difference in the perception of the respondent when the respondent has been told that the ad is user created. As it can be seen in the Appendix A in table 9, the mean for ICF when the respondents believes that is an user created ad is 5.33 while the mean when the respondent believes that it is professionally made ad is 4.08. This means that the respondents most like will pass on the ad when they believed that it was a user created ad.

**Table 21 - ANOVA Viral score for ICF**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	38.601	1	38.601	71.229	.000
Within Groups	53.109	98	.542		
Total	91.710	99			

For the Vodafone Albania the values of sig=0.00 as it can be seen in the ANOVA table below. This means that there is a difference in the attitude of the respondent when the respondent has been told that the ad is user created. As it can be seen in the Appendix A in table 10, the mean for Vodafone when the respondents believes that is an user created ad is 5.33, while the mean when the respondent believes that it is professionally made ad is 4.33. This means that the respondents most like will pass on the ad when they believed that it was a user created ad.

**Table 22- ANOVA Viral Score for Vodafone**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	25.281	1	25.281	47.545	.000
Within Groups	52.109	98	.532		
Total	77.390	99			

The results taken from both ads lead to the conclusion that we can strongly accept the alternative hypothesis, which suggests that:

Ha5: User created ads are more likely to become viral than professionally made ads

### 3.7.6 Loyalty

The sixth hypothesis is:

H<sub>0</sub>: there is no difference of attitude in the means of the two groups (user created or professionally made ads)

H<sub>a6</sub>: User loyalty is higher when an ad is perceived as user created.

For the ICF youth Albania the values of sig=0.00 as it can be seen in the ANOVA table below. This means that there is a difference in the perception of the respondent when the respondent has been told that the ad is user created. As it can be seen in the Appendix in table 11, the mean for ICF when the respondents believes that is an user created ad is 5.21 while the mean when the respondent believes that it is professionally made ad is 4.27. This means that the respondents' loyalty is higher for user created ads.

**Table 23 - ANOVA Loyalty for ICF**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	22.088	1	22.088	59.875	.000
Within Groups	36.152	98	.369		
Total	58.240	99			

For the Vodafone Albania the values of sig=0.00 as it can be seen in the ANOVA table below. This means that there is a difference in the attitude of the respondent when the respondent has been told that the ad is user created. As it can be seen in the Appendix in table 12 the mean for Vodafone when the respondents believes that is an user created ad is 5.31, while the mean when the respondent believes that it is professionally made ad is 4.62. This means that the respondents' loyalty is higher for user created ads.

**Table 24 - ANOVA Loyalty for Vodafone**

	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	12.130	1	12.130	41.534	.000
Within Groups	28.620	98	.292		
Total	40.750	99			

The results taken from both ads lead to the conclusion that we can strongly accept the alternative hypothesis, which suggests that:

Ha6: User loyalty is higher when an ad is perceived as user created.

## **Chapter 4 - Discussions**

### **4.1 Interpretation of the results**

The study conducted on this paper is very interesting for the Albanian society since viral marketing is not as “viral” as in many developed countries. In this study there were 100 participants which took part, where 56% of the participants asked were females and 44% were males. The target population ranges between 18 and 33 years old. Out of this range 72% were people in the age range 18 to 26. From the statistics it is seen that 59% of them were employed and 41% were students and 52 % of the respondents were with high education, while with middle education there were 48%. It is believed that this target population with these statistics gives a clear view of the general environment in the country. There were three methods used to complete the analysis for this thesis. These methods were Test of Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient, which is used to test the reliability and validity of the research. Pearson correlation, which is used to test the correlation between the variables and hypotheses testing, which is used to test the hypotheses’ acceptance.

Cronbach alpha has to do with whether or not the questionnaire will produce consistent results at different times and with different choices. In this case Cronbach alpha is 0.0706, which makes the analysis valid and reliable. The Pearson correlation, which assures that the data is in compliance with the statistical assumption of multivariate techniques, is always positive. This means that, if there is a change in one variable, it will be observed the same change in the other variable. All the correlations between the variables are lower than 0.8 and thus it is assured that there is no risk of multi-collinearity in the correlation of our variables.

There are sixth hypotheses which are tested in this thesis. These hypotheses are:

H<sub>0</sub>: there is no difference of attitude in the means of the two groups (user created or professionally made ads)

Ha1: The consumer attitude toward an ad which is user created is more positive that than when it is professionally made.

Ha2: If an ad is perceived to be user created the recipients will consider the ad more informative

Ha3: User created ads are perceived to have higher quality than professionally made ads

Ha4: User created ads are perceived to be more credible than professionally made ads

Ha5: User created ads are more likely to become viral than professionally made ads

Ha6: User loyalty is higher when an ad is perceived as user created.

The testing of these hypotheses is done by ANOVA table and there were several findings that were found. Firstly it is stated that whenever a person perceives that an ad is user created, it has a much more positive attitude than when it is perceived as professionally made. In addition, this also happens in terms of informativeness. Whenever a person thinks that the ad is user created, it judges that ad as more informative than a professionally made one. On the other hand the third hypotheses can be accepted just partially. This happens because when the respondents were asked about the ICF youth ad, they perceived the ad as more qualitative when they thought the ad was user created. When the respondents were asked about the Vodafone ad they had no difference in thinking of the quality of the ad, despite if they thought the ad was user created or professionally made. So the hypothesis can just be accepted partially. The same result is also with the fourth hypothesis which deals with credibility. This hypothesis can be accepted just partially because the respondents had no difference in the attitude when told that the ad is user created. The fifth hypothesis concludes that there is a difference in the attitude of the respondent when the respondent has been told that the ad is user created in both ads and this way the hypothesis is accepted. The last hypothesis is also accepted because there is a difference in the perception of the respondent when the respondent has been told that the ad is user created in terms of loyalty. These results can be seen in the table 25.

**Table 25 - Hypotheses results**

	Hypotheses	Result
Ha1	The consumer attitude toward an ad which is user created is more positive than when it is professionally made.	Accepted
Ha2	If an ad is perceived to be user created the recipients will consider the ad more informative.	Accepted
Ha3	User created ads are perceived to have higher quality than professionally	Partially

	made ads.	Accepted
Ha4	User created ads are perceived to be more credible than professionally made ads.	Partially Accepted
Ha5	User created ads are more likely to become viral than professionally made ads.	Accepted
Ha6	User loyalty is higher when an ad is perceived as user created.	Accepted

In other words, consumers react much better and have more positive attitude for an ad which is user created. They think that a user created ad is more informative than a professionally made one. This may happen as people perceive these ads as more realistic. Anyway in terms of quality and credibility the respondents were unclear about their perception. It could not be stated that user created ads were more qualitative or more credible. What is interesting to say is that people tend to pass on an ad which is user created rather than one which is not user created. This helps the user created ads to become more viral. In the end respondents also were more loyal to user created ads.

These results suggest that firms and companies should always increase the attention to its customer's thoughts because they can get free advertising and much more effective one, than the millions spent on professional advertising. These lead directly into the decrease of costs, which are always a burden for the accounts and an increase in sales. Viral marketing and user created ads have been the boost for many companies.

## **4.2 Limitations**

There were difficulties in completing the questionnaires because many persons hesitated and those who accepted claimed of the long time needed to fill it. Due to this there was a problem on the sincerity of the answers since the respondents tried to finish quickly.

The questionnaires were distributed just in person and non in electronic format due to the necessity to guide the respondents and this may have affected their judgment. When people are alone they may value their answers in a different way.

Sometimes the videos before the questionnaires were seen in group and this may have affected the opinion of the persons due to intimidation of what most of the persons thought.

There is not much research conducted on user created ads and the respondents had problems in understanding the topic

Questionnaires were distributed in Tirana where most of the population of Albania is concentrated. There might be a chance that in more poor places of Albania the results could be different.

Other studies should be done without stating if an ad is user created or professionally made one, before the participant watches the video.

### 4.3 Recommendations

Some possible recommendations of this study can be:

- There is a need of more studies about viral marketing, user created ads and professionally made ads in Albania, because it may have a great impact on the companies.
- Companies may spend more on these fields and train their employees to understand the importance.
- By having success on these fields , companies may succeed in their purpose on making profits
- Going viral today means destroying the borders and may lead to internationalization and globalization of the firm
- There are many global examples that Albanian firms can study in order to be more successful domestically.
- There is no better advertising than the satisfaction on the users. By giving importance to user created ads, the cost of a firm on professionally made ads is diminished and the profit is always climbing the ladder.

## 4.4 Conclusions

Viral marketing is used as a method to deliver, transmit or spread messages among persons which can forward or filter these messages to many peers which may show an interest on it. The traditional word of mouth was the path which led to a more powerful tool; just this tool is online now. There are four rising research streams which are:

- Consumer to consumer viral marketing
- Viral marketing comparisons
- Marketing positioning
- Communications media

Consumer to consumer marketing deals with issues in the consumer area, like consumer loyalty or consumer value. Marketing comparisons study different marketing variables in terms of marketing techniques like TV advertising. Marketing positioning deals with finding the positioning characteristics and driving conclusions for the domain of viral marketing. The media communications is concerned with transmission models like e-mails.

There are several benefits of viral marketing which mainly are:

- Inexpensive
- Reaches audiences within a short period of time
- Rapid
- Fast diffusion
- Boosts adoption speed
- Exponential
- Gives access to diverse audience through social contacts
- Effective targeting
- Voluntary transmission by the sender

On the other hand there are several risks that must be taken in consideration like:

- Consumers may want something in return to spread the message
- Difficult to control
- Specific loss of audience
- Content with few possibilities to measure its effectiveness

- No control of timing
- No control over information distributed due to filtering on incomplete messages or distortion and lack of control in the adverse selection of customers.
- Hate sites, negative perception of brands, unfavorable word of mouth, negative brand image, boycott, privacy concerns
- Emerging ethical issues, consumers may feel exploited and legal issues to be considered.

Moreover, viral marketing can use formal and informal communication style to transmit messages but usually the informal style is used more. Some places or channels where messages are spread may be chat rooms, different forums and social networks. The message itself can take different forms as images, text, animations, PowerPoint files and many others. There are several domains in which viral marketing can be categorized into. Two most important of them are e-marketing domain and marketing communication.

A message can become a virus if the strategy has a viral element since the beginning. The marketer has to have an idea or understanding of how to put the concept of the product within its target audience. This audience has to be set with the necessary tools in order to spread the message about the product that is marketed. There are two ways to spread the viral message: automatically or intentionally. In addition there are several steps to examine viral content and these steps consist of: social currency, triggers, emotion, public, practical value and stories.

Marketers consider and use many tactics to make their campaign go viral. There can be tactics to make the product market itself and tactics to interact with the users. Linking the users with different videos online are classic examples of viral marketing. To achieve success in viral campaigns the features of the product or service must be notable and the viral advertisement has to be arranged according to these characteristics. The arrangement of the campaign must be suitable to the product and there must be made room for diffusion by gathering the attention of potential buyers and triggering it. There are five important issues that influence viral marketing campaigns:

- Content of the message
- The characteristics of the service or product
- Peer to peer information transmission
- Characteristics of the spread

- Structure of the campaign

The structure of the campaign encourages the activity of viral marketing and deals with the legal and ethical issues. There are some products and services that are not suited or less suited for viral campaigns depending on their characteristics. The idea when the message is spread is that the receiver becomes or converts itself in another transmitter. The message transmitted can give to the receiver imagination, entertainment or intrigue.

To link and study the Albanian environment with viral marketing, this paper answers the question “How do Albanians perceive User Created Ads toward Professionally Made Ads” and six hypotheses were raised. The hypotheses consisted on the perception of people about user created ads, as more positive in terms of attitude, informativeness, quality, credibility, viral score and loyalty. There were three methods used to complete the analysis for this thesis. These methods were Test of Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient, which is used to test the reliability and validity of the research. Pearson correlation, which is used to test the correlation between the variables and hypotheses testing, which is used to test the hypotheses’ acceptance. With a value of Cronbach alpha of 0.0706 the analysis is valid and reliable. All the correlations between the variables are lower than 0.8 and thus it is assured that there is no risk of multi-collinearity in the correlation of our variables as it is explained by the Pearson correlation. This means that if there is a change in one variable, it will be observed the same change in the other variable.

Moreover, there were six hypotheses tested by the ANOVA table. The first hypotheses was:

Ha1: The consumer attitude toward an ad which is user created is more positive than when it is professionally made.

This hypothesis is accepted because the respondents preferred both ads more when they thought that the ads were user created.

The second hypothesis was:

Ha2: If an ad is perceived to be user created the recipients will consider the ad more informative

This hypothesis is accepted because the respondents believed that the ads were more informative when they thought that the ads were user created.

The third hypothesis was:

Ha3: User created ads are perceived to have higher quality than professionally made ads

In this case the hypothesis is accepted partially. This happened due to the fact that respondents had a difference in perception of quality in one of the ads when they were told the ad was user created, but they did not had the same reaction on the other ad .

The fourth hypothesis was:

Ha4: User created ads are perceived to be more credible than professionally made ads

Also in this case the hypothesis is accepted partially. This happened due to the fact that respondents had a difference in perception of credibility in one of the ads when they were told the ad was user created, but they did not had the same reaction on the other ad .

The fifth hypothesis was:

Ha5: User created ads are more likely to become viral than professionally made ads

This hypothesis is accepted because the respondents believed that the ads were more likely to become viral, because they would pass it on, when they thought that the ads were user created.

The sixth hypothesis was:

Ha6: User loyalty is higher when an ad is perceived as user created.

This hypothesis is accepted also, because the respondents believed they were more loyal in following that ad when they thought that the ads were user created.

By testing the hypotheses, there are found different perceptions toward user created ads. These findings may come in hand, as useful information, to companies in their marketing campaign. It is found that users have a better attitude toward user created ads and perceive them as more informative. In addition they are more loyal to user created ads and tend to spread them, which lead to making them viral. On the other hand, there is no clear information which can state that Albanian people perceive user created ads as more credible or of a better quality.

Albanians are taking part in the evolution of globalization and viral marketing and user created ads are getting its importance in the Albanian environment.

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## Appendix A – SPSS Tables

Table 1 – Mean of Attitude for ICF

### Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
User created	52	5.0673	.59433	.08242	4.9018	5.2328	3.50	6.00
Professional created	48	4.0208	.86269	.12452	3.7703	4.2713	3.00	6.00
Total	100	4.5650	.90077	.09008	4.3863	4.7437	3.00	6.00

Table 2 – Mean of Attitude for Vodafone

### Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
User created	48	4.6563	.68538	.09893	4.4572	4.8553	3.00	5.50
Professional created	52	4.2885	.85375	.11839	4.0508	4.5261	3.00	6.00
Total	100	4.4650	.79536	.07954	4.3072	4.6228	3.00	6.00

Table 3 – Mean of Informativeness for ICF

### Descriptives

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
User created	52	5.62	.661	.092	5.43	5.80	4	7
Professional created	48	4.35	.956	.138	4.08	4.63	3	6
Total	100	5.01	1.030	.103	4.81	5.21	3	7

Table 4 – Mean of Informativeness for Vodafone

**Descriptives**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					User created	48		
Professional created	52	4.29	.915	.127	4.03	4.54	3	6
Total	100	4.80	.932	.093	4.62	4.98	3	6

Table 5 – Mean of Quality for ICF

**Descriptives**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					User created	52		
Professional created	48	4.44	.897	.129	4.18	4.70	3	6
Total	100	4.96	.920	.092	4.78	5.14	3	6

Table 6 – Mean of Quality for Vodafone

**Descriptives**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					User created	48		
Professional created	52	4.54	.727	.101	4.34	4.74	3	6
Total	100	4.60	.791	.079	4.44	4.76	3	6

Table 7 – Mean of Credibility for ICF

**Descriptives**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					User created	52		
Professional created	48	4.35	.838	.121	4.11	4.60	3	6
Total	100	4.87	.872	.087	4.70	5.04	3	6

Table 8 – Mean of Credibility for Vodafone

**Descriptives**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					User created	48		
Professional created	52	4.75	.653	.091	4.57	4.93	3	6
Total	100	4.82	.770	.077	4.67	4.97	3	6

Table 9 – Mean of Viral Score for ICF

**Descriptives**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					User created	52		
Professional created	48	4.08	.871	.126	3.83	4.34	3	6
Total	100	4.73	.962	.096	4.54	4.92	3	6

Table 10 – Mean of Viral Score for Vodafone

**Descriptives**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					User created	48		
Professional created	52	4.33	.857	.119	4.09	4.57	3	6
Total	100	4.81	.884	.088	4.63	4.99	3	6

Table 11 – Mean of Loyalty for ICF

**Descriptives**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					User created	52		
Professional created	48	4.27	.765	.110	4.05	4.49	3	5
Total	100	4.76	.767	.077	4.61	4.91	3	6

Table 12 – Mean of Loyalty for Vodafone

**Descriptives**

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
					User created	48		
Professional created	52	4.62	.599	.083	4.45	4.78	4	6
Total	100	4.95	.642	.064	4.82	5.08	4	6

## Appendix B

# Questionnaire

## Viral marketing

### User created ads and professionally made ads

The information asked in this questionnaire is for the only purpose of conducting a study based on viral marketing in Albania. The Information taken will be confidential and will not be used for any other purpose. The questionnaire is divided into three parts. The first part of the questionnaire contains descriptive questions about gender, age, profession and education. The second part contains questions about your attitude towards advertising. The third part of the questionnaire contains questions about your attitude toward viral marketing ads that are user created or professionally made. We will show two ads, one about ICF youth Albania and one about Vodafone Albania. Both of the ads deal with types of communities.

#### Part 1

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What is your gender? Male Female

What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_

What is your profession? Student Employed

What is your degree of education? Middle Education High Education

## Part 2

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- Advertising most of the time tells the truth

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree						Agree

- Advertising gives a clear picture of the product being advertised

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree						Agree

- Generally advertising is informative

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree						Agree

- Advertising is a reliable source of information

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree						Agree

### Part 3

---

#### What do you think about youth communities?

- Youth communities to me are:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Important						Unimportant

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't matter to me						Does matter to me

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It means nothing to me						It means a lot to me

- How much do you know about youth communities?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Nothing						A Lot

**Now you will see the ad of ICF youth Albania. The ad is made from an ad agency contracted by the company.**

- Have you seen this ad before?      Yes    No

- What do you think about this ad?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bad						Good

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I don't like it						I like it

- The information in the ad is...?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not useful / Unimportant						Very Useful / Important

- The quality of the ad is?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Low quality / Not professional						High quality / Very professional

- The credibility of the ad is...?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not Credible						Credible

- I would spread positive word-of-mouth for this ad.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree						Agree

- Would you recommend to a friend to join this community after watching the ad?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not Likely						Most Likely

**What do you think about Telecommunication communities?**

- Telecommunication communities to me are:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Important						Unimportant

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Doesn't matter to me						Does matter to me t

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
It means nothing to me						It means a lot to me

- How much do you know about Telecommunication communities?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Nothing						A Lot

**Now you will see the ad of Vodafone Albania. The ad is made from user communities, which are fans and users of the brand.**

- Have you seen this ad before?      Yes    No

- What do you think about this ad?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Bad						Good

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I don't like it						I like it

- The information in the ad is...?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not useful / Unimportant						Very Useful / Important

- The quality of the ad is?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Low quality / Not professional						High quality / Very professional

- The credibility of the ad is...?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not Credible						Credible

- I would spread positive word-of-mouth for this ad.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Disagree						Agree

- Would you recommend to a friend to join this community after watching the ad?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Not Likely						Most Likely