VOLUME 9

NUMBER 1

JOURNAL OF MARKETING TRENDS RANKED 2024 - VOLUME 9 - NUMBER 1

A QUARTERLY PUBLICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL MARKETING TRENDS CONFERENCE

JOURNAL OF MARKETING TRENDS

APRIL 2024 VOLUME 9 / NUMBER 1

EDITORIAL

Quand les relations humaines (re)prennent le dessus
When human relationships (re)take over

Il est banal de constater aujourd'hui comment les relais électroniques viennent parasiter les relations commerciales, voire tout simplement les remplacer. L'expérience quotidienne de tous les sites commerciaux démontre qu'avant d'atteindre l'interlocuteur désiré, le consommateur doit suivre un long parcours de claviers numériques ou des phrases types à prononcer. Parfois même l'humain a totalement disparu et le contact se crée et se clôt avec un robot, comme dans le cas du site de l'opérateur téléphonique Orange.

Les incidences possibles de cette déshumanisation des relations sont bien connues : développement de stress chez les plus fragiles, énervement chez les autres, perte de confiance et d'engagement pour tous (Paul et al., 2023).

Les articles retenus dans ce numéro remettent les relations humaines « réelles » au centre des préoccupations marketing, qu'il s'agisse des relations interpersonnelles entre consommateurs, de relations entre des vendeurs et leur responsable hiérarchique ou des relations qui lient un client et son prestataire de service. Au-delà des caractéristiques objectives des relations d'échange, la confiance, l'implication, la prise en compte de l'individualité de chacun apparaissent comme des vertus cardinales pour une relation pérenne. Preuve que nous restons encore profondément humains dans notre manière d'appréhender les relations commerciales (Jeanpert et al., 2021).

Eszter Gedeon et Philippe Robert-Demontrond, dans leur article intitulé « «My best friends»: What influences on consumption practices? A qualitative study », investiguent un phénomène peu exploré dans le champ des influences interpersonnelles : celui de la relation entre meilleures amies. Cette relation est caractérisée par un fort attachement temporel et émotionnel, un degré d'intimité élevé et une confiance dans les rapports. S'appuyant sur une approche phénoménologique auprès de 30 informantes, leur recherche identifie quatre principaux mécanismes d'influence : la co-construction, l'imitation, la prescription et la conversion. Ces influences, qu'elles soient unidirectionnelles ou réciproques, contribuent à façonner l'identité de la dyade de meilleures amies afin que celle-ci s'approche de l'idéal fusionnel sous-jacent à l'imaginaire associé à cette forme d'amitié. Ces résultats invitent les marques à penser des offres spécifiques à destination de dyades de consommatrices, afin de renforcer leur engagement mutuel.

L'article de Didier Roche, intitulé « Vendeurs de la génération Z : entre style de leadership désiré et attentes des N+1 », s'intéresse au style de leadership préféré de la génération Z. Une étude qualitative auprès de 27 jeunes vendeurs met en évidence plusieurs attentes particulières de la part des vendeurs de la génération Z qui sont différentes de celles des générations précédentes telles que la liberté ou encore le fait que leur N+1 puisse leur faire confiance. Le leadership transactionnel est celui qui répond aux aspirations de cette jeune génération. Une seconde étude réalisée auprès de 92 N+1 de ces jeunes vendeurs révèle qu'au-delà de critères objectifs comme les compétences techniques, les diplômes ou encore les expériences passées, ils recherchent des critères plus subjectifs comme le sérieux, l'implication, le respect des objectifs, la maturité ou encore le côté agréable.

Toujours dans cette approche des relations humaines directes, le Journal of Marketing Trends s'est associé à la neuvième édition du Colloque Européen Innovation et Commerce autour de la thématique : « Le grand aggiornamento de la Vente et de la Négociation commerciale », organisé par la Fédération de la Vente Directe, l'EM Strasbourg (Université de Strasbourg) et le Global Sales Science Institute, les 3 et 4 avril 2023. Les deux articles suivants en sont issus.

L'article de Asmaa Belhour, Yohan Bernard et Jean-François Notebaert s'intéresse aux stratégies de réparation à mettre en œuvre dans le cas spécifique et complexe de la double déviation, qui survient lorsque la réponse apportée échoue à satisfaire le client. La double déviation impliquant la présence de deux problèmes concomitants, les solutions standardisées se révèlent en effet peu efficaces. L'étude qualitative réalisée auprès de 26 réclamants explore les moyens de rétablir la satisfaction et la fidélité après une double déviation. Si une approche transactionnelle peut convenir dans le cas d'une simple déviation, elle se révèle insuffisante dans le cas d'une double déviation. La complexité et la spécificité des situations vécues nécessite une approche relationnelle et personnalisée, afin d'apaiser la colère du client et de le retenir sur le long terme.

Michel Klein et Maria Rouziou ont réuni un panel de cinq responsables internationaux de la vente directe sur le thème des nouvelles tendances et des enjeux à relever pour le marketing direct au niveau mondial. Leur article fait une synthèse constructive de leurs échanges articulée en cinq grands thèmes : les spécificités de la vente directe, son recrutement et son management, les déterminants d'une vente réussie et d'une bonne relation client, l'impact de la pandémie Covid et les challenges et les opportunités à venir. Cette contribution est essentielle pour comprendre la façon dont les professionnels appréhendent les problématiques actuelles de la vente directe face à une certaine remise en cause du métier de vendeur et de son image. En écho avec notre propos introductif, ces experts de la vente soulignent la nécessité pour les entreprises comme pour les vendeurs de s'adapter aux outils digitaux et de trouver le juste équilibre entre des relations en face à face et des relations digitales.

Nous espérons que cette nouvelle parution du Journal of Marketing Trends, centrée sur l'importance de l'humain en marketing/vente, répondra aux attentes relationnelles et académiques de ses lecteurs.

Today, it's commonplace to see how electronic relays interfere with, or even replace, commercial relationships. The daily experience of all commercial sites shows that before reaching the desired interlocutor, the consumer must follow a long path of numerical keyboards or standard phrases to be used. Sometimes, the human element has even disappeared altogether, and contact is created and concluded with a robot, as in the case of the Orange telephone operator website.

The possible repercussions of this dehumanization of relationships are well known: development of stress in the most fragile, irritation in others, loss of trust and commitment for all (Paul et al., 2023).

The articles in this issue put «real» human relationships back at the heart of marketing concerns, whether they be interpersonal relationships between consumers, relationships between salespeople and their line managers, or relationships between customers and their service providers. Beyond the objective characteristics of exchange relationships, trust, involvement and consideration for the individuality of each person appear to be the cardinal virtues for a lasting relationship. Proof that we are still profoundly human in our approach to business relationships (Jeanpert et al., 2021).

Eszter Gedeon and Philippe Robert-Demontrond, in their article entitled «My best friends»: What influences on consumption practices? A qualitative study», investigate a little-explored phenomenon in the field of interpersonal influences: the relationship between best friends. This relationship is characterized by strong temporal and emotional attachment, a high degree of intimacy and trust in relationships. Using a phenomenological approach with 30 respondents, their research identifies four main mechanisms of influence: co-construction, imitation, prescription and conversion. These influences, whether unidirectional or reciprocal, help shape the identity of the best friend dyad, bringing it closer to the fusional ideal that underlies the friendship imaginary. These results invite brands to think of specific offers aimed at consumer dyads, in order to reinforce their mutual commitment.

Didier Roche's article, entitled «Generation Z salespeople: between desired leadership style and N+1 expectations», looks at Generation Z's preferred leadership style. A qualitative study of 27 young salespeople highlighted several specific expectations on the part of Generation Z salespeople that differ from those of previous generations, such as freedom or the fact that their N+1 can trust them. Transactional leadership is the type of leadership that meets the aspirations of this young generation. A second survey of 92 N+1s of these young salespeople reveals that, in addition to objective criteria such as technical skills, diplomas and past experience, they are looking for more subjective criteria such as seriousness, involvement, respect for objectives, maturity and agreeableness.

In keeping with this approach to direct human relations, the Journal of Marketing Trends has joined forces with the ninth edition of the Colloque Européen Innovation et Commerce on the theme: «Le grand aggiornamento de la Vente et de la Négociation commerciale», organized by the Fédération de la Vente Directe, EM Strasbourg (University of Strasbourg) and the Global Sales Science Institute, on April 3 and 4, 2023. The following two articles are taken from this event.

The article by Asmaa Belhour, Yohan Bernard and Jean-François Notebaert looks at repair strategies to be implemented in the specific and complex case of double deviation, which occurs when the response provided fails to satisfy the customer. Since double deviation implies the presence of two concomitant problems, standardized solutions are unlikely to be effective. This qualitative study of 26 claimants explores ways of restoring satisfaction and loyalty after a double deviation. While a transactional approach may be appropriate in the case of a single deviation, it proves insufficient in the case of a double deviation. The complexity and specificity of these situations call for a personalized, relational approach, in order to appease the customer's anger and retain him over the long term.

Michel Klein and Maria Rouziou brought together a panel of five international direct sales executives to discuss new trends and challenges for direct marketing worldwide. Their article provides a constructive summary of their discussions, focusing on five main themes: the specificities of direct selling, its acquisition and management, the determinants of successful selling and good customer relationships, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the overall challenges and opportunities to come. This contribution is essential if we are to understand how professionals are tackling the current issues in direct sales, in the face of a certain questioning of the sales profession and its image. Echoing our introductory remarks, these sales experts emphasize the need for companies and salespeople alike to adapt to digital tools and find the right balance between face-to-face and digital relationships.

We hope that this new issue of the Journal of Marketing Trends, focusing on the importance of the human element in marketing/sales, will meet the professional and academic expectations of its readers.

Références bibliographiques :

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JOURNAL OF MARKETING TRENDS

The Journal of Marketing Trends (JMT) is published by the Marketing Trends Association (Paris-Venice Association).
The Journal of Marketing Trends is positioned as the academic publication dedicated to Research on the Marketing Trends and to supporting its development.

All articles are evaluated through a double blind review process which is ensured, first by the Country Editorial Board (2 anonymous reviewers) and secondly by the Board of Editors (anonymous international reviewing process). The papers are an original material that has been neither published nor presented elsewhere, and that respects research ethics guidelines.

SUBSCRIPTION

The Journal of Marketing Trends is a quarterly publication.
Annual Subscription Rate
Subscription for 4 issues:
390 Euros digital edition sent by electronic mail.
Subscription form at the end of the Journal.

COMITÉ DE LECTURE - READING COMMITTEE

«My best friends»: What influences on consumption practices? a qualitative study

Abstract

How do best friends influence each-other in their consumption practices? This is the question that our article aims to answer. Friendship, and particularly female friendship is seriously under researched by marketing scholars. We attempt to fill this gap by studying interpersonal influences in female best friend dyads and their influences on consumption. To do so, we rely on marketing, sociological, and anthropological literature and conduct a qualitative study. Our method consists of phenomenological interviews and consumption diaries, with a total of 30 informants. We focalize on a particular age group: young (18-30 years old), unmarried women without children. Our study reveals the existence of four main influences between best friends: co-construction, mimicry, prescription, and conversion. These influences do not always act as expected based on western beliefs on friendship. Practitioners should therefore consider the particularities of best friend influences and offer services/products tailored to them.

Keywords: consumer practices, female friendship, best friendship, interpersonal influences.

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INTRODUCTION

For a long time, consumer behaviour research has had the individual as the essential focus of its investigations - giving "the impression that mainstream consumption research has not moved far from an individually focused paradigm" (Askegaard and Linnett, 2011, p. 383). However, in recent years, micro-social research focusing on 'interconnected consumers' - members of small-scale social unions (dyadic, triadic or otherwise) - has gradually been launched. For marketing, the challenge of this new perspective is important. Interpersonal relationships do have varied and consequential effects on consumer behaviour (Liu et al., 2019; Simpson et al., 2012a; 2012b). These influences within relationships are found to be most important when they come from close friends (Cavanaugh, 2016), as the strength of the relationship, the degree of intimacy and homophily between partners are key determinants of information exchange between consumers (De Kreyzer et al., 2019).

Despite these findings, few of these works have taken friendship as a field of study, which may be surprising since friendship is a relationship that is particularly present in collective imaginations and representations where it is constantly narrated and staged, as in the series FRIENDS, which has met with great popular success. Currently, friendship is conceived as the example of a fulfilled interpersonal relationship and friendship is commonly presented as a complementary, or even competing, model to the historically dominant -socially and culturally- relationship that constitutes the heterosexual couple (Duée and Nabli, 2011; Roseneil, 2011). The model of adult life, which has long been built around the couple and the family, is in fact changing significantly today. Western women are marrying later and later and are also having their first child later and later (in France, the average age of first childbirth is 30 in 2022, compared to 24 in the 1970s). Yet this phase of adult life, without children, is conducive to the development of friendships (Bidart, 2010). Although this is an important societal phenomenon, the friendship relationship remains little studied in marketing - and its influences on consumption, in particular, are insufficiently known. Therefore, we propose to enrich the work on interpersonal relationships and consumer behavior (such as the couple or the mother/daughter relationship) by introducing a relationship that seems to us to be taking a considerable place nowadays: friendship. We will take as a framework of study the model of friendship that seems to us the strongest the so-called "best friends" model that exists essentially in dyadic form (Felmlee et al., 2012).

We study this friendship relation in a particular age group that seems to be neglected by researchers studying consumer behaviour. Indeed, the behaviour of the adolescent consumer is now well documented (e.g. Gentina et al., 2012), the female consumer within a couple (Khemakhem, 2005), as a mother in the family unit (Mcneil and Graham, 2014) or in the mother-daughter dyad (Ruvio et al., 2013) is also well documented, but the pivotal stage between these two periods suffers from a lack of scientific work. It lies between the young person's departure from the family unit of origin and the construction of their own family as an adult. The boundaries remain unclear, so we delimit them artificially: the study concerns women between the age of 18, the age at which higher education or the first job begins, and 30, the average age of birth of the first baby among French women (Insee, 2022). Moreover, this stage of the life cycle seems to be conducive to friendships (Héran, 1988) due to the number of friends and the frequency of meetings (Bidart, 2010).

We have focused on 'in vivo' friendship relationships, leaving aside virtual friendship relationships, as the form of friendship that seems to interest researchers most at present is that which exists on social networks (friending), as numerous research studies on relationships during the Covid-19 pandemic confinements have shown that online relationships are not equivalent to physical relationships (e.g. Völker, 2023).

For this analysis, we propose a new angle of approach by taking as a starting point the nature of the relationship. Marketing research on interpersonal influences focuses on the situation of consumption (Liu et al., 2019; Gorlin and Dhar, 2012), their mechanism (Simon et al., 2016), the type of product (Reingen et al., 1984) or even the type of relationship (Cavanaugh, 2016). However, these researches never analyze the characteristics of the relationship within which the studied influences operate. While it has been shown that influences between people who have a strong bond with each other are also stronger (Granovetter, 1973), the nature of the relationship in question has never really been taken into account in the analysis of influences. We therefore pose as a problem to be explored: how are influences between best friends (between women who are in a strong, dyadic, mutual relationship), different from influences that occur in other strong, dyadic relationships? Banerji et al. (2020) propose that the answer lies in the mechanisms and deep nature of the friendship relationship. Our proposal is therefore to start from the characteristics of the "best friends" relationship based on the literature and then resonate them with the behaviors and types of influences that a study of consumption practices in the field reveals. More precisely, the objective is to understand how the specificities of the "best friends" relationship allow the implementation of particular types of influences and to understand how these differ or resemble the dyadic relationships already studied.

REVIEW OF THE LITTERATURE

Interpersonal influences

The topic of interpersonal influences has long been of interest to marketing researchers (Park and Lessig, 1977) but most of them reason in a dual way (e.g., Krumme et al., 2012) by distinguishing between informational influence on the one hand, and normative influence on the other (e.g., Bravo et al., 2006). These influences within relationships turn out to be more important when they come from close relatives (Cavanaugh, 2016) and are moderated by the respective roles played by each in the relationship. Thus, within distinguishable dyads, where partners occupy specific roles and/or have constraints (e.g. a married couple), the influences are different from those of indistinguishable dyads where partners are equal and occupy similar roles (Bagozzi, 2012), which seems a priori to be the case of a dyad formed by best friends.

The nature of the relationship

The nature of the relationship between two people influences the exchange of information between them (Chen, 2017). The closer the relationship, the more influential it is, in terms of consumption in particular.

Messages from acquaintances (as opposed to strangers) are considered more credible (Harrison-Walker, 2001), have a greater influence on consumers' expectations (Anderson and Salisbury, 2003), purchase decision, and attitude and judgment towards the brand (Godes and Mayzlin, 2004). Certain characteristics of the relationship such as its strength, the credibility of the source and the homophily between the partners are crucial in the exchange of information between consumers (De Kreyzer et al., 2019).

The strength of the relationship is determined, among other things, by the importance attached to it and its degree of intimacy. The concept of homophily refers to the similarity that members of a dyad may have in certain attributes - when the similarity relates to socio-demographic variables, it is called demographic homophily and when it relates to values, preferences, lifestyle or experiences, it is called perceived homophily (Gilly et al., 1998). People who are similar are more likely to interact. Products used by similar people are assumed to be suitable for oneself (De Bruyn and Lilien, 2008). As for credibility, it is strong if the source is considered expert and trustworthy. Expertise can be defined as 'the extent to which a speaker is perceived as being able to make correct claims' and trustworthiness refers to 'the extent to which an audience perceives the claims made by a communicator to be those that the speaker considers valid' (Pornpitakpan, 2004: 244). Trust (related to reliability) has a positive influence on the exchange and sharing of information between individuals (Chai et al., 2011). Various studies show that Western friendship, especially as it exists between women, has all these characteristics (strength, credibility, homophily) that can enhance mutual influence.

Friendship

The conception of friendship is not homogeneous in all societies - it differs according to gender, age, life cycle and social class (Bidart, 2010). But some characteristics can be more or less generalised. Friendship can be defined in the West as loyalty, caring, honesty, truthfulness and reciprocity (Spencer and Pahl, 2006), which essentially unite unrelated people (Pahl and Spencer, 2004). This last point, the liberal nature of a chosen relationship, is a strong mark of this Western conception. Privacy and self-disclosure are also important elements of Western friendships (Castaneda and Burns, 2008). Allan (2003) also emphasises the egalitarian nature of the relationship. Friends are supposed to be equal in terms of power and emotional, symbolic and material exchange. Friendships therefore tend to develop between people who have common social backgrounds, interests and lives (Pahl, 2011).

The figure of the best friend acts, in our representations, as the ideal-type of this relationship, which is also embodied in a concrete way in the social sphere. Thus, most psychosocial studies identify three levels of friendship: casual relationships, close friends and best friends. These levels are strongly and positively correlated with levels of interpersonal commitment (Policarpo, 2015) and investments in time and emotional commitment (Hall and Davis, 2017). The more intimate a relationship is, the more emotional and material resources it provides and, generally, the longer it lasts (Hall, 2012). In fact, most of the characteristics of friendship (listed above: loyalty, caring, honesty, truthfulness, and reciprocity) are most evident in relationships with close or best friends (Hruschka, 2010).

Friendship between women is a particularly intimate relationship, characterised by self-disclosure and thus, a high propensity for discussion (Baumgarte and Nelson, 2009). In addition, female friends have high expectations of trust, emotional support (Felmlee et al., 2012) and displays of affection (Argyle and Henderson, 1984). In order to meet these expectations, the friendships maintained by women are most often dyadic (David-Barrett et al., 2015).

Influences in different types of dyads

Although the best friend relationship has not yet been addressed by research on interpersonal influences, other consumer units, such as the couple and the mother-daughter dyad (teenage daughter or young adult), have been the focus of numerous studies. These studies show that interpersonal influences vary within each type of relationship. The members occupy different roles and the influences vary depending on whether they come from the daughter or mother (mother-daughter dyad), husband or wife (couple) (Wolfe, 1959). For example, in the case of the mother-daughter dyad, in a shopping context the mother's influence on the daughter is on the price and suitability of the outfit (Decoopman & Gentina-Dancoine, 2013) while the daughter's influence on the mother is on the style of the outfit (Kestler & Paulins, 2004). Similarly, the influence of spouses is more or less strong depending on their degree of specialization in the field concerned (Davis and Rigaux, 1974), but also on their professional status (women who do not work outside the home have less influence) (Lee and Beatty, 2008). Confrontations are likely to arise when these influences are exercised within the couple (Berrada, 2011) but also in the mother-daughter dyad (Oulad-Tarada, 2012).

The above presented researches highlight the specifics of relationship-related consumption influences; they often analyze the consumption context but do not really show how the relationship characteristics induce consumption influences. We therefore align our research in this trajectory by drawing on this literature but propose to establish more strongly the link between relationship characteristics and the resulting consumption influences.

METHODOLOGY

The relationship between the dyad and consumption implies not only examining individual consumption resulting from the interaction between friends, but also the existence of consumption practices specific to the dyad itself, i.e. highlighting a phenomenon that is not the simple sum of the consumption practices of each member of the dyad. In the friendship dyad the influence is largely pre-reflexive and therefore the phenomenon of imitation does not proceed from the transmission of information as an essential mode. This implies to be attentive to the practices and justifies the ethnographic approach. To this end, we have constructed a study, the methodology of which we present below.

Sample

Our informants have a homogeneous profile in terms of age (18 to 30) and life cycle. They are not married but sometimes live in a couple; they do not have children (however, some of them have a best friend who already has children). In total, 30 French girls of different professional status (half of them are students and half of them are young professionals) participated in our study.

Research design

Two methods were used to produce the data: phenomenological interviews based on a semi-structured interview guide (n = 23) and event-based design (Du, 2012) auto-ethnographic diaries (n = 7) which were kept for one month. The average duration of the interviews, which were fully transcribed, was 56 minutes. They focused on best friend consumption practices and experiences in various consumption situations: joint consumption with the best friend and individual consumption, with a focus on interpersonal influences. Following Kaufmann's (2016) recommendations, the meetings with the participants were more like a discussion around our research topic than an interview. Indeed, by triggering a conversational dynamic, the participants more easily opened up. The interviews focused on the participants' concrete experiences, asking them, for example, to tell us about the last time they had gone shopping together with their friend(s). This allows them to provide a more complete and detailed description (Thompson et al., 1989). The structure of the interviews can be found in Appendix 1. Participants were recruited through various channels: personal network, at the university among students, online on social networks. Then the "snowball" technique was used in order to have more participants.

The auto-ethnographic study was carried out by means of diaries in which the informants described their shopping experiences with their friends immediately after they had been carried out. Recruiting participants for the autoethnographic study proved to be a challenge. Keeping an autoethnographic diary for a month is an exercise that requires much more mental investment and time from participants than an interview. For example, at the beginning of the study, 30 girls agreed to participate, but in the end, only 7 returned their diaries. In total, we received descriptions of twenty-three shopping experiences that conformed to the instructions we gave them (Appendix 2).

Table 1
Profile of the participants in phenomenological interviews

Participant's code	Age	Profession/Activity	Family situation
P1	25	Commercial	in couple
P2	26	Data analyst	in couple
P3	25	In civic service	in couple
P4	28	PhD student	in couple
P5	27	Salesperson	in couple
P6	20	University student	in couple
P7	27	Archeologist	single
P8	26	School teacher	single
P9	19	University student	in couple
P10	20	University student	single
P11	20	University student	in couple
P12	25	Etiopath	in couple
P13	21	University student	single
P16	22	University student	in couple
P17	18	University student	in couple
P18	23	University student	in couple
P19	28	Gallery assistant	in couple
P20	22	University student	single
P21	23	In civic service	single
P22	25	Pharmacist	single
P23	25	Agricultural engineer	in couple

Table 2
Profile of the participants in the diary study

Participant's code	Profession/Activity	Recrutement
J1	Salesperson	Personal network
J2	University student	online
J3	University student	online
J4	University student	online
J5	University student	online
J6	University student	online
J7	University student	in class

Analysis

The analysis work began with the data from the phenomenological interviews. Following Spiggle's (1994) recommendations, we adopted a two-phase analysis: first a thematic analysis, then an interpretation phase.

We began by analysing each interview separately in search of themes related to our problem, and then the themes from all the interviews were compared by looking for similarities and differences. For the treatment of the diary narratives we followed the same procedure. This thematic analysis phase was followed by the conceptualisation phase, the aim of which was to find the "underlying logics" of the identified behaviours. We went back through all our interviews and narratives to re-read them. During this re-reading we tried to look at the results from above (Paillé and Mucchielli, 2016). The creation of categories consisted of grouping or dividing themes to establish the appropriate categories.

RESULTS

Interpersonal relationships, as discussed above, have many effects on consumption behaviour (Cavanaugh, 2016; Liu et al., 2019; Simpson et al., 2012a; 2012b). The nature of the 'best friend' relationship (strong temporal and emotional commitment, intimacy, honesty and trust) is particularly suited to the exercise of various influences. We have identified four main types of influence: "co-construction", "mimicry", "prescription" (a preferred term to recommendation which relates more to an information transmission model) and "conversion". One or more types may be present within the same relationship. These influences, whether unidirectional or reciprocal, even contribute to shaping the identity of the best friend dyad to some extent. Their purpose seems to be the same: to achieve a homogeneity within the dyad that is sufficiently strong for the relationship to approach the fusional ideal that underlies the friendship imaginary.

Co-construction

Our informants are at a specific moment in their lives, they are "young adults" who are constructing themselves "as autonomous individuals" (Cicchelli, 2001), hence their particular permeability to discourse on the ethical, environmental, health and even philosophical implications of consumption patterns in industrial society.
Moreover, they have sufficient resources (temporal and cognitive) that allow them to engage in such processes. They co-construct common interests (related to hobbies or consumption practices) among best friends over time through regular conversations and contacts.

Best friends play a particular role: they advise each other and give examples of other ways of consuming. It is a two-way process: one does not tend to adopt entirely the habits of the other, but the intimate dialectic of their relationship gives rise to a new consensus that leads to a common reconfiguration of consumption patterns. The co-construction of an ecological mode of consumption thus involves, for example, the gradual adoption of habits such as zero waste, composting, or the manufacture of organic cosmetics.

"It is little by little, she is also in quite a lot of everything natural, but more on the zero waste. There, we pass on tricks, things we have seen on the right, on the left. That's where we're going to influence each other more: "Oh, well, I found this toothpaste" and it's at that level (...) It's things that we each started to do a little bit on our own; to be more mindful, and then we'll talk about it, "Oh, well, I took such and such a decision", and then we'll start talking, "Oh, I'm doing it this way, I'm doing it that way". At the moment, she has started to compost, so she explained to me, she showed me, and like that little by little... " (P16).

They are interested in consumer practices that are constantly changing (zero waste, veganism or organic food). Due to the changing consumer environment and the general climate of mistrust towards companies, finding relevant information on new products, trends and recommendations seems to be a difficult task for them. In these circumstances, the best friend, perceived as a reliable source of information due to the confidential and trusting nature of the relationship, and with whom they share the same values (perceptual homophily), plays an important advisory role. In terms of engaging in new consumption practices, the dyad provides a mutually supportive framework that enables friends to take their approach further. In this sense, the relationship becomes a source of encouragement and motivation.

"We often discuss because as these things are in constant movement, it is not necessarily easy to find information. We have discussions, I take this and that, etc. And we often discuss the things we test and if we find it practical and good or not." (P7).

Co-construction also concerns shared passions. Hélène (P18) tells us how she and her best friend began to take an interest in Japanese culture together. Their interest in Japan started with the common reading of manga and grew over the years until it became a real passion that now extends to several cultural aspects (cooking, literature, music, etc.). This shared passion fuels their conversations, triggers common leisure activities and gives a perspective to their relationship when they prepare a trip to Japan. Indeed, by co-constructing common interests, the friends nourish their relationship and ensure its sustainability. Shared activities, exchange of advice and emotions strengthen the friendship and the likelihood of the relationship surviving is greater when friends share many common interests and hobbies (Roberts and Dunbar, 2011).

Mimicry

The imitation observed is carried out, between friends, either by conviction or by desire. Imitation by conviction results from a rational decision by the consumer who is spontaneously convinced of the virtues (effectiveness, quality, etc.) of a product/service. It is often the result of the observation and recognition of these virtues, through a friend, without any promotional discourse coming from her (ideological, aesthetic, etc.) or from a third party (commercial). This widespread phenomenon has immediate and direct consequences on consumption, specifically it leads to purchase. Imitation by desire, on the other hand, is an act that can be considered irrational because it is the subjective dimension (aesthetic, symbolic, emotional, etc.) of a product that convinces the consumer, and not a reasonable critical examination of the good/

service in question. This consumption is triggered by an impulsive desire to possess a product or benefit from a service. Yet no one would imitate the purchase of an average person in front of them at the checkout! Again, it is the perceived trust and homophily that allows for the existence of powerful mimicry between best friends and suggests to Nita (J7) that she should pick up the same moisturising lip gloss as her friend, just before going to the checkout: *"We all look around the shop together first, then separately. We then meet up to show each other what we have found, Mathilde tells me that she has found some kind of moisturising gloss, I then ask her how much it costs, and I decide to get one for myself too"* (J7).

Prescription

By prescription, we mean the recommendation of a product by a consumer whose experience and knowledge give credibility to the discourse. Our study allowed us to differentiate five types of prescription: intimate, informational, for a special occasion, by expertise and a prescription that allows a change in the consumer universe.

The intimate prescription is a direct result of the highly confidential nature of the relationship between best friends. The possibility of confiding in each other and of evoking the most intimate considerations in the discussions leads them to share advice on subjects that require a strong trust, in terms of consumption, it is most often about health problems (e.g.: skin problems) or intimate products (e.g.: menstrual cup). *"It was Clémence who made me buy mine [the menstrual cup], she's the one who told me about it, who advised me, who gave me the website, who told me "go for it!"* (P3). However, this privilege of access to the other's private sphere also has an instrumental aspect: there is a strong expectation of advice, opinions, shared experiences and support from the best friend. *"As we both have sensitive skin [...] if something works we talk about it and then we try it afterwards, to see if it works for us too or not [...] For example, I know that she has sensitive skin and that she is trying to stop taking cortisone, so I talked to her about coconut oil and it's true that she tested it"* (P5).

An almost purely informational influence also finds its place in the dyad, not surprisingly. It is not an influence related to the deep character of the relationship. However, it is important to emphasise that it is not only about female products and services, as the media and advertisements may lead us to believe. The regular meetings and exchanges between best friends on a daily basis give rise to exchanges on various phenomena with a consumer dimension (culture, sport, food etc.).

The best friend is present at important events in life. In terms of consumption, this translates into assistance with special purchases, such as a wedding dress. Usually the two people who accompany the purchase of the wedding dress are the mother of the bride and the best friend. The role of the best friend in this symbolic procedure shows her privileged place. This is both a privilege, because ordinary friends are not so intimately associated with the important events, and an obligation, which is a matter of loyalty, the indispensable character of the friendship bond. The best friend is an honest advisor, and the trust placed in her and the shared tastes mean that her opinion can be relied upon without fear.

"She booked an appointment in a rather chic wedding store in Le Mans, she tried on 4-5 dresses and I helped her choose the one that was the most beautiful, so of course it was emotional, a real princess dress. She hesitated, so we went back to validate her choice, because she hesitated between two dresses, and she was afraid not to choose the right one, I told her that she did, but she hesitated, so we went back a second time. Finally the first choice that was made was the right one. And the second time there was her mom too." (S6).

A source of information is traditionally considered credible if it is expert and reliable (Pornpitakpan, 2004). Friends who are highly competent in a field are considered 'experts' and their advice is taken very seriously and accepted without question. In our study, two types of expertise emerged: the first concerns in-depth knowledge of a field or product, and the second concerns knowledge of a geographical location. One of our participants turns to her best friend to choose an aloe vera product, because she *"is just a big fan of aloe vera and I've been saying for a while that I could buy some, but I would ask for advice on which one to buy"* (P7), it would also save her the time and mental effort spent on choosing the right product.

The influence between best friends changes when they go outside their usual context. The knowledge of the local environment, especially if it is another country, influences their choices: the one who does not know the environment follows the suggestions of the other without much hesitation. Aurélie (P2), whose friend has Bolivian origins, talks about her holiday in Bolivia: *"She took us to Bolivian shops, to very smart shops, if you want to get used to it, in fact, you have to follow what Maria tells you [...] she really guided us [...] Maria told us that we had to drink coffee in such and such a cafe, and in fact we didn't drink any other coffee than in the cafe Maria told us about".*

The influence of the best friend is even stronger if it allows for the modification of the habitus, even if this wish is not always conscious. It is a question of changing one's 'social capital' with the help of the best friend, who in this case plays a guiding role in order to first become familiar with and finally acquire new codes of behaviour and ways of living. The change in the 'social universe' naturally implies a change in the consumer universe. For example, Ines, who came from a modest background, began to discover a new world when she became financially independent and left the family home for good. Her new best friend, as she refers to her, guides her in this new world: *"Karine is very, very close to fashion, her* *house is always super fashionable and so she makes me discover a lot of things and I follow the movement a bit... there are things that I would never have bought before and now that I work and I have more means I let myself be tempted (...) I don't have money problems* (any more) *to buy them.) I'm not* (any more) *afraid if I wear heels, a nice jacket, a nice top, nice trousers, a bit of make-up, I feel good and I'm comfortable like that (...) For social networks it's the same, if it wasn't for Karine I think I would never have come on Instagram and Pinterest. She told me "Ines, you like doing that, you'd like it and all that". It's true that my upbringing meant that I was always forbidden to use Facebook, networks... so I never wanted to do it and then when I was shown how it was and everything..."* (P23).

Conversion

Our society, more than ever before, is witnessing the emergence and continuation of new ideological movements that are associated either with one-off acts (e.g. #metoo) or with radical lifestyle changes (e.g. veganism). The field of friendship is not left out of these trends. When the best friend holds a militant or quasi-militant discourse for a particular cause that is close to her heart (e.g. ecology, zero waste, animal welfare, etc.), she exerts an intentional and normative influence on her friend's practices (especially consumption). She tries to convert her, explicitly or implicitly, to the cause in question. This is where we find the particularity of conversion: it implies the adoption of certain values which then guide consumption. The sharing of values, one of the pillars of the friendship relationship, seems indispensable to the concept of perceptual homophily, which sees a risk of extinction of the friendship if the worldviews of two friends diverge too much.

If the options are clearly expressed and are the subject of partisan discourse, then it is an explicit conversion. Cynthia (P21) clearly insists that her best friend should adopt zero waste:

> *"Sylvie [one of her best friends], I really talked to her a lot, I really insisted that she do it.*
> *- She wasn't up for it at first?*
> *- At the beginning, she gave me a lot of arguments: "Yes, but I don't have the time, the children and all that"... But it doesn't take that much time, just organisation, so we really argued about it."*

Sometimes the friend is more cautious and tries to act in an implicit way. Instead of using a legitimising discourse, she advances by the force of the example given, by the capacity of attraction inherent in a practice. Jade now shops at a local farmers' market since she discovered this practice with her friend Isabelle (P19). In this case, Isabelle did not need to develop an argument or explicitly refer to an ideological or moral frame of reference to convert her friend: the practical demonstration was enough. This type of less radical, potentially less conflictual conversion therefore puts the relationship at less risk.

DISCUSSION, FUTURE RESEARCH AND IMPLICATIONS

Discussion

The phenomena of interpersonal influence between girlfriends listed above are apparently contradictory to the Western conception of friendship. Indeed, the best friend dyad is conceived in our culture as an 'indistinguishable' dyad (Bagozzi, 2012) whose members a priori occupy similar roles (unlike the couple or the mother-daughter dyad). However, the observation of the mechanisms of influence highlights a role asymmetry within this relationship. Indeed, although best friends influence each other, they mainly exert influences related to their respective roles, like the members of the distinguished dyads. Thus, the egalitarian and reciprocal characteristics attributed to friendship do not hold true in terms of interpersonal influence, particularly in the area of consumption. The phenomenon of expert prescription, or even conversion, illustrates this aspect. The two main interpersonal influences identified in the literature (normative and informational) therefore act in the dynamics of dyadic female friendship.

In the same friendship it is possible to find a change in the type of influence according to the products and knowledge of each one. This fits in well with the aspect of exchange between friends who can sometimes and in certain areas be in prescription and in others in conversion or in mimicry. The scope of these influences also overlaps with the sociological characteristics of female friendship described above. The high degree of intimacy between friends allows for the development of interpersonal influences that relate to specific consumer products. This is the case, for example, with advice on personal hygiene, underwear or health problems. These influences are all the stronger because they are based on a representation of dyadic friendship based on honesty and truth.

Indeed, one of the particularities of the best friend relationship is the obligation to establish a very strong trust compared to other types of relationships (Hruschka, 2010), notably to the mother-daughter relationship where trust can exist but is not mandatory.

The fundamental role of trust must be placed in the current context of consumers' growing distrust of the company and traditional marketing tools (Nielsen, 2015). Our results corroborate, from this perspective, Hayes et al.'s (2016) observation that consumers have more trust in people with whom they have strong ties. Thus, trust in the friend appears to enable safer and less suspicious consumption. Furthermore, best friend trust concerns intimate areas that allow for an exchange of information not found in most marketing strategies. Whether it is a question of taboos, confidential subjects or the desire to ensure a reliable and disinterested source of information, the friendship offers, in this respect, a framework of consumption perceived as reliable and privileged.

Our results indicate that this trust is not without consequences in terms of consumption. It acts, among other factors, on the phenomenon of word-of-mouth, which is present in prescription but also in co-construction and conversion. Word-of-mouth is more effective between acquaintances than between strangers (Hayes et al., 2016), its effectiveness increases with the strength of the relationship, the level of credibility of the source and the level of homophily between the partners (De Kreyzer et al., 2019). Of course, there are other strong interpersonal relationships, however, we doubt that word-of-mouth can be as effective there as it is in the best friendship.

Indeed, what best distinguishes the couple relationship and the mother-daughter dyad from the relationship of the best friendship is homophily. Socio-demographic homophily cannot exist in either the mother-daughter relationship (generational difference) or the heterosexual couple (gender difference). Perceived homophily can exist in these relationships, but this is not the rule (e.g. perceived homophily between mother and teenage daughter?).

As De Bruyn and Lilien (2008) argue, a product that is suitable for a homophile is considered suitable for oneself. In the case of the best friend dyad, homophily joins the characteristics of trust and intimacy that make the influences present within this relationship particularly strong.

The exercise of influence does not cause conflict in the best friend dyad. In this respect it is also different from other types of strong dyadic relationships. Research shows that for example between mother and daughter (Oulad-Tarada, 2012) or between spouses (Berrada,2011) the influences of the members can cause conflicts. A possible explanation could be rooted in the foundation of the relationship. Indeed, friends are chosen relationships (Pahl, 2004). Their unity therefore is neither natural (as in the mother-daughter dyad) nor "official" (as in the couple), so the relationship must be maintained permanently and preserved from conflict.

Managerial Implications

Girls, Sex and the City, Pretty Little Liars or Faking It, these successful television series are newly featuring and promoting female friendship. The sign BFF, for Best Friends Forever, has entered the codes of communication - insisting, beyond the idea of a very strong friendship, on the permanence of the feeling and thus suggesting a horizon of certainty, assurance and trust. This status of BFF, displayed on Instagram, is highly valued.

Generally speaking, the advertising use of friendship can be effective in creating an emotional connection with the target audience. By showing friends interacting and sharing life moments, brands can evoke an emotional resonance with consumers. Ads that use friendship as a communication axis can convey positive values, such as trust, loyalty and fidelity, authenticity and inclusion. All values that are important to strengthen the brand's reputation and image by halo. Furthermore, ads that feature friends sharing positive experiences with a product or brand can encourage consumers, through identification with these experiences, to make recommendations. Brands can also consider the psychological closeness between friends as claimed by them - as an identity. As the friends in each dyad have relationships that they consider exceptional and can expect the co-consumed brands to echo their relationship, it may be necessary for these brands to think in terms of "dyadic identity". This implies, in the B to C logic, a particular personalization of the relationship with each dyad that materializes its entitativity and uniqueness.

Brand attachment is often thought of in an exclusively individual framework, thus neglecting the fact that it can also be the effect of social interactions between people who are strongly linked. Our research points to the need to consider attachment in a dyadic framework. Several new questions need to be investigated: Does this attachment result in an identical commitment of the two friends? What happens when the relationship between the friends weakens or when the dyad disappears? Can it endure, in a nostalgic mode? How are individual actions reconciled with those developed within the dyadic framework?

Another marketing leverage identified in our research consists of exploiting the particularities of the influences within the best friend dyad. This leverage is based on another fundamental characteristics of this relationship: the very strong trust between the friends. From this perspective, some managerial recommendations can be put forward. Conversion is one of the strongest influences to emerge from our research. Exploiting this effectively means first and foremost identifying the best friend as one of the strongest normative vectors for holistic behaviours such as diets, zero waste and local consumption. The idea is to use the trust that exists between friends to promote this particular 'cause'. Prescription is a word-of-mouth phenomenon, so it's a spontaneous way of disseminating information about a product, and in most cases it's a strategy opposed to methods of dissemination designed and controlled for mass advertising purposes. Prescription is based on a relationship with a person in whom we have a deep sense of trust and proximity, and this person cannot, by definition, be consciously enrolled in a marketing strategy. The use of prescription by the marketer must therefore be seen, on one hand, as a constraint to be integrated into the development of strategies and, on the other hand, as a leverage to be used with caution. The "imitation by conviction" type of influence is based on the proximity (in terms of homophily and intimacy) of best friends. This proximity gives access to the private sphere and means that products consumed in private (beauty products, hygiene products, kitchen products, etc.) can be seen in an exclusive space. What's more, these products are potentially suitable for them (high level of perceived and social homophily between best friends). This suggests that it is important to emphasise the visual identity of the products and, when designing the packaging, to focus on the visual message to be conveyed. Products that are easily recognisable at first glance by their design transform the place where they are used daily into a place of in vivo exposure. As for the phenomenon of co-construction of leisure activities and modes of consumption, marketers who want to target best friends should first encourage co-construction, and then facilitate its development. During the incentive phase, the aim should be to get the best friends interested in a particular leisure or consumption activity. Assuming that the proposed service succeeds in becoming the basis of sociability and that the friends co-construct a shared preference for it, the next step is to facilitate the co-construction phenomenon. The aim is then to anchor this service or mode of consumption in the dyad's habitus and associate it with their identity. First of all, we recommend creating specific offers aimed at building the loyalty of best friends (for example, duo commitments in sports brands), but also systematically addressing the commercial rhetoric to the dyad, and not individually to each of its members.

Future research and limitations

Although our research was conducted before the Covid-19 crisis, we see the need to place our study in the perspective of the current health situation. Thus, future research should consider the impact of the current pandemic on friendship and friendship patterns, including changes in consumption. Friendships are non-familial intimacies, elective affinities, born of coincidence, and are lodged in the interstices of more clearly defined social positions, outside the broad sphere of contractual relationships. These special bonds are based on a series of privileged moments - shared actions and confidences, the joy of reunion, moments of fusion. Friendships need physical proximity to flourish. Yet friendships are essential to well-being: they allow us to support and help each other, long before we have fun together. True friends are our 'refuges', people with whom we can share the joys and difficulties of life.

The pandemic situation has restructured friendships. Recent studies have shown that lockdown has led many people to 'sort' their relationships and refocus on certain people - their best friends (Ayers et al., 2021; Philpot et al., 2021). In other words, friendships have become fewer in number and, at the same time, more select. Among the notable facts, homophilic relationships were found to be the most strengthened during this period (Bidart, 2021).

Individual differences may nuance the interplay of influences within the best friend dyad. In particular, the consumer's agency-communion orientation (the tendency to focus on self or others) plays a moderating role when it comes to a friend's influence on consumption expenditure (Kurt et al., 2011). Furthermore, receptivity to normative influences also impacts consumption expenditure; receptive individuals tend to avoid shopping together with friends and to enjoy these activities less with friends who have differing tastes, in order to avoid feeling the social pressure exerted by these norms (Mangleburg et al., 2004). Studying these individual differences is an interesting direction for future research on consumption behaviour among friends.

Our research has certain limitations, mainly related to the construction of the sample. Indeed, our study would benefit from a wider and more varied sample of participants. We were forced to restrict our sample to one social class. Thus, almost all of our participants are middle class and are (or have been) in higher education. Many of our participants are still students. This could potentially introduce a bias, since it implies limited financial resources on the one hand and, on the other, the feeling and practice of friendship vary according to social class (Bidart, 1991). In addition, all our participants were women aged between 18 and 30, who were not yet married and did not yet have children. It would be interesting to study friendship in another age group, such as young parents as the birth of a first child leads to a restructuring of social relationships (Bidart, 2010). During this period, some friendships disappear while others are strengthened, which no doubt has consequences for consumption practices.

CONCLUSION

Marketing suffers from a lack of research on female friendship. Indeed, the topic has hardly been addressed in marketing despite the extent to which the phenomenon is growing in society. Yet, if 'friendships are flourishing like never before' (Yalom and Brown, 2015), which is arguably not without consequences for consumption patterns, researchers need to follow this movement and document its implications for marketing.

After tracing the main characteristics of friendship in general, and female friendship in particular, by mobilising knowledge dispersed in disciplines such as anthropology and sociology, we studied the particularities of their implications in terms of consumption. The accounts of our informants clearly show the existence of a set of specific influences within this relationship. The four influences identified by our study (co-construction, mimicry, prescription and conversion) complement the literature on interpersonal influences on consumption behaviour.

Our research makes an important contribution by exploring a previously unexplored field in marketing. Although there is a rich literature on interpersonal relationships in marketing, recent works focus almost exclusively on social networks. However, online friendships are different from those that exist in real life. We study patterns of interpersonal influence outside of social networks, investigating how friendship is experienced in practice today.

We are interested in friendship between women, as well as how it is experienced within the female dyad, an area that to our knowledge has not yet been explored in the marketing context. In addition, consumer behavior research that focuses on friendship is very limited, and when it does, it focuses primarily on friendship among younger consumers, particularly adolescents. By exploring friendship specifically among young adults aged 18-30, we fill an important gap that has been neglected so far.

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Appendix 1

Parts of the phenomenological interviews

Parts of the interviews	Examples of questions
Presentation and theme of the interview	
Acquaintance	At the beginning of the discussions, the respondents were asked to introduce themselves. They talked about their family and professional situation, their studies and their hobbies.
Friendship and Female Friendship	We began the interview with a general, open-ended question, asking our respondents what friendship means to them. Then we asked them what female friendship was more specifically, and if there were any particularities to this form of friendship.
You and friendship	We asked respondents to describe their circle of friends, whether they differentiated between different types of friends, and to describe the evolution of these relationships, whether they had a best friend(s), and the specifics of that relationship(s).
Friendship practices	Time spent with friends and especially with best friend(s), how they communicate between meetings and activities when they are together.
Friendship and Consumption	During the interviews, the following topics were discussed by the participants: food shopping, shopping, vacations, birthdays, gifts, hobbies, restaurants, bars, parties. They told about the last time they went shopping with their friend(s). How the shopping or food shopping went, how they paid, how they chose products, where they shopped together.
Influences of friends on consumption practices	We asked our respondents if, in general, they think their friend(s) influence their consumption and if they influence their friend(s)' consumption.

Appendix 2

Instructions to diary study participants

Consumption diary
period: 30 November - 23 December

- In your journal, write about and analyze your shopping experiences with your friends over the next month.
- Pay particular attention to the interactions you have with your friend during the purchasing experience.
- Be observant! To retain as many details as possible, write down your experiences on the same day in your notebook.
- Mail me your experiences of the week every Monday (10/12, 17/12 and 23/12)
- You can make your productions anonymous, by changing the mentioned names and by not specifying your identity on the document.

Vendeurs de la génération Z: Entre style de leadership désiré et attentes des N+1

Sellers of generation Z: Between desired leadership style and N+1 expectations

Résumé :

L'objet de cet article est de définir quel est le style de leadership préféré des vendeurs de la génération Z et quelles sont les attentes de leur N+1. Pour cela cet article s'appuie sur deux études qualitatives. Une première menée auprès d'un échantillon de 27 jeunes vendeurs et une seconde réalisée auprès de 92 N+1 de ces jeunes vendeurs. Les résultats montrent que les N+1 devraient avoir recours à un leadership transactionnel afin de répondre aux aspirations de cette jeune génération et qu'ils ont des attentes et des reproches précis à formuler à ces jeunes vendeurs.

***Mots clés :** vendeurs de la génération Z, N+1, leadership, étude qualitative*

Abstract :

The purpose of this article is to define the preferred leadership style of Z-generation salespeople and the expectations of their N+1. To do so, this article is based on two qualitative studies. The first study is based on a sample of 27 young salespeople and the second is based on 92 N+1 of these young salespeople. The results show that the N+1 should use transactional leadership to meet the aspirations of this young generation and that they have specific expectations and criticisms to make concerning these young salespeople.

***Keywords:** Z-generation, salespeople, N+1, leadership, qualitative study*

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INTRODUCTION

Si le leadership peut être défini comme un processus complexe qui se manifeste à travers la capacité de mobilisation et de fédération d'individus et/ou de groupes autour d'une action collective (Plane 2016), le leadership des forces de vente peut quant à lui être défini comme étant un des facteurs critiques qui influence, guide et motive les vendeurs (Avolio et al. 2004) ou encore comme les activités réalisées par les membres d'une organisation commerciale pour influencer les autres à atteindre des objectifs communs pour le bien collectif de l'organisation commerciale et de l'entreprise (Ingram et al. 2005). De nombreux styles de leadership ont été détaillés dans la littérature comme les leaderships transactionnels (Jaworski et Kohli 1991) ou encore les leaderships transformationnels (MacKenzie et al. 2001). Ces types de leadership ont également été comparés pour juger de leurs effets sur la performance des vendeurs. Des styles de leadership éthiques, incarnés par leurs dirigeants ont même été récemment étudiés (Badrinarayanan et al. 2018).

Cependant, tous ces styles de leadership ont été observés auprès de générations confondues de vendeurs et non sur des générations spécifiques. C'est sur ce fossé spécifique existant que nous avons décidé de travailler. En effet, le terme disruption (rupture) qui était déjà le thème majeur du colloque International Marketing Trends Conference en 2016 est désormais le leitmotiv qui semble caractériser cette nouvelle décennie de vendeurs. Disruption c'est aussi le terme qui reflète le passage entre les deux premières révolutions industrielles et la postmodernité en entreprise. Les chefs d'entreprise doivent désormais prendre en compte les outils numériques et également s'adapter à une jeune génération d'employés utilisant des outils numériques et adoptant des comportements associés : la génération Z. Comme le précise Schroth (2019), la génération Z arrive sur le marché du travail et les employeurs doivent être prêts à les accueillir.

Si auparavant les membres de la génération précédente, la génération Y, accordaient une grande importance à la stabilité financière, c'est désormais principalement la qualité de vie au travail qui semble, par exemple, davantage guider les employés de cette génération Z (Action Commerciale, 2017). Ils sont de plus davantage enclins à utiliser les nouvelles technologies et le social selling ce qui permet de développer l'activité de la firme (Schmitt et al. 2021). Si la génération Y semblait déjà être une génération particulière qui méritait une analyse approfondie, comme le laissaient déjà entendre Brillet et al. (2012), la génération Z est une génération peu étudiée, particulièrement en termes de leadership à lui adapter et notamment dans le domaine des forces de vente, l'un des plus vieux métiers du monde (Barth, 2008). Comme le précisent Estellat et Leroux (2011), si n'importe quelle

INTRODUCTION

While leadership can be defined as a complex process that manifests itself through the ability to mobilize and federate individuals and/or groups around collective action (Plane 2016), sales force leadership can be defined as one of the critical factors that influences, guides, and motivates salespeople (Avolio & al. 2004) or as the activities performed by members of a sales organization to influence others to achieve common goals for the collective good of the sales organization and the company (Ingram & al. 2005). Many leadership styles have been detailed in literature such as transactional leaderships (Jaworski & Kohli 1991) or transformational leaderships (MacKenzie & al. 2001). These types of leadership have also been compared to assess their effects on the performance of salespeople. Ethical leadership styles, embodied by their leaders have even been recently studied (Badrinarayanan & al. 2018).

However, all of these leadership styles have been observed among mixed generations of salespeople and not in specific generations. It is this existing specific gap that we decided to work on. Indeed, the term disruption, which was already the major theme of the International Marketing Trends Conference in 2016, is now the leitmotif that seems to characterize this new decade of salespeople. Disruption is also the term that reflects the transition between the first two industrial revolutions and post modernity in business. Business leaders must now take into account digital tools and also adapt to a young generation of employees who are using them and adopting associated behaviours: Generation Z. As Schroth (2019) states, Generation Z is coming into the workforce and employers must be ready for them.

While members of the previous generation, Generation Y, favoured financial stability, it is now primarily the quality of work life that seems to drive this Generation Z employee more (Action Commerciale, 2017). They are also more inclined to use new technologies and social selling, which help to develop the firm's business (Schmitt & al. 2021). If Generation Y already seemed to be a generation that was particularly worthy of an in-depth analysis, as already suggested by Brillet & al. (2012), very few studies have been carried out on generation Z, particularly in terms of the types of leadership that would be suited to it and especially in the field of sales forces, one of the oldest professions in the world (Barth, 2008). As Estellat and Leroux (2011) point out, if all sales forces share the same constants: a repetitiveness of tasks, formalization, standardization, a degree of autonomy, planning and control, we have based our work on the study of Generation Z that we have distinguished from other existing generations. In addition, we studied and proposed a typology of existing leaderships to examine which one would be the most effective to apply to this particular generation.

force de vente partage les mêmes constantes : une répétitivité des tâches, une formalisation, une standardisation, un degré d'autonomie, une planification et un contrôle, nous avons basé notre travail sur l'étude de la génération Z que nous avons distinguée des autres générations existantes. De plus, nous avons étudié et proposé une typologie des leaderships existants pour examiner lequel serait le plus efficace à appliquer auprès de cette génération particulière.

Notre recherche a tenté de mettre en évidence deux points majeurs : le leadership que les futurs jeunes vendeurs de la génération Z attendent et la manière dont les leaders voudraient voir se comporter les jeunes vendeurs de cette génération Z. Pour cela, nous nous sommes intéressés à ce que les futurs jeunes vendeurs de la génération Z attendaient en termes de leadership, ce qu'ils appréciaient et ce qu'ils reprochaient à ceux qui les guident en entreprise. Nous avons également mis en évidence la manière dont les leaders voulaient voir se comporter les vendeurs de cette génération Z et ce qu'ils appréciaient et reprochaient à ces jeunes vendeurs.

Notre recherche s'est focalisée sur l'étude des jeunes vendeurs, notre but ultime étant d'allier la recherche aux besoins de l'entreprise (Barth 2009). Dans un premier temps, il nous a paru indispensable de faire le point sur ce qu'était cette nouvelle génération et sur ce qu'était un leadership efficace des forces de vente. C'est pourquoi nous avons tout d'abord décidé de présenter les caractéristiques des différents types de générations. Cette présentation a pour objectif de faire ressortir les caractéristiques propres de la génération Z, génération sur laquelle nous avons focalisé notre étude. Notre étude ne sera pas une étude comparative entre les générations et leur style de leadership préféré mais bien une étude axée uniquement sur les désirs en leadership de cette génération Z. Nous avons ensuite mené deux études qualitatives : une auprès d'un échantillon de 24 managés et une autre auprès de 92 N+1 de vendeurs. Ce sont ces travaux que nous allons présenter ci-après.

REVUE DE LITTERATURE DES DIFFERENTS TYPES DE GENERATIONS ET DES DIFFERENTS STYLES DE LEADERSHIP

Les différents types de générations

Dès les travaux de Mannheim (1952), il a été possible de comprendre qu'il existait différents types de générations. En 2011, Brosdahl and Carpenter's proposent une classification de quatre générations en utilisant comme critère de distinction leur date de naissance. Ces quatre générations qui se sont succédées ont effectivement des caractéristiques particulières qui les distinguent les unes des autres (Sladek 2011). Si Brosdahl

Our research attempted to highlight two major points: the leadership that future young Generation Z salespeople expect and how leaders would like to see young Generation Z salespeople behave. To do this, we looked at what future young Generation Z salespeople expect in terms of leadership, what they value, and what they criticize about those who guide them in business. We also highlighted how leaders wanted Generation Z salespeople to behave and what they liked and disliked about these young salespeople.

Our research focused on the study of young salespeople, our ultimate goal being to combine research with business needs (Barth 2009). First, we felt it was essential to take stock of just what this new generation was all about and what effective sales force leadership actually meant. Therefore, we firstly decided to present the characteristics of the different types of generations. The purpose of this presentation is to highlight the specific characteristics of Generation Z, the generation on which we have focused our study. Our study will not be a comparative study between the generations and their preferred leadership styles, but rather a study focused solely on the leadership desires of this Generation Z. We then conducted two qualitative studies: one with a sample of 24 managers and another with 92 N+1 salespeople. We will present these studies below.
n'importe quelle

LITERATURE REVIEW OF DIFFERENT TYPES OF GENERATIONS AND DIFFERENT LEADERSHIP STYLES

The different types of generations

As early as Mannheim's (1952) work, it was possible to understand that there were different types of generations. In 2011, Brosdahl and Carpenter's proposed a classification of four generations using their date of birth as a criterion of distinction. These four succeeding generations do have particular characteristics that distinguish them from one another (Sladek 2011). While Brosdahl and Carpenter's had distinguished the Silent Generation, the Baby Boomers, the Thirteenth Generation, and the Millennials, the literature often distinguishes three types of generations: the Baby Boomers, Generation X, and Generation Y. Another generation, Generation Z also exists (Bornman 2019) and is the one we will choose to study.

While there is not always consensus about the precise dates of these cohorts (Srivastava & al. 2017) this categorization still allows for a more accurate overview of the cohorts and what distinguishes them from one another. For this reason, we will choose to present the cohorts later, by dates in a summary table format but and Carpenter's avaient distingué la génération silencieuse, celle des baby boomers, la treizième génération et la génération des milléniums, la littérature distingue souvent trois types de générations : celles des baby boomers, de la génération X et de la génération Y. Une autre génération, la génération Z existe également (Bornman 2019) et c'est celle que nous choisirons d'étudier.

Bien qu'il n'y ait pas toujours de consensus au sujet des dates précises de ces cohortes (Srivastava et al. 2017) cette catégorisation permet tout de même d'avoir un aperçu plus précis des cohortes et de ce qui les distingue les unes des autres. C'est pourquoi nous choisirons de présenter par la suite les cohortes par dates sous forme de tableau de synthèse mais également en fonction de plusieurs éléments qui les représentent comme leurs caractéristiques, les styles de communication qu'ils adoptent, ce qu'ils attendent des entreprises, leur savoir, leur manière de coopérer, leur environnement d'apprentissage, leur environnement de travail, leurs désirs en termes d'avancement de carrière, le type de retour qu'ils attendent de la part de leur N+1 ainsi que leurs préférences d'apprentissage.

La génération des baby boomers

Les personnes qui la composent occupent généralement des postes de direction. Elles ont eu un bon développement de carrière ainsi que des promotions au sein des organisations. Cette génération est confrontée à des changements importants en termes de technologie. Elles se considèrent comme optimistes et pleines de ressources et évaluent leur propre valeur et celle des autres sur la base de la qualité du travail réalisé. Elles privilégient le travail par objectifs et sont motivées par les récompenses et par les évolutions de carrières (Bolton et al. 2009). Etant donnée leur longue période d'emploi au sein de la même entreprise, elles ont tendance à faire confiance à leur entreprise. Elles s'engagent dans leur travail et sont authentiques, expérimentées et compétitives, elles croient en l'égalité des droits et des chances, tiennent compte des valeurs, du travail d'équipe et des discussions. Les personnes qui la composent sont motivées, font preuve d'engagement et de loyauté (Cates et al. 2013).

La génération X

A la différence des individus de la génération des baby boomers, Les personnes de la génération X sont des personnes qui aiment s'amuser, sont autonomes et apprennent rapidement. Elles sont nées à l'ère de la technologie. Elles recherchent l'équilibre entre leur travail et leur vie personnelle et ne font pas du travail leur priorité. Ils sont une sorte de génération révolutionnaire, qui s'élève contre l'éthique oppressive du travail de la génération des parents du baby-boom (Kohnen 2002). Elles sont considérées comme des agents libres, sans attaches, à la recherche de motivations et de récom-

also according to several elements that represent them such as their characteristics, the communication styles they adopt, what they expect from companies, their knowledge, how they cooperate, their learning environment, their work environment, their desires in terms of career advancement, the type of feedback they expect from their N+1, as well as their learning preferences.

The baby boomer generation

The people who make up this group generally hold management positions. They have had good career development as well as promotions within organizations. This generation is facing important changes in terms of technology. They see themselves as optimistic and resourceful and assess their own and others' value based on the quality of the work they do. They value goal-oriented work and are motivated by rewards and career advancement. (Bolton & al. 2009). Given their long period of employment with the same company, they tend to trust their company. They are committed to their work and are authentic, experienced and competitive, believe in equal rights and opportunities, value teamwork and discussion. The people in it are motivated, and they show commitment and loyalty (Cates & al. 2013).

Generation X

Unlike the baby boomers, Gen Xers are fun-loving, self-directed and fast learners. They were born in the age of technology. They seek work-life balance and do not make work their priority. They are a kind of revolutionary generation, rising up against the oppressive work ethic of their parents' baby boomer generation (Kohnen 2002). They are seen as free agents, unattached, seeking individual motivation and reward. They are the most frequent job changers in pursuit of their personal aspirations. They are very independent. They see work as action-oriented. They trust their managers, but once that trust is broken, it is very difficult to rebuild. Some key characteristics of this generation are adaptability, competence and competition. They are educated and innovative. They need competent leaders whose knowledge they respect, not whose position they respect (Cates & al. 2013).

Generation Y

Invented in 1993 by Advertising Age magazine (an American weekly magazine dedicated to advertising), the expression «Generation Y» refers to the generation that follows «Generation X» born between 1965 and 1977. Some include young people born between 1979 and 1989, others limit themselves to individuals born after 1980 and still others include individuals born between 1979 and 1994 as Generation Y. Brillet and al (2012) use these three definitions, adapted from Pichaut and Pleyers (2010), to admit that Generation Y can be understood as a group of individuals born between 1979 and 1994.

penses individuelles. Ce sont les personnes qui changent le plus souvent d'emploi pour réaliser leurs aspirations personnelles. Elles sont très indépendantes. Elles considèrent le travail comme étant orienté vers l'action. Elles font confiance à leur supérieur, mais une fois que cette confiance est rompue, il est très difficile de la rétablir. Certaines caractéristiques clés de cette génération sont l'adaptabilité, la compétence et la compétition. Elles sont instruites et innovantes. Elles ont besoin de dirigeants compétents dont elles respectent les connaissances et non la fonction (Cates et al. 2013).

La génération Y

Inventée en 1993 par le magazine Advertising Age (magazine hebdomadaire américain dédié à la publicité) l'expression « Génération Y » désigne la génération qui suit la « Génération X » née entre 1965 et 1977. Certains y insèrent les jeunes nés entre 1979 et 1989, d'autres se limitent aux individus nés après 1980 et d'autres encore comprennent comme génération Y les individus nés entre 1979 et 1994. Brillet et al (2012) partent d'ailleurs de ces trois définitions adaptées de Pichaut et Pleyers (2010) pour admettre que l'on peut entendre par génération Y un groupe d'individu nés entre 1979 et 1994.

Pour notre part, nous retiendrons en accord avec Urbain et al. 2013, les personnes nées entre 1977 et 1995. Grâce aux travaux de ces derniers, il est possible de comprendre dans quels contextes la génération Y a évolué. Les contextes les plus importants sont au nombre de six : La période démographique : la génération Y est donc née entre 1977 et 1995. Le contexte économique : ces personnes sont nées dans un contexte économique de société de consommation et de crises, dans la globalisation et dans l'apparition d'un chômage élevé. Le contexte technologique : ils ont connu l'accélération des innovations des technologies de l'information et de la communication. Les évènements historiques traumatiques : ils ont connu le 11 septembre 2001, la guerre en Afghanistan et en Irak ainsi que la chute du mur de Berlin (Urbain et al. 2013). Les effets sociaux : l'évolution des attitudes envers les femmes, les minorités, le sexe, l'éducation, le gouvernement et tous les aspects de la vie sociale. Ils font une différence entre le monde en tant que société et les mouvements communautaristes. La socialisation : la famille et l'influence des autres. Ils ont été élevés dans un foyer non traditionnel (les enfants vivent parfois avec un parent divorcé). La femme travaille à l'extérieur de la maison. Ils sont influencés par leurs camarades et les médias (amis, e-amis, les célébrités).

La génération Z

Une autre génération, plus récente encore que les précédentes et sur laquelle nous avons basé notre recherche est celle appelée génération Z. Plus « connectée » que les précédentes, elle porte également ses

For our part, in agreement with Urbain and al. 2013, we will retain those born between 1977 and 1995. Thanks to their work, it is possible to understand the contexts in which Generation Y evolved. The most important contexts are six in number: The demographic period: Generation Y was born between 1977 and 1995. The economic context: these people were born in an economic context of consumerism and crisis, globalization and high unemployment. The technological context: they have experienced the acceleration of innovations in information and communication technologies. Traumatic historical events: they experienced 9/11, the war in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the fall of the Berlin Wall (Urbain & al. 2013). Social effects: changing attitudes toward women, minorities, gender, education, government, and all aspects of social life. They differentiate between the world as a society and communitarian movements. Socialization: family and the influence of others. They were raised in a non-traditional home (the children sometimes live with a divorced parent). The women women work outside the home. They are influenced by peers and media (friends, e-friends, celebrities).

Generation Z

Another generation, even more recent than the previous ones and on which we based our research, is the one called Generation Z. More «connected» than the previous ones, it also has its own specificities. It is represented by individuals who were born between 1995 and 2012. This generation has been immersed in a technological universe. They are the first to have experienced such easy access to Internet technology and they have been exposed to an unprecedented amount of technology in their education, thanks to the web revolution. This generation of digital natives is less motivated by money than their Generation Y counterparts. However, they are more entrepreneurial than the latter (Chillakuri & Mahanandia 2018). Although they are independent, individuals from this generation can collaborate or build good relationships with others, and are versatile. They are not afraid of change and are flexible in terms of where they work (Bornman 2019). In addition, members of Generation Z are poor listeners and lack interpersonal skills. They have an appetite for new technologies and typically choose connected places. This generation is also called the silent generation because they conduct meetings remotely rather than face-to-face (Bejtkovský 2016).

They prefer simplicity and want to feel safe. They want to escape from reality and highly value the experiences they have (Tunsakul, 2020). They are highly educated, techno-savvy, innovative, and creative (Priporas & al. 2017). They are known to use images to process short, real-time information. Due to their fast communication mode and short attention span, messages to them must be concise (Törőcsik & al. 2014). They use social media to gather and send information, but also to spécificités propres. Elle est représentée par les individus qui sont nés entre 1995 et 2012. Cette génération a baigné dans un univers technologique. Elle est la première à disposer d'une technologie Internet aussi facilement accessible et elle a été exposée à une quantité de technologie sans précédent dans son éducation, grâce à la révolution du web. Cette génération de digital native est moins motivée par l'argent que ses homologues de la génération Y. Elle est cependant plus entreprenante que cette dernière (Chillakuri et Mahanandia 2018). Bien qu'ils soient indépendants les individus issus de de cette génération peuvent collaborer ou établir de bonnes relations avec d'autres, et sont polyvalents. Ils ne craignent pas les changements et sont flexibles en termes de lieu de travail (Bornman 2019). De plus, les membres de la génération Z ne savent pas écouter et manquent de relations interpersonnelles. Ils ont une appétence aux nouvelles technologies et choisissent généralement des lieux connectés. Cette génération est également appelée génération silencieuse car elle réalise des rencontres à distance plutôt qu'en face à face (Bejtkovský 2016).

Ils préfèrent la simplicité et veulent se sentir en sécurité. Ils souhaitent échapper à la réalité et accordent une grande importance aux expériences qu'ils réalisent (Tunsakul, 2020). Ils sont très instruits, techno-savants, innovants et créatifs (Priporas et al. 2017). Ils sont connus pour traiter des informations courtes et en temps réel à l'aide d'images. En raison de la rapidité de leur mode de communication et de leur faible attention, les messages qui leur sont adressés doivent être concis (Törőcsik et al. 2014).

Ils utilisent les médias sociaux pour recueillir et diffuser des informations, mais aussi pour partager leurs expériences grâce à des vidéos, des photos ou encore des liens (Relander 2014).

Une enquête menée en 2014 a révélé qu'ils s'identifient eux-mêmes comme étant équilibrés, bienveillants, ouverts d'esprit, férus de technologie et responsables (Koulopoulos et Keldsen 2016 ; Iorgulescu 2016). Ils sont également ouverts à la réception d'une grande quantité d'informations et sont plus rationnels dans leurs décisions que toute autre cohorte générationnelle. En termes de récompense, ils sont sensibles aux systèmes de récompense s'il existe un système de performance-récompense qui peut être négocié. Cette génération est également à la recherche d'instructions explicites car ils n'aiment pas l'ambiguïté de rôle (Tulgan 2013). Ils exigent également une croissance et un développement personnels tout au long de leur carrière, mais veulent aussi une flexibilité d'emploi qui leur permette d'assouvir leurs autres passions (Montana et Petit 2008).

share their experiences through videos, photos or even hyperlinks (Relander 2014).

A 2014 survey found that they self-identify as being balanced, caring, open-minded, tech-savvy, and responsible (Koulopoulos & Keldsen 2016; Iorgulescu 2016). They are also open to receiving large amounts of information and are more rational in their decisions than any other generational cohort. In terms of reward, they are responsive to reward systems if there is a performance-reward system that can be negotiated. This generation also seeks explicit instructions because they dislike role ambiguity (Tulgan 2013). They also demand personal growth and development throughout their careers, but they equally want job flexibility that allows them to pursue their other passions (Montana & Petit 2008).

Tableau 1 : Les quatre cohortes

	Baby Boomers	**Génération X**	**Millénials**	**Génération Z**
Caractéristiques	Travailleur, loyal, confiant, cynique, compétitif	Anti-autorité, autonomie, axé sur la famille	Confiants, penseurs numériques, sens de droit, en demande	Entrepreneurs intéressés par la création de leur propre entreprise
Styles de communication	Préfèrent un dialogue approfondi en personne ou par téléphone, apprécient la rencontre, croient que pas de nouvelles égal bonnes nouvelles	Apprécient une approche claire et concise Pas de sur-explication ou de jargon d'entreprise	Souhaitent un retour d'information fréquent et la résolution de problèmes par la technologie au lieu du téléphone les appels ou les réunions	Considèrent la réalité virtuelle comme la technologie la plus susceptible de révolutionner leur travail au cours de la prochaine décennie, la plaçant devant les technologies portables, la gestion de projets et les conférences audio/vidéo
Ce qu'ils attendent des organismes professionnels (selon l'appellation américaine)	Qu'ils leur laissent des opportunités de diriger et de laisser un héritage	Qu'ils offrent des possibilités de faire progresser leur les carrières et les relations avec les pairs	Qu'ils leur permettent d'apprendre et de gagner l'accès à de nouvelles compétences et à l'information	Qu'ils considèrent la réalité virtuelle comme un outil de recrutement de ces cohortes
Le savoir	Est pour eux le pouvoir	Est nécessaire pour le travail	Permet de partager et de multiplier	Est digital
La coopération	Doit être Situationnelle	Doit être effective quand nécessaire	Est attendue	Existe même si cette génération est Indépendants
L'environnement d'apprentissage	Est traditionnel	S'appuie sur les méthodes traditionnelles et le E-learning	Est basé sur le Multimédia et la personnalisation	S'appuie sur les technologiques, numériques, les outils de gestion de projet. Cette génération exprime également son enthousiasme pour le cloud computing et les outils d'apprentissage en ligne
L'environnement de travail	Souhaitent des heures d'ouverture traditionnelles ; Le travail au bureau est préféré	Veulent des horaires flexibles ; Le bureau et la maison sont leurs lieux de travail privilégiés	Aiment les horaires flexibles et souhaitent travailler à la fois au bureau et à la maison	Pensent que les horaires de travail flexibles représentent une opportunité importante pour leur vie professionnelle. Souhaitent travailler avec des clients et des collègues dans d'autres pays.
L'avancement de carrière	Est basé sur le dévouement	Est basé sur le mérite	Est basé sur l'accomplissement des tâches	Est moins axé sur l'argent que pour les représentants de la génération Y
Le retour	S'il est seulement positif	N'est pas essentiel	Doit être constant	Doit engendrer de bonnes relations
Les préférences d'apprentissage	Se veulent être transformationnelles	Doivent être autodirigées	Sont de préférence incidentes et informelles	Sont basées sur les technologiques

Adapté de Bennett et al. (2012), Sladek (2013), Fogarty et al. (2017), Bresman et al. (2017), Bornman (2019).

Table 1: The four cohorts

	Baby Boomers	Generation X	Millennials	Generation Z
Characteristics	Hard-working, loyal, confident, cynical, competitive	Anti-authority, autonomy, Family-orientated	Confident, thinkers digital, feel that they have rights, on demand	Entrepreneurs Interested in creating their own business
Communication styles	Prefer in-depth dialogue in person or by phone, enjoy meeting people, believe that no news is good news	Appreciate a clear and concise approach No over-explanation or corporate jargon	Desire frequent feedback and problem solving through technology instead of telephone calls or meetings	See virtual reality as the technology most likely to revolutionize their work in the next decade, placing it ahead of wearable technology, project management and audio/video conferencing
What they expect from professional organizations (as they are called in the United States)	Let them have opportunities to lead and to leave a legacy	That they provide opportunities to advance their careers and peer relationships	Allow them to learn and gain access to new skills and information	That they consider virtual reality as a tool to recruit these cohorts
Knowledge	Means power	Is necessary for work	Allows you to share and multiply	Is digital
Cooperation	Must be situational	Must be effective when necessary	Is expected	Exists even if this generation is Independent
The learning environment	Is traditional	Is based on traditional methods and E-learning	Is based on multimedia and personalization	Relies on technological, digital and project management tools. This generation also expresses enthusiasm for cloud computing and e-learning tools
The working environment	Desire traditional business hours; Office work is preferred	Want flexible hours; The office and home are their preferred workplaces	Enjoy flexible schedules and want to work both in the office and at home	Think that flexible working hours represent an important opportunity for their professional life. Wish to work with clients and colleagues in other countries.
Career advancement	Is based on dedication	Is based on merit	Is based on the completion of tasks	Is less money-oriented than for Gen Y representatives
Feedback	Only if it is positive	Is not essential	Must be consistent	Must create good relationships
Learning preferences	Are intended to be transformational	Must be self-directed	Are preferably incidental and informal	Are based on technology

Adapté de Bennett and al. (2012), Sladek (2013), Fogarty and al. (2017), Bresman and al. (2017), Bornman (2019).

Après avoir examiné les différents types de générations et avoir montré leurs différences les plus significatives, il s'agit désormais d'éclairer la notion de leadership afin de pouvoir mettre en évidence quel type de leadership sera le plus efficient auprès de la population de type Z.

Les différents styles de leaderships

Plusieurs types de leadership existent et reposent sur différentes manières de concevoir cette notion. Différents articles ou ouvrages souvent séminaux ont été publiés sur ce sujet. Comme l'a précisé Plane (2016), le leadership peut être ainsi vu sous l'angle de l'analyse des traits de personnalité du leader (Kirtpatrick et Locke 1991) ou selon les comportements qu'il adopte (Tannenbaum et schmitt, 1973), (Blake et Mouton 1964), (Cherry 2006) ou encore en fonction des paramètres situationnels, des facteurs contingents que le leader va rencontrer (Fiedler 1981). Il peut même s'analyser sous le prisme de l'interculturalité, comme le projet GLOBE (House et al. 2004) a pu le mettre en évidence.

Il existe donc une variété de comportements qui favorisent la performance de l'équipe, parmi lesquels le leadership directif et le leadership participatif ont inspiré le plus grand intérêt académique car ces deux styles de leadership reflètent le modèle de leadership bidimensionnel (c'est-à-dire orienté plutôt vers la tâche à accomplir ou davantage vers les personnes (Mouton et Blake 1964).

Selon House (1996), le leadership directif désigne les comportements visant à fournir une structure psychologique aux subordonnés, tels que prodiguer des conseils spécifiques ou encore éclaircir des règles et procédures, tandis que le leadership participatif manifeste des comportements visant à encourager les subordonnés et le fonctionnement de l'unité de travail, tels que le fait de consulter les subordonnés pour recueillir leurs opinions lors de la prise de décision.

Bien que ces deux types de comportements de leadership soient tous des comportements de clarification d'objectifs, House (1996) soutient qu'ils sont orthogonaux et indépendants l'un de l'autre. Par conséquent, plusieurs études ont comparé le leadership directif et participatif en termes de résultats d'équipe tels que l'efficacité (Yun et al. 2005) ou encore la performance (Lam et al. 2015), ou encore l'efficacité et la pro-activité (Martin et al. 2013).

Comme le précisent Srivastava et al. (2017) « les dirigeants sont un élément essentiel des études organisationnelles depuis des décennies et ils sont les principaux déterminants de l'efficacité organisationnelle à plusieurs niveaux : individuel, collectif et organisationnel (Burke et al. 2007) ». Le leadership peut être compris comme étant la pratique d'une relation et d'une interaction mutuelles entre le leader et le suiveur (Indvik 2004) ou encore comme l'approche ainsi que le comportement

Having examined the different types of generations and shown their most significant differences, it is now a question of shedding light on the notion of leadership in order to be able to highlight which type of leadership will be the most efficient with the type Z population.

The different styles of leadership

Several types of leadership exist and are based on different ways of conceiving this notion. Different articles or books, often seminal, have been published on this topic. As specified by Plane (2016), leadership can thus be seen from the angle of the analysis of the personality traits of the leader (Kirtpatrick & Locke 1991) or according to the behaviours he adopts (Tannenbaum & schmitt, 1973), (Blake and Mouton 1964), (Cherry 2006) or even according to the situational parameters and the contingent factors that the leader will encounter (Fiedler 1981). It can even be analysed through the prism of interculturality, as the GLOBE project (House & al. 2004) has shown.

There are therefore a variety of behaviours that promote team performance, among which directive leadership and participative leadership have inspired the greatest academic interest because both these leadership styles reflect the two-dimensional leadership model (i.e., more task-oriented or more people-oriented (Mouton & Blake 1964).

According to House (1996), directive leadership refers to behaviours aimed at providing psychological structure to subordinates, such as providing specific advice or clarifying rules and procedures, while participative leadership exhibits behaviours aimed at encouraging subordinates and the smooth functioning of the work unit, such as consulting subordinates to gather their opinions when making decisions.

Although these two types of leadership behaviours are all goal clarifying behaviours, House (1996) argues that they are orthogonal and independent of each other. Therefore, several studies have compared directive and participative leadership in terms of team outcomes such as effectiveness (Yun & al. 2005) or performance (Lam & al. 2015), or efficiency and pro-activity (Martin & al. 2013).

As Srivastava et al. (2017) state «leaders have been a key focus of organizational studies for decades and are the primary determinants of organizational effectiveness at multiple levels: individual, group, and organizational (Burke & al. 2007).» Leadership can be understood as the practice of a mutual relationship and interaction between leader and follower (Indvik 2004) or as the approach and the behaviour by which a leader directs subordinates toward the achievement of a goal (Eagly & Johnson 1990). According to Bornman (2019), although leadership is considered as an abstract concept, there are various definitions that can help to define it.

par lequel un leader dirige ses subordonnés vers la réalisation d'un objectif (Eagly et Johnson 1990). D'après Bornman (2019), bien que le leadership soit considéré comme une notion non concrète, il existe diverses définitions qui permettent de le définir. Winston et Patterson (2006) proposent comme éléments constituant du leadership le fait qu'il faille l'existence d'un leader qui puisse motiver et inspirer les autres pour atteindre les objectifs de l'organisation, que ce dernier exige des subordonnés le fait qu'ils aient des compétences, des capacités et la volonté nécessaires pour atteindre avec succès les buts et objectifs de l'organisation de manière coordonnée. Dartey-Baah (2015) ajoute à cela en affirmant que le leadership est une question d'initiation ; il implique des personnes (c'est-à-dire des adeptes) et il se concentre sur la fourniture l'orientation des ressources, des comportements et des énergies vers la réalisation des objectifs.

Yukl et Lepsinger (2004) ont établi un cadre de leadership flexible qui traite de la reconnaissance de la complexité du leadership, de l'équilibre dans les situations difficiles et de la nécessité d'actions correspondantes de la part des dirigeants à travers de multiples niveaux et situations. Le style du leader dépend de la nature du travail, des employés et de la dose d'individualité du leader. Le style de leadership traditionnel n'est généralement pas motivant pour les trois groupes de travailleurs multigénérationnels. Même si les auteurs donnent quelques recettes comme le fait de tenir compte de l'efficacité et de la fiabilité des processus de travail, l'adaptation rapide aux changements de l'environnement externe et la création de ressources et des relations humaines solides, le leadership des nouvelles générations exige de nouvelles compétences, une expérience, une éducation et une compatibilité avec la technologie actuelle (Rodriguez et al. 2003).

Pour Thépot (2008) le leader organisationnel est un décideur rationnel qui opère de deux manières différentes : du côté comportemental, à travers des actions d'animation, de motivation, de communication envers les membres de l'organisation et du côté économique par des décisions sur les contrats les récompenses, et les punitions. Ce type de prise de décision du leader mis en évidence par Thépot s'adapte au contexte particulier de la vente de par ses caractéristiques. Comme le précise Thépot, en fonction du contexte organisationnel et du compromis effectué par le leader entre les deux types d'actions qu'il décrit, le leadership sera de type directif, transactionnel ou transformationnel.

En ce qui concerne le leadership à mettre en œuvre vis-à-vis de la génération Z dans un contexte de vente, il n'existe, à notre connaissance, que peu de travaux sur le sujet excepté ceux de Bolman (2011) qui sont d'ailleurs plutôt focalisés sur la compréhension des différences générationnelles. C'est pourquoi nous avons choisis de mobiliser les leaderships mis en évidence par Thépot à savoir :

Winston and Patterson (2006) propose, as constituent elements of leadership, that there must be a leader who can motivate and inspire others to achieve the goals of the organization, that the leader requires subordinates to have skills, abilities, and the willingness to successfully achieve the goals and objectives of the organization in a coordinated manner. Dartey-Baah (2015) adds to this by stating that leadership is about initiation; it involves people (i.e., followers) and it focuses on providing the direction of resources, behaviours, and energies toward the achievement of goals.

Yukl and Lepsinger (2004) established a flexible leadership framework that addresses the recognition of the complexity of leadership, of finding a balance in difficult situations, and of the need for leaders to take appropriate actions across multiple levels and situations. The leader's style depends on the nature of the work, the employees and how individualistic the leader is. The traditional leadership style is generally not motivating for all three groups of multigenerational workers. Although the authors give some possible leads such as considering the efficiency and reliability of work processes, quickly adapting to changes in the external environment, and creating strong human resources and relationships, leadership of new generations requires new skills, experience, education, and must be compatible with current technology (Rodriguez & al. 2003).

For Thépot (2008) the organizational leader is a rational decision maker who operates in two different ways: on the behavioural side, through team-driving actions, motivation, communication towards the members of the organization and on the economic side, through decision-making on contracts, rewards, and punishments. This type of decision-making by the leader, highlighted by Thépot, is adapted to the particular context of sales because of its characteristics. As Thépot points out, depending on the organizational context and the compromise made by the leader between the two types of actions he describes, the leadership will be directive, transactional or transformational.

Concerning the leadership to be implemented with respect to Generation Z in a sales context, to our knowledge, little work has been carried out on the subject, except for that of Bolman (2011), which is more focused on understanding generational differences. This is why we have chosen to mobilize the leaderships highlighted by Thépot, namely:

- Directive leadership: It is based on coercion and command. The leader wants to achieve objectives and will therefore impose his choices on his subordinate without worrying about the latter's preferences. He will give him clear instructions to help him establish clear rules (Katzenbach & Smith 1993). For the subordinate, the directions to be taken and the means and objectives to be achieved will thus be unambiguous (House 1996). This style of leadership was first considered to be the style to

- Le leadership directif : Il est basé sur la coercition et le commandement. Le leader a envie d'atteindre des objectifs et va pour cela imposer ses choix à son subordonné sans se soucier de ses préférences. Il va lui donner des instructions claires pour l'aider à établir des règles claires (Katzenbach et Smith 1993). Pour le subordonné, les orientations, les moyens et les objectifs à atteindre seront donc ainsi sans ambiguïté (House 1996). Ce style de leadership a été en tout premier lieu considéré comme étant le style qu'il fallait utiliser pour réaliser des tâches prévisibles peu enclines à évoluer (Hersey et al. 1996). Les leaders surveillent également activement les performances et fournissent un retour d'information approprié (par exemple, des récompenses et des punitions) en fonction des performances de l'employé (House 1996).

Les directeurs donnent des instructions claires à leurs subordonnés pour les aider à établir des règles claires (Katzenbach et Smith 1993), ce qui permet de clarifier les devoirs et les tâches des membres de l'équipe dans la réalisation des objectifs de l'équipe. Si les équipes dirigées par des chefs de file directifs forment plus facilement des processus routiniers et partagent des structures cognitives, les informations sociales provenant des chefs d'équipe peuvent également nuire à la créativité de l'équipe (Lorinkova 2013).

- Le Leadership transactionnel : Ce leadership présuppose un échange entre le leader et son subordonné afin que l'un et l'autre reçoivent quelque chose en échange de leurs interactions. Il se fait par l'utilisation de récompenses et les sanctions, ce qui permet d'aligner les performances des adeptes sur la réalisation des actions spécifiques (Afshari et Gibson 2016). Il n'existe pas de contrôle des subordonnés à proprement parler mais une construction de contrats pour aligner les intérêts des subordonnées sur ceux de la communauté. Cependant, ce style de leadership est beaucoup moins axé sur la manière précise d'atteindre les objectifs fixés (Bass 1985).

- Le Leadership transformationnel : Il s'appuie sur le charisme du leader qui va stimuler les changements dans l'attitude et les valeurs des subordonnés en établissant des valeurs morales élevées au sein de l'organisation et en recréant l'organisation pour assurer la survie dans un marché difficile (Tung 2016). Comme le décrit Bornman (2019), il existe quatre dimensions contenues dans le leadership transformationnel. Il s'agit notamment de l'idéalisation du leader, de la motivation inspiratrice qu'il dégage, de sa capacité à la stimulation intellectuelle destinée à faciliter la créativité et l'innovation en encourageant les subordonnés à penser différemment de lui et enfin la considération qu'il porte à ses subordonnés.

La revue de littérature précédemment menée a permis de mettre en évidence plusieurs points fondamentaux que nous retiendrons pour la suite de notre étude : il existe véritablement une génération particulière de type Z. Cette génération est particulière car elle est be used for predictable tasks that are not likely to change (Hersey & al. 1996). Leaders also actively monitor performance and provide appropriate feedback (e.g., rewards and punishments) based on the employee's performance (House 1996).

Managers provide clear instructions to their subordinates to help them establish clear rules (Katzenbach & Smith 1993), which helps clarify the duties and tasks of team members in achieving team goals. While teams led by directive leaders more easily form routine processes and share cognitive structures, social information from team leaders can also hinder team creativity (Lorinkova 2013).

- Transactional leadership: This leadership presupposes an exchange between the leader and subordinate so that both receive something in exchange for their interactions. It is done through the use of rewards and sanctions, which aligns followers' performance with the completion of specific actions (Afshari & Gibson 2016). There is no control of subordinates per se but a construction of contracts to align the interests of subordinates with those of the community. However, this style of leadership is much less focused on the specific way to achieve set goals (Bass 1985).

- Transformational Leadership: It relies on the charisma of the leader who will stimulate changes in the attitude and values of subordinates by establishing high moral values within the organization and restructuring it to ensure its survival in a difficult market (Tung 2016). As described by Bornman (2019), there are four dimensions contained within transformational leadership. These include the idealization of the leader, the inspirational motivation he or she exudes, his or her capacity to intellectually stimulate in order to facilitate creativity and innovation by encouraging subordinates to think differently from him or her, and finally the consideration he or she shows to subordinates.

The literature review we conducted earlier highlighted several fundamental points that we will keep in mind for the rest of our study: there really is a particular type-Z generation. This generation is special because it is characterized by entrepreneurs who rely on virtual reality as their communication style. Their knowledge is digital and they are compatible with current technology (Rodriguez & al. 2003): for example, they mostly use social media to spread information (Relander 2014). They are also capable of cooperation and are more rational in their decisions than any other generational cohort. They enjoy learning via technology and are fond of flexible work schedules. They like to have good relationships with their managers and they seek explicit instructions (Tulgan 2013). While they are less motivated by money than their Generation Y counterparts, they are, nonetheless, responsive to reward systems if there is a performance-reward system that can be negotiated (Tulgan 2013). In terms of personal development, they want to caractérisée par des entrepreneurs s'appuyant sur la réalité virtuelle comme style de communication. Leur savoir est digital et ils sont compatibles avec la technologie actuelle (Rodriguez, et al. 2003) : ils utilisent par exemple majoritairement les médias sociaux pour diffuser de l'information (Relander 2014). Ils sont également capables de coopération et sont plus rationnels dans leurs décisions que toute autre cohorte générationnelle. Ils aiment apprendre via des technologies et affectionnent des horaires de travail flexibles. Ils aiment entretenir de bonnes relations avec leur hiérarchie et ils sont à la recherche d'instructions explicites (Tulgan 2013). S'ils sont moins motivés par l'argent que leurs homologues de la génération Y, ils sont tout de même sensibles aux systèmes de récompense s'il existe un système de performance-récompense qui peut être négocié (Tulgan 2013). En termes de développement personnel, ils souhaitent évoluer tout au long de leur carrière et désirent également obtenir une flexibilité d'emploi qui leur permette d'assouvir leurs autres passions (Montana et Petit 2008).

La revue de littérature a également permis de montrer que le leadership est une notion complexe (Yukl et Lepsinger 2004) et qu'il existe trois types de leaderships principaux : directif, transactionnel et transformationnel. Si des travaux ont été menés pour savoir quel leadership adopter vis-à-vis des nouvelles générations, il n'existe pas de consensus, dans la littérature, pour savoir quel leadership mettre en place pour guider ces nouvelles générations et encore moins pour guider des vendeurs de la génération Z.

De même, ces vendeurs de génération Z ne savent pas nécessairement ce que les leaders leur reprochent en termes de comportements vendant ou non-vendant, ce qui, à notre connaissance n'est pas éclairé par la littérature. En reprenant la théorie des comportements vendant et non-vendant de Parissier et al. (2005), il sera possible de mettre en lumière ce dernier point. Le but de cette recherche va donc être de comprendre à quel style de leadership les vendeurs de génération Z adhèrent et d'apporter des éclairages sur les attitudes attendues et reprochées à cette génération Z par leurs leaders afin que les deux parties puissent se comprendre pour performer.

LA DEMARCHE EMPIRIQUE

Méthodologie de la recherche

Pour notre démarche empirique, nous avons décidé de recourir à l'utilisation d'une étude qualitative car l'orientation de notre recherche se traduisait par une exploration afin d'expliquer un phénomène en profondeur pour lequel il existait peu de recherches concernant le type de leadership souhaité par cette génération et les attitudes de vente des vendeurs reprochées ou encoura-

grow throughout their careers and also desire job flexibility that allows them to pursue their other passions (Montana & Petit 2008).

The literature review also showed that leadership is a complex concept (Yukl & Lepsinger 2004) and that there are three main types of leadership: directive, transactional and transformational. While work has been done on how to lead new generations, there is no consensus in the literature on how to lead new generations, and, even less so, on how to lead Generation Z salespeople.

Similarly, these Generation Z salespeople do not necessarily know what leaders dislike about their selling or non-selling behaviours. To our knowledge, this information has not been highlighted by existing literature. By taking up the theory of selling and non-selling behaviours of Parissier et al. (2005), it will be possible to shed light on this last point. The goal of this research will be to understand which leadership style Generation Z salespeople adhere to and to shed light on the attitudes that their leaders expect and those that they are critical of, so that both parties can understand each other in order to perform.

EMPIRICAL APPROACH

Research Methodology

For our empirical approach, we decided to use a qualitative study because the focus of our research was an exploration to explain an in-depth phenomenon on which there was little research regarding the type of leadership desired by this generation and the sales attitudes of salespeople reproached or encouraged by N+1s. We also wanted to understand behaviours in a particular context. Through this research, we were able to gauge the subject's perspective, describe everyday situations in detail, understand actions and meanings in their social context, and finally focus on time and process. Only one qualitative study was conducted. It consists of two sub-studies that respond to each other in a «zooming in, zooming out» process as defined by La Rocca and al. (2017). The choice of this method allowed us to focus our attention on the expectations of Generation Z salespeople and then on those of their N+1s towards them (zooming in) in order to then be able to highlight how the two parties could understand each other (zooming out).

Explanation, processing and analysis of the qualitative study data

Since the ultimate goal of our general research was to understand the leadership style sought by young future salespeople of Generation Z as well as the behaviours that were encouraged or reproached by their N+1, gées par les N+1. Nous voulions également comprendre des comportements dans un contexte particulier. Grâce à cette recherche, nous avons été en mesure de prendre le point de vue du sujet, de décrire des situations quotidiennes dans le détail, de comprendre les actions et les significations dans leur contexte social et enfin de mettre l'accent sur le temps et le processus. Une seule étude qualitative a été menée. Elle comporte deux sous-études qui se répondent selon un procédé de « zooming in, zooming out » au sens de La Rocca et al. (2017). Le choix de cette méthode a permis de pouvoir concentrer notre attention sur les attentes des vendeurs de la génération Z puis sur celles de leurs N+1 à leur égard (zooming in) pour pouvoir ensuite mettre en évidence la manière dont les deux parties pourraient se comprendre (zooming out).

Explication, traitement et analyse des données de l'étude qualitative

Le but ultime de notre recherche générale étant de comprendre quel était le style de leadership recherché par les jeunes futurs vendeurs de la génération Z ainsi que les comportements qui étaient encouragés ou reprochés par leur N+1, il nous a semblé en effet opportun de recourir à deux études distinctes.

Le cadre choisi pour notre étude a été celui d'un cadre abductif selon un procédé de zooming in, zooming out afin de mettre en lumière l'ensemble des résultats obtenus. Le but a été de comprendre ce qui se passait « sur le terrain » afin d'observer si les éléments qui avaient été repérés au préalable au sein de la littérature étudiée apparaissaient. Une démarche de « systematic combining » incluant des boucles itératives entre littérature et terrain a été réalisée comme le préconisent Dubois et Gadde (2002). En ce qui concerne l'analyse thématique, les thèmes ont donc été choisis en fonction de la revue de littérature effectuée précédemment en nous basant sur les travaux de Thépot (2008). Cette analyse thématique nous a permis d'enrichir les étapes qui suivaient afin de compléter la recherche.

Dans cette optique nous avons réalisé une analyse de contenu afin de comprendre la manière dont les individus se représentaient le contexte global de l'étude. Cela nous a permis d'accéder au sens lexical du discours utilisé. Nous avons focalisé notre analyse sur le contenu linguistique et sur le vocabulaire employé par les personnes interviewées. Ceci a pu « éclairer les différents aspects du langage susceptibles de fournir des indices sur la pensée, les sentiments ou les représentations du locuteur » comme le précisent Desmarais et Moscarola (2004).

La première sous-étude a concerné l'étude des désirs des futurs jeunes vendeurs en termes de style de leadership de leur N+1. Nous avons réalisé des entretiens semi-directifs auprès de 24 jeunes futurs vendeurs. Ces personnes, âgées de 18 à 22 ans, 11 filles et 13 garit seemed appropriate, to us, to use two separate studies. The framework chosen for our study was that of an abductive framework based on a zooming-in, zooming-out process in order to shed light on all the results obtained. The aim was to understand what was happening «in the field» in order to observe whether the elements, that had been previously identified in the literature under study, appeared. A «systematic combining» approach including iterative loops between the literature and the field was used as recommended by Dubois and Gadde (2002). As far as the thematic analysis is concerned, the themes were chosen according to the literature review carried out previously, based on the work of Thépot (2008). This thematic analysis allowed us to enrich the following steps in order to complete the research.

To this end, we conducted a content analysis in order to understand how individuals perceived the overall context of the study. This allowed us to access the lexical meaning of the discourse used. We focused our analysis on the linguistic content and vocabulary used by the interviewees. This allowed us to «shed light on the different aspects of language that may provide clues to the speaker's thoughts, feelings or representations» as stated by Desmarais and Moscarola (2004).

The first sub-study involved the study of the future young salespeople's desires in terms of their N+1's leadership style. We conducted semi-structured interviews with 24 young future salespeople. These individuals, aged between 18 and 22, 11 girls and 13 boys, had all been placed in a sales position during a sales internship and were not affected by role tensions as defined by Commeiras and al. (2009). Interviews were conducted asking the interviewees to express themselves in writing about the leadership qualities expected of their N+1 when dealing with a generation such as theirs. The interview that took place with each interviewee did not exceed 10 minutes. These interviews were subject to a thematic analysis and, as proposed by Bardin (2013), a content analysis. A lexical analysis using Textanalyser software was also carried out to highlight the number of occurrences in the corpus.

As far as the occurrences and their analysis with the Textanalyser software are concerned, they made it possible to indicate the number of repetitions of a word or an expression within the analyzed texts. The purpose of this particular analysis was to understand and then highlight the expectations of Generation Z salespeople and those of the N+1 through the analysis of the words or expressions they had used.

The corpus was then coded in order to be able to assign the verbatims obtained from the different types of leadership highlighted by the literature and based on the typology of Thépot (2008) who proposed to classify different styles of leadership: directive, transactional and transformational leadership styles. Then a double coding was carried out. This was done in two stages. The first çons avaient toutes été placées en position de vente lors d'un stage de vente et n'étaient pas impactées par des tensions de rôle au sens de Commeiras et al. (2009). Des entretiens ont été effectués demandant aux interviewés de s'exprimer par écrit sur les qualités de leadership attendues de leur N+1 face à une génération telle que la leur. L'entretien qui a eu lieu avec chaque interviewé n'a pas excédé 10 minutes. Ces entretiens ont fait l'objet d'une analyse thématique ainsi que, comme le propose Bolman (2013), d'une analyse de contenu. Une analyse lexicale à l'aide du logiciel Textanalyser permettant de mettre en évidence le nombre d'occurrences du corpus a également été conduite.

En ce qui concerne les occurrences et leur analyse grâce au logiciel Textanalyser, elles ont permis d'indiquer le nombre de répétition d'un mot ou d'une expression au sein des textes analysés. Le but de cette analyse particulière était de comprendre puis de mettre en évidence les attentes des vendeurs de génération Z et celles des N+1 à travers l'analyse des mots ou des expressions qu'ils avaient employés.

Le corpus a ensuite été codé une première fois de manière à pouvoir affecter les verbatims obtenus au sein des différents types de leadership mis en évidence par la littérature et en nous appuyant sur la typologie de Thépot (2008) qui proposait de classer différents styles de leaderships selon le style de leadership directif, transactionnel et transformationnel, puis un double codage a été réalisé. Il s'est déroulé en deux temps. Un premier codage a été effectué par nos soins et un deuxième codage a ensuite été mis en œuvre par un deuxième codeur qui n'avait bien évidemment pas accès aux résultats du codage précédent. L'ensemble des textes lui a été présenté ainsi que la classification des leaderships selon Thépot qui lui a servi de codebook. La fiabilité intercodeurs a été évaluée par l'indice de concordance de Kappa et Cohen. L'indice obtenu est de 0,7937 en admettant un intervalle de de confiance de 95%. Si l'on se réfère aux travaux de Landis and Koch (1977), cet indice montre un accord fort entre les deux codeurs.

coding was done by us and the second was then implemented by a different coder who, of course, did not have access to the results of the previous coding. All the texts were presented to them as well as the classification of leaderships according to Thepot, which served as a codebook. The inter-coder reliability was evaluated by the concordance index of Kappa and Cohen. The index obtained is 0.7937, assuming a 95% confidence interval. If we refer to the work of Landis and Koch (1977), this index shows a strong correlation between the two coders' observations.

Tableau 2 : Leaderships préférés par les futurs jeunes vendeurs

Verbatims	Thèmes
-être directif pour les missions à faire mais ne pas être toujours derrière à surveiller	Leadership directif
-être à l'écoute, sérieux, poser des règles -compréhensif, à l'écoute, faire confiance -grande ouverture d'esprit, instaurer un climat amical sans oublier son rôle -de la patience, doit écouter, être ferme, manager participatif semble être la meilleure méthode -droit, rigoureux, laisser une autonomie aux étudiants, -patience, capacité d'adaptation aux différents profils de travail -discipline, écoute, travail d'équipe -à l'écoute, nous guider -laisser liberté et responsabilité, calme et concentré sur les conseils donnés, explicatif et informatif, strict sans être colérique, être confiant -être accessible, se concerter régulièrement, partager nos connaissances, être libre dans ses horaires, avoir des moments externes avec les autres employés -exigeant mais souple et surtout ne pas mettre de pression -A l'écoute, sérieux mais sympathique et toujours connecté -Savoir fixer un objectif dès le départ, laisser les employés aménager leur emploi du temps, -Manager avec plus de discipline, Laisser plus de responsabilité -Que le manager parle avec respect, un manager qui nous responsabilise -Compréhensif, rigoureux, accessible -Être managé librement, plus de liberté et de laisser faire dans mes actions -Être impartial, professionnel, intéressé par ses employés, toujours donner l'air d'être détendu, pas stressé même si c'est faux. Il doit cacher ses émotions -Minimum de pédagogie et de souplesse, rigueur. -Liberté dans le travail, ne pas donner de conseil mais un objectif. -Va créer une offre en fonction des compétences Calme discret serein ? créer une sorte d'autocratie où l'équipe décide elle-même pour se fixer ses limites -Avoir une attitude détendue. 80% du temps en laissant travailler les salariés, les 20 autres % en obligation de résultats, souligner ce qui va et qui ne va pas -Un bon encadrement, un bon état d'esprit	Leadership transactionnel
-Professionnel, sérieux, enthousiaste, à l'écoute, clair dans ses explications, curieux, envie de dépassement de soi, qui entraîne le groupe, agréable, compréhensif. Travailler dans une bonne ambiance agréable mais avec du suivi et du sérieux	Leadership transformationnel

Table 2: Leaderships preferred by future young salespeople

Verbatims	Themes
-To be directive for the missions to be done but not to be always checking up on the team	Directive leadership
-To be a good listener, serious, setting rules -Understanding, trusting open-minded, create a friendly atmosphere without forgetting what your role is -Patience, must listen, be firm, participative management seems to be the best method -Straightforward, rigorous, leave room for students to take initiatives -Patience, ability to adapt to different work profiles -Discipline, attentive, teamwork -Attentive, guiding us -Leave room for expression and responsibility, calm and focused on the advice given, explanatory and informative, strict without showing anger, confident -Being accessible, consulting regularly, sharing our knowledge, being free in our schedules, socializing with the other employees -Demanding but flexible, and above all not pressuring -A good listener, serious but friendly and always connected -Know how to set a goal from the start, let employees set their own schedule, -Manage with more discipline, give more responsibility -That the manager speaks in a respectful way, a manager who helps us to become responsible -Understanding, rigorous, accessible -To be managed freely, more freedom and freedom of action -To be impartial, professional, interested in their employees, always seem relaxed, not stressed, even if it is not the case. They must hide their emotions -A minimum amount of pedagogy and flexibility, rigor. -Give space to grow at work, do not give advice but an objective. -Will create an offer according to the skills required Calm, discreet and composed create a kind of autocracy where the team decides to set its own limits -Have a relaxed attitude. 80% of the time let the employees work, the other 20% with the obligation of results, underline what goes well and what does not go well -Good management, a good mentality	Transactional leadership
-Professional, serious, enthusiastic, a good listener, who gives clear explanations, curious, desire to surpass themself, who leads the group, pleasant, understanding. Work in a good and pleasant atmosphere but with follow-up and seriousness	Transformational leadership

Les réponses des interviewés ayant été classées par catégories de type de leadership préféré, il apparaît que le leadership transactionnel est le plus représenté : le calcul des fréquences relatives montre qu'un seul élément est représenté pour le leadership directif et le leadership transformationnel. En revanche le leadership transactionnel est représenté par 23 éléments. En termes de valeur relative, le leadership transactionnel est représenté à 92%. La demande explicite des jeunes vendeurs vis-à-vis du leadership à exercer par leur N+1 est basé sur un réel échange entre le leader et son subordonné. Les mots ressortant le plus du discours ont été « laisser » et « écoute ». D'autres mots comme « liberté », « compréhensif », « sérieux » sont également apparus.

Pour notre seconde sous-étude, ce sont les annotations des N+1 (les tuteurs de stage) qui avaient dirigé les jeunes vendeurs de la génération Z en entreprise qui ont été analysées à partir d'une fiche d'évaluation que ces mêmes tuteurs avaient remplie.

Bien que la fiche permette au N+1 de se prononcer par l'intermédiaire d'échelles de Likert, il nous a paru plus intéressant d'analyser les commentaires portés sur les fiches d'évaluation par ces derniers.

Afin d'explorer aussi bien les représentations que le sens nous avons retenu deux unités de codage. En ce qui concerne l'analyse lexicale c'est le mot qui a été retenu et pour ce qui concerne l'analyse de contenu c'est l'unité de sens qui a été mobilisée. Cela suit l'idée de Desmarais et Moscarola (2004) et de Gioia et al. (2013) qui précisent que l'analyse de contenu permet d'explorer le sens que les sujets donnent à une expérience alors que l'analyse lexicale est, quant à elle, davantage de nature à révéler les représentations.

Nous avons ainsi effectué une analyse lexicale de 92 fiches mettant en évidence le nombre d'occurrences et réalisé une analyse de contenu qui nous a permis de catégoriser des unités de codage. Avant de réaliser ces analyses, nous avions auparavant classé le discours en deux parties en distinguant comme le proposent Parissier et al. (2005) le comportement vendant du vendeur d'une part et le comportement non-vendant du vendeur d'autre part. Pour rappel, le comportement vendant peut être défini comme étant le comportement que le vendeur adopte lorsqu'il est en lien avec son client, le comportement non-vendant désignant le comportement adopté par le vendeur lorsqu'il est plus particulièrement en lien avec son organisation. Les remarques positives et les observations négatives formulées par les N+1 des vendeurs de la génération Z ont été classées suivant ces critères. Une analyse des occurrences a montré que le dynamisme et la volonté semblent être les mots les plus employés par les N+1 pour qualifier les qualités attendues d'un jeune vendeur.

When the interviewees' responses were categorized by preferred leadership type, it appears that transactional leadership is the most represented: the calculation of relative frequencies shows that only one item is represented for directive leadership and transformational leadership. In contrast, transactional leadership is represented by 23 items. In terms of relative value, transactional leadership is represented by 92%. The explicit desire expressed by young salespeople regarding the leadership to be exercised by their N+1 is based on a real exchange between the leader and their subordinate. The words that stood out the most were «let» and «listen». Other words such as «freedom», «understanding», «serious» also appeared.

For our second sub-study, the comments of the N+1s (the internship tutors) who had directed the young Generation Z salespeople in the company were analyzed based on an evaluation form that these same tutors had filled out.

Although the form allows the N+1 to give their opinion via Likert scales, we found it more interesting to analyze the comments made on the evaluation forms by the tutors.

In order to explore both the representations and the meaning, we retained two coding units. For the lexical analysis, the word was chosen and for the content analysis, the unit of meaning was used. This aligns with the idea of Desmarais and Moscarola (2004) and Gioia and al. (2013) who state that content analysis allows us to explore the meaning that subjects give to an experience, whereas lexical analysis is more likely to reveal representations.

We thus carried out a lexical analysis of 92 cards highlighting the number of occurrences and a content analysis which allowed us to categorize the coding units. Before carrying out these analyses, we had previously classified the discourse into two parts by distinguishing, as proposed by Parissier and al. (2005), between the seller's selling behaviour on the one hand, and the seller's non-selling behaviour on the other. As a reminder, selling behaviour can be defined as the behaviour that the sales assistant adopts when he/she is in contact with his/her client, and non-selling behaviour designates the behaviour adopted by the sales assistant when he/she is more specifically in contact with his/her organization. The positive and negative comments made by the N+1s of Generation Z salespeople were classified according to these criteria. An analysis of the occurrences showed that dynamism and willingness seem to be the words most used by the N+1s to describe the qualities expected of a young salesperson.

Tableau 3 : Occurrences remarques positives des N+1

Mots	Occurrences	Fréquence
dynamique	11	1.6%
bien	10	1.4%
volontaire	9	1.3%
curieux	8	1,1%
tâches	8	1,1%
faire	7	1%
pour	7	1%
rapidement	7	1%
L'écoute	7	1%
souriant	7	1%
L'équipe	7	1%
comportement	7	1%
relationnel	7	1%
vente	7	1%
client	7	1%
intégration	7	1%

Afin d'affiner notre réflexion, nous avons extrait les remarques positives formulées par les N+1, classées selon le caractère vendant ou non-vendant des jeunes vendeurs observés. Il est ressorti de cette analyse que les comportements vendant que les directeurs voudraient voir adopter par les jeunes vendeurs sont la connaissance des techniques de vente, la prise d'initiative, un bon relationnel avec les clients, une intégration à l'équipe et un goût du challenge. En ce qui concerne les comportements non-vendant, les directeurs apprécient le sérieux, l'implication, le respect des objectifs fixés, la maturité, le côté agréable et le bon comportement du jeune vendeur.

Table 3: Occurrences of positive remarks from N+1

Words	Occurrences	Frequency
dynamic	11	1.6%
well	10	1.4%
voluntary	9	1.3%
curious	8	1,1%
tasks	8	1,1%
do	7	1%
for	7	1%
quickly	7	1%
Listening	7	1%
smiling	7	1%
The team	7	1%
behaviour	7	1%
relational	7	1%
sales	7	1%
customer	7	1%
integration	7	1%

In order to refine our thinking, we extracted the positive remarks made by the N+1s, classified according to the selling or non-selling nature of the young salespeople observed. This analysis revealed that the selling behaviours that the managers would like to see the young salespeople adopt are knowledge of sales techniques, taking initiative, good relations with customers, integration into the team and a taste for challenge. As far as non- selling behaviours are concerned, the managers appreciate the seriousness, the involvement, the respect of the objectives set, the maturity, the pleasant side and the good behaviour of the young salesperson.

Tableau 4 : Remarques positives des N+1

Comportements vendant	Comportements non-vendant
-Appliquée qui a rapidement assimilé les techniques de vente propres à l'enseigne, bon contact avec la clientèle -S'est intégrée très rapidement à l'équipe, très autonome, débrouillarde, a rapidement appris ses tâches et pris des initiatives, très mature, très bonne communication, sens du relationnel avec les clients -Motivation et investissement sans faille. A su s'intégrer à l'équipe et s'approprier les techniques de vente. Professionnelle, disponible et souriante - A l'écoute des clients, fait ce qu'on lui demande - Compétent - Bonne écoute, désir de bien faire, bonne intégration des techniques de vente, agréable compagnie - Impliqué, intéressé, bon relationnel client, capacité d'intégration à une équipe naturelle et rapide -Motivé et impliqué, naturellement chaleureux, relationnel très agréable avec ses clients et ses collègues - Volontaire, n'hésite pas à réaliser toutes les tâches qui lui sont confiées, a su répondre aux demandes faites par les clients, gestion efficace de son temps. Accueillante et chaleureuse -A bien maîtrisé les missions qui lui étaient confiées -Bon dynamisme, bon état d'esprit, contact facile avec la clientèle, comportement général très satisfaisant - Très polyvalente et très dynamique avec une très bonne maturité -Bon comportement, a le goût du challenge et aime suivre ses résultats Excellent esprit commercial	-Sérieuse, impliquée et motivée par les objectifs qui lui ont été fixés, implication totale, volonté débordante -Très agréable, motivée et bien intégrée dans l'entreprise -Elève agréable - Très bonne maturité et volonté de s'impliquer, très bon esprit Bon comportement dans l'entreprise

Table 4: Positive remarks from N+1

Selling behaviours	Non-selling behaviours
-Diligent, quickly assimilated the sales techniques specific to the brand, good contact with customers -Very quickly fitted into the team, very autonomous, resourceful, quickly learned their tasks and took initiatives, very mature, very good communication, good relationship with customers -Motivation and investment without fault. Has been able to fit into the team and to adapt to the sales techniques. Professional, available and with a ready smile -Listens to customers, does what is asked of them -Competent -Good listener, desire to do well, good integration of sales techniques, pleasant company -Involved, interested, good customer relations, ability to fit into a team naturally and quickly -Motivated and involved, naturally warm, very pleasant relationship with customers and colleagues -Determined, does not hesitate to carry out all the tasks entrusted to them, knew how to answer the requests made by the customers, effective management of their time. Welcoming and warm -Has a good command of the missions entrusted to them -Good dynamism, good mentality, easy contact with the customers, very satisfactory general behaviour -Very versatile and dynamic with a very mature approach -Good behaviour, likes to be challenged and to keep tabs on their results Very commercially-minded	-Serious, involved and motivated by the objectives that were set for her, total involvement, strong will -Very pleasant, motivated and well integrated in the company -Pleasant student -Very good maturity and willingness to get involved, very good spirit Good behaviour in the company

De même, nous avons extrait les remarques négatives formulées par les N+1, classées selon le caractère vendant ou non-vendant des jeunes vendeurs observés. Il ressort de cette analyse que les comportements vendant dont les managers ne veulent pas sont le manque d'implication dans les relations avec la clientèle, l'attitude de retrait, le manque d'effort, l'absence de curiosité ou encore une affirmation trop faible des jeunes vendeurs.

Les managers ont tendance à détester certains comportements non-vendant de la part d'un jeune futur vendeur. Ces comportements sont la familiarité, le non-respect des encadrants, trop de distraction, le manque d'implication dans les objectifs fixés ainsi que le manque de curiosité, de maturité, le manque de passion et d'enthousiasme. Des comportements comme le « non-respect des horaires d'embauche » ou encore une attitude ou un langage inapproprié ne sont également pas appréciés par les managers.

Similarly, we extracted the negative remarks made by the N+1, classified according to the selling or non-selling character of the young salespeople observed. It emerges from this analysis that the selling behaviours that managers do not want are the lack of involvement in customer relations, the attitude of withdrawal, the lack of effort, the absence of curiosity or the low level of assertiveness of young salespeople.

Managers tend to dislike certain non-selling behaviours from a young prospective salesperson. These behaviours include familiarity, disrespect for supervisors, getting easily distracted, lack of commitment to goals, and lack of curiosity, maturity, drive and enthusiasm. Behaviours such as «not respecting working hours» or inappropriate attitudes or language are also not appreciated by managers.

Tableau 5 : Remarques négatives des N+1

Comportements vendant	Comportements non-vendant
-Manque d'implication dans la satisfaction des clients -Souvent en retrait face à la clientèle -Difficulté à mettre en œuvre les techniques de vente -Travailler le savoir oser : moins de timidité -Timide et réservé, la relation avec le client n'est pas aisée -Doit s'affirmer un peu plus -Difficulté à trouver ses marques, sa place sur le point de vente. Pas facile d'aller au- devant des clients pour engager un processus -Attention à l'attitude et au langage en surface de vente.	-Familiarité dans les attitudes et les propos -N'a pas saisi sa deuxième chance, très déçu par le stagiaire, gros problème de comportement, allant du vol au respect des encadrants manque de relationnel avec les clients -Ne porte pas d'intérêt pour la vente beaucoup trop distrait, tête en l'air -Pas impliqué dans les objectifs fixés manque d'intérêt et parfois complètement perdu dans ses pensées -Doit chercher à être plus constant -Plus de curiosité et doit poser plus de question afin de pousser plus loin son analyse contextuelle l'anticipation et la spontanéité sont à travailler -La prise d'initiative est à travailler -A subi son stage parfois dans une position de souffrance manque de maturité évident -Attention à la régularité -Manque de dynamisme et d'implication, manque de maturité professionnelle -Caractère réservé, attention aux horaires d'embauche Stagiaire discret travailler le savoir être : sourire, spontanéité et passion -Devrait faire preuve de plus de dynamisme et de curiosité -Doit s'investir un peu plus dans son travail, doit se concentrer sur le travail demandé, doit devenir plus autonome et s'investir totalement pour progresser -Peu d'effort, pas de curiosité -Pourquoi a-t-il choisi le commerce -Manque de connaissance des produits -Souvent distrait sans réelle passion pour le commerce en magasin -De par sa timidité l'étudiant a eu du mal à rentrer dans son stage -Doit parler plus fort - Manque d'initiative, travaille difficilement en autonomie, se laisse facilement distraire - Plus de concentration, plus de polyvalence, plus de confiance en soi pour plus de prise d'initiative - Manque d'enthousiasme - Discret - Manque de connaissance - Attention à la position statique en boutique en période calme - Désordonné et tête en l'air - Attention aux horaires d'embauche - S'impliquer davantage pour réussir ses objectifs - Démarrage lent

Table 5: Negative Remarks from N+1

Selling behaviours	Non-selling behaviours
-Lack of involvement in customer satisfaction -Often reserved when dealing with customers -Difficulty in implementing sales techniques -Work on knowing how to dare: less shyness -Shy and reserved, the relationship with the customer is not comfortable -Must be a little more assertive -Difficulty in finding their marks, their place in the sales outlet. Not easy to go up to customers to start a process -Attention to attitude and language on the sales floor.	-Familiarity in attitudes and words -Did not react when given another chance, very disappointed by the trainee, big issues with behaviour, ranging from theft to non respect of the supervisors Incapable of building a relationship with the customers -Not interested in sales much too easily distracted, absent-minded -Not engaged in the objectives set lack of interest and sometimes mind completely wanders off the task in hand -Must strive to be more consistent -More curiosity and must ask more questions in order to push their contextual analysis further Anticipation and spontaneity need to be worked on -The capacity to take initiative needs to be worked on Just put up with their work experience, often finding it hard to cope, obvious lack of maturity -Pay attention to regularity -Lack of dynamism and involvement, lack of professional maturity -Reserved nature, pay attention to work hourst Discreet intern Work on the soft skills: smile, spontaneity and enthusiasm -Should show more dynamism and curiosity -Must invest a little more in their work, must concentrate on the work requested, must become more autonomous and invest themself totally to progress -Little effort, no curiosity -Why did he/she choose sales -Lack of product knowledge -Often distracted with no real enthusiasm for in-store selling -Because of his shyness, the student had a hard time getting into his internship -Needs to speak up -Lack of initiative, difficult to work independently, easily distracted - More concentration, more versatility, more self-confidence to take more initiative -Lack of enthusiasm Discreet -Lack of knowledge -Beware of standing still in the store during a lull in activity -Disorganized and absent-minded -Pay attention to work hours -Be more involved in order to achieve goals -Slow start

L’analyse des occurrences liées aux remarques négatives des N+1 montre que ces derniers reprochent en premier lieu des manques, des problèmes vis-à-vis du devoir des jeunes vendeurs. En second lieu, les N+1 citent des problèmes avec des horaires ou encore avec le travail et l’intérêt que les jeunes vendeurs y portent.

The analysis of the occurrences related to the negative remarks of the N+1s shows that the latter firstly reproach shortcomings and issues with the young salespeople’s duties. Secondly, the N+1s mention problems with timetables or with work and to what extent the young salespeople are engaged in it.

Tableau 6 : Occurrences remarques négatives des N+1

Mots	Occurrences	Fréquence
manque	10	2.8%
doit	7	2%
horaires	2	0.6%
difficulté	2	0.6%
discret	2	0.6%
réservé	2	0.6%
s'investir	2	0.6%
travail	2	0.6%
passion	2	0.6%
clients	2	0.6%
d'initiative	2	0.6%
dynamisme	2	0.6%
maturité	2	0.6%
spontanéité	2	0.6%
distrait	2	0.6%
travailler	2	0.6%
d'implication	2	0.6%
curiosité	2	0.6%
d'intérêt	2	0.6%

DISCUSSION, LIMITES ET VOIES DE FUTURES RECHERCHES, IMPLICATIONS MANAGERIALES

Discussion des résultats

L'étude réalisée auprès des jeunes vendeurs a pu mettre en évidence le fait que, selon les vendeurs il existe plusieurs points d'amélioration par rapport au leadership auquel ils sont soumis. Pour eux, leurs N+1 doivent mettre en place un leadership dit transactionnel auquel ces jeunes vendeurs aspirent. Ce leadership présuppose comme le précise Thépot (2008) un échange entre le leader et son subordonné afin que l'un et l'autre reçoivent quelque chose en échange de leurs interactions. Il n'y a alors pas forcément de contrôle des subordonnés mais plutôt une construction de contrats pour aligner leurs intérêts sur ceux de la communauté. Le double codage effectué a montré de légères différences

Table 6: Occurrences of positive remarks from N+1

Words	Occurrences	Frequency
lack	10	2.8%
must	7	2%
schedules	2	0.6%
difficulty	2	0.6%
discreet	2	0.6%
reserved	2	0.6%
be involved	2	0.6%
work	2	0.6%
enthusiasm	2	0.6%
customers	2	0.6%
initiative	2	0.6%
dynamism	2	0.6%
maturity	2	0.6%
spontaneity	2	0.6%
distracted	2	0.6%
work	2	0.6%
involvement	2	0.6%
curiosity	2	0.6%
of interest	2	0.6%

DISCUSSION, LIMITATIONS AND AVENUES FOR FUTURE RESEARCH, MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

Discussion of the results

The study conducted on young salespeople revealed that, according to the salespeople, there are several points of improvement that should be considered with respect to the leadership to which they are subjected. For them, their N+1 must implement a so-called transactional leadership that these young salespeople aspire to. This leadership presupposes, as Thépot (2008) points out, an exchange between the leader and their subordinate, so that both receive something in exchange for their interactions. There is, therefore, not necessarily a form of control exerted on the subordinates but rather a construction of contracts to align their interests with those of the com-d'appréciation entre intercodeurs, le leadership directif n'ayant ainsi pas été repéré par le deuxième codeur et le leadership transformationnel ayant été seulement un peu incrémenté par le deuxième codeur. Le leadership transactionnel, d'ailleurs bien repéré dans la littérature demeure donc comme étant le leadership le plus représenté et donc le plus demandé par les jeunes vendeurs. L'étude menée par la suite auprès des N+1 a montré que les comportements des jeunes vendeurs pouvaient être classés comme le suggèrent Parissier et al. (2005) sous forme de comportements vendant et non-vendant que les N+1.

En ce qui concerne les attentes des vendeurs, il a déjà été montré qu'il existait des différences de préférence de management entre la génération des baby boomers et celle de la génération Y (Schultz 2012) : les baby boomers préfèrent par exemple des réunions collaboratives, une notion de travail en équipe et un encadrement réel, les vendeurs de la génération Y souhaitant quant à eux moins de contact avec leur encadrement et une reconnaissance de leur propre performance. Notre recherche met en évidence plusieurs attentes particulières de la part des vendeurs de la génération Z qui sont différentes de celles des générations précédentes telles que la liberté ou encore le fait que leur N+1 puisse leur faire confiance.

En ce qui concerne les attentes des N+1, ces derniers n'ont plus uniquement tendance à axer leur demande sur des critères objectifs comme les compétences techniques, les diplômes ou les écoles fréquentées ou encore les expériences passées (Action Commerciale 2017). En effet, il est possible de comprendre que les N+1 recherchent des critères plus subjectifs comme des traits de caractère particuliers tels que le sérieux, l'implication, le respect des objectifs, la maturité ou encore le côté agréable.

Ils ont également de nombreuses remarques négatives vraiment particulières à formuler vis-à-vis des vendeurs de cette génération spécifique. Ainsi le manque d'implication vis-à-vis des objectifs fixés, le manque de concentration ou encore le non-respect des horaires de travail sont autant de particularités observables à la fois au sein de la littérature et sur le terrain, ce qui témoignent des spécificités de cette génération. Cependant, les entreprises ne peuvent se passer de cette génération. En effet, les firmes n'ont pas le choix et doivent inévitablement recruter des acteurs de cette cohorte. Mais c'est également par les vendeurs issus de cette génération que l'entreprise pourra passer par de la vente basée essentiellement sur des méthode d'outbound marketing à des méthodes de vente plus particulièrement axées sur l'inbound marketing (Aljohani 2020). C'est de même grâce à cette génération que l'entreprise pourra également performer en termes de vente phygital (Roten et Vanheems 2021).

munity. The double coding that was carried out showed slight differences in appreciation between coders, with directive leadership not being identified by the second coder and transformational leadership being only slightly incremented by the second coder. Transactional leadership, which has been well identified in the literature, remains the most represented and therefore the most requested leadership by young salespeople.

The subsequent study of N+1s showed that the behaviours of young salespeople could be classified, as suggested by Parissier and al. (2005), as selling and non-selling behaviours.

Regarding the expectations of salespeople, it has already been shown that there are differences in management preferences between the baby boomer generation and the Generation Y (Schultz 2012): baby boomers prefer, for example, collaborative meetings, a notion of teamwork and real supervision, while Generation Y salespeople want less contact with their supervisors and recognition of their personal performance. Our research highlights several specific expectations from Generation Z salespeople that are different from those of previous generations, such as freedom and the fact that their N+1 understand that they can be trusted.

Regarding the expectations of N+1s, the latter no longer tend to focus solely on objective criteria such as technical skills, diplomas, schools attended or past experiences (Action Commerciale 2017). Indeed, it is possible to understand that N+1s are looking for more subjective criteria such as particular character traits like seriousness, involvement, respecting objectives, maturity or even pleasantness.

They also have many very specific negative remarks to make about salespeople of this specific generation. Lack of commitment to objectives, lack of concentration and non-compliance with working hours are all characteristics that can be observed in the literature and in the field, which are evidence of the specificities of this generation. However, companies cannot do without this generation. Indeed, firms have no choice but to recruit members of this cohort. But it is also through the salespeople from this generation that the company will be able to move from sales based essentially on outbound marketing methods, to sales methods that are more particularly focused on inbound marketing (Aljohani 2020). It is also thanks to this generation that the company will be able to perform in terms of phygital sales (Roten &Vanheems 2021).

Limitations and avenues for future research

Of course, our study has some limitations. It would have been possible, for example, to obtain feedback from the young salespeople on the assessments made by their N+1, in order to enrich the study. This would have been similar to a Delphi method, which would

Les limites et les voies pour de futures recherches

Bien entendu, notre étude comporte quelques limites. Il aurait par exemple été possible d'obtenir un retour des jeunes vendeurs sur les appréciations que leur avaient porté leur N+1, ceci afin d'enrichir l'étude. Ceci se serait rapproché en quelque sorte d'une méthode Delphi, ce qui aurait permis d'encore éclairer davantage cette recherche. De même, il aurait été également possible de recourir à une approche dyadique (Lussier 2014) en interrogeant conjointement cette fois-ci non pas des vendeurs et des clients comme l'a réalisé Lussier mais les vendeurs et leur N+1. De même, une étude comparative des différentes générations et de leur style de leadership préféré pourrait être menée. Il est prévu de recourir à ces types de recueils lors de nos travaux futurs pour connaître encore et avec davantage de précision les modes de leadership que les managers doivent adopter pour guider au mieux ces vendeurs de la génération Z et ce dans une approche non pas uniquement franco-française mais également dans une étude qui pourrait être une approche interculturelle comparative.

Les implications managériales

Les résultats obtenus peuvent avoir une portée à la fois pédagogique et andragogique. En effet, d'un point de vue pédagogique, nos travaux pourraient être intégrés dans un contenu de formation à destination d'étudiants. Ainsi, en France, il pourrait être intéressant de les diffuser au sein des cycles de BTS, de BUT, de licence, voire de les intégrer au sein des titres RNCP en vente et management commercial. Cela permettrait de diffuser les bonnes pratiques à destination des étudiants de manière à pouvoir mettre l'accent sur les comportement attendus et reprochés par les managers vis-à-vis d'une génération telle que la leur de manière à ce qu'ils en prennent conscience.

De même, d'un point de vue andragogique, les résultats de nos recherches pourraient permettre, par l'apport de techniques expérientielles basées sur l'exposé de problèmes rencontrés par les managers ou par le biais d'études de cas axées sur des faits réels, de présenter, lors de formations dispensées à des managers commerciaux, le style de leadership adapté aux jeunes vendeurs.

CONCLUSION

Bien que nous ayons porté un regard attentif à la littérature, notre étude a tout de même été à visée largement exploratoire, peu d'études ayant été réalisées sur ce sujet. Notre étude a montré l'importance d'une mise en relation des attentes des jeunes vendeurs et de leur style voulu de leadership et du désir de comporte-

have enabled us to shedgreater light on this research. Similarly, a dyadic approach (Lussier 2014) could also have been used, this time, by jointly interviewing not salespeople and customers as Lussier did, but salespeople and their N+1. Similarly, a comparative study of different generations and their preferred leadership styles could be conducted. We are planning to use these types of data collection in our future work in order to learn more about, and with even more precision, the leadership styles that managers must adopt in order to best guide these Generation Z salespeople, not only in a Franco-French approach but also in a study that could be a comparative intercultural approach.

Managerial implications

The results obtained can have both pedagogical and andragogical significance. Indeed, from a pedagogical point of view, our work could be integrated in a training content for students. Thus, in France, it could be interesting to disseminate them within the cycles of "BTS, BUT, Licence", or even to integrate them into the RNCP titles in sales and commercial management. This would make it possible to disseminate good practices to students in order to emphasize the behaviour expected and reproached by managers with regard to a generation such as theirs, so that they become aware of it.

Similarly, within the domain of adult education, the results of our research could be used to present the leadership style of young salespeople in training courses for sales managers, using experiential techniques based on the presentation of problems encountered by managers or through case studies based on real facts.

CONCLUSION

Although we took a close look at the literature, our study was still largely exploratory, as few studies have been conducted on this topic. Our study showed the importance of relating young salespeople's expectations to their desired leadership style and the desire for specific salesperson behaviours demanded by their N+1s.

The results of this research show that N+1s can be the major actors of an adapted leadership if they opt for a so-called transactional leadership. According to the study, it would be possible for N+1s to move from directive leadership to this transactional leadership if they have not yet implemented it. For example, they could get young salespeople to work through social networks or to work on projectswhich would make them more satisfied and more inclined to increase their performance.

ments particuliers des vendeurs réclamés par leurs N+1.

Les résultats de cette recherche montrent que les N+1 peuvent être les acteurs majeurs d'un leadership adapté s'ils optent pour un leadership dit transactionnel. D'après l'étude menée, il serait tout à fait possible pour les N+1 de passer d'un leadership directif à ce leadership transactionnel si ces derniers ne l'ont pas encore mis en place. Ainsi, ils pourraient par exemple faire travailler les jeunes vendeurs grâce à des réseaux sociaux ou encore les faire œuvrer par projet ce qui les rendrait du coup plus satisfaits et plus enclins, du même coup, à accroître leur performance.

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CUSTOMER SATISFACTION AND LOYALTY AFTER A DOUBLE DEVIATION: THE FUNDAMENTAL ROLE OF PERSONALIZED REPAIRS AND RELATIONAL, NON-TRANSACTIONAL MANAGEMENT

Abstract :

The repair of service failures has been widely studied, but few studies have addressed the situation where the repair fails to satisfy customers, creating a double deviation. This situation can generate negative emotions, which in turn can lead to behaviors that are highly detrimental to the business. It is therefore crucial to find effective strategies to prevent these negative behaviors and regain customer satisfaction and loyalty after a double deviation. A qualitative study explored ways to remedy this situation. The results suggest (1) a better understanding of customer emotions (2) the key role of personalizing repairs and (3) the need for relational, non-transactional management.

Key words: *double deviation, negative emotions, repair personalization, relational management, satisfaction/loyalty*

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INTRODUCTION

The literature on service repair can be divided into two main categories: (1) repairs following initial service failures, referred to by some researchers as “single deviations” (Suresh and Chawla 2022), and (2) repairs related to double deviations, which occur when a service failure is followed by a failed repair attempt, amplifying feelings of injustice and dissatisfaction among customers (Grégoire et al. 2019). The term “double deviation” was coined by Bitner, Booms and Tetreault (1990) to describe the failure of both the initial service and its subsequent repair. However, the vast majority of research focuses on the first theme, namely service failure treatment, which is more commonly known as “service failure recovery”. This topic has received particular attention from many researchers (Valentini, Orsingher and Polyakova 2020), in contrast to double deviations, which have been little studied to date (Suresh and Chawla 2022). When double deviation situations occur, companies run the risk of losing customers permanently (Man 2022).

The statistics published in 2020 by Customer Care Measurement & Consulting (CCMC) on customer dissatisfaction indicate that 66% of American households experienced at least one issue with products and services. Moreover, over half of these customers reported not receiving an appropriate response, exposing them to a double deviation. In this regard, CCMC highlights a potentially significant risk, with estimates reaching up to $494 billion in potential revenue losses for American companies in the event of inadequate complaint handling (CCMC 2020). According to Van Vaerenbergh et al. (2019), managers and researchers have yet to effectively manage service failures. According to these researchers *“One of the key drivers of poor recoveries might reside in the current static, transactional approach to recovery”*.

Double deviations, as Man (2022) points out, tend to generate significant dissatisfaction among customers, triggering a cascade of negative emotions. These intense emotions don’t stay dormant, as they can quickly translate into resistance and revenge behaviors (Lee et al. 2021; Roux 2022). For all these reasons, double deviations present a considerable challenge for companies that is far more complex than that of single deviations (Lee and Park 2010). Although most studies have examined dissatisfaction by focusing primarily on cognitive appraisal such as the disconfirmation process or perceived fairness, Giese and Cote (2000) indicate that appraisals related to (dis)satisfaction can be both cognitive and affective, or even both. This perspective is supported by the research findings of Lee and Park (2010), who reveal the existence of emotional distress and perceptions of interpersonal injustice among customers during a failed repair (double deviation). Their results also highlight an increase in negative emotions and a decrease in perceptions of justice among customers after a double deviation.

Furthermore, it is observed that many studies recommend similar remedies for single and double deviations, including measures such as compensation, rapid response, apology, initiation of repair (Chou 2015) and the promise that the failure will not recur in the future (Van Vaerenbergh, Larivière and Vermeir 2012). But are there any particularities about repairs after a double deviation? In this context, crucial questions arise: how can the company effectively manage dissatisfaction and appease the anger of customers faced with a double deviation? What are consumers’ specific expectations in this complex situation? How can it re-establish a lasting relationship of trust with its customers after this double failure?

To explore these questions, our research aims to fill this gap by exploring in depth the specific repairs required for double deviations, while taking into account key variables such as consumers’ negative feelings in order to better manage them. To this end, we conducted a qualitative study through semi-structured interviews with 26 consumers who had experienced a double deviation. The results of this research make several contributions. From a theoretical point of view, this research contributes to deepening the understanding of double deviations, in particular through an explanation by the notion of violation of the psychological contract. The analysis of the results of the empirical study leads to proposing several hypotheses on the effectiveness of personalized repairs and the need for a more relational management. This research also leads to managerial recommendations concerning the operational management of double deviations in order to restore relationships with customers and avoid harmful behavior.

This paper is structured as follows: (1) The literature review will be presented, (2) followed by a description of the qualitative study methodology, (3) and the study results will be presented and (4) discussed. Finally, the theoretical and managerial implications will be presented, as well as the limitations and future directions of the research.

Literature review

Despite the abundance of literature on the importance of service recovery and best practices in managing this process, it is often found to be performed unsatisfactorily (Basso and Pizzutti 2016). Indeed, research has shown that when service recovery fails or falls short of customer expectations, this usually leads to a significant breakdown in trust in the company (Pacheco et al. 2018).

In the context of double deviations, customers are faced with a situation where the company fails to effectively manage a single deviation (Basso and Pizzutti 2016). Numerous studies have examined the impact of ineffective service

repairs on customer dissatisfaction. This research indicates that failed or ineffective service repairs have the same negative impact on customers as no repair at all (Suresh and Chawla 2022).
To gain a better understanding of this research area, we will address the following points in this section: (1) An analysis of double deviation as a violation of psychological contracts, (2) The strong emotions it triggers in consumers, notably anger and dissatisfaction, and finally, (3) An examination of the pivotal role of justice in managing these emotions.

The double deviation as a perceived violation of psychological contracts

According to Fang and Chiu (2014) in the dynamic between buyer and seller, it is common to view the buyer as the relatively vulnerable party, while the seller often holds more power in the transaction. Double deviation can occur when this power of the seller is abused, for example by refusing a refund, which can lead to the dissolution of the relationship between buyer and seller. This can be interpreted as a violation of the psychological contract (PCV) that exists between consumers and seller, and this is likely to generate negative emotions such as anger and dissatisfaction (Fang and Chiu 2014). Rousseau and Tijoriwala (1998) define the psychological contract as *"an individual's belief in mutual obligations between that person and another party".*

Although psychological contract violation has been primarily studied in employeeorganization relationships, researchers such as Pavlou and Gefen (2005) have explored its role in buyer-seller relationships. Every interaction between a buyer and a seller is influenced by a psychological contract, going beyond the formal provisions of the legal contract (Pavlou and Gefen 2005; Theotokis et al. 2012). PCV arises when buyers feel that the seller has failed to meet the obligations specified in the psychological contract (Niehoff and Paul 2001; Theotokis et al. 2012). Thus, psychological contract violation refers to buyers' perception of having been treated badly with regard to the terms of an exchange agreement (Pavlou and Gefen 2005). For Hill et al. (2009), this psychological contract violation may have its roots in the seller's failure to meet its obligations or promises in terms of perceived justice. However, while PCV has been widely studied in employee-organization relationships, its impact and relevance in buyer-seller relationships remains relatively unexplored (Malhotra et al. 2017).

Emotions caused by double deviations

Emotions are a complex phenomenon encompassing both mental and physical aspects (Stephens and Gwinner 1998). In the context of services, emotions are of particular importance, as they exert a significant influence on individuals' reactions to the often complex events and interactions associated with services (Fang and Chiu 2014). Moreover, emotions can play a crucial mediating role in the relationship between perceptions of justice and customer loyalty when it comes to service repair (DeWitt, Nguyen and Marshall 2008).

Among the emotions that frequently emerge in response to double deviations, anger and dissatisfaction are particularly notable (Xu and Wu 2018). Fang and Chiu (2014) specifically examined these two emotions as emotional reactions to unsatisfactory service experiences. Anger and dissatisfaction have a significant influence on how customers evaluate the company after experiencing a double deviation, and can strongly impact their propensity to recommend the company positively or negatively (Mehmood, Rashid and Zaheer 2018).

Research in this area focuses on customer evaluation and perception, particularly with regard to the (in)justice that influences dissatisfaction and the behaviors adopted by customers (Lee et al. 2021). All three levels of justice theory can contribute to the management of customer dissatisfaction, including distributive justice, which concerns the compensation provided by the firm, procedural justice, which focuses on the procedures implemented by the firm to manage dissatisfaction, and interactional justice, which concerns the quality of exchanges and interactions mobilized by the failing firm (Putra and Yasa 2021). Moreover, the perception of injustice can trigger intensely negative feelings (Nisar Khattak, Zolin and Muhammad 2020) such as customer anger (Bambauer-Sachse et al. 2022) and loss of trust (Kaufmann, Carter and Esslinger 2018). Customers also feel that the company has not lived up to its relational commitments (de Ruyter and Wetzels 2000). Faced with such a situation, customers are likely to translate these feelings into unfavorable behaviors towards the failing company, such as Exit (Hirschman 1970), change, revenge or avoidance (Bechwati and Morrin 2003). These double deviations are also seen as a waste of time and money for customers (Liao 2007), associated with difficulties in contacting the company or asserting their rights, as well as money spent without receiving the expected service.

Customer anger in service: origins, triggers and relational implications

According to McColl-Kennedy et al (2009), service failures that are not satisfactorily resolved have the potential to trigger customer anger, an emotion frequently associated with episodes of customer rage. This anger can be an indicator of various sources of dissatisfaction, including dissatisfaction with an action, dissatisfaction with treatment, or a perceived violation of justice (McColl-Kennedy et al. 2009).

Moreover, the relational elements of exchanges, particularly in the context of services, often elicit more intense emotional responses than transactional elements (Bailey, Gremler and McCollough 2001). These socio-emotional exchanges, also known as relational contracts, become essential in understanding customers' emotional responses (Fang and Chiu 2014). Furthermore, in the context of relational psychological contract violation (PCV), consumers are likely to experience intensely negative emotions in the face of procedural or interactional injustice regardless of the final outcome (Fang and Chiu 2014). According to these researchers, angry customers may express their dissatisfaction destructively. This destructive voice represents a mechanism by which the consumer seeks to regain power in response to a double deviation.

Although the concept of the relational contract may appear less tangible than that of the transactional contract from a business perspective, it is essential to stress that fair procedures and interactions can help reduce the economic costs of complaints. Consequently, they can reduce the compensation required to achieve distributive equity (Tax and Brown 1998).

Dissatisfaction in the context of double deviations and its emotional implications

Dissatisfaction, as a complex emotion, occupies a crucial place in customers' reactions when faced with double deviation situations (Fang and Chiu 2014). This emotion is associated more with the undesirable outcome of an event than with its underlying cause (Bougie, Pieters and Zeelenberg 2003). It frequently finds its source in violations of the psychological contract, generating a sense of unpleasantness in individuals (Tomprou, Rousseau and Hansen 2015). In a transactional context, psychological contract violation (PCV), particularly distributive injustice, is shown to be directly linked to consumer dissatisfaction (Fang and Chiu 2014). This association stems from the economic imbalance resulting from a double deviation (Fang and Chiu 2014). Transactional PCV focuses primarily on outcomes in terms of economic, tangible, short-term and extrinsic characteristics (Conway and Briner 2005). In other words, when the service provided fails to meet the customer's expectations, this can lead to dissatisfaction linked to distributive injustice, fueling a series of negative emotions. Dissatisfaction in this context is an emotional response that arises directly from a service experience that fails to meet customer expectations (Fang and Chiu 2014). This experience can include situations where service quality, communication or problem resolution fall short of the standards expected by the customer. It is important to note that this dissatisfaction is not a static reaction, but rather a dynamic emotion that can evolve depending on the circumstances (Fang and Chiu 2014). Moreover, significant correlations have been established between dissatisfaction and anger (Folkes, Koletsky and Graham 1987).

Justice theory for managing injustice

Justice is an essential concept for understanding human reactions to conflict, and has been widely explored in the literature about service recovery (Varela-Neira et al. 2008; Vázquez-Casielles et al. 2012). Justice theory, based on the notion of perceived justice, has its roots in social exchange theory, whose origins can be traced back to Blau (1964) and Adams (1965). Perceived justice, at the heart of much marketing research, is identified as a pillar in the formation of customers' evaluative judgments in the face of organizations' responses to double deviation (Mattila and Cranage 2005; Zou and Migacz 2022). According to this theory, individuals assess the fairness of an exchange by comparing the ratio of their results and investments to those of other participants in the exchange relationship (Adams, 1963). This notion is subdivided into several dimensions, notably distributive justice (fairness of outcomes), procedural justice (fairness of procedures) and interpersonal justice (fairness of interactions). These dimensions prove crucial to understanding how customers perceive the repair of a double deviation and how this influences their emotional and behavioral reactions (Ellyawati 2017).

Cognitive theories of emotion, underpinned by the work of DeWitt et al. (2008) stipulate that the perception of fairness in service repair efforts has an impact on customers' emotional responses, such as disappointment, happiness and pleasure. These emotions, in turn, exert an influence on customers' attitudinal and behavioral loyalty (Choi and Choi 2014). Hence, to assess the extent to which the repair process is perceived as fair by the customer, several questions arise: Does the customer feel that he or she has obtained a fair result (distributive fairness)? Does the customer feel they have been treated with courtesy and respect (interactional fairness)? Does the customer feel that the company's decision-making procedures were fair (procedural fairness)? These elements are essential to understanding how customers react to deviations and their redress (Smith et al. 1999).

Methodology of the qualitative study

The objective of this exploratory study is to identify the specific expectations of customers who have experienced a double deviation situation in order to determine how the company can effectively manage customer dissatisfaction and appease their anger, with the aim of reestablishing a lasting trust relationship with its clientele. A convenience sample of 26 dissatisfied customers (50% female; see Annex A) who have experienced a double deviation situation agreed to participate in this research through semi-structured individual interviews.

Respondents were recruited in two ways. Twenty respondents were recruited through the website www.ma-reclamation.fr[1], where they had provided their contact information in the hope of being contacted by the failing company. The remaining six respondents were recruited through personal connections. The respondents ranged in age from 21 to 67 and came from various socio-professional categories. The average interview duration was about forty-five minutes, ranging from twenty minutes for the shortest interview to two and a half hours for the longest one.

The interview guide was developed based on document analysis, research objectives, and research questions. It was structured around the following themes:

- The type of double deviation experienced;
- The approach adopted by the company [repairs (distributive justice) – procedures (procedural justice) – quality of interactions (interactional justice)];
- The emotions felt by the customers;
- The decisions made;
- Customer expectations in terms of repairs;

All interviews were conducted by telephone, as the interviewees lived in different parts of France. As the interviews progressed, the amount of new information diminished. We therefore decided to stop the interviews when they no longer provided any new information (saturation). The interviews were recorded and fully transcribed. They were then coded and analyzed thematically using NVivo 12 software (see Appendix B). Content analysis makes it possible, according to Gavard-Perret et al. (2018), to *"identify consumers' attitudes, intentions, beliefs, stereotypes (...)"*, as well as to *"compare responses in terms of interests, opinions, associations of ideas, expectations, etc."*. Thus, the thematic analysis (Gavard-Perret et al. 2018) we carried out consisted of a complete and in-depth exploration of emerging themes and to find certain recurring themes among the various respondents such as feelings and emotions experienced (injustice - anger - powerlessness...), as well as customer decisions and expectations.

RESULTS[2]

Three main results emerge from the analysis. (1) A better knowledge and understanding of customer emotions following a double deviation. (2) The importance of personalizing repairs to manage double deviations more effectively and appropriately. (3) The need to adopt a relational rather than transactional process to appease customers' negative emotions and ensure continuity of the relationship.

Emotions caused by double deviations

Emotions play a crucial role in customers' decisions and behaviors (Sharma et al. 2023). That's why we focused our study on the emotions felt by customers following a double deviation. Our qualitative approach enabled us to identify several negative emotions that frequently recurred among participants. Topping the list were (1) anger, (2) a sense of injustice and (3) powerlessness, all of which were widely shared by respondents, forming a common denominator.

However, it is essential to note that customers expressed other emotions, including (4) incomprehension. This emotion stems from the many unanswered questions linked to the company's multiple failings. Customers questioned the non-delivery of their parcels, the cancellation of their flights and the company's failure to meet its commitments. This intensified their negative emotions. In addition, (5) a persistent feeling of lack of consideration emerged. This feeling stems from customers' perceived violation of psychological contracts, whether transactional or relational. Customers felt that they had suffered distributive injustice due to the absence of adequate redress, if not redress at all. They also felt procedural injustice in the face of the company's non-responsiveness or long waiting times for redress. In addition, interactional injustice was felt due to the mediocre quality of exchanges with the company, characterized by a lack of response from the organization and a customer service department deemed incompetent. All these elements contributed to reinforcing the customers' negative emotions, generating great anger towards the offending company.

The perceived violation of psychological contracts and the resulting negative emotions had a significant impact on customers' decisions towards the company, as highlighted by the following testimony from customer N°20. This underlines the crucial importance of taking these emotions very seriously and putting in place appropriate measures to address them.

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[1] Free and open website for all customers who want to express dissatisfaction with a brand following an encountered issue.

*[2] The names of the offending companies have been masked with *.*

"So far, my experience has been particularly disappointing and very frustrating. I have never received reminders or even a simple personalized email. All I got were automated messages that seemed completely out of context. Honestly, it makes me feel like the company has no respect for its customers. [...] We are extremely angry! Especially that they don't respond to us! And frustrated not to be able to reach them in any way! To feel helpless! [...] In the very beginning, when we called, we had to wait for hours and hours to get someone to tell us they don't know what to do! After that, we never managed to get ahold of anyone! [...] What's certain is that we will never choose this company again! And we've told everyone in our circle about it! " (Respondent No. 20).

The importance of personalized repairs

During the interviews, whenever the subject of necessary repairs and ideal management to effectively remedy the crisis situation was raised, customers expressed their desire for a more personalized approach. In addition, among the interview guide questions posed to interviewees was the following: "If you were in the company's shoes, how would you handle this crisis?"

The unanimous response from customers was that they would opt for a personalized approach. They demanded solutions tailored to their specific situation, such as the option of choosing between a credit note and a refund, rather than generic repairs "imposed" by the company.

Consumers also wanted to be able to choose between a fast, even immediate repair, and the possibility of being patient before obtaining a repair or compensation. They felt that their financial situation varied, so the solution that suited one was not necessarily suitable for another.

By way of illustration of this claimed personalization, a number of verbatims can be presented:

"As a business owner, I was prepared to wait up to 6 months to receive a credit or a refund, given that my financial situation allowed for it, unlike other passengers. However, this was contingent on the company's commitment to taking the necessary actions within that timeframe and honoring its commitments. Yet, despite the company's cancellation of this flight to New York, I had to struggle for a whopping 18 long months, which is a year and a half, to finally obtain my €1,000 refund due to the company's chaotic management!" (Respondent No.17).

"I lost €354! It created a huge hole in my budget due to my already difficult financial situation! The months following this incident were very tough for me financially. I needed an immediate refund to repurchase the product in question. Yet, despite all the steps I took with the company, the mediator, and a consumer association, I still haven't received my refund. I feel very, very angry, completely powerless, and helpless against this company. I wish someone could help me get my money back!" (Respondent No. 4).

This expectation of customers in the context of double deviation aligns with the concept of personalization, as highlighted by Chandra et al. (2022). Personalization involves tailoring products or services to meet individual preferences, reducing cognitive load and decisionmaking time for customers. It plays a pivotal role in marketing, providing easier access to information, assisting in achieving professional objectives, and acknowledging individual differences.

The need to adopt a relational rather than a transactional process

In the context of a simple deviation, adopting a transactional approach to repair, such as the one presented in Appendix C, may be appropriate and even satisfactory for customers. Given that any company is likely to encounter service failures, when a customer contacts the company to report a problem, and the company responds promptly while offering a repair in line with its pre-established strategy, this transactional approach may suffice in the case of a single deviation. However, it is important to note that this transactional management does not allow the customer to play an active role in the repair process, which essentially flows from the company to the customer, without any real exchanges to find a compromise that suits both parties.

On the other hand, when customers face a double deviation, i.e. a situation where they suffer a double penalty, it is often perceived as a violation of transactional and relational psychological contracts (Xu and Wu, 2018). This situation leads not only to dissatisfaction, but also to feelings of injustice and powerlessness. In such cases, a relational approach becomes essential to restore the balance of exchanges as required by respondent N°25.

As part of this relational process, customers can play an active role, and their participation is crucial. They can actively contribute to the repair process by expressing their needs and having a say in finding solutions. This relational process enables the company to respond to the perceived powerlessness and injustice felt by customers, with the aim of providing repairs that meet their expectations and thus guarantee their satisfaction and loyalty.

"I never received my package, which was a birthday gift sent by my sister through this transport company! What deeply frustrated me was that they seemed to completely disregard the customer's feelings, that sense of loss, and the need for trust in the service they were supposed to provide. In a customer relationship, it's not just about managing the technical aspects but also addressing customer concerns and reassuring them. Even in the case of a lost package, there are always ways to reassure the customer by guaranteeing that every effort will be made to locate it and by keeping them informed at every step. Reassuring behavior can make all the difference in a complex situation like this. [...] It feels like hitting a brick wall, which leads to extreme anger. Moreover, this situation raises numerous questions, a sense of helplessness, and even a deep feeling of injustice!" (Respondent No. 25).

DISCUSSION

The Importance of Personalization and Customer Relations in Winning Back Customers

The qualitative study has brought to light several key findings. Firstly, a clear distinction emerges in the approaches that businesses must take in addressing double deviations as compared to single deviations. Due to the heightened intensity of emotions and reactions provoked by double deviations compared to single ones, it becomes imperative to adopt a more nuanced approach to manage these crisis situations and their subsequent repairs. This nuanced approach aims to pacify customer anger while allowing the company to maintain ongoing and fruitful relationships with its clientele. This can be achieved thanks to personalized repairs.

According to Surprenant et Solomon (1987), personalization is a method aimed at recognizing the uniqueness of each individual by offering products tailored to their preferences. For Polk, Tassin et McNellis (2020), personalization is a process that seeks to establish a relevant and individualized interaction to enhance the customer experience. Many companies attach significant importance to personalization to achieve their business objectives. In this regard, Sunikka et Bragge (2012) state that personalization involves offering the right product and service to the right customer, at the right time and place. However, what about personalization of repairs after the transaction has already taken place?

Many companies tend to offer generic solutions and repairs when problems arise, rather than personalized ones. This overlooks the specific needs and expectations of customers, revealing a gap between the potential of personalization and its effective implementation in the case of a double deviation.

"Personalization requires customer engagement to cocreate a personalized experience" (Chandra et al. 2022). This statement accurately highlights the expectations of customers facing a double deviation. These customers demand a more pronounced involvement from companies in the repair process. This involvement can take various forms, starting with active listening. Customers who have experienced a double deviation have an urgent need to express their dissatisfaction, anger, disappointment, and even make complaints about the company's handling, which has turned a simple deviation into a double one. They also desire an open dialogue with the company, where they can receive explanations and avoid the company adopting a passive attitude toward their emotions and queries. The absence of exchange and interaction could further exacerbate the situation, underscoring the importance of adopting a relationship management approach.

The company must avoid being perceived as indifferent to customers' feelings and what they have endured. Facilitating and encouraging exchanges are major demands of customers. These interactions will enable the company to establish closeness with its clientele and gain a better understanding of each individual's expectations regarding desired repairs. Therefore, exchanges are essential for identifying repair needs, while personalization allows for the proposal of tailored and specific solutions for each customer. (Chandra et al. 2022) indicates that the goal of personalization is to increase customer satisfaction by improving the quality of decisions, thereby promoting customer loyalty. Peppers et Rogers (1997) emphasizes that a thoughtful implementation of personalized marketing has the potential to enhance the perceived value by the customer by expanding the scope of the customer-company relationship.

In our empirical study, customers reproach companies for their lack of availability and commitment, and sometimes their complete absence when issues arise. This deficiency in a company's responsiveness elicits emotions such as anger, a sense of injustice, and a profound feeling of powerlessness in customers regarding the company. Furthermore, customers criticize the absence of personalization in customer relationship management. Even as companies strive to personalize their marketing offers to reach a broader audience (Prahalad et Ramaswamy 2000), consumers find that this personalization is lacking when it comes to addressing postpurchase issues. During an incident, companies tend to offer standardized and generic repair solutions. By providing repair solutions that are carefully tailored to the individual needs of their customers, companies have the opportunity to go beyond mere issue resolution. This personalized approach is not only beneficial for solving problems, but it also plays a crucial role in enhancing customer loyalty and establishing long-term and sustainable relationships.

Through personalized repairs, companies would demonstrate that they genuinely understand the specific needs and concerns of each customer. This demonstration of attention and consideration would create a deeper emotional connection between the customer and the company. When customers feel understood and acknowledged, their satisfaction naturally increases (Söderlund et al. 2022). Furthermore, personalized repairs also show that the company is willing to invest time and resources to ensure the customer is fully satisfied. This strengthens the customer's perception that their experience and satisfaction are a priority for the company, thereby enhancing trust in the relationship. These higher levels of satisfaction and trust are closely linked to customer loyalty (O'Sullivan et McCallig 2012). When customers are satisfied and have trust in a company, they are more likely to continue doing business with it in the future (Gounaris 2005). They are also more likely to recommend the company to others, thereby contributing to customer base growth (Pansari et Kumar 2017).

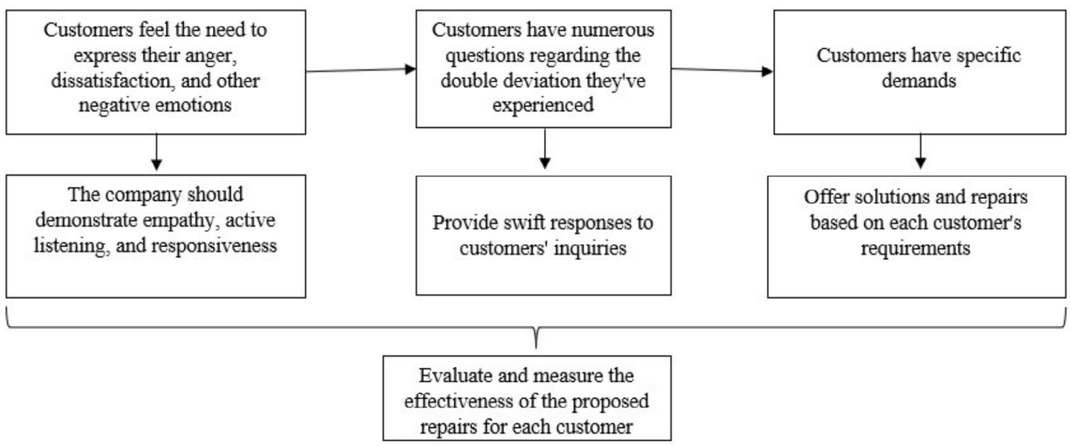
According to respondents, swift and individualized issue management could help mitigate the damage to the company. In contrast, when the company does not take responsibility, customer dissatisfaction increases, fueling extremely negative emotions and perceptions, equivalent to a breach of psychological contracts. In such scenarios, customers are motivated to do everything in their power to resolve their issues, including forming collectives against the company, publicizing their issues through the press or social media, or seeking assistance from consumer rights advocacy associations (Weitzl 2019). Consequently, when poor failure management is highly publicized, its management becomes more complex for the company (e.g., JetBlue's Valentine's Day Crisis and Dave Carroll's United Breaks Guitars). Furthermore, the company risks permanently losing its current customers and discouraging potential customers influenced by the double deviation experience suffered by the company's customers.

However, in the face of this double blow suffered by consumers, it seems imperative that companies implement a process aimed at repairing the deteriorated relationship rather than a purely transactional process. The relational aspect is essential for addressing the perception of psychological contract violation and the resulting cognitive and emotional evaluations. These evaluations can lead to strong negative emotions such as anger, a sense of injustice, and powerlessness. For this reason, the transition to a relationship-oriented repair process is of paramount importance, as this process goes beyond merely fixing a problem. It aims to rebuild trust and seeks to provide value to customers to counteract the feelings of powerlessness and lack of consideration mentioned by several interviewees.

Personalization Process in the case of a double deviation

The personalization process in marketing is iterative and involves multiple stages (Adomavicius et Tuzhilin, 2005). According to these researchers, it can be condensed into three distinct phases: understanding the customer, proposing personalized offers, and evaluating the impact of personalization. Moreover, Vesanen et Raulas (2006) suggests that this personalization process can be generalized to be considered as a co-creation of value between marketers and customers. This becomes particularly relevant given the heterogeneity of customers in terms of value, knowledge, orientation, and relationships (Chandra et al. 2022). Following our study, we present a diagram (Figure 1) that illustrates the personalization process for repairs that can be implemented in the case of a double deviation.

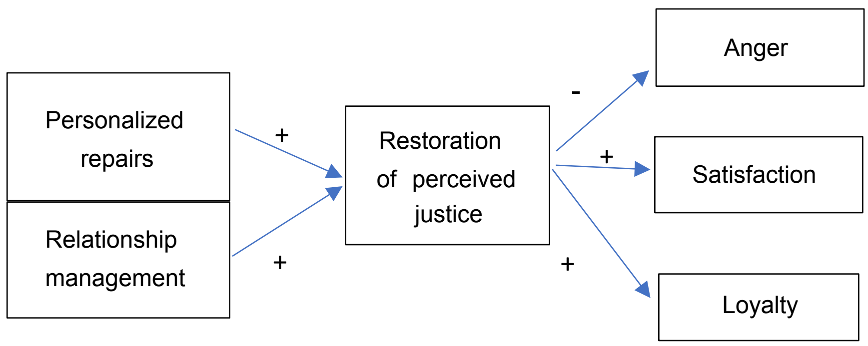
Figure 1
Personalization process for repairs in the case of a double deviation



Peppers, Rogers et Dorf (1999) states that personalized marketing, also known as relationship marketing or customer relationship management, involves the willingness and ability to adjust one's behavior towards each individual customer. Such a management approach can help the company reconnect with its customers, reestablish the closeness that was disrupted due to this double deviation, and personalization can be a key to regaining the trust and esteem of customers in the failing company.

In summary, adopting a transactional approach may suffice to manage single deviations, while double deviations require personalized repairs and a more engaged relational approach, where customers actively participate in restoring the balance of the exchange and the relationship. This proactive approach appears essential to ensure customer satisfaction and loyalty. As a synthesis, Figure 2 below illustrates the main hypothesis suggested by our research. It explores the impact of personalized reparation and relational management on the double deviation suffered and their impact on perceived justice. This justice aims to reduce anger and increase customer satisfaction. This model could be tested by a future quantitative study.

Figure 2
How to repair a double deviation



CONCLUSION

This research aims to understand how can the company effectively manage dissatisfaction and appease the anger of customers faced with a double deviation. According to customer feedback, the failure itself is not the most worrying aspect. What is more worrying is the way in which companies decide to handle the situation. The absence of appropriate assistance in such circumstances tends to aggravate and complicate the situation further.

Many studies have primarily focused on managing single or unique deviations, offering standardized repairs that can be generally applied. Several works related to double deviation suggest repairs similar to those of single deviation. However, our results suggest that double deviation requires differentiated approaches and management, better suited due to its more pronounced impact on customer evaluations and emotions. While many companies focus primarily on distributive justice, the results of our study show that in the event of double deviation, it is essential that companies pay particular attention to interactional and procedural justice. Distributive justice can compensate for customers' economic loss, while interactional and procedural justice can influence customers' emotional and relational aspects. Indeed, double deviations imply the presence of two simultaneous problems, making standardized solutions less effective. Therefore, it is imperative to revisit repair strategies for double deviations, considering their complexity and specificity. Companies should prioritize a relational approach to appease customer anger. They should develop more personalized and situation-specific approaches for double deviations, taking into account individual customer needs and offering tailored solutions. This research highlights the importance of recognizing and treating double deviations differently from single deviations.

In conclusion, by adopting a personalized repair approach that actively integrates customers into the problem-solving process, companies can not only resolve difficulties, but also build strong relationships with their customers. This can result in increased satisfaction, strengthened trust, and lasting loyalty, all of which are essential to maintaining successful longterm relationships even after experiencing a double deviation.

Theoretical contribution. Over the past thirty years, many researchers have focused on the treatment and repair of service failures. Although some studies have mentioned double deviation, few have examined the specific requirements that double deviations necessitate. Furthermore, to our knowledge, (1) no research has yet examined repair customization as a solution for effectively dealing with double deviations to ensure the continuity of the company's relationship with its customers. The aim of this personalization is to restore the justice claimed by customers and remedy perceived powerlessness. It is therefore an essential contribution of the present research. Additionally, (2) transactional remedies may suffice to satisfy customers in the case of a single deviation, whereas in the context of a double deviation, these remedies might be perceived as inappropriate and could prove insufficient. Furthermore, they do not provide customers with the opportunity to interact with the company to restore the balance disrupted due to the violation of the psychological contract. This finding represents another significant contribution of the present research. (3) We propose several new hypothesis to be tested in order to deepen our understanding of effective way to manage double deviation.

Managerial Implications: In the delicate context of a double deviation, overcoming the critical situation in which the company finds itself is a major challenge, crucial for its reputation and long-term survival. In this regard, (1) personalized repairs can more precisely address customers' expectations and requirements, thereby contributing to strengthening their loyalty to the company. (2) These repairs provide the opportunity for the company to address the perceived violation of psychological contracts by customers, thus restoring fairness and balance in the exchange dynamics. (3) Personalized repairs play an essential role in rebuilding customers' trust, thanks to the perceived empowerment that customers can gain throughout the relational process involved in the repair strategy.

On the other hand, exploring the role of tracking and analyzing customer data as an organizational competence emerges as a central lever to detect, anticipate, prevent, and monitor double deviations. This technological and predictive capability goes beyond contributing to organizational memory; it also serves as a valuable tool for personalizing interactions with customers. By judiciously harnessing the power of customer data, companies can proactively address potential issues, improve customer satisfaction, and cultivate a more resilient and customer-centric organizational culture, benefiting both customers and the company as a whole.

Limitations and research avenues. This study has its limitations, due to its exploratory nature and the use of qualitative methods, which may make it difficult to generalize the results. It would therefore be necessary to validate, measure and empirically test these results and the suggested model through a quantitative survey. Furthermore, it is important to note that the sample used in this study is small, which may restrict the generalizability of the results. To enhance the study's representativeness, it would be interesting to expand the sample by including a larger number of participants from various populations and contexts. Furthermore, for cross-sector comparisons, future research could investigate how personalization is implemented in different industry sectors and how it may vary based on each sector's specific characteristics.

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Appendix

Appendix A. Information about the interviewees

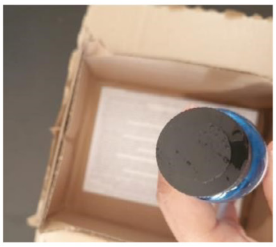
Respondent number	Gender	Age	City in France	Profession	Sector of the defaulting company
Respondent 1	F	24	Besançon	Student	Airline
Respondent 2	M	34	La Rochelle	Doctor	Online travel and tourism industry
Respondent 3	F	25	Oullins	Science Mediator	Real estate management
Respondent 4	F	60	Miramas	Home Care Assistant	Online travel and tourism industry
Respondent 5	F	21	Besançon	Student	Rail transportation
Respondent 6	F	50	Landres	Town Hall Secretary	Online travel and tourism industry
Respondent 7	M	60	Paris	Retiree	E-commerce and online retailin
Respondent 8	M	52	Paris	Manager	Logistics and parcel delivery
Respondent 9	M	67	Rouen	Departmental Inspector	Online travel and tourism industry
Respondent 10	M	22	Dijon	Student	Long-distance passenger bus transportation
Respondent 11	M	65	Les Landes	Technician	E-commerce and online retailing of various products
Respondent 12	F	44	Harcourt	Microbiology Laboratory Technician	Online travel and tourism industry
Respondent 13	F	41	Angers	Payroll Administrator	Online travel and tourism industry
Respondent 14	M	64	Nevers	Doctor	Online travel and tourism industry
Respondent 15	F	31	Saint-Seine	Restaurateur	Food retailing and supermarket industry
Respondent 16	F	27	Dijon	PhD student in Cognitive and Acoustic Psychology	E-comme-commerce and online retailing
Respondent 17	M	50	Lyon	Business Owner	Online travel and tourism industry
Respondent 18	M	31	Dijon	Food Science Researcher	Airline
Respondent 19	M	35	Compiègne	Branch Manager and Sales Manager	Online travel and tourism industry
Respondent 20	F	31	Haute-Saône	Veterinarian	Online travel and tourism industry
Respondent 21	F	46	Asnières-sur-Seine	Fashion Designer	Online travel and tourism industry
Respondent 22	M	66	L'étoile	Former Local Government Official	Logistics and parcel delivery
Respondent 23	F	56	Lyon	Administrative Manager	Online travel and tourism industry
Respondent 24	F	55	Paris	Luxury Jewelry Entrepreneur	Online travel and tourism industry
Respondent 25	M	51	Paris	Doctor of Energy Engineering	Logistics and parcel delivery
Respondent 26	M	59	Angers	International Risk Management Consultant	Logistics and parcel delivery

Appendix B. Excerpt from Nvivo coding

DOUBLE DEVIATION MANAGEMENT BY THE COMPANY	26	132	25/05/2022 13:57	AB
Effective management	0	0	25/05/2022 13:57	AB
Ineffective management	26	132	25/05/2022 13:57	AB

WHY DID YOU POST YOUR BAD EXPERIENCE ON ma-reclamation.fr	20	101	25/05/2022 13:57	AB
Alert other customers	15	18	25/05/2022 13:57	AB
Create a group against the company	9	9	25/05/2022 13:57	AB
Get assistance from other customers	14	15	25/05/2022 13:57	AB
Put pressure on the company for a resolution	15	16	25/05/2022 13:57	AB
Report the company - WOM-	15	19	25/05/2022 13:57	AB
Revenge	3	6	25/05/2022 13:57	AB
Voice (make one's voice heard to the company)	17	18	25/05/2022 13:57	AB

Appendix C. Example of a “transactional” recovery following a single deviation



[redacted]

Dear Customer,

We are very sensitive to the satisfaction of our customers and have carefully rea
your message indicating that your order is not perfectly compliant. We thank you for sharing your observation with us;

We apologize for any inconvenience caused.

Very sensitive to the impact of successive transports, including replacement shipments, we have chosen to create for you the value of the affected products a
a voucher which we increase with a commercial gesture for a total of €7:

[redacted]

Thanks to your codes, activated within 24 hours, you will be able to group your products on a future order in order to send only one shipment. With no expiry dat
or minimum purchase, they cannot be split and will not be visible from your customer area.

Do not hesitate to let us know of any new information or that we have misunderstood by simply “replying” to this email.

Renewing our most sincere apologies for the inconvenience caused, the entire team remains at your disposal and wishes you a very beautiful aromatic day.

Xavier [redacted]
Customer Service

Shipping within 3 days
Secure payment
Service Customer
Commitments quality

New trends and challenges in direct selling: An international expert panel discussion

Abstract :

This paper presents a comprehensive summary of a panel discussion conducted by a distinguished group of international experts from the direct selling industry. The primary objective of the panel was to delve into the emerging trends and challenges within this industry. Additionally, it aimed to offer readers valuable insights into the nature of direct selling, the industry's current state, and the prevailing sales and sales management practices. The discussion was held after the 9th European Innovation & Trade Colloquium that took place on April 3–4, 2023. The panel consisted of five representatives from professional organizations. Each panelist was asked to answer questions regarding (i) their respective markets, (ii) sales, recruiting and training processes in the direct selling industry, (iii) the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and (iv) the opportunities and challenges in the industry. Several themes arose from the discussion and are presented in the paper, providing profound insights into the new trends and developments within the direct selling industry and its future prospects.

Key words: *direct selling, personal selling, sales management, direct selling industry, panel discussion*

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This article was conducted without any technical or financial assistance.

INTRODUCTION

Direct selling refers to the business model in which products or services are sold directly to consumers outside of a fixed retail establishment, bypassing traditional retail channels (Msweli-Mbanga & Lin 2003; Peterson & Wotruba 1996). It involves independent salespeople, often referred to as distributors, representatives, consultants, or agents, who personally interact with customers to promote and sell products or services (e.g., Coughlan & Grayson 1998). These salespeople typically operate as independent contractors and are not employees of the company whose products or services they sell (e.g., Biggart 1989). The practice of direct selling encompasses diverse methods, such as one-on-one demonstrations, sales presentations, and home parties. It is a flexible and personalized approach that fosters direct interaction and relationship-building between the salesperson and the customer (e.g., Sparks & Schenk 2001). Companies that engage in direct selling usually offer a wide range of products, such as cosmetics, wellness products, kitchenware, home decor, and clothing (e.g., WFDSA 2021a). The Appendix presents worldwide retail sales by product group in the direct selling industry.

The global success of the direct selling industry is evidenced by its significant economic impact (e.g., WFDSA 2021a), job creation, and high customer satisfaction. It serves as a gateway for individuals to start their own businesses, offering flexible income options and empowering entrepreneurs. Companies provide training, marketing materials, and support to their salesforces to help them succeed in promoting and selling the products effectively.

Direct selling companies have adapted to changing markets by embracing digital technologies and catering to diverse consumer needs. Their ability to reach global markets and contribute to local economies further underscores their success. Worldwide, the industry continues to grow. Table 1 presents the worldwide total retail sales and their recent evolution.

Table 1
Annual retail sales in the direct selling industry worldwide
(adapted from WFDSA, 2023b)

Data Year	Year over Year % Change	3-Year Compound Annual % Change	Total Retail Sales
2019	-4,3%	-1,2%	$168 117 497 146
2020	2,4%	-0,1%	$172 146 534 062
2021	2,0%	0,0%	$175 553 652 401
2022	-1,5%	0,9%	$172 891 356 376

The global sales force includes over 100 million independent representatives and distributors (WFDSA 2021a). Table 2 presents the number of independent distributors worldwide and percentages by gender.

Table 2
Number of independent representatives and distributors worldwide and percentages by gender
(adapted from WFDSA, 2023b)

Data Year	Year over Year % Change	Total Number	% Women	% Men
2019	2,5%	114 801 793	72,8%	27,2%
2020	3,5%	118 797 317	73,4%	26,6%
2021	0,3%	119 158 420	70,6%	29,4%
2022	-3,6%	114 878 041	70,7%	29,3%

The United States is the largest direct selling market, representing approximately one-third of global direct sales (e.g., WFDSA 2021a). Within the European Union, direct sales have demonstrated steady growth, even during challenging times like the pandemic (Seldia 2021). Germany stands out as the largest direct selling market in Europe (e.g., WFDSA 2021a), hosting over 600 direct selling companies with 16 billion euros in net sales and a significant market presence (Universität Mannheim - Bundesverbands Direktvertrieb Deutschland 2023). In France, the direct selling market has surged by almost 20% over the past decade, and by 2% in 2021 (Fédération de la Vente Directe 2022). Companies adapt to evolving consumer expectations and prioritize product quality to meet customer demands effectively.

Direct selling is an ever-evolving and resilient industry that continues to thrive worldwide, benefiting both sellers and consumers alike. Its ability to innovate, adapt, and create opportunities makes it a force to be reckoned with in the global marketplace.

CHARACTERISTICS OF DIRECT SELLING

Direct selling is a progressive business model that satisfies both consumer and seller expectations. Consumers benefit from the convenience of intelligent consumption without the need to travel, while sellers enjoy the freedom to organize their work and establish secure relationships with brands and customers.

What sets direct selling apart is its accessibility and flexibility. Unlike traditional ventures that may require significant capital investment, becoming a direct seller typically involves little to no upfront cost. Additionally, individuals have the freedom to dictate their own schedules, enabling them to invest as much or as little time and effort as they desire. This unique aspect offers the potential for modest supplemental income or even greater earnings, making it an ideal opportunity for self-motivated individuals seeking financial independence, such as self-starters.

Contrary to impersonal advertising campaigns, direct selling places a strong emphasis on meeting human needs and establishing genuine connections with consumers. Sellers engage directly with potential customers, taking the time to explain and present products in a personalized and customized manner. This approach fosters a deeper and more meaningful experience for consumers, allowing them to make informed decisions and feel valued throughout the process. The human touch and personal interaction are core strengths of the direct selling model, creating an authentic and trustworthy relationship between sellers and their clientele.

Direct selling encompasses various approaches, including traditional party plan companies, door-to-door home improvement companies, social commerce, and network marketing. For over 150 years, direct selling has provided consumers with excellent products while offering independent sellers the chance to earn additional income, acquire new skills, and positively impact their lives. Direct selling offers a flexible work-life balance, particularly appealing to parents in the remote working era.

RECRUITING AND TRAINING IN THE DIRECT SELLING INDUSTRY

In the direct selling industry, recruitment processes occur through multiple channels and methods. In today’s digital era, a significant portion of recruitment takes place online, utilizing websites and social media platforms. This approach allows for reaching a wider audience and engaging with potential candidates more efficiently.

Another widely employed method of recruitment is through personal interaction often referred as “word of mouth.” This organic approach involves individuals recommending or expressing interest in joining a company’s salesforce or become a direct seller. Attracting salespeople can also be achieved through sales parties. Consumers who have shown genuine interest in products and have become advocates are approached. Furthermore, potential direct sellers are identified and approached at trade fairs or in shopping malls. It must be emphasized that in the United States, for instance, conventional advertising is not typically utilized for recruitment purposes. By embracing these diverse and personalized recruitment strategies, direct selling companies can build robust salesforces driven by passionate individuals who genuinely believe in the products they promote.

It is however important to distinguish between companies that work with independent self-employed individuals and those that have a staff-based workforce. Companies working with independent salesforces, usually dealing with consumer goods such as cosmetics, kitchen utensils, textiles, etc., primarily rely on cooptation as the recruitment method. Additionally, they may use social networks, job classified ads, and government services to attract potential candidates. On the other hand, companies employing staff mainly handle services or products related to home improvement. Their recruitment efforts are primarily directed through the company itself or overseen by team managers, who play a key role in identifying and hiring new team members. In this process, they frequently harness the power of internet classified ads and social networks as effective and efficient recruitment tools. By leveraging the reach and connectivity of these platforms, they can easily connect with potential candidates who possess the desired skills and qualifications for the roles they seek to fill.

Training plays a crucial role in equipping salespeople with the necessary skills and knowledge. Key elements of training include product knowledge, enabling salespeople to effectively demonstrate and sell products by understanding their features, advantages, benefits, and usage. Sales techniques and strategies are also taught to enhance sales capabilities. Fostering entrepreneurial skills is another important aspect, as it offers individuals the chance to acquire and enhance valuable skills, regardless of their long-term commitment to the direct selling industry. Additionally, training encompasses company policies and compliance to ensure adherence to guidelines and regulations, and ethical selling behaviors. Ongoing support is provided through mentorship programs, online resources, and other means to assist salespeople throughout their journey.

MOST IMPORTANT DETERMINANTS OF SUCCESSFUL SELLING AND CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP

In direct selling the most important determinants of successful selling can be summarized as follows:

(1) Recruitment: building a strong sales force by recruiting motivated individuals who are aligned with the company's values and goals.
(2) Sales Activity: consistently engaging in sales activities and actively promoting products or services to potential customers.
(3) Personalized and customized advice: providing personalized guidance and support to customers, establishing a relationship of trust and care.
(4) Social network (online and community): leveraging social networks, both online and within communities, to reach and connect with potential customers.

Building and nurturing relationships, along with establishing trust with customers, stands as a fundamental differentiator between direct selling and traditional retail approaches. Moreover, the success of direct selling is deeply reliant on the promotion of innovative and high-quality products or services. An atmosphere of appreciation for the sales force, coupled with upholding high ethical standards and maintaining the company's good reputation, also play pivotal roles in achieving success within the industry. Embracing technology and leveraging digital tools and platforms are essential for remaining relevant and competitive in the face of e-commerce and traditional retailers. In summary, quality, value, trust, credibility, transparent business practices, excellent customer service, timely product delivery, and compliance with ethical standards are vital components that foster customer loyalty.

IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The onset of the Covid-19 pandemic initially created unprecedented opportunities for direct selling recruitment and sales, as numerous traditional retailers closed, prompting people to turn to online purchasing and home-based business opportunities. During this period, direct selling companies adeptly integrated the internet into their salesforce communication tools, resulting in successful outcomes. This shift though has necessitated a delicate balancing act for direct selling companies as they navigated a new landscape that combined online and in-person interactions. As society gradually reopened, sales and recruitment have declined, returning to pre-pandemic levels or experiencing a downturn, while salesforce motivation and commitment have also declined due to changing consumer and work habits. Amidst these challenges, direct selling enterprises were proactively seeking innovative solutions to reignite salesforce enthusiasm and sustain long-term success.

To that end, direct selling companies in Europe have demonstrated adaptability and resilience, modernizing logistics, communications, and business practices to thrive in these difficult conditions. Because of these drastic changes, the pandemic has accelerated the need for regulatory frameworks to keep up with economic and societal changes, and professional organizations were working on policies to shape the future of direct selling. In addition, the period of transformation in the last few years has highlighted the importance of flexible work, youth entrepreneurship and female entrepreneurship. However, the pandemic has disproportionately affected female employment rates, resulting in job and income losses for women (European Central Bank 2023).

Despite the challenges posed by the pandemic, direct selling companies and distributors have demonstrated remarkable resilience on a global scale. Embracing digital transformation, they swiftly adapted to the new reality by leveraging virtual interactions, enhancing support systems, and implementing virtual marketing strategies. These proactive measures have proven to be instrumental in enabling companies to sustain their support for the salesforce and foster meaningful connections with customers through innovative and dynamic means.

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

In some markets, direct selling experienced significant growth in 2020 and 2021, but the industry faced more difficulties in 2022 with lower growth rates (Universität Mannheim - Bundesverbands Direktvertrieb Deutschland 2023). Several factors played a significant role in this decline, including the impact of high inflation rates, decreased salesforce activity, and challenges in recruitment due to demographic changes in some countries (Universität Mannheim - Bundesverbands Direktvertrieb Deutschland 2023). Specifically, the surge in inflation rates placed additional pressures on consumers, influencing their purchasing behavior and overall spending patterns.

Consequently, this influenced the demand for products and services offered through direct selling channels. The changing circumstances and evolving consumer preferences affected the engagement levels and productivity of the salesforce, leading to a dip in overall sales performance. Finally, as the demographics of potential salesforce members shifted, direct selling companies had to devise new strategies to appeal to different age groups and target audiences effectively.

As we move to the post-pandemic era, the direct selling industry will continue facing challenges in the evolving digital world, including staying current with social media and effectively reaching consumers and potential sellers. The digital transition is essential, and investments in infrastructure and building consumer trust are crucial for direct selling companies to fully leverage the benefits of e-commerce and the digital era.

In certain markets, selling is perceived as a positive entrepreneurial initiative. However, a key challenge lies in striking the right balance between presenting potential earnings realistically without creating unrealistic expectations among salespeople. Providing transparent and accurate information about earnings becomes essential, as well as the ability to pay commissions quickly and efficiently. For instance, in some markets, alternative supplemental income providers often offer daily commission payments, creating higher expectations for payment speed and convenience. As a result, direct selling companies need to modernize compensation plans and streamline the process of paying commissions promptly, adapting to the preferences of today’s fast-paced business environment. While modernization is crucial, direct selling companies must also uphold the core principle of fostering and maintaining person-to-person relationships, which form the very foundation of the industry.

There is no doubt, that the industry is evolving rapidly. Regulatory environments need to adapt to support this transition in Europe, aligning with EU directives and policies related to the digital and green transitions. Discussions on upskilling, reskilling, employment policies, and social policies are necessary to ensure direct selling remains attractive, provides portable skills and rights, and embraces sustainable practices. There are also more global challenges to overcome, such as demographic changes and declining birth rates in some countries, or political challenges related to self-employment.

Despite the challenges posed by the fast-paced business environment, there are also opportunities for the direct selling industry. The rising demand for work flexibility from more people and high inflation rates have made a second flexible income opportunity increasingly appealing, providing a valuable means to cover essential expenses and achieve financial stability in uncertain times. In addition, direct selling companies have the opportunity to reinvent their role in the digital world, expand their impact by reinventing who can be a direct seller and how they are compensated, and redefine the industry’s image as a diverse and inclusive economy. Corporate social responsibility plays a significant role in the sector, with trust being a key value. Sustainability initiatives, such as planting trees and publishing sustainability reports, demonstrate the industry’s commitment to its social, environmental, and business impact.

In sum, the direct selling industry must navigate the challenges and opportunities presented by the digital world, adapt to changing regulations and market demands, and embrace sustainability and corporate social responsibility to ensure long-term success and a positive legacy.

CONCLUSIONS

Direct selling sets itself apart by prioritizing personal interaction and offering convenience to consumers while granting sellers the flexibility they desire. Recruitment methods encompass personal interactions, social networks, and other means. Once recruited, salespeople receive comprehensive training covering product knowledge, sales techniques, and company policies. Vital for success in direct selling are recruitment, consistent sales activity, personalized advice, and leveraging social networks.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, direct selling saw initial opportunities, but sales and recruitment declined as the society reopened. In response, companies and sellers adapted through digital tools and finding a balance between online and in-person interactions. However, the industry encountered challenges in staying current with social media, modernizing compensation plans, and maintaining personal relationships. To secure long-term success, direct selling must embrace regulatory support, sustainability initiatives, and the seamless transition to digital platforms.

Despite the challenges, direct selling continues to offer both business opportunities and flexibility. Corporate social responsibility, trust, and ethical standards play a significant role. By adapting to market demands, supporting salespeople, and fully embracing digital tools, direct selling strides ahead into the future.

ADDENDUM: PANELISTS' SHORT BIOGRAPHIES

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Mrs Alexandre joined the European Direct Selling Association (Seldia) as Executive Director in September 2020. A French national, she has been working in European Public Affairs in Brussels, Belgium, for the past 17 years, specializing in health and consumer policy. She previously worked for the European Advertising Standard Alliance and spiritsEUROPE, promoting and advancing effective self-regulation and corporate social responsibility.

Frédéric Billon
General Manager
Fédération de la Vente Directe (FVD)
France
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In 2023, Mr Billon was hired to serve as the French Direct Selling Association (FVD) General Manager. He graduated from ESSEC business school in Paris, France. He joined the FVD after 25 years as CEO or Executive Director in different companies in France and other countries. His goal is to increase the notoriety and reputation of the direct selling industry and to represent its interests.

Jochen Clausnitzer
General Manager
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Mr Clausnitzer is the General Manager of the German Direct Selling Association (Bundesverband Direktvertrieb Deutschland). Prior to this position, he worked as the Head of the Department of International and European law at the Brussels office of the Association of German Chambers of Commerce and Industry (DIHK). With over 20 years of experience in various business associations, Jochen Clausnitzer is responsible for representing the interests of the direct selling industry in Germany and promoting its positive impact on the economy and society.

Adolfo Franco
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Direct Selling Association (DSA)
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Responsible for managing and directing the government relations efforts for the association in Washington, DC and throughout the United States, Mr Franco is Executive Vice President at the Direct Selling Association (DSA). In this capacity, he represents the association and the member companies. He works to promote the direct selling industry's interests with Members of Congress, State Legislatures, as well as both Federal and State regulatory authorities. He also

provides advice and counsel to member companies engaged in international activities, including serving as liaison to U.S. Government agencies.

Tamuna Gabilaia
Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer
World Federation of Direct Selling Associations (WFDSA)
USA
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Mrs Gabilaia serves as the Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer of the World Federation of Direct Selling Associations (WFDSA). In her capacity, she leads and oversees the WFDSA initiatives that focus on advocating direct selling industry's position with external stakeholders, promoting women's economic empowerment initiatives, fostering the highest ethical conducts in the marketplace and enhancing local association management. She works with various governments, consumer groups and academics around the world and serves as the global spokesperson for the industry.

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Appendix

Worldwide retail sales in percentage terms by product group (adapted from WFDSA, 2021b and from WFDSA, 2023a)

Data Year	% Clothing & acces-sories	% Cosmetic & Personal Care	% Home Care	% Household Goods / Home Durables	% Wellness	% Books, Toys, Statio-nary, Etc.	% Foodstuffs & Beverages	% Home Improvement	% Utilities	% Financial Services	% Other Products & Services
2018	6,1%	29,4%	1,9%	13,1%	34,2%	2,4%	2,8%	2,0%	2,8%	3,3%	2,0%
2019	6,1%	26,8%	2,7%	11,8%	36,7%	2,1%	3,3%	1,8%	3,1%	4,0%	1,5%
2020	4,7%	26,2%	2,6%	14,5%	36,2%	2,9%	2,9%	1,3%	2,5%	3,7%	2,6%
2021	4,5%	24,5%	2,9%	16,0%	34,8%	3,2%	2,8%	1,5%	2,1%	4,0%	3,7%
2022	4%	23%	3%	15%	30%	4%	4%	3%	4%	5%	6%

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