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The Role of the Digital Influencer as Differentiation in the Food Market Competition

El papel del influenciador digital como diferenciador en el mercado gastronómico

O Papel do Influenciador Digital como diferenciação no Mercado Gastronômico

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PALAVRAS-CHAVE

Influência Digital. Marketing Estratégico. Mercado Gastronômico. Resumo: Com o avanço das tecnologias o marketing precisou reinventar-se nos meios digitais, abrindo espaço para novas estratégias e ferramentas. Entre elas, vem crescendo o uso de influenciadores digitais como opção estratégia de marketing. Estes são capazes de trazer uma proximidade maior da empresa com o seu público-alvo estreitando, assim, o relacionamento do modelo de negócio com o cliente. Com base nisso, esse estudo teve por objetivo compreender como essa estratégia pode proporcionar um diferencial competitivo para empresas do mercado gastronômico. Desenvolvemos um estudo de caso qualitativo realizado no Restaurante João Pizza, localizado em Caruaru (PE), o que nos permitiu identificar especificidades do perfil do influenciador digital, a estratégia criativa no processo de construção do marketing e as estratégias adotadas nas mensagens, que formam, assim, a capacidade de influência no caso levantado. Os dados evidenciam que é possível alcançar vantagem competitiva com a tática de influência digital por meio da aplicação de um conjunto de estratégias criativas e veiculação de mensagens dentro da nova lógica do marketing digital.

KEYWORDS

Digital Influence. Strategic marketing. Gastronomic Market. Abstract: With the advancement of technologies marketing needs to reinvent itself in digital media making room for new strategies and tools. Among them, the use of digital mediators as the marketing strategy is growing. These are able to reach a larger company with your target audience by narrowing down the business relationships with the customer. Based on this, this study shows how it is a question of taking a differential advantage to a gastronomic company based on a case study carried out at the João Pizza Restaurant, located in Caruaru / PE as the main director, at the same time an entrepreneur and influencer The use of qualitative methods of execution, similar to the profile



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measurement process, and the strategies adopted in the messages, which thus form an influence capacity in the case raised. Digital technology that enables digital and digital technologies to connect with digital and digital marketing technology.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Influencia digital. Mercadeo estratégico. Mercado gastronómico. Resumen: Con el avance de las tecnologías, el marketing necesitaba reinventarse en los medios digitales, dejando espacio para nuevas estrategias y herramientas. Entre ellos, el uso de influencers digitales como estrategia de marketing ha ido creciendo. Estos son capaces de acercar a la empresa a su público objetivo, fortaleciendo así la relación del modelo de negocios con el cliente. En base a esto, este estudio tuvo como objetivo comprender cómo esta estrategia puede proporcionar una ventaja competitiva para las empresas en el mercado gastronómico. Con este fin, desarrollamos un estudio de caso cualitativo llevado a cabo en el Restaurante João Pizza, ubicado en Caruaru (PE), que nos permitió identificar detalles del perfil del influencer digital, la estrategia creativa en el proceso de creación de marketing y las estrategias adoptadas en los mensajes, formando así la capacidad de influir en el caso planteado. Los datos muestran que es posible lograr una ventaja

competitiva con la táctica de la influencia digital dentro del mercado gastronómico mediante la aplicación de un conjunto de estrategias creativas y la transmisión de mensajes dentro de la nueva lógica del marketing digital.



Introduction

Faced with the evolution of Information Communication **Technologies** and companies' digital marketing strategies needed to reinvent themselves to keep up with technological experiences on increasingly interactive platforms present in people's daily lives and their insertion in all aspects of life economic, political and social (Okada & Souza, 2011; Pedroni, 2015; Homburg, Jozić & kuehnl, 2017; Armstrong et al., 2018; Porter & Kramer, 2019). For Pedroni (2015) social networks create a link of strangers who are open to be conquered and to conquer, allowing different forms of interaction between people and/or organizations, promoting thus fertile environment for implementing digital marketing strategies (Tomaél et al., 2005). One of the strategies that has been gaining the most popularity is Influence Marketing, in which several brands seek to link their products to the image of digital influencers and to the content propagated by them through social networks, which are now seen as another channel for approaching a target audience (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Digital influencers are looking for reach, so they need to act to increase their recognition on social networks. The process of building their capillarity on the web happens gradually and timidly, with the conquest of followers in a slow process, in a "digital word of mouth" format. The use of this new aspect of digital marketing has been observed in the gastronomy sector. For Wiedmann et al. (2018), these are market sectors that have been following the new trends in people's lifestyle and behavior, as well as incorporating a growing volume of knowledge in creation, production, management and marketing, since this sector is becoming increasingly competitive.

This way, there is a movement of investment in strategies that go against traditional strategies (such as TV commercials, flyers, and radio, for example) in the quest to stand out and conquer new market niches, increasing disputes between companies for the customer. The ease of measuring the reach of these new approaches means that there is quick feedback relating to investment and return. This dynamic makes it necessary to research the strategies and new tools

used and to understand the performance of the socalled digital influencers, as well as the impact of this marketing innovation on business and the market in general (Pacauskas et al., 2018). Corroborating this new phenomenon, some studies show that when companies use partnerships with digital influencers as a marketing tool, they achieve a considerably higher return when compared to other advertising strategies, and this effect is observed when the influencer is integrated with the brand and has reached the organizations target audience (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019).

Based on the exposed problematic, the main question to be answered by this research was established: How can the digital influencer role generate competitive advantage for companies in the gastronomic market? Through a unique case study, based on a bibliographical review and qualitative interpretive methods, the intention is to show the relevance of the digital influencer in the new marketing strategies. That is, how the consideration of this artifice, as a tool in structuring these strategies, can result in tactical investments that result in expressive reach and, when well planned, can open space for companies that invest in digital influence to stand out in the market.

Theoretical elements of the research

Digital Platforms articulating Marketing connections

For Shuen (2018) web 2.0 promoted technological innovation and virtualized the forms of interaction between "ordinary" people and organizations, which began to use the internet in their professional, leisure, learning and interpersonal contact activities. Through this movement, relationships also began to occur over the internet and then, digital social networks appeared.

The social network is defined as an Internetbased service that allows individuals to build a public or semi-public profile within a delimited system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share a connection, and view and refer to their list of connections and others that are within the system. The nature and nomenclature of these connections may



vary from place to place (Boyd & Ellison, 2007, p. 09).

According to Tomaél et al. (2005) and Homburg, Jozić and Kuehnl (2017) social networks represent one of the underlying strategies used by society to share information and knowledge, through the relationships between individuals that integrate them. Social networks are currently the most used way for this virtual interaction between people, which can be broadly classified into three different network forms. Because they are open systems under permanent construction, in which economic and geographical barriers can be overcome, their main characteristic is their great capacity to transmit information. These are being targeted by companies as a marketing tool to expand and strengthen relationships between people and the brand or product, through online advertising mechanisms (Duarte, Silva & Ferreira, 2018).

Web 2.0, a name chosen by O'Reilly (2005) and sanctioned by authors such as Shuen (2018) to baptize the second generation of the internet, representing a platform on which people interact with each other and create their content, has influenced the dynamics of interaction between social individuals, creating new communication channels. The fact that it allows instantaneous provides participatory, communication a collaborative and democratic environment in the construction of information (Petersen, Kushwaha & Kumar, 2015). The advent of several online platforms has made social networks possible in a virtual environment, bringing new ways of establishing communication to society. Online social networks, or social media, are based on the Web 2.0 concept, which means a possibility of interaction between people such as sharing knowledge, ideas, and experiences (Gaunt, 2016; Shuen, 2018).

According to Duarte, Silva, and Ferreira (2018) online services offer three major benefits for consumers: convenience, information, and greater comfort. Purchases can now be made from anywhere with internet access, and delivery of what has been purchased can be made anywhere in the world. The benefits for purchasing services can also be used to support marketing strategies (Pedroni, 2015; Homburg, Jozić & Kuehnl, 2017).

It is a field of information exchange and, in this context, it is up to marketing research to extract as much information as possible, filter it and give it back.

For Petersen, Kushwaha and Kumar (2015) with the global transformations and consequent change in communication platforms, it is necessary for companies to seek to be on the Internet, identify their target audience and find a way to attract them in an environment full of information and competition. To be on the internet, it is essential that the company be transparent, as all information travels at great speed and is outside the company's control. A dissatisfied customer can tarnish the company's image, no longer for some people, but for the whole world (Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017).

Marketing definitions and functions need to be revisited, requiring continuous improvement and evolution, maintaining the basic premise of performing beneficial exchanges between the consumer and the organization. If before the concern was to sell more and have more customers, the great competition evidenced by the information exchange facilities has demonstrated the need to build a more lasting relationship with customers (Gaunt, 2016; Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017). Digital Marketing is seen as an evolution of conventional marketing. Now, what we have is a version enhanced and amplified by the internet. Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) defined Digital Marketing as an effective set of marketing and advertising strategies, applied by the company to the Internet and consumer behavior while immersed in the digital network.

The basis of Digital Marketing action refers to the organizations and systems involved with the processes of creation and dissemination of their content. In this way, the importance of the user as a customer-consumer of information and product is reinforced, and consequently, this is a facilitating factor to adapt the offer to the needs. Increasingly demanding customers will consider the products and services offered based on the added value that companies can offer. In addition, Duarte, Silva and Ferreira (2018), argue that in the online world, the means to reach the consumer are ample, however, the company will



need to identify which is its target audience, which tool best adapts and how it will use the tools to achieve your results.

In summary, Digital Marketing is the update of traditional marketing, which has adapted to the new business scenario, an environment of constant transformation, in which the customer participates actively and instantly, acting as receiver, channel and feedback simultaneously. Organizations now have a concern that goes beyond just "being seen" on the networks, but also in being searched for. In other words, it's not just being there available, it is about being there at the service of people who can find them, unlike so many others who are also at the disposal, but fail to deliver services over the network (Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017; Armstrong et al. 2018).

According to Mazzinghy (2014) digital presence can determine the success of a brand/company. With this goal, the current concern of companies is to be "findable". In other words, there is a concern to occupy a prominent space in the rankings of search engines such as Google, for example. When talking about digital presence, the intention is to clarify that, in addition to existing on social media, there must be a concern to stand out in these networks, which represents one of the efforts considered in this study.

Digital Marketing Tools and Advantages

Digital Marketing uses various digital media to put its strategies into practice, ranging from sponsored links, banner ads, marketing emails, blogs, newsletters, to social media. The internet has become, in this context, the main means for the practice of companies' Digital Marketing strategies, as it is the place where the general public is currently. Besides, online advertising presents itself as a mechanism with a much lower cost compared to other tools to attract customers and strengthen the brand in the market (Veirman, Cauberghe & Hudders, 2017; Duarte, Silva & Ferreira, 2018).

Today, there are precise metrics for evaluating the results of online campaigns, such as Google Analytics on Google's platforms, the Follower Growth Rate and Engagement per Follower metric on Instagram, which allows companies alternative ways to make an investment. Still, for the use of this tool to be effective, it is of paramount importance to define, through market research, the target audience, the campaign objectives and the means of approach to guarantee its success (Ashley & Tuten, 2015).

Corroborating this idea, Mazzinghy (2014) and Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, (2019) observed, in their respective studies, that all customers reached in the survey considered the interaction enabled by digital platforms to be of great importance, which saves effort and creates a prior familiarity with the store. In these surveys, it was possible to conclude that there are newfronts that deserve maximum attention the from entrepreneurs. And the results highlighted points that require more investment and others that require continuity within online platforms.

Influence Marketing

Among the different ways to reach the target audience in the digital environment and, given the full competition in this space, companies with the intention of standing out in the digital market need to build a relevant content strategy capable of persuading Internet users and potential customers. Therefore, one of the main strategies adopted in Digital Marketing is Influence Marketing, which is assigned the function of creating and distributing consistent and relevant content to both attract new customers and retain customers already won (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

In order to make it possible for the content to reach the target audience in a more effective way, increasing the brand's visibility and power in the market, Influence Marketing strategies have grown in strength. The main one is the use of influence agents, digital influencers, in order to propagate the brand through social networks, which are the environment where these agents operate and, thus, reach as many potential consumers as possible (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Digital Influencers

Web 2.0 and the new possibilities of



interaction brought by them, such as social networks and bloggers, opened space for new jobs within these platforms (Shuen, 2018). In this way, Digital Influencer Marketing needed to create its own performance aspects, thus opening space for digital influencers, who are a third party involved in the buying and selling process, who have influence in the purchase decision and have a great reach, being able to overcome the conventional media, when well planned, or having a different impact on Internet users (Silva & Costa, 2021). It can be said, therefore, that the digital influencer is an agent with tools to access a large number of people, and who has a relationship with these people that makes it possible to influence their desires and purchase decisions (Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2018).

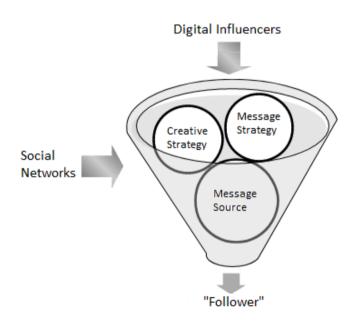
The field of action of these influencers are the social networks - Instagram, Facebook and Twitter, which are the most known and used - in which communication has reached new heights, since users have the chance to simultaneously act as producers, transmitters, and receivers, depending on cultural background and technical skills. The collage of individual interferences puts ideas and knowledge into circulation, without the notions of selection and stratification that condition media processes (Jiménez-Castillo & Sánchez-Fernández, 2019).

It is necessary to identify what, how, and who to communicate. Armstrong et al. (2018) suggest that the process of elaborating a message or advertisement consists of finding an answer for each of three steps: message strategy, creative strategy, and message source. In this way, this advertising tool – digital influence – manages to go through the three stages in order to take the message to those who trust the sender, even if he is not an expert, as shown in Figure 1.

Creative strategy is about "how to say it" and includes structuring and formatting the message. This must be based on the company's strategy so that there is no dissonance between what the company shows and what it communicates. As for the message strategy, it is known that, basically, the purpose of the message is to somehow attract attention, keep the customer interested, spark a desire, and finally obtain action. For this, it is necessary that the message is clearly

elaborated and that it reaches the target audience, meeting this objective. The message strategy is in "what to say" to the customer. Regarding the source of the message, Petersen, Kushwaha, and argue marketing Kumar (2015)that communication is the way that companies seek to inform, persuade, and remind consumers of their product/service or brand. The process of communicating requires that a source be defined, that is, "who will say" what has already been defined, efficiently and clearly.

The advance in communication is the greatest facilitator of influencers, however, it is not exclusive to them. Therefore, it is necessary to stand out on the network, increasing it even more, in order to remain advanced in terms of reaching people. The open and distributed nature of the web allows the influencers to be "people like us" on the networks, disclosing their routine, considered normal and in a spontaneous way, thus generating a natural identification and advertisement.



 $\label{eq:Figure 1-Processing of the message emitted by Digital Influencers, through social media.$

Source: Based on points considered by Armstrong et al. (2018).

According to Gaunt (2016), the executed style should match the message source and advertising objectives. The way this type of advertising is done is meant to make it not seem like advertising. The objective is that it is not a conversation between seller and customer, but between a virtual friend who indicates something



for him to use. This view of friendship builds naturally in times when nothing is being advertised.

As already mentioned in this study, some Brazilian celebrities in the mainstream media (television, music, sports and cinema) have become digital influencers, due to the fact that they have a large number of followers who are fans of their work. They take advantage of this massive reach to link to marketing strategies. However, most of those who are digital influencers in the country today went through a reverse process. They managed to build a large network, but in a more gradual and timid way. So, there is an ambiguous point: on the one hand, the famous people in the mainstream media have a large number - which is divided into fans and those interested in their personal lives - and, on the other hand, the famous people exclusively on social networks, who, although they have a smaller number of followers, have the advantage of being more watched by these followers, who follow the growth of the network, achieving a strong link of trust (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

This trust is sometimes gained through interaction strategies that treat followers as if there were a physical and affective closeness. Most of these influential agents share most of their routine, in a relaxed and spontaneous way, thus creating the image of someone closer. By following this routine, the followers feel intimate with the agents, enabling the emergence of a bond of trust. Therefore, they follow the market trend of a consumer seeking more affection with the brands they identify with.

However, when it comes to the direct promotion of a product, the main care to be taken, taking advantage of the macro strategy of established trust, is the association of the product to the agent. As it is an identification strategy, it is important that people look at it and, even if they realize that it is an advertisement, believe that the person actually uses and trusts what he or she is advertising. A fitness muse promoting fast food, for example, sounds inconsistent with the rest of her routine. In other words, it is necessary to analyze the exposed profile before associating any product or service with this profile, thus avoiding a contradictory posture (Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019).

Contextualizing the Gastronomic Market

The gastronomic market is a growing sector, due to its large market and the inexhaustible need for food, which fits the basic needs of human beings (Farias et al., 2022). According to Bogers and Jensen (2017) entrepreneurs are attracted by the glamor of this industry and decide to invest and risk their resources in opening new businesses. The numerous success stories in the sector attract many new entrepreneurs, however, it is important to mention that since it deals directly with people's diet - involving moments of fraternization, meeting a basic need and working with health – it always needs to be studied and improved. Getting into this business requires more than resources, ideas and courage. According to Gaunt (2016), acting in the context of the gastronomic market requires professionalism and qualification. Mainly because it is a market that generates so much employability and strongly moves the economy (Maricato, 2010).

In addition to the issues raised, the relevance of planning goes beyond the idea of adapting resources to needs and ideas to possibilities. The gastronomic branch has its own specificities that need to be considered, such as opening hours (weekends, holidays, and third shifts) for example, so that this doesn't become a problem a posteriori. Another point that needs to be considered in this field is the need to differentiate, whether by quality, variety or innovation, considering aspects such as product (food) – services – environment (Jenkins, Ford & Green, 2018).

Anyway, in the world of constant evolution, where everything changes quickly, the way of meeting basic needs has also changed. Meals, which in the beginning had a character of survival, advanced to festive banquets, which makes the act of eating a social event and, later, it was established as a family social act, in which there was a pattern of the act in a fraternal moment. Nowadays, when time is directly associated with money, everything is in a hurry, including meal times. In this way, the act of eating can become, in certain social situations, lonely, fast and, increasingly external, in order to optimize time (Bortonio, 2017).



As previously mentioned, the one who goes out to eat also seeks status. In this way, companies that enter this industry are prepared to meet this need in the traditional ways, investing in the point, in infrastructure, image and quality, so that frequenting already directly refers to a greater sense of status (Bortonio, 2017). However, this image will be the highlight and will be built by several factors, ranging from the quality of products and services to the marketing actions performed. When the company is assertive in all factors, it manages to establish a good image in front of its internal and external customers. In this way, besides creating an image, it has the mission of disseminating this image and trying to attract the maximum number of customers. Given the constant growth of the sector, companies need to invest in strategies to get ahead of competitors who have also been adhering to the trend of professionalizing image communication, with the aim of adding value to internal and external customers (Mariani, Di Felice & Mura, 2016).

In times of technology, inhabiting social a basic organizational networks is also requirement (Okada, 2011). In the gastronomic market this is not an exception. However, creating a social network, and feeding it in the traditional way, with product photos and promotion of promotions, for example, became the mandatory minimum to be inserted in the digital world. And, sticking to traditional basics eventually becomes outdated, making it necessary to do more than that to reach as many customers as possible (Tomas et al., 2012; Duarte, Silva & Ferreira, 2018).

Based on the above, restaurants are starting to find in digital communication, through social networks, the tools to differentiate themselves. Either through the direct interaction of the company figure with its customers, which are already common in social networks, like Twitter for example, where large companies (Habib's, Mc Donald's, Domino's and Shweppers) interact with some of their customers, or through the figure of its owner, who exposes himself, exposes his organizational routine, creating a more direct interactivity, strengthening ties with his customers and thus using a new approach, in which this owner is presented as a content producer digital, achieving success in the quest to articulate a large

network of customers, based on a relationship of reliability, thus becoming an agent of digital influence (Drummond, Mcgrath & O'toole, 2018).

Methodological elements of the research

The nature of the study is qualitative, since it proved to be the most appropriate for understanding how an owner, assuming the position of digital influencer, can generate competitive advantages for his company in the gastronomic market. In this way, after the theoretical basis was built, by means of bibliographical research, qualitative methods were used, among them, the monitoring of the company through its social networks, visits to the establishment to observe the movement and the relationship between virtual and real engagement, and, finally, a semi-structured interview with the owner, in which the research protocol created from the objectives of this study was used.

This research was conducted in a qualitative way, since its fundamental concern is the study and analysis of the empirical world in its natural environment, and in this approach, the direct and prolonged contact of the researcher with the environment and the situation being studied is valued (Chizzotti, 2018). So, everything is recorded through notes and/or recordings so that it can be analyzed without losing the contextual essence (Gil, 1994).

As the facts are inseparable from the figure of the researchers, since we are an integral part of the knowledge process and that interprets the phenomena, assigning them a meaning, the study fits into the interpretivist research stream, since even if the researchers' view is partial, it cannot be excluded from the process. For qualitative and interpretive research, in addition to the integration between the participants throughout interaction, the researcher's view is of paramount importance to the plot in the interpretation of the data generated (Denzin & Lincoln, 2006). As a qualitative research, the main purpose of this was to consider, in terms of Denzin and Lincoln (2006), the specificities of the enterprise within the city and the differentiation brought by the company studied, in order to elucidate the results achieved within the social and cultural scenario of



the region where the company is located.

The research strategy employed was the case study, because the objective is to understand the events within the context of real life. the characteristics without preserving modification, that is, the reality of the organization is interpreted exactly where it is, considering its context and interpreting it along with all research. The data collection method is variable, and may include recordings, notes, interviews and, in this case, also involved regular monitoring of social networks from October 2017 to June 2018, always with the aim of exploring, describing and evaluating the company from a more critical perspective, corroborated by the main theory of influence marketing.

The research objective is exploratory because its purpose is to explore the problematic created for this study and provide information for a more precise investigation, aiming at a closer approach to the theme, being able to be built based on hypotheses or even intuitions. The reason for choosing the company João Pizza, was mainly the great popularity achieved in a short time of opening. In less than 8 months of creation, João Pizza's Instagram already had 60,000 followers. In April/2018, he received from the National Service for Commercial Learning (Senac) Caruaru, the outstanding entrepreneur award. The fact of being in the pizzeria business for the previous 10 years with another brand, Pizzarela, and another management model, was also relevant. Since in the previous model, it had less than 3,000 followers on Instagram, divided into two accounts, and a moderate movement.

The primary data collection tool used was the semi-structured interview, based on the research protocol (Chart 1). It is noteworthy that the interview script be organized with basic (main) questions, in order to allow them to be complemented by other questions inherent to the momentary circumstances of the interview (Manzini, 2004). For the author, this type of interview can bring out information more freely, unattached to alternatives that may be suggested by the script used, allowing respondents to be more spontaneous. The interview was conducted on April 27, 2018, conducted from the protocol, in which much information the interviewee provided even before being questioned, as he found it

pertinent. The protocol was divided by thematic coverage according to the three stages considered fundamental for the construction of an advertisement, by Armstrong et al. (2018).

Creative Strategy

Creative Strategy								
Research	How can a digital influencer generate							
Question	competitive advantage for a company in the							
	gastronomic market?							
Thematic Coverage	Creative Strategy							
Analytical Categories	Message Creativity and Source Creativity.							
Definition	Message styles in advertisements are often tied to the type of media that will be used to deliver them. The message style should match the font and the message objectives.							
Inquiries	How is the message structured for each situation? From what parameters are the ideas raised? To what extent are you willing to use and abuse your creativity? Is it worth taking the risks that spontaneity involves?							
Specific objective achieved	Identify the profile of digital influencers in the gastronomic sector							

Message Strategy

Research Question	How can a digital influencer generate a competitive advantage for a company in the gastronomic market?						
Thematic Coverage	Message Strategy						
Analytical Categories	Content creation.						
Definition	Formation of the content you want to communicate. Define what will be communicated.						
Inquiries	How is the message that will be passed on to the public defined? Which filters to apply so as not to generate any discomfort to the public instead of identification? How is it defined what is directly related to the business, and what is related to the issuer in order to identify the public? What precautions should you take to maintain a coherent essence in your content? How do you know that the content you generate in various media is strengthening your brand? How do you know the content you generate creates fleeting followers or lasting relationships?						



Objective					•	Influencers get audience	
achieved	COIIII	iuiii	ate wi	ui uici	ı tai	get audience	

Message Source

Research How can a digital influencer gene	rate					
Question competitive advantage for a company the gastronomic market?						
Thematic Coveragea Message Source						
Analytical Categories Characteristics of the message sender give it the tone that fits the mess context.						
Definition The advertiser needs to turn the 'big i into the actual execution of an ad captures the attention and interest of target market.	that					
What personal characteristics integrated into the message at the time broadcast? What are the positive negative points of the personality present in this emission of information? Can you see a limit between your personal characteristics and the explicit commer content of your restaurant? Can you this limit? Does this limit have to exist What are the positive and negative poof the personality present in this emission of information? Is there any study of the comments, of comment's tones (positive and negatinumber of video views, qualitative met before generating the ads?	and sent onal scial see? ints sion the ve),					
Specific Identify the digital influencers profile	e in					
objective the gastronomic sector.						
achieved						

Table 1 - Research Protocol Source: Prepared by the authors.

One of the sources of information used in the study was the "João Pizza Oficial" page, on Instagram. Following it since October 2017, it was possible to monitorate all the brand growth and strengthening due to a constant advance in reaching customers. Visits to the restaurant can also be considered relevant sources of information, since from them it was possible to verify whether the social network's success was actually confirmed in the physical environment movement.

From the social networks and visits to the restaurant, a search for more information began, to understand: what would make this place different from so many other pizzerias in the city? How did they manage to attract followers? Although it had a high quality standard on the menu, other older

pizzerias had equivalent quality. Still in this phase of the visits, it was possible to identify the marketing efforts put into practice, from the language to the tools used. After this identification, the research was intensified to find support in the theory related to innovations within the gastronomic market, to digital marketing and its new tools. In order to associate, in the clearest and most objective way possible, the theory to the practice within the case studied.

Delving deeper into Digital Marketing and its new tools, the interest arose in mapping the tools used by a digital influencer to reach the target audience, the style of messages used by this influencer, and how an influencer can innovate and differentiate within the gastronomic market, considering that the main purpose of using this case is the fact that the owner of the João Pizza's company, as a brand and page of great reach, fits the profile of a digital influencer and is seen as such by the digital media and conventional in the city of Caruaru (PE).

In that way, the trajectory of the research started from the monitoring phase as a client, where the interest in conducting a robust study was framed in the management practices already studied by the authors. From this, the search for the maximum amount of fundamentals and research in the area began and, soon after, the request for authorization was made to the company to conduct this case study. Subsequently, the research protocol and the interview were elaborated, thus adding a relevant and comprehensive base to raise the research results, based on the analysis of the collected data.

In order to meet the validity and reliability criteria, intended to ensure the solidity of the qualitative research, some research techniques were established and defined in this study: methodological rigor, congruence between the stages of the study, internal validity, transferability of results, and quality of evidence recording. During the research stages, clarity was always sought in the presentation of the research, a prerequisite for the reliability and validity that support the quality of the study. During the methodological procedures, the steps of the field work and the analysis process were explained. More than one collection technique was sought in



order to ensure the provision of rich and abundant evidence. During the descriptions of the research stage, information was provided that was seen as sufficient to enable similar research to be replicated.

Presentation and discussion of results

In order to apply the theory presented so far, and the corresponding three analytical categories based on Armostrong et al. (2018) a case study was conducted in the João Pizza's company, located in Caruaru (PE), which was opened on 09/29/2017 and, on 06/06/2018, surpassed the mark of 64,000 followers on Instagram. Although the pizzeria is new, the owner is an old-timer in the business, having owned a pizzeria for 10 years, most of the time with the Pizzarela brand, which, although traditional in the city, was not differentiated from other pizzerias, causing him restlessness in the search of new ideas.

Inspired by two other great entrepreneurs and influencers in the gastronomic market - "Sanduba do Careca", which has more than 158,000 followers on Instagram and 5 franchises in the Northeast with an installation project also in Orlando/USA, and the "Grupo Ferreti", with more than 150,000 followers on Instagram and composed of Pizzeria, Bakery, Supermarket, Confectionery, and recently, a fast food sandwich passport - João restarted the new brand without any resemblance to the previous one except for the branch.

He changed the location, structure, menu and way of doing marketing. João Pizza's Instagram began to be used to initially show the pizzeria's routine, with more accessible language and great interaction with customers, establishing partnerships and showing well-known figures of the city as their customers, giving the place a perspective of status, aligning itself the strategies suggested by Mazzinghy (2014) and Bortonio (2017). This kind of behavior corroborates with the idea of Silva (2010) and Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, (2019), who define social media as open systems under construction, and a marketing tool that strengthens relationships between customer and company in a more dynamic

environment.

In a short time, the owner of the pizzeria began to be seen more in Stories, Instagram's feature for photos or videos of up to 15 seconds, which are on the network for 24 hours, and somehow gave a face to the place. After that, he started to create promotional content through raffles and contact with famous figures to promote his brand, such as well-known singers in the region who, when they were going to perform in the city, or even on other occasions, João Pizza would take to them giant pizzas. The singers publicized the pizzeria and he publicized the delivery via video, attracting the attention of these people's followers, turning this moment into content for this audience. Corroborating, therefore, with the idea of Ashley and Tuten (2015) and Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) who determine that content marketing is about creating compelling content to your customers within social media, expanding the reach and interest in the organization, and that in influence marketing, it is necessary to combine content and reach, so that this content influences your target audience.

1.1 Creative Strategy

João Pizza's company has a source of great credibility with its target audience, which is its owner, João. The same takes advantage of the reach of social networks to build an identification with the clientele. In this process, the development of the message is fundamental. Creative strategy is about "how to say it" and includes structuring and formatting the message. In other words, it addresses the different facets of how the message is conveyed.

According to Armstrong et al. (2018) and Pacauskas (2018) the structuring of messages happens based on a business strategy that needs to match the creative strategy. When asked about the strategies adopted, the interviewee argues the following:

Spontaneity is the strong point, there is the art creation that is made by someone else, there is my experience that makes me pay attention to not to let it get out of focus - which is the pizzeria - but the intention is to take advantage of the image and keep customers interested in following, that's the business strategy. There is this concern not to lose the focus, because our



way of acting on social networks generates an interaction, disclosure of other people's content, of events, of personal routine, which is what makes people identify more, so I try to making the most of it, but reaffirming the pizzeria so that it doesn't get lost, and becomes totally personal.

The interviewee is concerned about developing effective communication with the public, that is, maintaining the integration between informed content and business objectives (Petersen, Kushwaha & Kumar, 2015). The company's publicity is done in a way that keeps the pizzeria as the main support, or context, where communication is established, allowing João to participate and direct what is commented about the company on the network. According to Martínez (1999), the greatest mission of creative strategy is the construction of the advertising message. This goes through two successive stages: choosing the content of the message and creatively expressing it in a concrete message. So, there are different ways to work to find the most effective way to establish the content of the advertising message (Gaunt, 2016). We can mention the brand image strategy, in which the strategy evokes superiority based on factors external to the product or service (Pedroni, 2015; Homburg, Jozić & Kuehnl, 2017). That is, psychological rather than physical factors (Brochand et al., 1999).

This type of creative strategy, based on the spontaneity cited by the interviewee, corroborates the association with external factors to the product and/or service, in line with what Brochand et al. (1999) and Bortonio (2017) describe it as a strategy through emotions, since the feeling of identification is considered relevant, so that it attracts and keeps customers. Another point brought up in the interview, and which shows another facet of the company's messages, was about the interest in holding events. João Pizza's brand has already promoted two events in the city. A smaller one, in the pizzeria itself, and a larger one, in a closed space, both in the open bar modality – free drink. These two episodes managed to sell out the tickets and yielded positive feedbacks from the public. Asked about this association of the brand with events as well, it was reported that:

We did the first one in a more modest way, smaller proportions. And it was possible to see the engagement of customers, and how much people wanted an event of this standard, which is not common in the region. From that, we started using the phrase "jpz standard", which was seen as a quality standard. The second event was much bigger and stronger, and strengthened the image of this standard. It was a success, it was very good, and it attracted more customers, which increased the reach and many other positive results. So it's something I don't want to stop doing, and it will always be a job parallel to the Pizzaria, but connected with the brand's image.

It is understood that this parallel association of another activity, with another approach, which is the resonance, in which "advertising does not evoke product characteristics, but presents situations or emotions that provoke positive memories in consumers. It is indicated when there is little differentiation between products on the market" (Brochand et al., 1999, p. 262). That is, this advertising associated with the event is not related to what is produced in the pizzeria, but generates a feeling in the customers who went to the events in relation to the brand, since the product itself is not a differential. According to Petersen, Kushwaha and Kumar (2015) and Homburg, Jozić and Kuehnl (2017), this strategy demonstrates a commitment to the creativity of the message as a differentiating element. while enriching company's the communication mix.

And there is still the affective strategy, which is when contact with the consumer is presented on a purely emotional level. The consumer's reaction to this contact can draw attention to the product. This artifice is also indicated for markets in which the products differ little from each other (Brochand et al., 1999). As a way of bringing elements that evidenced the affective strategy, it was asked about the interaction with customers:

I answer all the messages I receive, and there are many, but I answer them all. I always think about generating content, whether it's about what's happening at the pizzeria at the moment or just entertainment, and people interact and I interact in return for the relationship to exist, depending on the message received I interact more or less, keeping a coherence. When this



interaction generates a funny dialogue, for example, I take a print – which is the record of the conversation in image – and I repost it in the stories to generate even more entertainment and closer contact with the customer.

This strategy corroborates the idea defended by Pedroni (2015), Veirman, Cauberghe and Hudders (2017), Armstrong et al. (2018) in which they state that Digital Marketing brings the ease of immediate feedback, and this interaction causes the customer to have that same impression about the company, the approximation reaffirms the customer-company relationship, and strengthens the image. That is, this type of strategy is consistent with one of the strengths of digital marketing.

Besides the feedback, it is important to use evaluate within social metrics to Mazzunghy (2014) and Duarte, Silva and Ferreira (2018) argue that the results of Digital Marketing should be closely monitored, and that the networks themselves provide information that should be tracked to evaluate the results and reach of the campaigns conducted on them. It is these results in numbers that reaffirm the interest of the target audience for the organization and its way of working, based on the assumption that the message/action strengthens the brand and the relationship with the followers. Regarding the monitoring of these results, the owner explained and interprets it as follows:

Instagram shows everything, how many people saw it, how many people passed that content, and also how many people saw it again, and responded to each content. All this I'm always interpreting, because a content that had a large number of slips - which is "skipping" one or more stories - I already understand that it was not interesting and did not add much to us, so it is already avoided, the same thing with the other metrics. And the results of this reflect directly on the daily movement. Today, for example, all tables are booked for the next two days [Saturday and Sunday].

As Digital Marketing communication works in a circular format, this type of evaluation within networks demonstrates a result that is reintegrated into the creation strategy. Since from it, it is understood if the strategy applied in a

particular message within the creative strategy is positive or not. According to Petersen, Kushwaha and Kumar (2015) and Mariani, Di Felice and Mura (2016) when the company is assertive in its communication strategies, the influencer is able to establish a good image in front of its internal and external customers. However, in addition to creating a positive image, it has the mission of disseminating this image and trying to attract as many customers as possible. In view of the constant growth of the sector, companies need to strategically recycle themselves to stand out in the market, since when a company achieves this prominence, there is a natural tendency for other companies to try to replicate the management format. In the interview this point was raised and the digital influencer stated that:

Even if they don't do it the same way, with the same content model, we see that other companies have started to invest in this interaction, in this conversation with the customer in a more relaxed way, making the customer feel part of it. This is important, it makes the market better for the customer, and that alone is still not enough to intensify competition. It is only an advantage for the customer who feels valued. It doesn't bother us. We know the quality and the search for improvement that we have and the loyalty of customers, so I see it as something positive (Bezerra, 2018).

Corroborating, thus, with Drummond, Mcgrath and O'toole (2018) on the positive results of the company's direct interaction with the customer, which is now enhanced by the advent of social media. Now the receiver is invited to participate in the process, so that the message is given meaning from his intervention, reversing what Kapitan and Silvera (2016) call traditional communication techniques that dealt with unidirectional channels. The consumer starts to act as a transmitter and disseminator of the company's interlocutions.

Message Strategy

With principles similar to the AIDA Model (Attention, Interest, Desire, Action) described by Hassan et al. (2015), the purpose of the message issued within marketing is also, in some way, to attract attention, keep the customer interested,



awaken a desire and, finally, obtain the action. For this, it is necessary that the message be elaborated in a clear way, and reach the target audience meeting this objective. Here we are talking about message strategy, that is, "what to say".

According to Armstrong et al. (2018), one of the most important points is the filter applied to these messages, as it is intended to avoid a reverse effect from any discomfort in the audience and does not convey value to consumers (Gaunt, 2016). Put into question the emission, the filters and the positive and negative points of the messages, it was reported by the interviewee:

As already mentioned, I am constantly thinking about generating content. Even if it's not directly linked to the pizzeria, it's something that draws attention and piques people's interest. For example, this situation [of being the case of a research], where it doesn't talk about our product, but certainly draws the attention of customers. In relation to filters and positive and negative points, I try to deal with them in the best way possible, taking most of the messages in a healthy joking tone without much reason for discomfort, and as we interact, when it happens, I try to get around/clarify with the customer just in time. In general, the way I've been working is positive, it yields good results and is relaxed, but the negative points are the issue of personhood. I believe that with artists it must also happen, that people can't separate and feel very intimate, more than they are, because in fact the artist is known but does not know his entire audience. This is what also happens to me, there are clients who, because of this exposure, think they have intimacy to play in a very personal way, to treat very intimately or think that every moment is for fun and it is not like that, I have concerns with management (financial, people, delivery, structure) outside of content creation. When this happens, I try to get around the situation in the best way, I talk, I try to explain, it's not that common and therefore it doesn't become a problem, but it happens and we take it with us, it's not possible to please everyone, so I try to get around the situation and try to please the majority.

This evidence demonstrates that Okada (2011) and Petersen, Kushwaha and Kumar (2015) are correct when they state that in digital media, the communicator needs to have expertise in dealing with customers, constant monitoring and

agility in responses, in order to circumvent the negative aspects that may arise from interactions, and that can have much greater impacts than traditional media such as Radio, Newspapers and TV. For Duarte, Silva and Ferreira (2018) this new digital scenario suggests a continuous and realtime approach, in addition to greater pressure on the figure of the entrepreneur who exploits these tools. The interviewee's reports, regarding the messages that are elaborated, is that these are spontaneously generated and involve from the internal routine of the pizzeria, direct relationship with customers and personal routine, in which the interviewee demonstrates relaxed and goodhumored moments, trying to keep people interested in following their networks for entertainment or curiosity (Wesley & Barczak, 2016).

In this logic, associating the message strategy adopted in the previous company by the entrepreneur with the one that is used today in the João Pizza restaurant, it was questioned the differences between the traditional one - the former Pizzarela pizzeria, which did not use this type of digital media and neither marketing content/influence as a tool, as it is done today at João Pizza restaurant - and, in Shuen's (2018) terms, the new marketing strategy and its respective results. The owner is emphatic:

Everything changed, completely. I can't tell you exactly how much the revenue [in reais] increased, but I believe it was 100% or more. Revenue, expansion, customer loyalty, brand value, traffic, everything has improved, and I can say with certainty that it's all thanks to the internet, to this new way of working, today we stand out in the market in a way that the competition is not a concern, and certainly all this thanks to the social networks and our new way of doing marketing.

This change in the performance of the pizzeria, in order to explore these new interaction channels and communication with the consumer, corroborates the idea of Bertonio (2017), who emphasizes that there is a change in consumer behavior, that the same actually seeks differentials in the choice of restaurants for food, emphasizing that there is an interest in seeking an added status and feeling part of the frequented place, for feeling like a maintainer as a customer, therefore a



relevant figure for the company. That is, the fact of having followed this change in the consumer profile, can be considered as a strong point of these improvements.

Message Source

According to Armstrong et al. (2018) and Petersen, Kushwaha and Kumar (2015) marketing communication is the way companies seek to inform, persuade and remind consumers of their product/service or brand. For Gaunt, (2016) the process of communicating requires defining a source, that is, "who is going to say". In the case of Digital Marketing, and more specifically in Influence Marketing, the influencing agent digital influencer – is the source of this message. For this reason, it was questioned the moment to differentiate the company figure from the person figure, for the brand in the message emission, since this is the emitting source. The answer was that "today it has already become a thing, I am all the time João Pizza, and in this I balance what I want to pass to our customers, but always the João Pizza's company that interests the customers".

Another point raised in relation to the source, is that the strategic basis of the case raised here, João Pizza's Restaurant, is spontaneity. Therefore, it was questioned whether it was worth taking the risks that this spontaneity brings the source of this whole new communication strategy as defined by Shuen (2018), and it was said that "yes, this is how it has flowed well, I have already done test with someone else managing the social network and it is not the same, it loses identity, it becomes plastered, automatic and discontinued, it ends up making a very big difference".

Regarding the concerns about being this source, the digital influencer said that:

We really wanted to do things differently and have reach, we were inspired by people who do this – Grupo Ferreti and Sanduba do Careca – but for a longer time and in a different way, since I was afraid of becoming a fictitious character that I couldn't maintain. And we also didn't expect it to stay as it is today, things started to appear, and people started to identify themselves, and became curious about the place. But there was the fear of being seen as a clown, for example. A caricature. So it's something natural, without forcing an image, there was fear and it's not what I wanted for

my image.

According to Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick (2019) the coherence of the influence figure is a relevant factor for its credibility, since people believe and actually follow those people they identify with. If it falls into a contradiction between virtual and real posture, it loses credibility, a negative fact that easily spreads on the network, making messages less persuasive, even showing mastery of the content and empathy of the sender. And since there is no differentiation between the source of the message and the company, negative associations in one of them have a direct impact on the other.

When this coherence is broken, credibility is lost with consumers who see this break (Mazzinghy, 2014; Chaffey & Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). An example that can be cited of this process is the Blackberry phone, which in 2015 made a Twitter post to publicize its new product, but did so from an iPhone, its biggest competitor. The brand's consumers harshly criticized it, assuming that if the product was indeed quality, the company would not use the competition. A contradiction, even in a large company, still led to a reduction in customers and brand credibility. Another recent case, which took on major proportions, was that of the digital influencer Bianca Andrade – known for the vlogger "Boca Rosa", in which she talks about fashion and makeup – who has more than 6 million Instagram followers, the social network she uses to share healthy lifestyle habits regarding food and exercise. In 2017, she was recorded talking about a liposuction she had done and had never talked about it with her followers, this caused a controversy involving the image of the influencer, who needed to block the comments of her posts temporarily by the amount of complaints and criticism she received from her followers (Capricho, 2017).

Engagement

During the research, visits were made to the restaurant in order to compare whether the engagement shown on social networks directly reflected on the restaurant's movement. Factors such as service, location, price and product quality were also considered.



Service: the place has a standard service, the employees are attentive and have the differential of having a nutritionist on staff, available to answer questions and assist customers:

Location: the restaurant is well located, in the Mauricio de Nassau district - central part of the city of Caruaru (PE) and is easily accessible.

Price and quality: the menu is diversified. As much for the flavors and types of pizza as for the plates, the price is also varied, and the products are of good quality, thus yielding a good quality service. The result is a good costbenefit ratio.

These factors corroborate for the business sustainability (Bogers & Jensen, 2017). But, according to the restaurant owner, these are factors that already existed in the other restaurant and what makes this more visible are the social networks and the confirmation of this virtual engagement also in practice. Even with the possibility of booking, the restaurant - on every visit - had queues. People were waiting outside the restaurant for a table. Another observation made in the visits to the restaurant is the fact that people are looking for contact with the owner - described here a digital influencer - for photos and conversations. That is, they also corroborate the main findings of authors such as Wiedmann et al. (2018) that people are looking for interaction. This interaction reinforces ideas described in the study, that people value this closeness between the company and the customer, making them feel close to the business.

Final Considerations

Based on the outline of our research, the following research question was established: How can the role of digital influencer generate competitive advantage for companies in the gastronomic market? Digital influencers have similarities in the way they act. They initially conquer their followers by talking about fashion, beauty, ideologies, or doing something (humor, food, art or sustainability practices, for example) that they dominate in their social networks. They alternate this with their routine, which makes the

follower attracted and identifies with the digital influencer's routine. In the gastronomic sector, this profile follows this pattern.

When the influencer is an entrepreneur in the field – such as João Pizza, the case studied, and Sanduba do Careca and Grupo Ferreti who are also influencers and served as inspiration for João Pizza's work format – he follows the "basics" of the influencer profile, with the advantage of showing his business backstage and giving a face to his brand. This profile is drawn aiming to achieve greater customer receptivity and, in a way, breaks the vision of the enterprise as being pure business (Bogers & Jensen, 2017), bringing humor, showing the differentials that your business has internally - elements that usually not made public - and the possibility of taking advantage of feedbacks in a timely manner. That is, this profile of the digital influencer in the gastronomic sector is built from what Wesley and Barczak (2016) describe as the ability to relate directly to your customer, generate entertainment and use customer feedback to strengthen affective bonds and improve service.

Corroborating with Veirman, Cauberghe and Hudders (2017) in this relationship process, influencers use social networks as their main work tool. Currently, the main one is Instagram, which allows the sharing of images and videos that remain in the user's profile, and also photos and videos that are available for 24 hours. The mapping needs to consider an analysis cycle. It starts with attracting your target audience, which can be done through sweepstakes of products used by that audience, reaching the entire follow-up process. It is important to use all available information to your advantage in order to obtain engagement and feedback, and to check whether this involvement is confirmed in the restaurant's movement. Analyzing the results of social media engagement is one way to know if your audience is being reached and engaged by your content. That is, observing whether these results reflect in business movement is what will determine whether the strategy is efficient.

In the case of digital influence, a creativity strategy with an emotional aspect differentiates and gives space to spontaneity, which contributes positively to the brand's image as it narrows the



identification process of the customer with the brand. The message strategy involves the generation of attractive content – either by the relevance of the content or by the entertainment – and filtering this content so that it cannot be misinterpreted, generating an image different from what was desired and, even so, preparing to deal with this situation if it happens. In general, the style of the message executed from this, needs to compile all these points and it will need to match the personality and reality of the influencer, so that he passes credibility in the execution of his actions.

It is believed that the choice of a human figure as a character facilitates and speeds up the transmission of the brand's personality. When an entrepreneur creates his brand within a market that is still very adept at traditional or digital marketing with little differentiation and becomes an agent of influence, it can generate several advantages for his business, the main one being competitiveness. The differentiation draws attention, and the quality wins customers to perform the purchase action and subsequent build loyalty. The entertainment that is generated on social networks makes the brand be seen as something beyond, and in this way the cycle of affection before the purchase is created. So, an owner assuming the position of a digital influencer can generate competitive advantages for his company within the gastronomic market, as it has generated in the investigated case.

The concept of influence marketing has received theoretical and practical contributions in the last decades, and influence marketing under the strategies of digital communication channels still has few studies, mainly on applicability and adoption in real cases within organizations. Most of the studies found on this subject are associated with digital influencers in the fashion and fitness routine industries, who are treated as external figures to the organizations. These are being treated from a perspective of the digital influencer's reach capabilities and do not provide information about the return that companies get by partnering with these influencers to do their marketing. In this way, a research suggestion would be to study this perspective of return obtained by companies that use this service. Another suggestion for future work on the subject is the replication of the study presented here in the

same sector, with companies that use this type of strategy, but with other perspectives and methods. And also new studies in different sectors, such as the applicability of digital influence in the education sector, which is a sector mostly used by young people, who are also the main consumers of digital platforms, mainly social networks.

Finally, as the main limitations of this study, we can highlight the fact that it was a single case study, the João Pizza Restaurant, which allowed identifying a profile of socially recognized success in its activity, but other incorporated case studies could be carried out, in that it is possible to evaluate different profiles and make comparisons, for example, with the other two major entrepreneurs and influencers in the local gastronomic market, which are Sanduba do Careca, which has more than 196,000 followers on Instagram and 5 franchises in the Northeast with an installation project as well in Orlando/USA, and the Ferreti Group, which has more than 150,000 followers on Instagram and is composed of a Pizzeria, Bakery, Supermarket, Bakery and recently with a fast food sandwich. Likewise, the study was limited to a single geographic space and economic activity sector, a factor that may restrict the scope of the results. But the study's methodological path allows it to be replicated in other areas and with other influencers' profiles, in addition to expanding the applications Armstrong et al.'s (2018) analytical categories.

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