

# **Viral Marketing on Facebook**

*A study to clarify what makes people in the age 16-44 share content on Facebook*



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## Abstract

Viral marketing has been increasingly used by companies over the past years, because the right marketing content can differentiate themselves towards their competitors by creating a successful marketing campaign.

The aim of this thesis is to investigate the questions from the questionnaire about how people act on Facebook. The thesis aims to investigate why people in the age 16-44 share content on Facebook and what they share to their social network. The study went in-depth to find a connection between why and what they share content on Facebook, as well as emotions that are evoked in the people participating in the study, while looking at three different cases, that are included in the questionnaire which could lead to sharing content of either positive and negative character or both.

The research is based on selected theories in combination with a conducted online mixed methods questionnaire. The chosen target group is represented by 276 people from different countries around the world in the age 16-44 years.

It was found that the reasons why people share happens for a lot of different reasons, as well as what they share also is presented by a large variety. However, some of the reasons of why and what they share can be combined. They like to tell others about products and share product reviews. They share to define themselves to their network and give them an idea of who they are and what they care about and therefore share private events of their life. Furthermore, they like to bring valuable, interesting and entertaining content and share videos, pictures and articles that have these characteristics, and which could result in getting attention and likes from their network. At least they are interested in sharing causes to create awareness and lead to a debate and a discussion. Additionally, the study showed that people are more willing to share content, which evokes positive emotions instead of content that evokes negative feelings. This is important for companies who are interested to use viral marketing as a strategy in their marketing activities. This could be useful know-how if they are aiming to reach out to people within this thesis target group.

## Acknowledgements

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I would like to thank my supervisor, John Hird for competent and patient supervision during the research and writing period.

***This thesis is dedicated to my mom, Marianne Kjølby (1956-2016)***

## Introduction

In the modern life, social media platforms have a huge influence on people's everyday life (Socialmagnets - How Social Media Influences People - Infographic). Today it is possible to stay connected whenever and wherever you are due to a worldwide increase in the usage of smartphones and mobile devices (Statista, 2014-2019). Nowadays there is a lot of different social networks all over the world. Some of the most popular networks are for example Instagram with 400 million monthly active users, Twitter with 320 million monthly active users, and the biggest social media platform and market leader is Facebook with 1.59 billion monthly active users (Statista, 2016) and it only seems to increase in the future. The number of worldwide social media users is based on projections set to increase from 2.04 billion active social media users worldwide with a annually increase in 2015 and in 2019, to have 2.72 active social media users worldwide (Statista, 2016). The age distribution of active users of social media shows the same patterns with the highest number of active users in the age 16-24 and 25-34, but closely followed by the age group 35-44 years old (Statista, 2014).

The world of social media has created some new opportunities for companies seen from a marketing perspective, and viral marketing is one of many that are used. Viral marketing has always been used, even before social media platforms, through word-of-mouth, which is a more old fashioned way of doing it (I-Scoop - Understanding WOM in the digital age). Now word-of-mouth have changed to word-of-mouse, which is the online based word-of-mouth method, where people still communicate, recommend products, services and share experiences etc. People still do these things through word-of-mouth, but they do it more and more through social media networking sites, and with few click, they are able to share this information. In other words, it has changed from less and less speaking, to more and more typing (BusinessCulture - How social media became word of mouse marketing). Today's technology gives online content the potential to go viral only with a few click, through the social media channels, but it can still be tough for companies to create successful viral marketing campaign, without the right know-how about what it should include. There is a lot of questions to be answered about what the holy grail of viral marketing and sharing is, because it can reach a lot of people within few minutes, but most importantly, a successful viral marketing campaign can create a lot of attention and is the future

for companies (PracticalEcommerce - The Six Principles of Viral Marketing). Furthermore, companies have become more aware of using marketing online, by the use of viral marketing, to increase their sales, awareness etc. (Forbes - The most important reasons why online marketing is more important than ever).

Hence, the rise in the number of active users on social media sites, and the potential for them to share different content through their personal networks and create a breeding ground for content to go viral. Besides the importance of viral marketing for companies is increasingly developing as viral marketing has been given more focus from the companies. This has initiated my curiosity about what makes people share content on the social networking site Facebook.

## **Problem statement**

*Based on an analysis of Viral Marketing - What makes people in the age 16-44 share content on Facebook?*



## Process Description

This is the description of the process of this thesis in order to research my problem statement. The acquired knowledge from each stage are often used in the next stage, which creates a natural continuity to the thesis. The stages below are explained continuously through the thesis.

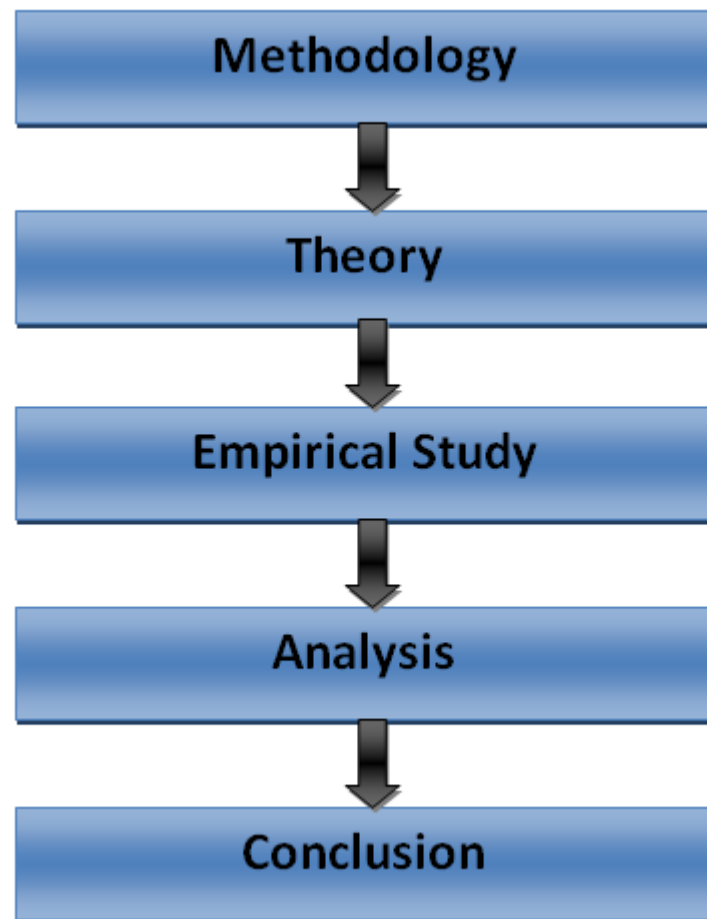


Figure 1 - Process description of the thesis (own development)

## Methodology

The methodological framework of this thesis takes stance in the beliefs of different theorists regarding the importance of paradigms as a fundamental matter for the research of this thesis. This section seeks to explain the approach to research, research design, methods of data collection, limitation of this thesis, and how the theory will be used to analyse data.

## Paradigm

The paradigm is a very fundamental block for understanding the research. For a scientist a paradigm is what should be studied, how research should be done, and how results should be interpreted (Bryman, 2012). According to Guba (1990), the paradigm of a research study can be divided into different systems of beliefs. Each system of belief is based on three important elements: Ontology, epistemology and methodology. This means that the paradigm in this thesis will help to guide it in the right direction, which also will create a better structure for the thesis. For a researcher there are different paradigms to use as a guideline, to which all have different characteristics, and they are inconsistent with each other because of their divergent assumptions and methods (Kuhn, 1970 cited in Bryman (2012)). It is necessary to consider the characteristics of the different paradigms carefully to find the most suited for the research of the thesis.

## Epistemological considerations

Epistemology is concerned with the nature and scope of knowledge and what should pass as knowledge (Bryman, 2012). It questions what knowledge is and how it can be acquired. It also concerns whether the social world can or should be studied according to the same principles, procedures and ethos of the natural sciences (Bryman, 2012). This thesis is based on the interpretive point of view to reach answering the problem statement of this thesis. Using interpretivism, which is a contrast to positivism as usually focuses on meaning, and may employ multiple methods in order to reflect different aspects of the issue (Collins, 2010). This thesis will be dominated by the interpretive way of thinking, because the world is seen as a subjective place where each individual experiences and interpretes according to own beliefs. The goal of interpretivist research is to understand and interpret the meanings in human behaviour, rather than to generalize and predict causes and effects (Neuman, 2000; Hudson and Ozanne, 1988). For

an interpretivist researcher it is important to understand motives, meanings, reasons and other subjective experiences, such as time and context bound (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988; Neuman, 2000). This thesis is aiming to understand the motivation or factors that make people in the age of 16-44 years share content on Facebook. The participants of this research have different motivation or factors to why they share content on Facebook according to the wide spread in the age group and their preferences. Furthermore, this research is made to gain a deeper understanding of the different factors and motivation, which are the trigger for sharing.

### Ontological considerations

The ontological position is concerned with a central point of orientation, "Whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can or should be considered social constructions built up from perceptions and actions of social actors" (Bryman 2012). According to Guba and Lincoln (1989) ontology answers the question: "Where is there that can be known?". To consider the ontological position there are two stances; Objectivism and Constructivism. In this thesis it is important to determine and clarify why people in the age of 16-44 years share content on Facebook using the ontological position constructivism. "Social phenomena and their meaning is continually being accomplished by social actors" (Bryman, 2012), which means that "Multiple realities exist, because they are created in minds of social actors" (Guba, 1990) and "Reality exists only in people's minds, and subjective interaction is the only way to access this reality" (Guba 1990). This ontology allows each person aged 16-44 to participate in this study. This study gives each individual a chance to express their views about reality based on their own actions and activities on Facebook.

As a constructivist I hold the belief of multiple realities and see the reality by this view, and that the knowledge is created by human activity, which is also referred to as human constructions. By holding this belief I am dependent of the human behaviour from the research to show how the reality is, before I can answer my problem statement.

## Research approach

Constructivists do not generally begin with a theory as with post positivists, they rather "Generate or inductively develop a theory or pattern of meanings" (Creswell, 2003) throughout the research process. Therefore, the approach to research in this thesis will be carried out the inductive way, which means that I start collecting data through various literature and then a questionnaire about viral marketing that is relevant for this thesis. Once a substantial amount of data have been collected, I will take a step back and get an overview of the data to look for patterns in the data. By doing research this way, I go from data to theory or from the specific to the general (Blackstone, 2012).

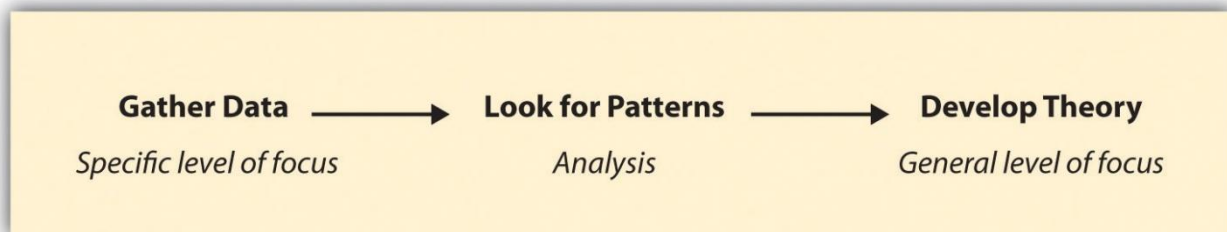


Figure 2 - Inductive Research (Blackstone, 2012)

## Research design

The research design of this thesis is a case study. It is defined "As an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used" (Yin, 1984). This definition will be adapted into this research study, since it is well connected with the aim of this thesis. The meaning is to reach to an understanding of viral marketing on Facebook and extend the experience within this field. The case study is conducted on the basis of three cases that have gone viral on Facebook with great success, meaning that every case have been shared several times. These three cases will be combined with a questionnaire (which will be explained further below). That is why the purpose of this thesis is to investigate and clarify what viral marketing is, and what the motivational factors are behind people in the age of 16-44 years old to share content through Facebook, in others words: Why do they share? As mentioned above, a questionnaire of qualitative and quantitative character will be used to attempt to reach an understanding of this topic. Case studies are usually seen as

qualitative research, but they can also have the quantitative approach (University of Surrey - Introduction to research).

The questionnaire in this thesis will include both qualitative and quantitative method, also called mixed methods. "Not everything that counts can be counted, and not everything that can be counted counts" (Einstein). There is a certain truth in this statement if you consider this research. The questionnaire should include questions where the respondents can speak freely and elaborate why they share online content on Facebook (open-ended questions) and questions where they need to tick some boxes in the questionnaire related to viral marketing (closed-ended questions). Thus adapting the belief in this study it is creditable that the findings of the mixed method questionnaire can be regarded as features representable for large parts of the targeted segment, which is people in the age 16-44 years old.

### Research methods and methods of data collection

To collect my data I will use both desk and field research. The study will consist of a mixed method data collection, as there will be quantitative and qualitative data present in the data collection process. The reason why it is a good idea to choose the usage of both desk and field research is to cover the research area in the best way possible. Desk research will be used through existing material and existing research for inspiration which will be articles, databases, existing analysis, books and the internet, but still having a critical approach to the sources that I am using. Desk research is used to give an overview of the field I am examining (Innovationsguiden.dk - Desk research). Field research will be used to the extent of a detailed questionnaire, gathering qualitative and quantitative data. There are no right and wrong answers in the questionnaire. That is why it seems pointless to crosscheck the collected data from the questionnaire. Speaking of qualitative and quantitative data there are some advantages and disadvantages attached to each of them. Some of the advantages of using qualitative data are that the data provides an in-depth and detailed insight of the topic - you get an insight into how the respondents, who answer the questionnaire, act and behave online and what emotions are aroused in them, when they act in a certain way. A disadvantage could be that the qualitative data is more time consuming to handle afterwards, because the respondents have the opportunity to comment and thus deepen some of

the questions with their own thoughts about the topic. There are chances that the respondents react differently and give different answers to these general questions, and that is why they become subjective (Learnhigher - Qualitative data).

The advantage of using quantitative data is that it allows for a broader study, where I get the opportunity to examine a large number of respondents instead of only using qualitative data. Furthermore it enhances the generalisation of the results from the questionnaire and increases the objectivity. It also creates an overview of the large amount of information collected from the questionnaire. One of the disadvantages of quantitative data is that the answers are not elaborative, and therefore it will be difficult to get an insight to what the respondents feel and mean when they are answering the questionnaire. It is not elaborating as qualitative research is. The quantitative data is not as precise as qualitative data is. (Learnhigher - Quantitative data).

By using a mixed method containing both qualitative and quantitative data it gives me a deeper understanding of the topic, and it covers a wider range of information that are relevant to have to answer my problem statement. The questionnaire will be explained further below.

### Questionnaire - Appendix 1

Sheehan and Hoy (1999 cited in Bryman, 2012) gave the impression that web surveys or questionnaires are used to study large groups of online users. To gather information to answer my problem statement a questionnaire of qualitative and quantitative character has been made. A web based questionnaire is a good match for this thesis, because it allows me to reach out to a large group of people in the age 16-44 years.

The questionnaire is designed as a self-completion and it was conducted using an online survey tool called Google Forms, consisting of both open-ended and closed-ended questions, which makes the respondents reflect on some answers and thus provide more accurate answers. Google Forms is used because they offer unlimited questions as well as unlimited answers, and then it is user friendly. The reason for the self-completion system and using a online questionnaire is to make the questionnaire as attractive as possible for people in the age 16-44 years and make them

interested in answering it. This method makes it possible to get answers from all over the world and not only limited to one place. At first the questionnaire will be posted through Facebook, because, as mentioned in the introduction, it is the most used social media channel, and the target group is very present on this media. By publishing the questionnaire through Facebook it is possible for friends to share it through their social media network, and in the end exceed the number of respondents and create some diversification in the respondents. Furthermore the questionnaire have also been posted in several forums, which have a lot of users from different countries. It is very important to have some diversification within the respondents in order to ensure a broader perspective on the topic I am investigating, and by that supply my research with opinions from different respondents within the target group. To ensure that only people in the target group (16-44 years) answer the questionnaire a small text was included in the post on Facebook, where it was mentioned, that only respondents in the age of 16-44 years, were interesting for this research. Furthermore, the respondents also have to state their age in the beginning of the questionnaire. Even though such measures has been made to secure the respondents age, a problematic aspect could be to control the respondents age for an online self-completion questionnaire, because the respondents could answer it even though they are not in the target group. This could influence the level of credibility of the study negatively.

Another thing that could affect the study negatively is the respondents' interpretation of the questions that I am asking. This applies to the open-ended questions, because they have to comment freely on these questions, and it cannot be guaranteed that the respondents' interpretation of the questions are similar to how the questions intentionally were supposed to be understood, and thus answers may differ. However, there is no right or wrong in this questionnaire, and therefore it is not seen as a huge pitfall to the research.

The online questionnaire is composed of both open-ended and closed-ended questions as mentioned above. It leaves me as a researcher not to ask for elaboration on the given answers. However, there are some questions that give the respondents the opportunity to elaborate with their own words and share their own perspective. The questionnaire is designed with a short introduction, followed by some demographic questions. Next there are some general questions

towards viral marketing and Facebook, but the main part of the questionnaire consist of three cases that have gone viral - being shared many times through social networking sites. These three cases consist of a video and two pictures that people have to consider when answering the belonging questions. The questionnaire will be conducted in English language to reach as many people as possible, because English is number one language according to total speakers in the world, which means people that are able to speak English and not only native speakers (Statista, 2015).

There are some advantages and disadvantages attached to a online questionnaire. Some of the advantages are that it is very fast to gather data and easy to handle and make them into statistics, when it is conducted over the internet. By using the internet it is possible to reach respondents all over the globe, by sharing it through social media (Explorable - Advantages of Online Survey). Another advantage is the increase in the response rate. When the questionnaire is online, the respondents can answer it according to their own pace, chosen time and preferences (Explorable - Advantages of Online Survey). Some of the disadvantages could be fraud, because as mentioned above it is hard to control the given answers and control the age of the respondents. Furthermore, there is no physical interviewer present to clarify the questions if the respondents may have some confusion. Another thing could be that the respondents get bored during the questionnaire and therefore tend to answer the questions without thinking about each question (SnapSurveys - Advantages and Disadvantages of Surveys). I am fully aware of these disadvantages, and therefore I have tried my best to make the online questionnaire exciting, by including a short video and two pictures and not too many questions that could make the respondent skip the questionnaire, but still enough questions to complete my research. Also from previous projects I have gained the experience that it is very difficult to get enough respondents to make a valid study if the questionnaire has too many pages with questions. It seems pointless to include an interview in the study, because I am interested in a large part and not only a few peoples opinion.

### 3 cases from the questionnaire

As mentioned shortly in the questionnaire description, three different have been used in the questionnaire - One video and two pictures. These cases have been included to find out how the



respondents react towards them, focusing on their emotions/feelings. First I would tell something about each case and **why** I chose these.

### 1. Video "Friend Furever" by Android - Appendix 2.

This is a short video from the company Android about some animals fooling around in the nature. This video is watched more than 24.000.000 times and shared over 6.400.000 times in only 10 months through social networks. This is a lot considering that the video is from year 2015 and have not been out there for long (Unruly - Most Shared Ads of 2015). **Why** was this video chosen? This video was chosen based on some characteristics. First of all it was one of the most shared video ads in 2015 with approximately 6.400.000 shares in only 10 months, which makes it a video people like. Therefore it could be very interesting to analyze what emotions this particular video evoke in people, and then I have the possibility to compare the answers from this case to the other cases to find out, if there are some similarities. Also the video has to be popular (shares, likes etc.), I was also looking for a video with the length of not more than 1 min duration, because I am aware that people are not interested in watching a long video when doing a questionnaire, and I do not want to decrease my chances of getting more respondents (Survio - Online Surveys and their Disadvantages). This video is focuses on animals

### 2. Picture "War is ugly" - Appendix 3

This is a picture of a soldier who is about to be deployed. He is holding his newborn baby girl and is overwhelmed with emotions, because he has to leave her. It was posted by an American singer named Matt Rogers. At the first day it received nearly 130.000 shares and 1.600.000 likes (ShoutMeLoud - Top 20 viral photos on Facebook). **Why** was this picture chosen? This picture was chosen because of the number of shares it received in a short amount of time. I only want to have cases in my questionnaire that have gone viral. This picture is also different in the context compared to the video and the other picture due to the different topics, because I want to have some diversity in the cases. This picture focuses on people.

### 3. Picture "Heaven in the midst of the sea" - Appendix 4

This is a picture of a cabin in the sea. It was posted by the Facebook site "I love the ocean". When the picture was posted, it received about 72.000 shares and 1.500.000 likes (ShoutMeLoud - Top

20 viral photos on Facebook). **Why** was this picture chosen? I chose this picture because of the many shares it received and the number of likes. The number of shares and number of likes tell something about the likeability of the picture, and therefore it could be interesting to investigate this picture. Furthermore, this picture also differs from the other two cases. This picture focuses on nature/vacation.

To sum it up: There are some diversity to the cases, which was carefully selected. There is a video focusing on animals, a picture focusing on people, and lastly a picture focusing on nature/vacation. They have all received a great number of shares and have gone viral. I am aware that the two pictures not are marketing campaigns, but they are still relevant, because they have gone viral with a great number of shares.

## Limitations

The problem in this thesis can be viewed from many different angles and can be involved with many theoretical fields I have deliberately made some choices and rejections in constructing the project framework. These choices and rejections are based on relevance to make the analysis more precise and to fit the limited physical framework.

These choices have been considered carefully before this thesis was started. The research of this thesis is restricted to the target group - people in the age of 16-44 years, because as seen in the introduction. This target group consists of the most present active users on social media (Statista, 2014). Furthermore, this thesis will only focus on Facebook as a social media, because it is the most used and market leader of social media platforms (Statista, 2016). Therefore, it seems relevant to investigate what makes people share content on Facebook.

The aim of the thesis is not to test a given theory. In contrast, the theories will only be involved with the purpose of being able to explain the different relationships between the thesis' main concepts and viral marketing to the extend reflect what makes people in the age of 16-44 years share content on Facebook. Furthermore, the theories applied will be used as an explanation for the possible cause of the empirical part of the project.

## Theory

In this section of the thesis the theories that have been chosen to include in an effort to answer the problem statement will be presented. The theories that will be used are a description of what viral marketing is, word of mouth vs. word of mouse, pros and cons of viral marketing, a description of Facebook, Social Media Honeycomb Framework, Recommender Role Matrix, Five Functions of Word-of-Mouse, Self-Determination Theory and Critics of the chosen theories.

### What is Viral Marketing?

Since this thesis includes the topic viral marketing it is important to discuss what it is and clarify word-of-mouth and word-of-mouse, which gives the reader an insight into the topic.

Viral Marketing is a buzzword for promotional messages that spread through social networks and involves the concept of a chain reaction.

"For a virus campaign to be successful it is necessary to nurse the two basic characteristics of a virus: Reproduction and survival" (Hird & Poulsen, 2002)<sup>1</sup>.

"No virus can survive without a disease carrier and thus it can't reproduce itself either. The more disease carriers a virus has infected the better it feels. Spreading the virus means having an interesting, involving and relevant message in the eyes of the target group. To reproduce the message constantly needs to be modified and revitalized to maintain interest and involvement" (Hird & Poulsen, 2002)<sup>2</sup>.

Viral refers to a virus that can be spread from person to person and create a chain reaction, which also happens when some content goes viral on social networks (Techin - What does "Goes Viral" on Facebook mean?). It is something that depends on a high pass-along rate from person to person, and the content needs to be reproduced constantly to maintain interest and involvement. For example if a large percentage of the recipients forward something to a large number of friends, the overall growth will quickly increase (Marketingterms - Viral Marketing).

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<sup>1</sup> Appendix 5 - Lecture: by John Hird: Viral Marketing

<sup>2</sup> Appendix 5 - Lecture: by John Hird : Viral Marketing

It is difficult to establish when viral marketing occurred, but there is a well-known Hotmail.com example. In 1996 Hotmail.com did a very successful viral marketing campaign with their free email service. They gave away free email addresses and were smart to include a tag "Get your private, free email at <http://www.hotmail.com>" in the end of every email that was sent. This led to the spread with the speed of light and only 18 months later Hotmail had gained about 12 million registered users (Kotler, 2009).

Throughout the years several theorists have given their point of view on the concept viral marketing, and there are some discrepancies in trying to explain what the essence of viral marketing is. Therefore it seems relevant to take a look and discuss some of these definitions.

"Viral marketing describes any strategy that encourages individuals to pass on a marketing message to others, creating the potential for exponential growth in the message's exposure and influence. Like viruses, such strategies take advantage of rapid multiplication to explode the message to thousands, to millions" (Wilson, 2000).

This definition by Wilson describes the basic principles of viral marketing in a sufficient way, but omits the use of internet, because the messages are passed on electronically in Viral Marketing rather than from face to face like in older days. The internet is an essential element for viral marketing, because the message is able to reach geographical areas that not would be possible with word-of-mouth.

"Any form of advertising and/or communication that spreads with like a virus and is passed on from consumer to consumer and market to market. The use of the internet (particularly social networking sites) and the internet increases the speed and geographic coverage of these communications" (Kotler 2009; 870).

This definition by Kotler, that describes the principles of viral marketing and includes the use of internet and social networking sites, is perfectly for this thesis which focuses on viral marketing.

### Word -of- Mouth and Word- of -Mouse

Viral Marketing is built on the old Word-of-Mouth. It is a central concept of viral marketing and is about how to get people to spread a message by word-of-mouth. It can be characterized as oral person-to-person communication regarding a brand, product, service etc. (Kotler, 2009; 704). People (buyers) who use word-of-mouth as a source for information tend to trust recommendations, as they are coming from a known source, which makes the communication more personal than word-of-mouse. It is important to make the distinction between traditional Word-of-Mouth, and Word-of-Mouse that takes place on the internet, because the surroundings are different on the internet, and there are other opportunities to communicate.

Both word-of-mouth and word-of-mouse can assist businesses in spreading a positive "buzz" about their products, but word-of-mouse can lead to greater consequences given its far reaching capabilities due to the use of internet and possibility to reach a lot more users than traditional word-of-mouth. However, the great reaching capabilities of word-of-mouse communication can be unreliable in nature given the anonymity of the users (Isenberg Marketing - Word-of-Mouth vs. Word-of-Mouse Advertising - From Kotler, 2011). Communication and dissemination through the internet allows the consumer to interact with many other people at the same time, which means that there is no longer need for face-to-face communication. A person can send an email or a message through a social networking site to all its contacts without major time costs. In this way, the consumer has a big reach and is available to spread information quickly. (Subramani, 2003). Another difference is that human interaction is no longer bounded by time. Through traditional Word-of-Mouth the individuals communicating are in the same spot while interacting with each other. Afterwards when they are separated the communication is interrupted, and the communication must wait to continue until they meet again. During word-of-mouse a person can send a message through a social networking site for example Facebook that the recipients can see whenever they have time to react. Another difference between word-of-mouth and word-of-mouse is that the spread of a viral message is far easier to measure through Word-of-Mouse, for example

the spread can be measured by number of likes, shares, views etc., which is much more difficult to do with word-of-mouth (Subramani, 2003). As mentioned in the description of "What is Viral Marketing?" the importance of the internet and social networking sites and word-of-mouth in the perception of what viral marketing is, is very important as the definition by Kotler, 2009 showed.

### Pros and Cons of Viral Marketing

Viral Marketing has occurred because of the internet and it comes with great advantages and opportunities. However, there are also some disadvantages and pitfalls associated with viral marketing that can create damage. Therefore it is relevant to discuss and clarify the pros and cons of viral marketing in this part. This is relevant to include as the reader has an idea what the positive and negative sides of viral marketing is.

#### Pros of Viral Marketing

The right content can create a very high spread of viral marketing and create a buzz that makes a greater impact on people. The social networking sites where sharing is a large part and often represented as a key feature. The social networking sites offer different methods of sharing on the internet and create conversations in which content can be shared or discussed. Since Word-of-Mouth is carried out through the internet it gives the opportunity to reach widely geographically in no time. Furthermore, individuals have a wide reach and that is why they are able to share any kind of information to their network quickly and easily, using the social networking sites (Leskovec, 2007).

Another advantage of viral marketing is that a marketing campaign has no ending date, because the consumers are doing most of the work, by keeping the campaign alive with sharing, liking and commenting etc. Therefore, if a campaign is interesting there is no time limit for how long it can continue. Thus the companies have the opportunity to reach a constant increasing ROI, because brand awareness is still being created even though the company do not use any resources on the campaign any longer (Ferguson, 2008).

The ability to measure the effects of viral marketing campaigns is seen as an advantage for companies, because it is quite easy to extract data from social networking sites and thus measure whether the campaigns have had the desired effect and thus determine whether the message have reached the intended target group. Furthermore, it is possible to measure the number of times the campaigns have been communicated. These data make it possible to improve future marketing campaigns (Kirby & Marsden, 2006).

One of the most obvious advantages of using viral marketing is, that this form of marketing is cost-effective, since companies have the opportunity to launch a campaign where the message can be spread at a low cost, when using social networking sites. It is the users and existing or potential customers of the social networking sites who do the work of spreading the message and create a buzz. The companies save a lot of money and resources in this way, since they do not have to spread the message themselves (Kirby & Marsden, 2006).

### Cons of Viral Marketing

As mentioned above, viral marketing campaigns can run for a long time without using resources on it. It can also be seen as a disadvantage, because the message of the campaign can flourish for long time, which can be undesirable for the sender if the message of the campaign is not relevant anymore or if the sender does not want to be associated with the message anymore (Ferguson, 2008).

The risk of creating a one-hit wonder is definitely a disadvantage of viral marketing. It can happen to most companies if they are not determined to focus on creating interesting campaigns of the same quality than the previous, that have gained enough attention to be shared by a lot of people. For the companies there will always be a need to differentiate themselves at social networking sites, because otherwise they will just end up like one of many with no strategy for viral marketing. To have a constant need for differentiation, and to be creative, is a crucial factor of viral marketing and the desire to go viral and create a buzz (Ferguson, 2008).

When the message from the companies is sent out by using viral marketing through social networking sites, the companies are losing control of the communication process, as when a viral

marketing campaign are spreading at a larger scale. The distribution of the message is left to the users of the social networking sites, and as a sending company you can only stand idly by while the message is shared uncontrolled through the networks. Thereby they lose control with how the message is delivered and how people perceive it. They also lose the control of how the recipients talk about the brand. This can also cause a backlash effect, which will create a negative buzz for the company. A negative buzz can create a large spreading of negative comments towards the viral marketing campaign. A negative attitude against a viral marketing campaign can spread as fast as a positive attitude towards a viral marketing campaign (Kirby, 2006), which makes it important for the companies to invest some time and resources in creating a viral marketing campaign.

## Facebook

This is a short description of Facebook as a social networking site. It is included in the thesis to identify Facebook and its features.

Facebook started in the United States as a networking site for some college kids to stay in touch after they had left campus (BBC - What is Facebook). The social networking site was created by Mark Zuckerberg while he was a student at Harvard in 2004 (Businessdictionary . Facebook). Facebook is now a social networking site for people to connect with each other. It is possible to stay connected with friends and others who work, study and live around them. Facebook is used to keep in touch with friends, post photos, share links, videos etc. and exchange other information. (Webopedia - Facebook). **Facebook has** been so popular and has reached 1.59 billion active users, which makes them the most used social networking site in the world (Statista, 2016).

## The Honeycomb of Social Media

I have chosen to include this theory to analyze Facebook as a social networking to get a better understanding of the platform itself.

As mentioned in the introduction and in the description "What is viral marketing", social media is highly used in modern marketing. Social media networking sites are considered as one of the most



important elements for companies. That is the reason why companies are interested in using viral marketing in their marketing strategies. To define social media I am using the theory of the seven social media building blocks - Honeycomb framework by Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre (2011). Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre present the seven building blocks on different social media networking sites where I am, however, only interested in their view on Facebook, because this thesis is only based on Facebook, which makes their view on other social media networking sites pointless. This theory is important to include, since this thesis deals with Facebook, and it is therefore appropriate to get a good understanding of how Facebook works as a social networking site.

They present the seven building blocks as a honeycomb, as seen below in figure 3 . The social media honeycomb shows if the social media networking sites are using one or more building blocks to create the social environment. The blocks in the honeycomb do not exclude each other, and not all of them have to be a part of a social media. They are constructs that allow us to make sense of how different levels of social media functionality can be configured. This means that a social media environment may consist of one, two or three building blocks or a mixture of all seven. The social media networking site, always offer their users key-features which are their main features. They do this in order to attract users. Some social networking sites also offer sub-features, which aims to enhance the users experience (Kietzmann et. al. 2011).

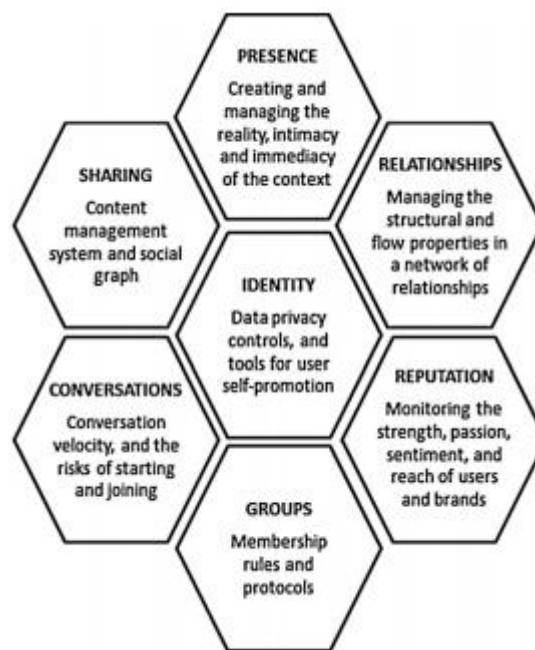


Figure 3 - The Honeycomb of Social Media (Kietzmann et al. 2011)

Figure 3 - The honeycomb of social media shows the seven building blocks described by Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre as: Identity, conversations, sharing, presence, relationships, reputation and groups.

### Identity

The identity block represents the extent to which users reveal their identities in a social media setting and include or exclude information such as name, age, gender, profession or location. There are many different social media sites build around identity that require users to make profiles (e.g. Facebook). Other social media sites encourage their users to use nicknames or usernames (e.g. Twitter) (Kietzmann et. al. 2011). One major implication is privacy - users are willing to share their identities on social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. However, this does not mean that users do not care what happens to this information. Users of social media consider their identity before they are getting started. For example they are considering real identity versus virtual identity (Kietzmann & Angell, 2010).

### Conversations

The conversations block of the framework represents the extent to which users communicate with other users in a social media setting. Many of the social media sites have incorporated the building block, as conversations between people are designed primarily to facilitate conversations among individuals and groups. These conversations can occur for different reasons such as meeting new people, stay connected, finding love etc. Others see social media as a place of making their message heard. This could be caused by issues they are supporting, economic issues, political debates etc. There is an enormous number of diversity in the conversations through the social medias (Kietzmann et. al. 2011).

### Sharing

Sharing represents the extent to which users exchange, distribute, and receive content. There are different ways to share content, which range from sending it in an email to a person to posting it on a social media website, which makes it accessible for the whole social media network. Sharing content on social media sites has been a popular feature. It has increased, and now individuals distribute and receive more content in less time than all of humanity has done previously. Websites, online articles etc. often have a sharing button attached to their website for the different social media sites, which also helps spreading the content directly to social media sites (Kietzmann et. al. 2011).

### Presence

The building block presence, represents the extent to which users can know if other users are accessible, both virtually and physically through status updates and check-ins. The increasing connectivity of people on the move, cross the real world and the virtual world. By making status, updates and check-ins at a location their network and followers are able to see where they are and what they are doing at this place (Kietzmann et. al. 2011).

### Relationships

The relationships block represents the extent to which users can be related to other users. To be related means that two or more users make some form of association that create conversations,

share content, meet up or list each other as a friend, follower or a fan. Mostly how users are connected on social media sites determines what and how the information is exchanged. The relationships can be formal, regulated and structured depending on which social media platform. Furthermore the scale of relationship can vary from small to large depending on the social media platforms features (Kietzmann et. al. 2011).

### Reputation

Reputation block is the extent to which users can identify the standing of others, including themselves, in a social media setting. Reputation can have different meanings on social media platforms. Reputation is mostly based on trust, which could be seen as likes, followers, fans, thumbs up etc. This depends on how each social media platform is structured. Measuring reputation can be difficult, but it is measured the same way trust is, by likes, followers, fans, thumbs up. These measurements can cause that the users of the social media sites have the opportunity to get an idea about their place in the hierarchy of the social media site compared to others (Kietzmann et. al. 2011).

### Groups

The group functional building block represents the extent to which users can form communities and sub-communities. In the world of social media there exist two major groups - one made by individuals and one made by a community. The group made by individuals works as follows: The individual can categorise their own network/contacts into self-created groups, based on relationships with their friends, acquaintances, followers, fans etc. The other are groups on social media that can be based on interests, network, education etc. These groups can be open to anyone, but they require approval or an invitation (secret groups). There are attached administrators to the groups. Their task is to manage the group, approve users and invite other to join. These groups often want to pursue an agenda and increase its number of members.

## The Honeycomb of Facebook

Since only Facebook as a social media site is relevant for this thesis, Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre's development of the honeycomb of Facebook is illustrated below. This will be discussed in the analysis part while considering the theory "The honeycomb of social media".

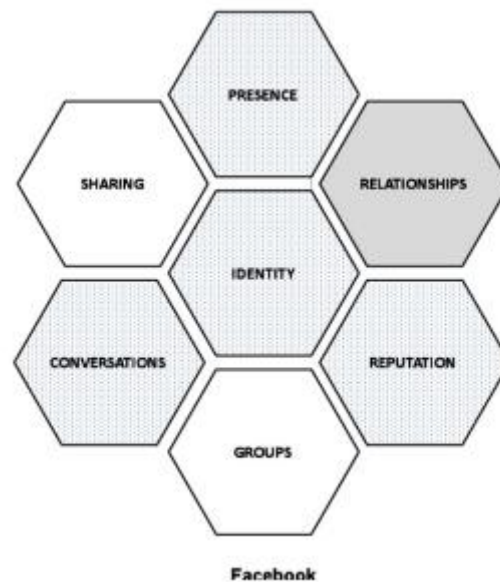


Figure 4 - The Honeycomb of Facebook (Kietzmann et. al. 2011)

## Critics of theory "The Honeycomb of Social Media"

This theory is mostly build on the point of view from Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre and how they see social media combined to the seven building blocks. Therefore it is important to have a critical view on this theory when it is used to analyze Facebook. Since the theory is from 2011, some of the social media sites may have changed, but Facebook is still using the same key-features and sub-features as they did back then.

## Recommender Role Matrix

This theory is included in this thesis in order to clarify the type of respondents, who have participated in the questionnaire. This will mainly be investigated through the questions "Why do you share content on Facebook and what do you share on Faceook?" and "Are you more likely to share content on Facebook from companies or private persons? And why?"

The recommender role matrix is a framework for viral marketing. This theory highlights two key factors: The role of the influencer and the level of network externalities. The role of the influencer is whether the attempt to influence is actively or passively persuasive. The level of network externalities is the additional benefit from the usage of something being recommended in a user community. Together these two factors highlight four quadrants: **1. Awareness Creation, Benefits Signaling** **2. Targeted Recommendation** **3. Signaling use, Group Membership** **4. Motivated Evangelism** (Subramani & Rajagopalan, 2003). The four quadrants are illustrated in figure 5 below.

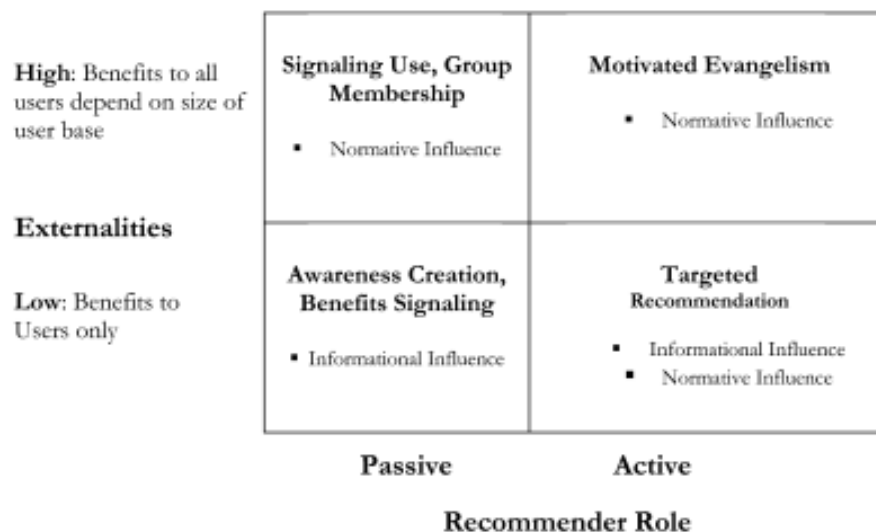


Figure 5 - Recommender Role Matrix (Subramani & Rajagopalan, 2003)

The Recommender role matrix also shows that there are both normative and informative influences. Normative influence means that the recipient's behavior is based on the understanding of the influencers' information. The informative influence is based on evaluation by the recipients of the information received by the influencer.

#### Awareness Creation, Benefits Signaling

In this quadrant the influencer's role is passive and that is why the influencer is not active in spreading the message. The role of the influencer is mainly to create awareness and signal benefits to others within their social network. The networks externalities (benefits) are also minimal (Subramani & Rajagopalan, 2003). As an example, the recipients get a personalized email

message including a link, that directs them to another website to view the greeting card and therefore the sender do not actively send information about the website to the receiver (Lecture slide, appendix 6)<sup>3</sup>.

### Targeted Recommendation

This quadrant is where the influencer plays an active role in spreading the word. There are only benefits to the users. The network externalities (benefits) are also minimal (Subramani & Rajagopalan, 2003). For example if the influencer sends a news story from a website to a person in the network "Send a story to a friend" or the "Share" button that are available on most news sites nowadays and the person that receive the news story is directed to the website and the influencer has actively shared the link to the news site (Lecture slide, appendix 6)<sup>4</sup>.

### Signaling use, Group Membership

In this quadrant the recommender's role is passive, but there are significant externalities (benefits) to both the recipient and the influencer (Subramani & Rajagopalan, 2003). An example is that the influencer sends a PDF file to the recipient, which leads directly to Adobe's website to download the free PDF reader and therefore the influencer does not actively want them to visit Adobe's website (Lecture slide, appendix 6)<sup>5</sup>.

### Motivated Evangelism

In this quadrant the recommender/influencer plays an active role in sharing/sending information to the recipients. There are significant network externalities (benefits) to both influencers and recipients (Subramani & Rajagopalan, 2003). A social media as Facebook requires that both the influencer and the recipients are created as a user on the website (Lecture slide, appendix 6)<sup>6</sup>. Since Facebook is the largest social media site at the moment it tells something about how effective influencers have been. They have since the start acted as evangelists for Facebook and by that recommended their own network to try it out (Statista, 2016).

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<sup>3</sup> Appendix 6 - Lecture by John Hird: Viral Marketing - Recommender Role

<sup>4</sup> Appendix 6 - Lecture by John Hird: Viral Marketing - Recommender Role

<sup>5</sup> Appendix 6 - Lecture by John Hird: Viral Marketing - Recommender Role

<sup>6</sup> Appendix 6 - Lecture by John Hird: Viral Marketing - Recommender Role

### Critics of theory "Recommender Role Matrix"

This theory is from year 2003 and focuses a lot on email messages as being social and sharing things online. However, Facebook was established in 2004 as one of the first social media networking sites (Businessdictionary - Facebook). Therefore it is obvious that Subramani and Rajagopalan could not have included social media sites into their theory in 2003. Even though the social media sites are left out in this theory, there are still some similarities to email messages and the recommenders role of social media that could be beneficial for this thesis. Further discussion of this theory will be done at the analysis part.

### The Five Functions of Word-of-Mouse

This theory is used to clarify why people share content online, but also because it is a new way to look on viral marketing and word-of-mouse, based on previous research from other theorists (Berger, 2014).

Jonah Berger, a marketing professor at Wharton University of Pennsylvania, has been studying social influence in marketing for about 15 years and is an expert in word-of-mouth and word-of-mouse , both traditional and online. He has been publishing articles for years, and he has also managed to write a book which became an international bestseller "Contagious: Why things catch on" (Wharton University of Pennsylvania - Marketing Department).

Jonah Berger suggests that word-of-mouse (sharing online content) serves five key functions: Impression Management, Emotion Regulation, Information Acquisition, Social Bonding and Persuasion. The five key functions are divided into components, which contain, both the underlying psychological aspect that drives sharing (why people share), as well as the types of things that particularly lead people to share (what they talk about). Word-of-Mouse may be driven by multiple motives at the same time, and he also suggests some of the effects of sharing (Berger, 2014).



*J. Berger / Journal of Consumer Psychology 24, 4 (2014) 586–607*

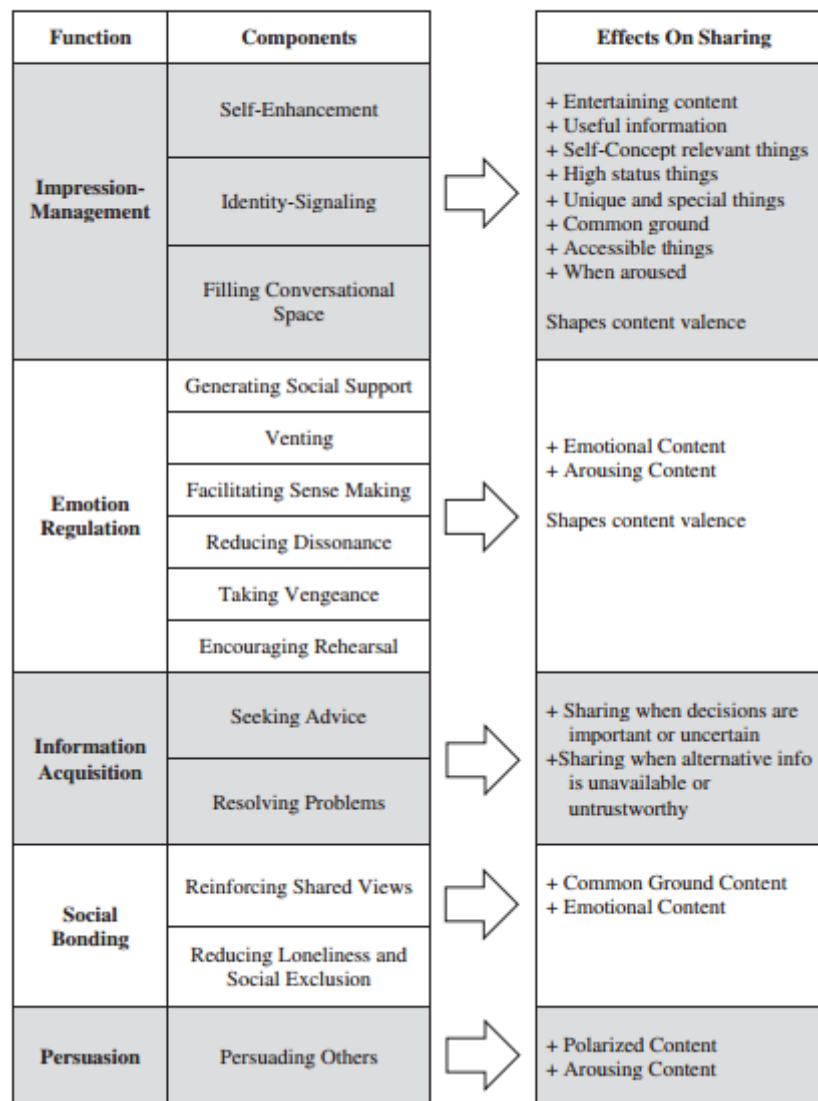


Figure 6 - The Five Functions of Word-of-Mouse (Berger, 2014)

### Impression Management

The first function of Word-of-Mouse is impression management. One of the reasons why people share Word-of-Mouse is to shape the impression others have on them and the impression they have of themselves. People present themselves in ways to achieve desired impressions, and sharing Word-of-Mouse may present who people are or what they want. There are three components under impression management: Self-enhancement, identity-signaling and filling conversational space (Berger, 2014).

**Self-enhancement**

This is basically what people talk about impacts, how others see them and how they see themselves. People like to be perceived in a positive way that creates such impressions. Therefore people are more likely to share things that makes them look good rather than bad. It is about the status of the individual (Berger, 2014).

**Identity-signaling**

Identity-signaling is when people share things to communicate specific identities. People may talk about particular ideas or topics to signal that they have a certain characteristic, knowledge or expertise in a particular domain (Berger, 2014).

**Filling conversational space**

This is about conversational style. People may engage in small talk, and if silence happens in the conversation. There are always some people, who are willing to share almost anything to fill the conversational space (Berger, 2014).

**Effects of sharing**

Jonah Berger suggests that these three components lead to different effects on sharing: Entertaining content, useful information, self concept relevant things, high status things, unique and special things, common ground, accessible things, when aroused (Berger, 2014).

**Emotion Regulation**

The second function of Word-of-Mouse is emotion regulation. It refers to the way people manage which emotions/feelings they have and how they experience and express them. Social sharing of emotion provides an important channel for sharers to regulate their emotions. Emotion regulation describes the processes through which people manage their emotions. There are six components under emotion regulation: Venting, sense making, reducing dissonance, taking vengeance and encouraging rehearsal (Berger, 2014).

**Generating social support**

Social support is about generating help when someone has had a negative experience (negative emotional experiences). However, sharing with others after a negative emotional experience can boost the well-being, because of the increased perceived social support (Berger, 2014)

**Venting**

This is about allowing people to vent, share negative experiences and share negative emotions with others to feel better (Berger, 2014).

**Sense making**

This is about to help people to attain a better sense of what is going on and why and sharing their emotions with others without knowing why they feel that way. Therefore, talking with others can help people understand what they feel and why (Berger, 2014).

**Reducing dissonance**

Reducing dissonance is about what people like to share with others to confirm their own judgment. If a person has made a decision about something, this person gets uncertain about if this was the right choice and therefore help reducing the doubt by talking to others (Berger, 2014).

**Taking vengeance**

This is not one of the most common, but this is about that people should be able to regulate their emotions through punishing individuals or companies for a negative experience (Berger, 2014).

**Encouraging rehearsal**

Encouraging rehearsal is about that people should be allowed to pass on positive experiences through sharing. When people feel that others do something that are positive towards them, they are sharing it to others (Berger, 2014).

**Effects of sharing**

Jonah Berger suggests that these six components lead to different effects on sharing: Emotional content and arousing content (Berger, 2014)

### Information Acquisition

The third function of Word-of-Mouse is information acquisition. This is about acquiring information. This is when people turn to others for assistance. They use Word-of-Mouse actively to seek for information. This could be when a person wants to buy a product or a service (Berger, 2014).

### Seeking advice

In this point people are helping others seeking advice. Often people are uncertain about what they should do in a particular situation. People use Word-of-Mouse to get assistance for suggestions about what they should do, recommendations or an outside perspective (Berger, 2014).

### Resolving problems

This is about helping people to resolve problems. By talking to others online people can get advices about how to deal with an issue and fix the problem they may have (Berger, 2014).

### Effects of sharing

Jonah Berger suggests that these two components lead to different effects on sharing: Sharing when decisions are important or uncertain and sharing when alternative info is unavailable or untrustworthy (Berger, 2014).

### Social Bonding

The fourth function of Word-of-Mouse is social bonding. This function is about talking and sharing with others because it serves a bonding function. Sharing connects people with each other and reinforces their care and give them an insight to what goes on in the other person's life (Berger, 2014).

**Reinforced shared views**

Reinforced shared views is about deepen social bonds through reinforcing shared views, group memberships and one's place in a social hierarchy. These act as a communication system and allow people to connect with similar others that you have things in common with (Berger, 2014).

**Reducing loneliness and social exclusion**

This is about reducing feelings of loneliness or social exclusion through sharing. Loneliness is a feeling of social isolation driven by how one feels about their frequency of interaction with others. Social exclusion refers to when people feels rejected. This should increase people's desire for social connection. Sharing should decrease the interpersonal distance and help people to feel closer to others. Boredom have the similar effect, which can lead people to reach out to others to have something to fill their time (Berger, 2014).

**Effects of sharing**

Jonah Berger suggests that these two components lead to different effects on sharing: Common ground content and emotional content (Berger, 2014).

**Persuading others**

The fifth function of word-of-mouth is persuading others. Persuading others through sharing is to fulfill the sharers satisfaction. This could be when the person who share wants others to give them something, to agree with them or want them to do something they want. Basically it is used to affect others (Berger, 2014).

**Effects of sharing**

Jonah Berger suggests that this one component leads to different effects on sharing: Polarized content and arousing content (Berger, 2014).

**Critics of theory "The Five Functions of Word-of-Mouse"**

This theory is more up-to-date than the other theories that are used in this thesis, as it is from year 2014. However, there are some concerns about this theory by Jonah Berger because he leans heavily on other theorists statements', both new and old theorists. This could be a problem as old

theorists did not have the same understanding of social media and sharing of online content such as new theorists. This means that there may be an uncertainty in the comparisons of the various statements of the old and new theorists.

## Analysis

The analysis of this thesis presents the results from the questionnaire, which interacts with the theories. The analysis is used to find out what makes people in the age of 16-44 to share online content on Facebook. At first an analysis of the mixed method questionnaire will be done to clarify what the respondents have answered and as a base before starting to use the data on the selected theories.

### Analysis of questionnaire

This analysis has the purpose of clarifying the answers I have received through the questionnaire and to create an overview. The questionnaire is built upon mixed methods, consisting of qualitative and quantitative character, which can be seen as the open-ended and closed-ended questions. The open-ended questions give the respondents the opportunity to elaborate on their answers and give me thorough understanding into how they think and feel when they share content on Facebook. The closed-ended questions give the respondents the opportunity to state their answer, by ticking boxes. This gives me an insight to how they react when they see the three cases they have to consider. The questionnaire is a self-completion and was published through Google Forms, which is a tool for data analysis of questionnaires through the internet. The respondents were given a direct link to the questionnaire, which they should use to answer the questionnaire. Before the questionnaire was published I have tested it several times through pilot tests to validate the questions. This was done to catch possible understanding problems in the selected questions and to reduce uncertainty to maximize the reliability.

Further details as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the questionnaire are explained in the section "Questionnaire" under the methodology part. The questionnaire, including all the answers, can be seen in appendix 1 - Questionnaire.

This study is aimed for an analytical and statistically generalization since the questionnaire consist of a large number of respondents in the age 16-44 years who randomly have chosen to participate in the research. It is possible to create a statistical generalization of the data, which will be used in analyzing the theories. Before the findings in the questionnaire were approved, it had been checked for errors.

### Data screening

When the data were collected, the first thing that was done was to check the received data to secure consistency between answers, questions and the number of respondents. All answers with inconsistency that could damage this thesis were excluded.

### Participants

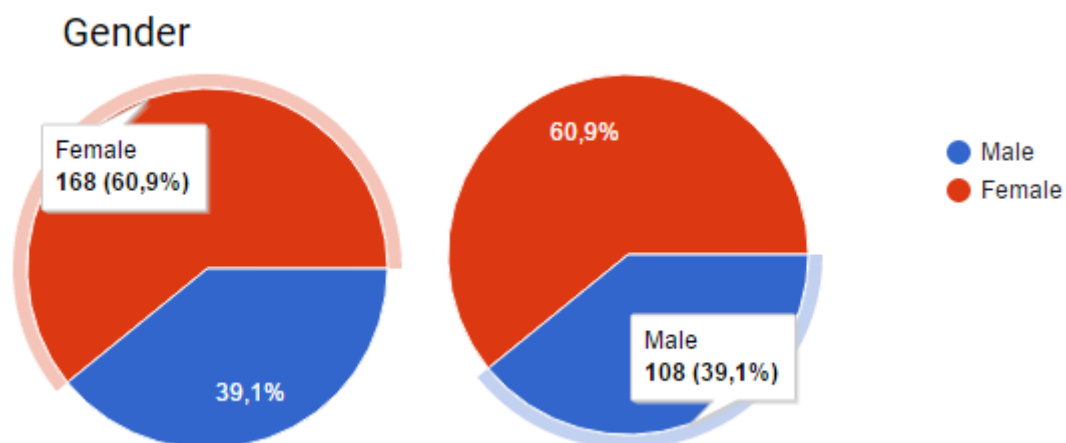


Figure 7 - Gender (Questionnaire)

Google Forms showed that 277 people participated in this questionnaire. However, by sorting and checking the answers, it was clear that only 276 people participated in the questionnaire. Although there was a discrepancy in the number of people who participated, it has no significance on the research. The 276 participants completed the questionnaire 100%, which is very satisfying. From figure 7 "Gender (Questionnaire)" you can see that 60,9% of the respondents were females and 39,1% of the respondents were males.

## Age

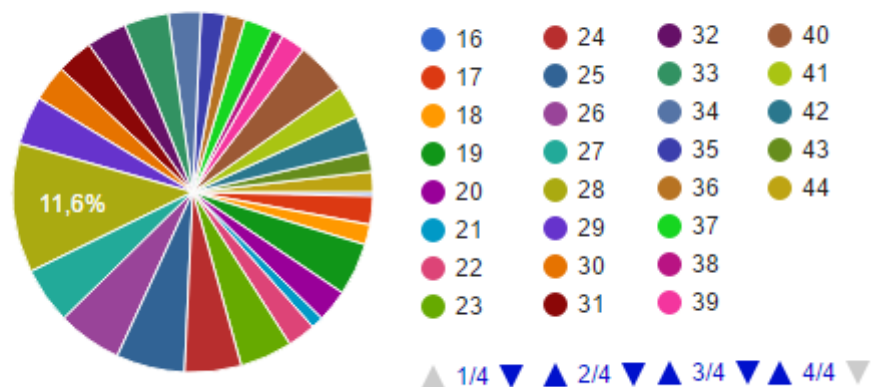


Figure 8 - Age (Questionnaire)

The age group of the 276 respondents ranges from 16-44 years old. As seen in figure 8 "Age (Questionnaire)" all ages from the target group have participated. However, it is difficult to see how many percent from each age have participated. Below a self-made table is created to make an overview of the percentage in each age that have participated.

Table - Age distribution in percent

16 år	17 år	18 år	19 år	20 år	21 år	22 år	23 år	24 år	25 år
0,6 %	2,5 %	1,8 %	4,7 %	2,9 %	1,1 %	2,5 %	4,7 %	5,1 %	6,2 %
26 år	27 år	28 år	29 år	30 år	31 år	32 år	33 år	34 år	35 år
5,8 %	5,1 %	11,3 %	4,3 %	3,3 %	3,3 %	3,6 %	4 %	2,9 %	2,2 %
36 år	37 år	38 år	39 år	40 år	41 år	42 år	43 år	44 år	
1,8 %	2,5 %	1,1 %	2,2 %	4,7 %	2,9 %	3,3 %	1,8 %	1,8 %	

As mentioned in the introduction to this thesis the highest number of active users on social media was divided into three groups: 16-24 years old, 25-34 years old and 35-44 years old (Statista, 2014). This is the main reason why I chose the target group to consist of people in the age 16-44 years old. According to the self-made table, age group 16-24 years old have **25,9 %** of the responses, age group 25-34 years old have **49,8 %** of the responses and age group 35-44 have **24,3**



% of the responses. This indicates that people in the age 25-34 represents nearly half of the 276 responses, while the other two age groups, 16-24 and 35-44 represent a quarter of the responses each. These results also give us an idea that people aged 35-44 use social media less than the other age groups. However, the figure is close to the age group, age 16-24, but there may be various reasons that are not possible to clarify with clear evidence. This could have something to do with the questionnaire. It has not managed to reach out to those in the age 16, 17 and 18 years of age, who have a very low response rate in this study. For example it may be because they are not part of the network of those, who have shared the questionnaire, or maybe they have not been represented in the various forums where the questionnaire was posted.

### Sharing on Facebook

How often do you share content on Facebook to your social network?

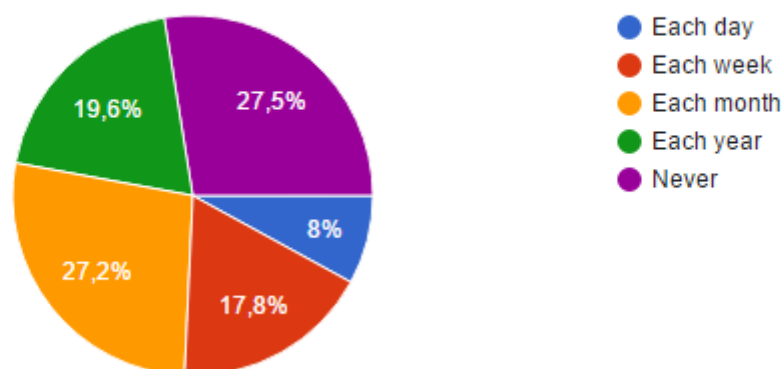


Figure 9 - Sharing on Facebook (Questionnaire)

The 276 respondents in this study was given the opportunity to choose between five different reply options to how often they share content on Facebook to their social network. These options were: Each day, each week, each month, each year and never. They can be seen above in figure 9 - "Sharing on Facebook". From the responses received, the distribution of respondents have shown that 8 % share content on Facebook each day, 17,8 % share content on Facebook each week, 27,2 % share content on Facebook each month, 19,6 % share content on Facebook each year and 27,5 % never share content on Facebook. By putting the numbers together on the respondents, who share content on Facebook, a total number of 72,5 % who share content on Facebook are present

in this study. This is acceptable as this thesis seeks to find out why people aged 16-44 share content on Facebook. There is only 27,5 % of the 276 respondents who do not share content on Facebook, which is acceptable for this study.

### Why they share content on Facebook

The respondents were given the opportunity to elaborate on why they share on Facebook. I have received a lot of different answers, which have been necessary to carefully look through to find the most common patterns, which will be described below. All the answers of why they share content on Facebook, is seen in appendix 1 - Questionnaire.

The most common reason to why the respondents share content on Facebook is divided into points to create a better overview of the answers from the questionnaire. They can be seen below.

- **Attention and likes from their network**

The respondents want to get some attention from the content they share on Facebook. A number of respondents state, that they want attention through likes, but it is unclear, which type of attention they want.

- **Debate and discuss (Political, articles and news)**

Sharing content, the respondents want to start a debate or a discussion of their shared content. This could be by sharing political content, articles and news. This could also have something to do with the point above, where the respondents want to get attention from their network and therefore tend to share content that could create a debate or a discussion.

- **Personal life events**

People who responded the questionnaire said that they share because they want to tell their network about personal life events (children, celebrations, holidays and so on). By sharing personal life events, they have the opportunity to show what they have achieved in the past time.

- **Learn others about interesting content**

Some respondents also stated that they share to learn people in the network about content they find interesting. This could be if they have a hobby or something they are really passionate about and want to learn others about it.

- **Spread awareness about a cause**

The answers received showed that a number of the respondents share content to create or spread awareness about a cause they are supporting. This could be environmental, political, human, animals etc.

- **Relevant to their network**

A number of respondents state that they share content through Facebook, if they think it is relevant to their network. If they come across some content that they know someone in their network can use, they share it. This could be travel ideas, product recommendations and everything else they see as relevant to their network. Some also shares content directly into some of the groups they are enrolled in, for the same purpose.

- **Helpful to their network**

The respondents want to help their network. This could be if they share a job opportunity to their network, update with information that could have an important role in the network and trying to help where there is a need for it. This could also be linked to the point "Share of they think something is relevant to their network" because they overlap each other.

- **Activity on their Facebook profiles**

People in this questionnaire state, that they share to show activity on their Facebook profiles. If they have been inactive on Facebook in some time and fears to be "forgotten" by their network, it is easy to share some content to show that they are still there.

- **Located by check-ins and status updates**

The answers from the questionnaire also show that the respondents share to show where they are located by check-ins and status updates. Even some of them stated that they wanted their network to reach out for a meet-up, if they are nearby.

- **Belonging to a community or a group**

Some of the respondents stated that they share to feel as a part of a group or a community, where they feel they have the opportunity to speak to mind-like people with the same interests.

- **Define themselves to their network**

The respondents share content for the purpose of defining themselves to their network. They want to show who they are and what they care about through sharing content in their social network.

- **Share because of boredom**

Some also stated that they share because of boredom and only share to waste time when they are waiting for the bus, train etc.

- **Be interesting**

The respondents also share content because they want to be interesting in their networks' eyes. For example they share content that makes their network see them as interesting.

The points show a wide range on reasons why the respondents share content on Facebook. Some of the points can be linked to each other, which will be discussed further below in the part "discussion of results".

It will be clarified, which type of content the respondents share on Facebook.

### **What they share on Facebook**

The respondents were able to write what they share on Facebook. I have received different answers, which have been necessary to carefully look through and to put into categories, which will be described below. All the answers of what they share on Facebook is seen in appendix 1 - Questionnaire.

The most common answers of the respondents to what kind of content they share on Facebook is divided into points to create a better overview of the answers from the questionnaire. They are seen below.

- **Funny and entertaining**

Most of the respondents stated that they share funny and entertaining content. When they come across something funny or entertaining, they want to share the experience with their network. This is videos or pictures that have a funny or entertaining content from the shares point of view.

- **Articles**

The respondents also share articles, which is news stories, articles about products etc.

- **Videos**

Some of the respondents share videos on Facebook to their network. These videos could be of funny, entertaining, inspirational or motivational character etc.

- **Pictures**

The people who answered the questionnaire have stated that they share pictures as content on Facebook. This is mostly from personal events like summer holidays, Christmas, children and when they are going out.

- **Important information**

The respondents from the questionnaire also stated that they share important information. For example something they see as important information they have to share, news stories etc.

- **Happy content**

Many of the respondents also share content that makes them happy. When they see something that evokes happiness in them, they share it. This could be linked to the first point "Funny and entertaining", which can arouse the feeling of happiness.

- **Product reviews**

Some of the respondents are sharing product reviews through their social media network, to inform and discuss product related reviews with others.

- **Causes**

There is a part of the respondents who share different causes they support. They see it as a good way to get the message out.

Some of them can be linked to each other and to the points "why they share", which will be discussed further below in the part "discussion of results".

### Sharing content from companies or private persons on Facebook

The respondents were asked to state, if they are more willing to share content on Facebook from companies or private persons. The answers will be divided into a table below to create a better overview of the responses. All the answers from the question, if they are willing to share content on Facebook from companies or private persons, are seen in appendix 1 - Questionnaire.

There is close to equal distribution about how many people that would share from companies and private persons, and a part that cannot tell whether they share content from one rather than the other. It is interesting to dive into the answers to see what their main reasons are for choosing one over the other.

### Companies

The respondents who stated they are more likely to share content from companies on Facebook say, that companies seem much more trustworthy in their content compared to private persons, and the content contains often a more relevant message than private persons. At most times they also share articles, which in most cases are offered by companies.

Some of the key words from the answers of why they chose companies over private persons:

- Trust
- Serious
- Relevant message
- Loyal
- Valuable content
- Interesting content

### Private persons

The respondents who indicate that they are more likely to share content from private persons on Facebook say that there is greater consistency in sharing from private persons than companies. They often have emotional content that respondents may feel some attachment to. The

respondents do not want to spam their network with company content that often are of promotional character. However, if it were relevant for someone in their network, they would rather send it to them directly. Furthermore private persons often have memes and quotes, which are seen as funny and entertaining. Some of the respondents are also too scared to share content from companies, because they are afraid that they use their information for the wrong purpose.

Some of the key words from the answers of why they chose private persons over companies:

- Better context
- Emotional content
- Memes and quotes
- Funny and entertaining
- Afraid to share content from companies

#### Other

People who were unsure stated that it depends on the content, and a part of the respondents were likely to share from both companies and private persons.

### Video "Friends Furever"

This video was included in the questionnaire. The respondents were asked to tick some boxes to state, which emotions the video evoked in them and if they were willing to share it through Facebook. A link directly to the video can be found in appendix 1 - "Friends Furever".

#### Emotions from video

Which emotions do you feel this video evokes in you?

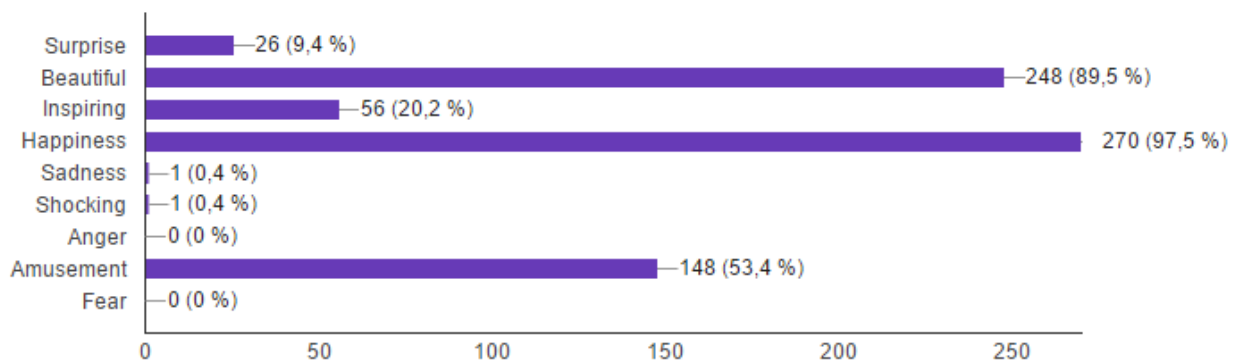


Figure 10 - Emotions - Video "Friends Furever"

When the respondents have watched the video, they chose the presented emotions that were evoked in them. However, they also had the opportunity to write their emotions that were evoked, but this will be described below in "Other emotions".

The respondents had nine different emotions to choose between, which includes positive and negative emotions. The most prominent emotions were happiness with a rate of 97,5 % of all 276 respondents, beautiful with 89,5 %, amusement with 53,4 %, followed by inspiring with 20,2 % and surprise with 9,4 %. The least prominent emotions was sadness with a rate of only 0,4 % of all 276 respondents, shocking with 0,4 %, anger with 0 % and fear with 0 %. The answers can be seen above in figure 10 - Emotions - Video "Friends Furever".

Dividing those emotions into positive and negative emotions can be difficult considering how the respondents see each emotion in the different context. However, the positive emotions are:



Happiness, beautiful, amusement, inspiring, surprise. Negative emotions are: sadness, shocking, anger and fear.

The respondents answers have stated with a convincing result that this video evokes positive emotions in them according to figure 10 - Emotions - Video "Friends Furever".

### Other emotions

The respondents of this questionnaire were given the opportunity to write other emotions, if emotions were evoked in them while watching the video. These emotions will be listed below. These answers can be seen in appendix 1 - Questionnaire.

When the respondents have watched the video, some of them have felt other emotions. The most common will be written below:

- Joy
- Funny
- Friendship

These three emotions were the most mentioned between the respondents. One thing that categorizes them all is that they are positive emotions.

### Share

After watching this video, would you share it through Facebook?

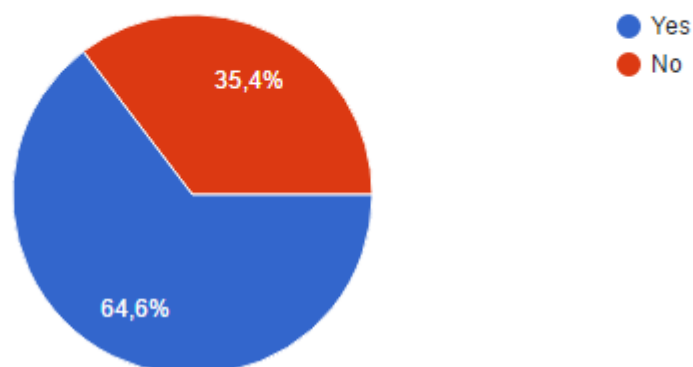


Figure 11 - Sharing of video "Friends Furever"

After the respondents have watched the video, they were asked to state if they would share it through Facebook. 64,6 % of the respondents would share this video and 35,4 % would not share it through Facebook. 64,6 % is a very acceptable number considering 27,5 % of the respondents never share content on Facebook. This video has some kind of positive impact on the respondents, since a large percentage (taking the "never share respondents" into account) was willing to share this video through Facebook.

### Picture "War is ugly"

This picture was included in the questionnaire. The respondents were asked to tick some boxes to state which emotions the picture evoked in them and if they were willing to share it through Facebook. The picture can be seen in appendix 3 - "War is ugly".

### Emotions from picture

Which emotions do you feel this picture evokes in you?

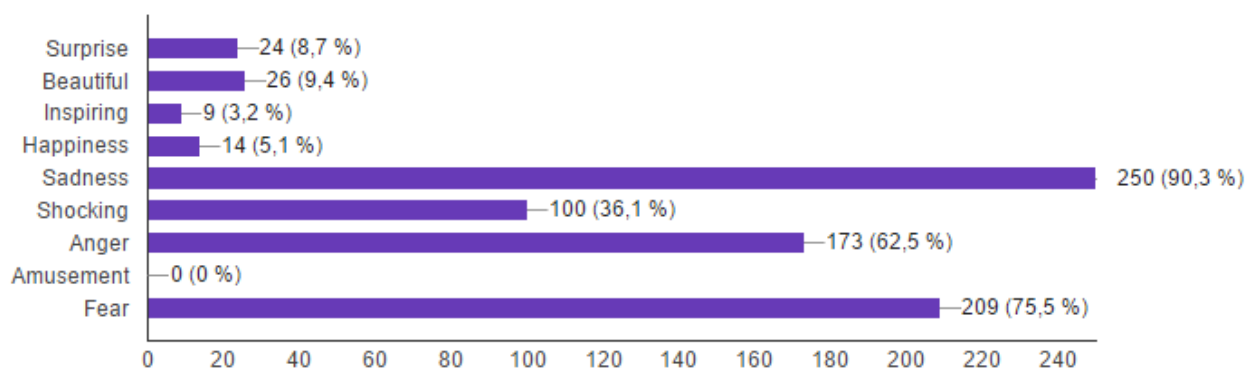


Figure 12 - Emotions - Picture "War is ugly"

When the respondents have looked at the picture, they choose the presented emotions that were evoked in them. However, they also had the opportunity to write their own emotions, but this will be described below in "Other emotions".

The respondents had nine different emotions to choose between, which include positive and negative emotions. The most prominent emotions were sadness with a rate of 90,3 % of all 276 respondents, fear with 75,5 %, anger with 62,5 %, followed by shocking with 36,1 %. The least prominent emotions were beautiful with a rate of 9,4 % of all 276 respondents, surprise with 8,7

%, happiness with 5,1 %, inspiring with 3,2 % and amusement with 0 %. The answers are listed above in figure 12 - Emotions - Picture "War is ugly".

Dividing those emotions into positive and negative emotions can be difficult, considering how the respondents see each emotion in a different context. However, in generally the positive emotions are: Happiness, beautiful, amusement, inspiring, surprise. Negative emotions are: sadness, shocking, anger and fear.

The respondents answers have stated with a convincing result that this picture evokes negative emotions in them according to figure 12 - Emotions - Picture "War is ugly".

### **Other emotions**

The respondents of this questionnaire were given the opportunity to write other emotions if evoked in them while looking at the picture. These emotions will be listed below. Seen in appendix 1 - Questionnaire.

When the respondents looked at the picture, some of them have felt other emotions evoked in them. The most common will be written below:

- Hate

This emotion was the most mentioned between the respondents. One thing that categorizes this emotion is that it is a negative emotion.

### **Share**

### Would you share this picture through Facebook?

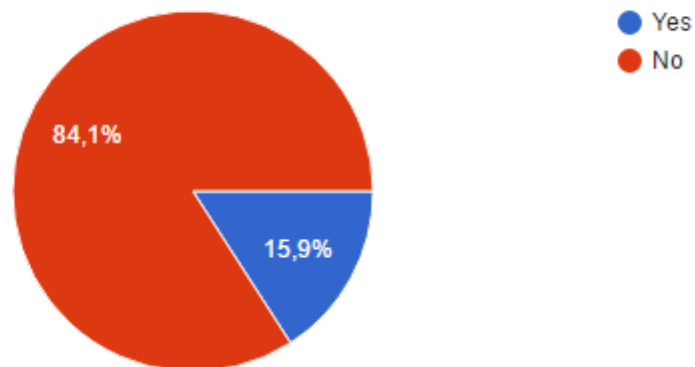


Figure 13 - Sharing of picture "War is ugly"

After the respondents have looked at the picture, they were asked to state, if they would share it through Facebook. 15,9 % of the respondents would share it and 84,1 % would not share it. 15,9 % is a very low number considering 27,5 % of the respondents who never share content on Facebook and 84,1 % of the respondents who do not want to share this picture through Facebook. This picture has had some kind of a negative impact on the respondents, since a large number of respondents were not willing to share this picture through Facebook.

#### Picture "Heaven in the midst of the sea"

This picture was included in the questionnaire. The respondents was asked to tick some boxes to state, which emotions the picture evoked in them and if they were willing to share it through Facebook. The picture can be seen in appendix 4 - "Heaven in the midst of the sea".

## Emotions

Which emotions do you feel this picture evokes in you?

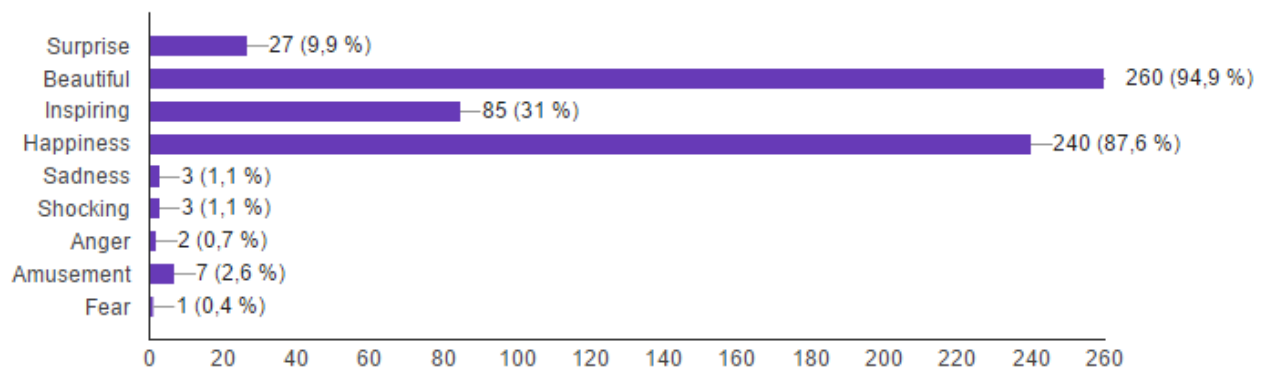


Figure 14 - Emotions - Picture "Heaven in the midst of the sea"

When the respondents have looked at this picture, they choose the presented emotions that were evoked in them. However, they also had the opportunity to write emotions themselves that were evoked, but this will be described below in "Other emotions".

The respondents had nine different emotions to choose between which includes positive and negative emotions. The most prominent emotions were beautiful with a rate of 94,9 % of all 276 respondents, happiness with 87,6 %, inspiring with 31 %. The least prominent emotions were surprise with a rate of 9,9 % of all 276 respondents, amusement with 2,6 %, sadness with 1,1 %, shocking with 1,1 %, anger with 0,7 % and fear with 0,4%. The answers can be seen above in figure 14 - Emotions - Picture "Heaven in the midst of the sea".

Dividing those emotions into positive and negative emotions can be difficult, considering how the respondents see each emotion in the different context. However, in generally the positive emotions are: Happiness, beautiful, amusement, inspiring, surprise. Negative emotions are: sadness, shocking, anger and fear.

The respondents answer have stated with a convincing result, that this picture evokes positive emotions in them according to figure 14 - Picture "Heaven in the midst of the sea".

### Other emotions

The respondents of this questionnaire were given the opportunity to write other emotions if they was evoked in them while looking at the picture. These emotions will be listed below and are seen in appendix 1 - Questionnaire.

When the respondents have looked at the picture, some of them have felt other emotions evoked in them. The most common will be written below:

- Joy
- Relaxing

These two emotions were the most mentioned between the respondents. One thing that categorizes these emotions, is that they are positive emotions.

### Share

Would you share this picture through Facebook?

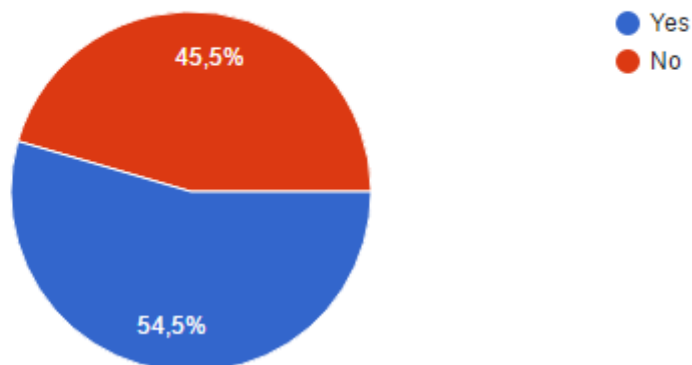


Figure 15 - Sharing of picture "Heaven in the midst of the sea"

After the respondents have looked at the picture, they were asked to state, if they would share it through Facebook. 54,5 % of the respondents would share the picture and 45,5 % would not share it through Facebook. 54,5 % of the respondents were willing to share the picture and 45,5 % would not share it. 54,5 % is an acceptable number, considering that 27,5 % of the respondents never share content on Facebook. This picture has had an impact on the respondents in a positive way, since a large number of the respondents were willing to share the picture through Facebook.

## Discussion of the results

The mixed method questionnaire consists of 276 responses. These show that about two-thirds were females and one-third were males. There have been responses from the entire target group ranging from people aged 16-44. Out of the 276 respondents, 72,5 % share content on Facebook and 27,5 % do not share content on Facebook. This is a satisfying result as the high number of people, who share content on Facebook makes this study more valid, as this thesis seeks to find out what makes people aged 16-44 to share content on Facebook. A low number of respondents, who shares content on Facebook, would have led to data that have been less useful to analyze this problem statement.

There are different reasons of why the respondents share content on Facebook. These are to get attention and likes from their network, start a debate and discussion with others, show others their personal life events, learn people in their network about content they find interesting, spreading awareness about a cause they support, sharing content they find relevant for some or the entire network, which is linked with people, who want to help their network with different tasks, show their network that they are still active. Some tell their network where they are by locating themselves by check-ins and status updates, some share to feel as a part of a community or a group. A part of the respondent wants to show their network who they are and what they care about, some want to show their network that they are interesting and some simply just share because they are bored to waste some time. Some of the reasons why the respondents share could overlap each other, but they have been divided into separate points. Otherwise it could lead to confusion for the reader. The respondents from this study share different types of content, which are funny and entertaining, articles, videos, pictures, information they think is important, product reviews and causes they support. Why they share and what they share are linked together.

Approximately the same number of respondents are inclined to share content from companies and private persons. There are various reasons why they either choose companies or private persons. The group that wants to share content from companies see them to be more trustworthy with relevant messages and valuable content. The groups that want to share content from private persons see their content to be more funny and entertaining, often in form of memes and quotes.

They also state that they have more emotional content that they can feel attachment to, and they are afraid to share content from companies, because they do not know what they will do to their information.

The respondents have stated, that the video from the questionnaire "Friends Furever" evoked feelings dominated by positive emotions in them. The majority of the respondents, who shares content on Facebook, were interested in sharing the video through Facebook. According to the respondents, the picture "War is ugly" were dominated by negative emotions. The majority of the respondents would not share this picture through Facebook. The last picture from the questionnaire, "Heaven in the midst of the sea" was dominated by positive emotions according to the respondents. Even though the number of respondents, who were willing to share the picture, were lower than the respondents who wanted to share the video. The majority of the respondents who shares content of Facebook was interested in sharing the picture through Facebook.

### The Honeycomb of Facebook

As mentioned in the description "The Honeycomb of Social Media" the theory discusses the social media world as a whole. The theory is described in the theory section "The Honeycomb of Social Media". This thesis is only dealing with the social media Facebook, and therefore, it is only relevant to discuss Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre's (2011) thoughts of Facebook. The seven building blocks by Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre and the results from the questionnaire, will be discussed below. Further below Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre's, suggestions to the honeycomb will be discussed.

### Identity

The identity block is a part of Facebook, where users are supposed to create a profile with their real name, age, gender and profession. This information helps your friends and network to find and connect with you.

According to figure 7 - "Gender (Questionnaire)" and figure 8 - "Age (Questionnaire)", the identity of this study is based on 60,9 % females and 39,1 % males, which are aged 16-44 years old.



### Conversations

Users are able to create conversations through Facebook. Facebook has a chat function, where users can connect with each other, both when people are online and offline. Furthermore, the ability to comment on shared content by their network, pages they follow etc. also creates a kind of conversation between the users. These conversational tool makes the conversation block a part of Facebook's honeycomb.

### Sharing

The users of Facebook are able to share content easily, with a few clicks. They have the ability to share content through the chat function to individuals or have the opportunity to share on their or someone else's wall.

According to the analysis of the questionnaire, 72,5 % of the 276 respondents share content on Facebook. Considering the different way users have to share content on Facebook and the results of the questionnaire, the sharing building block is a part of Facebook. Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre do not see sharing as a building block of Facebook. It is not included in their honeycomb. This will be discussed further below.

### Presence

The building block presence is a part of Facebook's honeycomb because users are able to make check-ins and status updates based on their geographical location.

The analysis of the questionnaire "Sharing on Facebook" also confirms that presence is a part of the honeycomb of Facebook, because the respondents state that they share, to show where they are located by their check-ins and status updates.

### Relationships

Relationships are based on the relation to other people and how users keep track of what their network does. The users keep in touch by creating conversations, sharing content, meet-ups etc., which are all very characteristic of Facebook. This building block is the key feature of Facebook and a part of the honeycomb.

### Reputation

This block is based on how people are seen by others on Facebook, and people opinions really matters. This is based on likes and thumbs up, which are available on Facebook. The reputation block is a part of the social honeycomb.

The responses from the questionnaire "Sharing on Facebook" say, that the respondents share to get attention and likes from others on Facebook, which is about their reputation when sharing content.

### Groups

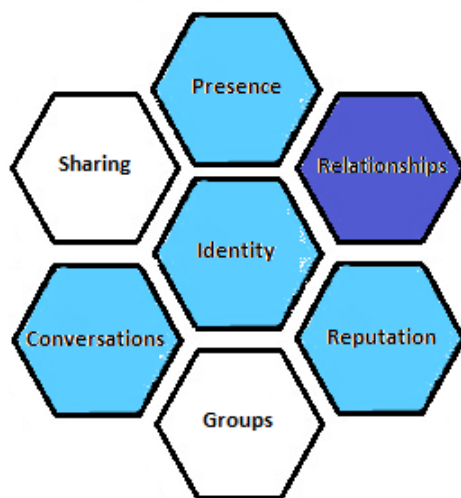
This building block is also a feature on Facebook, because they have made it available for the users to create or find groups, where they can speak with like-minded people with similar interests. The users are able to categorize their contacts into groups. This building block is also a feature of the honeycomb of Facebook.

The results from the analysis of the questionnaire "Sharing on Facebook" show that the respondents share content to feel part of a group or a community.

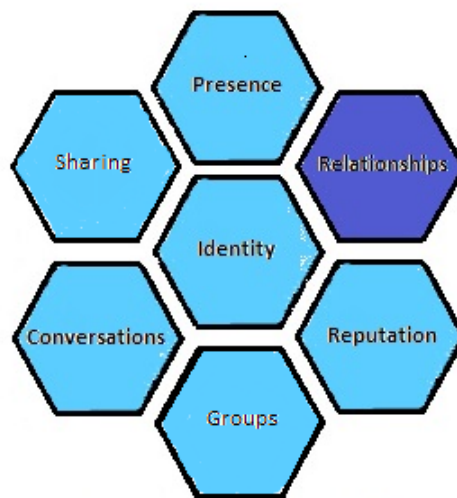
However, Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre do not see groups as a building block of Facebook. They do not include it in their honeycomb. This will be discussed further below

### Discussion of the honeycomb

The left figure shows how Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre see the honeycomb of Facebook. The figure to the right show how I see the honeycomb of Facebook.



Left: The Honeycomb of Facebook by Kietzmann et. al. (2011)



Right: The Honeycomb of Facebook by Michael Kjølby (2016)

Kietzmann, Hermkens, McCarthy and Silvestre argue in their honeycomb of Facebook that there are no building blocks of sharing and groups to create a social environment. However, I have to disagree on these two blocks, because I see them as relevant as much as the other blocks to create a social environment. As seen in the questionnaire, sharing is a large part of Facebook to get conversations started. 72,5 % of the respondents stated that they share content on Facebook. There could be several reasons to why this theory proposes to exclude sharing from the honeycomb. For example one of them could be that people have changed their online behavior since 2011 and have a bigger need to share things. Facebook excluded the building block groups from their honeycomb, but groups are also a relevant building block for Facebook to create the social environment and help keep increasing their user base as mentioned in the introduction. The answers from the analysis of the questionnaire, "Sharing on Facebook", could indicate that it has gone in that direction.

## Recommender Role Matrix

This theory seeks to clarify what types of respondents, who have participated in the questionnaire through "Recommender Role Matrix" to get a better understanding of the respondents through a discussion of each of the four quadrants. As mentioned in the theory section earlier, it will mainly be analysed through the questions "Why do you share content on Facebook and what do you share on Facebook?" and "Are you more likely to share content on Facebook from companies or private persons? and why?"

The description of this theory is seen in the theory section "Recommender Role Matrix".

The four quadrants by Subramani & Rajagopalan, will be discussed below according to the findings from the questionnaire.

<b>Externalities</b>  <b>High:</b> Benefits to all users depend on size of user base  <b>Low:</b> Benefits to Users only	<b>Signaling Use, Group Membership</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Normative Influence</li> </ul>	<b>Motivated Evangelism</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Normative Influence</li> </ul>
	<b>Awareness Creation, Benefits Signaling</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Informational Influence</li> </ul>	<b>Targeted Recommendation</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Informational Influence</li> <li>▪ Normative Influence</li> </ul>
	<b>Passive</b>	<b>Active</b>
	<b>Recommender Role</b>	

Figure 5 - Recommender Role Matrix (Subramani & Rajagopalan, 2003)

### Awareness Creation, Benefits Signaling

It is difficult to determine whether the respondents are placed in this quadrant, because the influencers' role are passive and the answers in the questionnaire are pretty much active in the way they share content on Facebook.

However, the respondents state that they share product reviews on their Facebook profile, to inform and help their network. This raises awareness and signals the benefits of the product shared. A link is often attached to a product review, which directs the reader to the website,

where you can buy it. By this way, the sender of the product review will not send the link to the website actively, where the product can be bought.

### Targeted Recommendation

In targeted recommendation the influencer has an active role in spreading the word. According to the questionnaire, the respondents mostly share articles, containing different content, to create a debate or a discussion. They share causes, job postings or news stories to their social network, because they find them interesting and relevant, and then people will be lead directly to a website where the news story is posted. In this way the respondents/influencers have actively sent the link to the site, where the news come from, to their network. There are only benefits to the receiver that clicks on the link. However, it could be argued whether the sender achieves some benefits if the shared cause or news story starts a debate or a discussion.

### Signaling use, Group Membership

In this quadrant the respondents from the questionnaire share videos to their network, but when someone in their network wants to watch it, it requires to have flash installed on their computer. Therefore they have to download the program to continue to the video. The sender does not actively refer the network to install flash player before they can watch the video.

Another thing could be job postings. When someone share a job posting to their network and the persons that are interested in it clicks on it, to be directed to a job site, where it is required to create an account before you can view the job posting. The sender does not actively send their network to a job site where they have to create an account before they can continue reading.

### Motivated Evangelism

Motivated evangelism is presented in the questionnaire, because the respondents share reviews of a product to inform others about that it is a good product. Furthermore, it also happens when the sender shares a cause they support. In both cases they act as evangelist for the product or the cause. They play an active role in spreading the word, because they want others to either buy the product, support the cause or to learn others about it.

### Summing up the different characteristics of the respondents

The respondents from the questionnaire are presented in all of the four quadrants. However, it is difficult to use this theory from 2003, because the authors have developed it from a time where email-messages were the only social media. Furthermore a lot of new modern social media sites have emerged and a lot have happened since then as mentioned in the critics of this theory, in the description of "Recommender Role Matrix".

### The Five Functions of Word-of-Mouse

This theory serves five functions of sharing online content and focuses on why people share online content. The full description of this theory is seen in the theory section "The Five Functions of Word-of-Mouse". The results of the questionnaire combined with other collected information will be used in this theory to clarify **why** and **what** people share and the **effects** of their sharing. The process of the components that leads to sharing is seen in figure 6 - "The Five Functions of Word of Mouse" and in the theory section "The Five Functions of Word of Mouse".

The effects of sharing are marked with bold texture and followed by a short description of what Jonah Berger defines it as. This is included to inform the reader, while doing the analysis of this theory.

*J. Berger / Journal of Consumer Psychology 24, 4 (2014) 586–607*

Function	Components		Effects On Sharing
<b>Impression-Management</b>	Self-Enhancement	➡	+ Entertaining content + Useful information + Self-Concept relevant things + High status things + Unique and special things + Common ground + Accessible things + When aroused Shapes content valence
	Identity-Signaling		
	Filling Conversational Space		
<b>Emotion Regulation</b>	Generating Social Support	➡	+ Emotional Content + Arousing Content Shapes content valence
	Venting		
	Facilitating Sense Making		
	Reducing Dissonance		
	Taking Vengeance		
<b>Information Acquisition</b>	Encouraging Rehearsal	➡	+ Sharing when decisions are important or uncertain + Sharing when alternative info is unavailable or untrustworthy
	Seeking Advice		
	Resolving Problems		
<b>Social Bonding</b>	Reinforcing Shared Views	➡	+ Common Ground Content + Emotional Content
	Reducing Loneliness and Social Exclusion		
<b>Persuasion</b>	Persuading Others	➡	+ Polarized Content + Arousing Content

Figure 6 - The Five Functions of Word-of-Mouse (Berger, 2014)

### 1. Function: Impression Management

*People share to shape the impression other people have of them and the impression they have of themselves. People present themselves in different ways to achieve the desired impressions (Berger, 2014).*

#### Self-enhancement

People from the questionnaire want to define themselves to their network through sharing and share content that is funny and entertaining to their network. When something personal happens in their life, people are willing to share the personal events. As an example of personal events, they share pictures of their kids, selfies, holidays etc. They also want to share information to their network that they think is relevant and can be helpful to their network. These things will make

them look good, because they tend to share things, that make them look good rather than bad to increase their social status.

### **Identity-signaling**

The respondents are likely to share different causes to create awareness about them and learn their network about the topic the causes and inform the persons in their network about product reviews. Furthermore, they want to create debates and discussions by sharing articles and news with political content and also articles and news. They do it to show their identity to the network by sharing their knowledge and expertise within these fields.

### **Filling conversational space**

People from the study also say that they share because of boredom, which could indicate that they are willing to share almost everything to have a conversation going with someone to use their time more efficient and to get rid of the boredom.

### **Effects of sharing**

Why the respondents share according to the questionnaire and this theory led to different effects on what they share. According to Jonah Berger, sharing **entertaining** and funny content on Facebook leads to, that the person, who shares the content, will appear interesting and in-the-know, which I agree on. According to the questionnaire, the respondents share entertaining and funny content through videos and pictures. Berger also says that the effects of sharing **useful information** makes the person who shares look smart and helpful, which could be connected to the questionnaire in the meaning of that they share job postings as relevant content and to be helpful towards their network. Another effect of sharing is **common ground**, which is defined by Berger as people, who talk with like-minded people through sharing. This occurs when the respondents share content in the groups they are enrolled in to speak with persons they have things in common with. The effects of sharing **emotional valence**, is whether they pass on positive or negative emotional content. (Bell, 1978; Folkes & Sears, 1977; Kamins, Folkes, & Perner, 1997) cited in "Word of mouse and interpersonal communication", Jonah Berger (2014)) says that "People may just want to avoid associating themselves with negative feelings and prefer to be



associated with positive", which I can agree upon through the findings in the questionnaire - The video called "Friends Furever" and the picture called "Heaven in the midst of the sea" from the questionnaire are dominated by positive emotions, while the picture called "War is ugly" is dominated by negative emotions. The results show that people are willing to share the video and the picture dominated by positive emotions, while people do not want to share the picture dominated by negative emotions.

## 2. Function: Emotion Regulation

People share content to regulate their emotions, which refers to the ways people manage the emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express them (Berger, 2014).

### Reducing dissonance

The respondents are likely to share product reviews for different reasons. One reason is that they have to confirm their own judgment of the product, but they also need people in their network to confirm if the product is something worth buying or not and reduce their sense of doubt.

### Encouraging rehearsal

People from the questionnaire share positive private life events, when they take pictures of their kids and when they are on a holiday or make any form of positive progress in life. They also post pictures on a daily basis when they are out at a dinner etc. They share these things to relieve positive emotions to their network.

### Effects of sharing

Why the respondents share according to the questionnaire and this theory led to different effects on what they share. Berger claims that **Emotionality** (emotional content) are more often to be shared. The respondents share to raise awareness about causes, because they have a strong emotional attachment to it. Some of the respondents say that they share mostly from private persons, because according to them, private persons share more emotional content, which means that they can feel emotional attachment to them. Another effect of sharing is **valence**, which is sharing positive things that people experience. This effect is seen as when the respondents share

positive content about their private life events, ex as photos of their progress in their working life or family life.

### 3. Function: Information acquisition

This is about acquiring information and is when people turn to others for assistance. People use sharing to seek information (Berger, 2014).

#### **Seeking advice & resolving problems**

The respondents are interested in helping and giving their network new information, which would help them in their search for advices. This could happen through a product review they share, if someone in their network is interested in buying a new product.

#### **Effects of sharing**

Why the respondents share according to the questionnaire and this theory led to different effects on what they share. Sharing when decisions are important or uncertain & sharing when alternative info is unavailable or untrustworthy, is according to Berger seen as when someone in the respondents network wants to buy a product, but there is no trustworthy information available and it is an important decision, because the product costs a lot of money. Then the respondents can help with information by sharing product reviews about the desired product.

### 4. Function: Social bonding

Social bonding is about talking and sharing with others, as it serves a bonding function (Berger, 2014).

#### **Reinforced shared views**

The respondents share different content related to groups they are enrolled in. This reinforces the bond they have with the other group members.

#### **Reducing loneliness and social exclusion**

People from the questionnaire share content because of boredom. When they have some extra time to fill, they reach others to be entertained.

## 5. Function: Persuading others

This is when the person, who shares content, wants others to give them something, to agree with them or want them to do something they want.

### **Persuading**

According to the questionnaire it happens when the respondents share a cause to create awareness. They want to affect their network and want to increase the network's knowledge about the cause and maybe support it.

## Discussion of the findings

This section has the purpose of discussing the results from the analysis part before the conclusion.

Viral marketing is described in the theory section as

"For a virus campaign to be successful it is necessary to nurse the two basic characteristics of a virus: reproduction and survival" (Hird & Poulsen, 2002)<sup>7</sup>.

"No virus can survive without a disease carrier and thus it can't reproduce itself either. The more disease carriers a virus has infected the better it feels. Spreading the virus means having an interesting, involving and relevant message in the eyes of the target group. To reproduce the message constantly needs to be modified and revitalized to maintain interest and involvement" (Hird & Poulsen, 2002)<sup>8</sup>.

This means that before a marketing campaign can go viral, people have to share the campaign to their network, and then the network have to share it again. This process has to go on and on before the content can spread like a virus. The message of the content has to be relevant, interesting and it has to involve the recipients.

The questionnaire received 276 valid responses, which is seen as acceptable to create an insight into why people share content on Facebook, what they share and which emotions that are important to consider, while aiming for content to go viral.

There was some disagreement between the theorists' version of the honeycomb of Facebook and my version. The answers I received from the questionnaire, created the impression that Facebook is seen as a social media, that offers all features of the honeycomb. Furthermore, the type of respondents who participated in the questionnaire is represented in all four quadrants of the recommender role matrix, which are roughly people who passively and actively share content on Facebook.

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<sup>7</sup> Appendix 5 - Lecture: by John Hird - Viral Marketing

<sup>8</sup> Appendix 5 - Lecture: by John Hird - Viral Marketing

Throughout the questionnaire the findings show a pattern in the emotions that are evoked by viral content versus sharing the content through their Facebook profile.

"Content that evokes high-arousal positive emotions (e.g., happiness) is more viral. Content that evokes low-arousal negative emotions (e.g., sadness) is less viral." (Berger & Milkman, 2011). I have to agree with Berger & Milkman, because the results show that positive emotions entails people to share content through Facebook, while negative emotions are not likely to be shared on Facebook. The positive emotions can be seen as a motivational factor for sharing content.

The positive emotions that were chosen mostly were happiness and beautiful, and the negative emotions that was picked mostly were sadness, fear and anger. Companies that want to make a marketing campaign for the purpose of going viral through Facebook and not only reaching for a one-hit wonder, should consider to only use positive emotions and focus on creating content, that includes the emotions happiness and beautiful, because people feel some attachment to these emotions and makes them share content through their network. Furthermore, they also have to maintain their marketing campaign to keep people interested in the content.

People share content on Facebook for a variety of reasons. By analyzing the questionnaire and connecting the answers to the theory "Five Functions of Word-of-Mouse", I found out that people share content through impression management, emotion regulation, information acquisition, social bonding and persuading others. Some of the reasons why they share content on Facebook are:

- To get attention and likes from their network
- Share to define themselves to their network
- Debate and discuss political content, articles and news
- They want to tell their network about their personal life events
- Spread awareness about a cause
- Learn their network about interesting content
- They share content that they find relevant to their network to be helpful.
- Share to have activity on their Facebook profiles
- They share to feel as a part of a group/community

- Share because of boredom

According to Jenkins et. al., people share for reasons like 1. To support the storytelling about themselves, 2. Share content they believe have value in their social network and 3. Contributing to conversation. These reasons to why people share can be linked to the findings of the questionnaire. Number one can be connected to that the respondents from the questionnaire want to define themselves to their network. Number two can be connected to that the respondents share content that they find relevant to their network, and the last one can be connected to that the respondents are interested in sharing content to create debates and discussion, with their social network.

The respondents from this study share different kinds of content. Some of the types of content they share are:

- Funny, entertaining and happy content
- Articles, videos and pictures
- Product reviews and causes

There are several purposes for the respondents to share content on Facebook. They have different needs that have to be fulfilled, but looking at the reasons why the respondents share and what they share, gives an idea of what a marketing campaign should contain to catch the interest of the target group. However, this study only focuses on people in the age group 16-44 years old, which excludes the other age groups. A deepening of these results can be seen in the analysis part of this thesis.

Even though there are findings that clarify the problem statement, you have to be critical towards the findings and the result of the analysis, because only a small part of the world's population have been examined. However, this could be used as an indication of what makes people in the age group 16-44 years old share content on Facebook.

## Conclusion

In this thesis I have - with the help of different theories and a questionnaire consisting of qualitative and quantitative questions - tried to find out what makes people in the age 16-44 share content on Facebook.

An examination of the theories on viral marketing has shown that viral marketing is a modern form of word-of-mouth, also called word-of-mouse, because it is spread through social media channels. Using viral marketing has advantages, which include cost-effectiveness due to lower costs associated with it than traditional marketing like TV ads. The spread of viral marketing is one of the best advantages, because - if a marketing campaign or content is catchy - it could spread fast across the world. For companies it is much easier to measure the effect of marketing campaigns through viral marketing, because there are numbers that indicates the success, such as likes, number of shares etc. Even though viral marketing has many advantages, there are also some disadvantages which need to be considered. Companies who have no strategy to viral marketing can risk a one-hit-wonder, because they do not continue to create interesting and exciting content for the users. When the campaign is sent out, the companies lose control over the communication process, because it is spread through many different networks by many different people. This could affect them negatively if people start talking bad about their content. This is important for companies, since there is a tendency which shows that companies have become more aware of using viral marketing.

The mixed method questionnaire and the theories in this thesis showed different results of why and what people share on Facebook. This has given me new knowledge to answer my problem statement:

*Based on an analysis of Viral Marketing - What makes people in the age 16-44 share content on Facebook?*

First of all, people share content on Facebook through the idea of self-enhancement and encouraging rehearsal, which means that they want to define themselves and look good to their network by sharing funny and entertaining content and even personal life events, e.g. photos of

their kids, selfies and holidays in order to relieve positive emotions to their network. They like to share content on the purpose of signal their identity to their network and show them, that they have knowledge in different fields, which is seen as sharing causes to create a debate and a discussion, but also to create awareness and persuade others to learn about the cause. People also share to reduce dissonance through products, because they want people in their network to help them to confirm, whether the product is good or not good to buy. Another reason is that they try to help their network if they think it is relevant, and they want to resolve any problem their network might have. Furthermore, they share to reinforce the bond they have with like-minded people of the groups on Facebook they are enrolled in.

There is a clear tendency of why and what people share and emotions. People in the target group share videos, photos etc. of funny, entertaining and happy character. No one from the questionnaire says or indicate, that they share content of sad character. This is also linked to how emotions and sharing cause people to act. From the results of the questionnaire and the analysis part, there was a clear pattern of what people in the age-16-44 are much more likely to share content that evoked positive emotions in them compared to the content that evoked negative emotions, and therefore I have to agree with the theorists used in this thesis, that positive emotions are more likely to be shared than negative - However, with a few exceptions as mentioned in the relevant sections. These emotions and the needs people have make them share content through their Facebook profile.



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## Appendix

### Appendix 1 - Questionnaire

The following pictures show the questionnaire developed in order to support the research of this thesis.

# Viral Marketing on Facebook

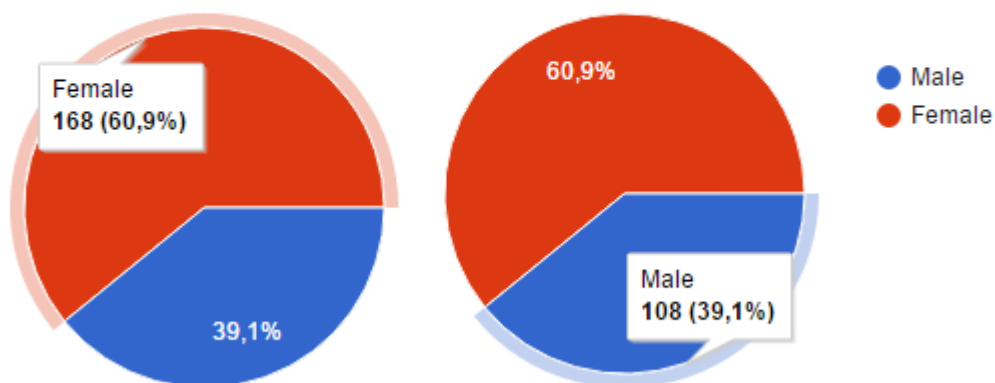
Aalborg University - Culture, Communication and Globalization

Only participant's in the age 16-44 years old.

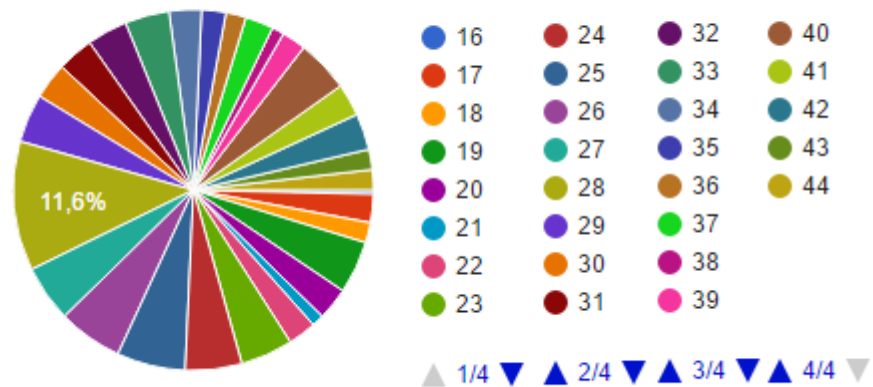
This survey is a part of my master thesis with the purpose of studying viral marketing and what makes people in the age 16-44 share content on Facebook.

#### Demographic questions

#### Gender

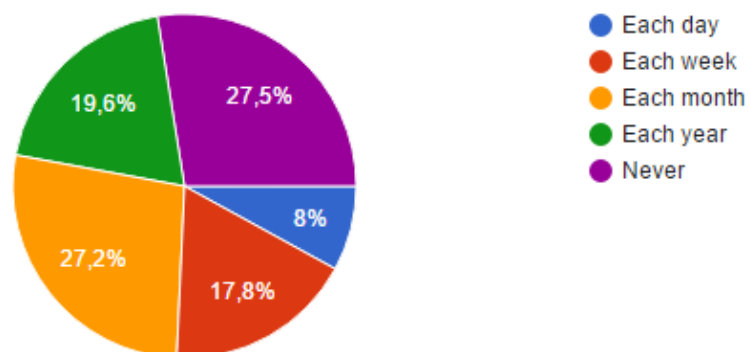


## Age



## General questions about Viral Marketing

How often do you share content on Facebook to your social network?





## Why do you share content on Facebook and what do you share? (Please elaborate)

To be interesting
To be interesting
To get friends attention and to connect with other.
To share something I discovered like music or articles, but I rarely share stuff.
to tell people what's going on in my life. Big life events etc.
I try to limit the content I share, due to privacy reasons. However - occasionally I share an inspirational video, something interesting I stumbled upon, and rarely a picture (special moments with those I care about).
To share feelings and emotions about a content
Whenever i find something fun or important
To help people in my network with things like finding a job or getting help with their projects in school.
Underholdning der glæder andre, politiske debatter og holdninger - for at få en debat og menings udveksling & selvfølgelig for at opdatere omkring mit liv
To help my friends (if something important like a missing cat or a research)
This is a much easier way to communicate news about your life to friends and relatives without a need to text them.

When I believe, that the content is valuable for my connections.

If something interest me in a political, educational or professional matter I want to share so other can learn from it.

To discuss news or share something funny but it is via messenger.

It varies, sometimes it is just because I saw something funny It thought others might enjoy. Othertimes I may share something to help spread awareness about a certain cause.

to share information I care about

Update friends with my life

my daily life

Either because its news, or because its something i find accurate for my person.

For people to see and comment

Fordi jeg synes det er spændene

Because i find it important for my friends or because it is too funny

To show others what i'm up to and things that makes me happy. Vacation, holidays ect

Hvis der er noget som jeg mener er en milepæl for mig eller nære - eller i en brandret hvor det sjovt i øjeblikket

If someone in friend list needs help (finding job or coworkers, lost and found), sometimes entertainment content

To remember something later on, show something that caught my attention to my friends

Funny videos, newspapers articles

I find something funny or interesting.
To get connected with friends, to show my appereance
To have life in my profile
To show my support to something
To show where I am
To connect with the social media world
To use my time online
To debate with my connections
To be active on Facebook
I share content on Facebook because I want to stay updated and create a debate on stuff I find relevant.
To stay connected and have an attractive profile
To create a debate of the content I find interesting
Because I want to show my connections what I am interested in
To show my support to a cause
I want to be connected
To debate
Debate and share environmental relevant content

If something is funny from my own life

Only funny content, mostly when im going out

Show my personal life

I want to stay active og socialiaze

I share because I think it is relevant

Because I want to be connected with friends

I have no idea

To show people what I am doing. Could be fun things, going out or just to support some causes

I share because I like to tell others about new goods, products that are on the marked

Hmm I share because I want to feel like a part of a community or a group. It gives me the feeling of belonging to something.

Share because the network can use it . Only if it is relevant for the network

To define myself to others - give others a better sense of who I am and what I care about.

To bring valuable and entertaining content to others and carefully consider how the information will be of use to other people in my network.

To feel more involved in the world

I want to get the word out about causes I care about and because it is a good way to support the causes/issues I care about

I share when i'm bored

Tell people about different thing (products, causes) and also to show where I am at the moment and when i am bored

I share because I want to feel a part of something and speak with equally people with the same interests as I have, also funny content when i'm out for a drink and so on

Relevant content for my network and I dont share often

When I share I do it because I want to show my network what I am doing, both work related, spare time related

Only entertaining content because I see Facebook as the type of social media where you put this stuff

Share to get a good debate on facebook with my network

I only share on Facebook for timewasting, waiting for a bus or a train

Personal life updates and I feel satisfied when I share something I have acomplished

Just to be active on Facebook

I want to show my knowledge to others through sharing, as an example that I know something they dont

I share something my online network can use to show some goodwill. It could be jobs..

I rarely share, but when i do it is to support people, environmental content

To be active on facebook and show that i'm still "there"

I share everything that range between funny stuff -> serious stuff

It souns maybe a bit odd but give my network the feeling that iam better than them

Deler med mine venner fordi alle de andre også gør det

I share for the most in the groups i'm following to debate

I don't share very often maybe once or two a year and it is birthday, new year, christmas

The reason I share is to show my network and networks friends who i'm. I share different content depending on what happens. Active on making online reviews, debating, personal events.

To give some people an idea of what I stands for.

When I share it is to be part of the network and the groups I'm enrolled in

When I find content that are relevant to others in my network and something they can use. Thereby I guess they would appreciate my sharing.

To show people what i stands for. I'm a member of a lot of groups with animals and how they are treated. When I came across something like this i could consider to share it, but it depends on the source.

To be more involved in my network

Different aspects: I share job opportunities for my network to help them out. I share funny content. I share content for debating and I share personal things, family related

I have a blog where I discuss product related content - Therefore my focus is on product reviews. I see Facebook as a place where it is possible to communicate with others that have the same interest as me

Family content (Private)

I don't share very often but when I do it is to bring something to my network.

To show that i am active and interesting :)

To waste time
To show my achievements in life
Why i share is hard to state because I do it rarely. Maybe to show where I am in life and my progress
I do not see Facebook as a serious social media and that why I only share to get attention (Entertaining content)
I have my own company where we repair mobile phones and I share content from my store..discounts, new products etc.
To show my friends who i am with
I only make few updates a year. It is to tell my friends I haven't seen in a long time what I have been doing
I want people to know that i am still alive
To show my fitness progress and get comments about it
To show people that i am out-going
I use it so say merry xmas and happy new year to my network and friends.
I share to be active on Facebook. It is not so often anymore but just to show that im still here (does it make sense?)
I share a lot of different contents on Facebook. Selfies, going out, funny and entertaining videoes, quotes and so on
To speak with my friends when I have some ekstra sparetime
When i'm on the "run" I post pictures of my day to tell my friends where i'm located and to show them my everyday life.

I have shared and posted a lot on Facebook before but after I have been older I think a lot of the information I allow Facebook to use and therefore I only share few things each year.

Be connected with my friends and show photos of my day.

Connect with my network and help out. Relevant for my network

I use Facebook to stay connected with old friends who lives far away, tagging them in articles, videos etc.

Rolling updates from my life

I share and post content to give something to the groups on Facebook I'm a member of (Happinessrocks, local fitness group, work group)

To update my network with my personal life, photos, small videooes

To start a debate, I like the tension. Articles.

Everything

Showing my personal life to my network on Facebook

Discuss and comment on reviews of goods I would like to buy

I dont know why but I share pictures of my kids

To catch attention of my friends and get likes

I share content on facebook each year, only on personal occasions and to show people that i'm celebrating events.

To interact with my friends and to stay interesting

Likes and attention

There are different reasons for me. To show my friends, family progress of my kids, to talk with colleagues. I share pictures and tagging friends

Connect with everyone

To talk with my friends and arrange meet ups

To find a date. Sharing pictures of myself

To look funny in my friends eyes

I share to give my friends and online friends an idea of what i am doing now with my life

to get likes from friends and to see who likes my posts

Life events



Are you more likely to share content on Facebook from companies or private persons? and why?

Both

Both

Both

Companies

Companies

Companies

No

No

Don't know

Don't know

No it doesn't matter for me.

I mostly like company content, and am more likely to share from private persons (usually someone in need of help or looking for something).

Private persons. I feel it is a better context to share something from private persons rather than companies

It depends on the content. Who shared it (company or private person) does not matter. Of course, I wouldn't share personal posts/pictures of my friends.

Private because they often put content on Facebook which i find some emotional attachment to

Company's

Mostly from private persons because I don't want to spam my network with things that are not relevant or interesting to them. If I reckon that something is interesting to a person in my network I would rather send it directly to him or her.

Kommer an på hvad formålet er - fra virksomheder er det fordi det er relevant inden for interesse områder. Fra privat personer deles der Når: det er noget jeg personligt mener er gavnligt for Personen

Private Persons indeed, im to scared to share from companies, because in that way your opinion on something can sometimes be shown.

I do not like to share content from somebody else. Only if its non profit organizations working with abandoned animals.

Yes. It seems a lot more trustworthy in that case.

I mostly share articles from news media, NGO's or organisations/institutions with some kind of humanitarian message, never commercial adverts

Private, as it is a private network for me. I share company stuff on LinkedIn

Private person - I don't want to annoy my friends with promotions.

Ngos I think, because they have causes I want to support.

both
Depends on the content, but usually from company
Nope, it is none of my business
Mostly official persons, because the most come with a suiting meme og quote.
Private grundet hader reklamer pp fb
I think I am more likely to share content from organisations because I think that private persons oftent have a more private message that maybe is not as relevant for my network
Non of them
Nope not really
Private as I try to keep my Facebook profile on minimum as possible
both, it depends on the content, i would share it if i can relate to it.
-
It depends. I would say more private persons.
Companies, because I think they are more loyal
None
Companies, because I think they are more reliable
Dont know

Everytime that is relevant to my connections

Companies, because they mostly share valuable articles etc.

Both if the content is relevant

Both if the content is relevant for me and my connections

Companies, because they put up the most interesting stuff

Companies because they publish more interesting content

Don't know, maybe both

Companies because they share the best content

Companies and why? They post the most interesting content

Both, depends on the content

Doesn't matter to me

Private persons because they post the most funny content

Companies, because they share good things

Companies, because they share relevant content. Private persons share content about themselves at most I think

Dunno

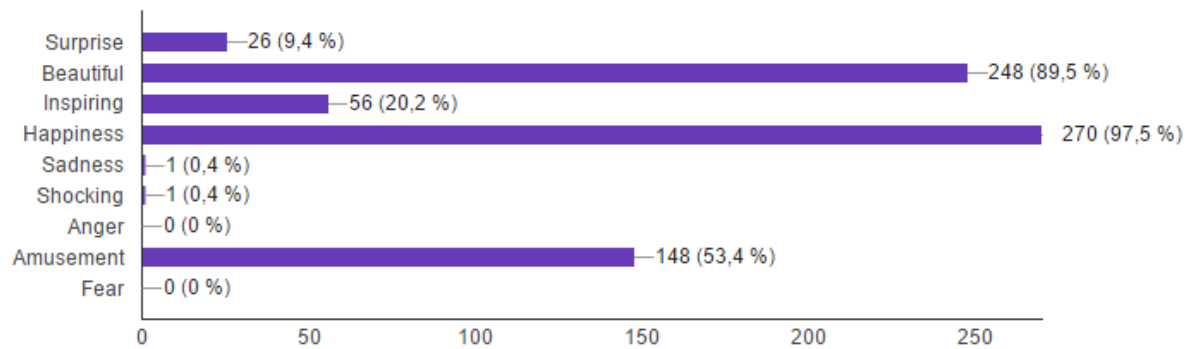
Companies, because they share most interesting content

Companies because I want to tell people about new things
Private persons - the content interest me the most
Really don't know. Mostly companies I think. I have the feeling that they are more serious in their content.
Companies and why - I like to give my support to different causes
Haven't thought about it, sorry
Companies (causes)
Private persons (funny content)
I think I will share from both
Companies most times, but also private persons. depends on the type of content i share
I dont know
Private persons, they often share entertaining content
I think both, depends on the content
Persons when they need something ex apartment, car
Well I just share whatever comes up and seems interesting
Companies, jobs
Everything that seems relevant to share
Ved ikke

Private persons and reviews
I only share things of my own life
Companies and why: they offer the most relevant content to why I share.
I share from both parts.
Companies. The content they have often are more relevant to my network and shows more seriosity
Companies I guess, but also from private persons. If the content are relevant to my network I share it.
Companies because they are the most valid sources.
Both parts
Everything that can be used and seems OK to share
Private persons (Product reviews)
I don't know. I share from YouTube (a company, but also from private persons)?
Could be from both
Companies ^
I only share my personal content
Hard to state but I think both because I share everything that stands for me
Sometimes I tend to share cool stuff from companies
Companies since they offer the best content for me to share
Companies = Most reliable
Companies and private persons. Companies when I share to my work group and private persons when I share to my fitness and happinessrocks group.
I most cases private persons, reviews
Companies and private persons
Only personal
Private persons
Private

## Questions to video

Which emotions do you feel this video evokes in you?



Other (Please comment)

Joy
Joy
Joy
Joy
Joy
Joy
Joy
Friendship
Friendship
Friendship
Friendship
Friendship
Funny
Funny

Funny

Funny

Funny

joy

joy

Trust

Trust

Comfort

Comfort

Nostalgic (childhood memories from the song)

Enlightenment. If you go deep and try to analyse it some of the first thing that comes up is, that WE ARE NOT THE SAME but we can still be together as one. Instead of hating each other because of race, religion etc.

Trust, comfort

cute

-

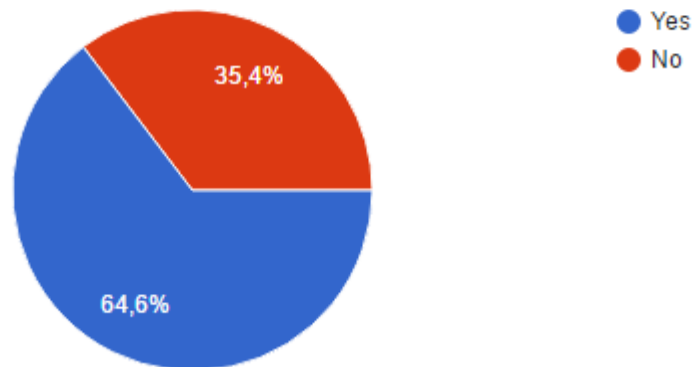
Love, Joy

Joy, life



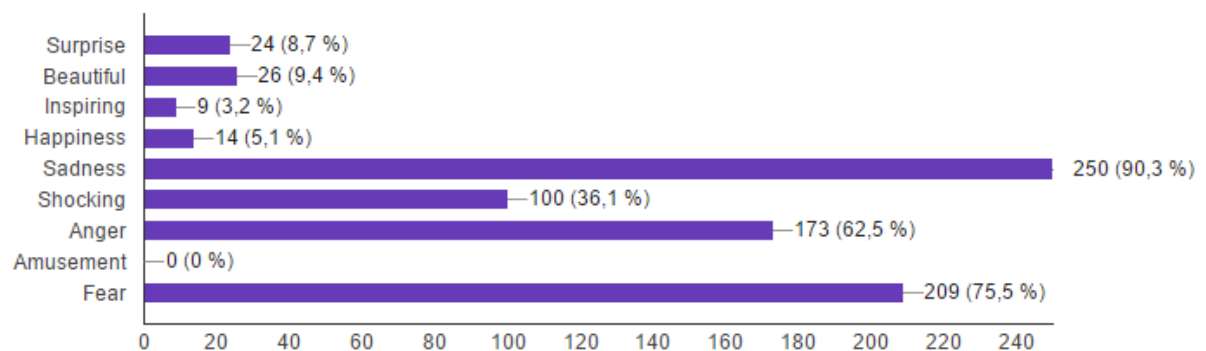
We can all be together, race), Friendship, joy
Enlightenment
Playfull, childhood
Hope for the humanity
Race (be together) joy
Funny, Good, Everything will be ok
Joy, race
Race, enlightenment
Life
Funny, nice
Joy, Be together o matter what race
Joy, Friendship, Race
joy, happy, funny
Life, Race, Hope
Funny, memories
Hope for everyone
Diversification
Hope, childhood
This video made my day :D
Comfrt
Cool
Perfect

After watching this video, would you share it through Facebook?



#### Questions to picture 1

Which emotions do you feel this picture evokes in you?



## Other (Please comment)

Hate

Hate

Hate

no

Empathy towards the soldier, who I imagine sees his baby for the first time.

It is hard to state, considering the context is uncertain.

Love

Love, happily sadness

Tough, bad

Hard

Tough life, hope

I don't want to share things that makes me sad

Hate, life

Sorrow, I do not want to share sad content

Hate war

I would never share so sad content

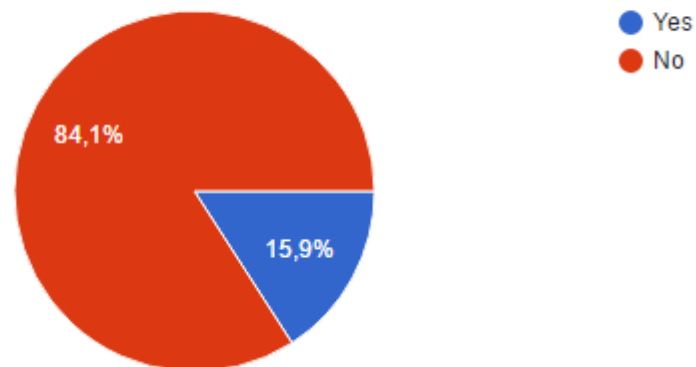
Very sad content. Would never share it.

Hatefull

Sorrow

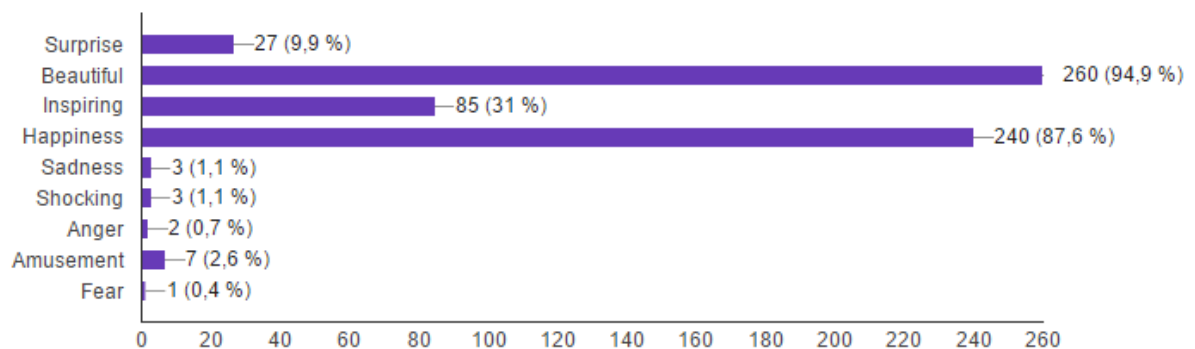
Hopeless

## Would you share this picture through Facebook?



### Questions to picture 2

## Which emotions do you feel this picture evokes in you?



## Other (Please comment)

Joy
Joy
Joy
Joy
Joy
Joy
Joy
Relaxing
Relaxing
Relaxing
Holiday
Holiday
Life
Life

Greatness

Greatness

no

Nothing

The feeling I get the most, is that I want to travel across the land. Searching far and wild!

relax

calmness

Fake

Vacation, summer, family

Paradis

I wouldn't remember it, nothing special

Warm, paradise, lucky

Love, relax, chill

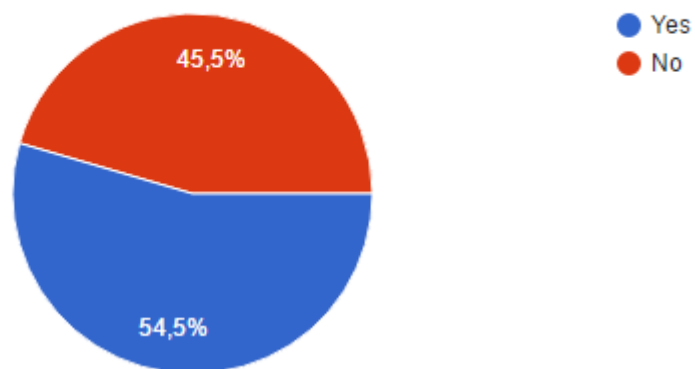
Relaxing, chill, hope, dreams

Chill

Life, Relax, Great

Hope
Paradise
vacation
Love, Joy
Vacation, relaxing
This made me wish I was on vacation
Joy, everything that is good
next holiday
Motivation
Joy, good
Joy, unstressfull
Joyfull


Would you share this picture through Facebook?



## Appendix 2 - Video "Friends Furever"

YouTube link: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vnVuqfXohxc>



YouTube <sup>DK</sup> Friends furever



0:01 / 1:02

Android: Friends Furever

Android ☒

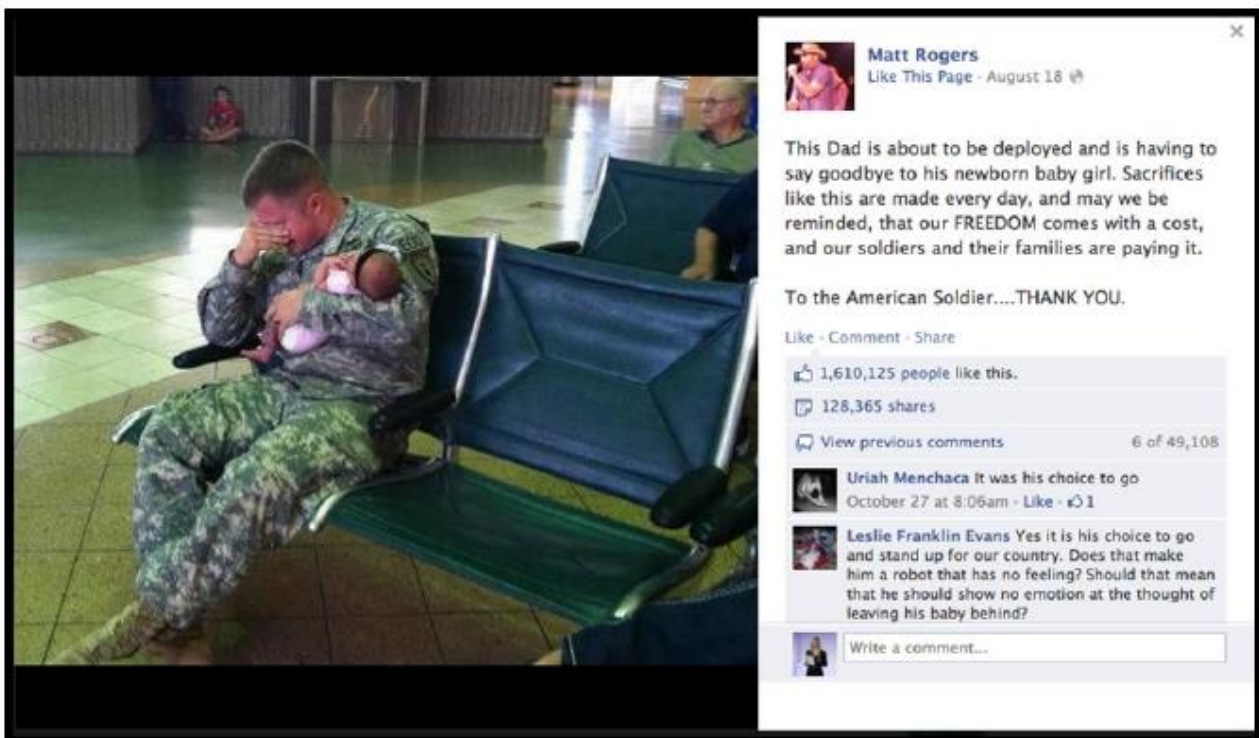
  575.460

24.615.760 afspilninger



### Appendix 3 - Picture "War is ugly"

(<http://www.shoutmeloud.com/most-viral-photos-on-facebook.html>)





## Appendix 4 - Picture "Heaven in the midst of the sea"

(<http://www.shoutmeloud.com/most-viral-photos-on-facebook.html>)



## Appendix 5 - Lecture by John Hird - Viral Marketing

### Viral marketing

For a "virus campaign to be successful it is necessary to nurse the two basic characteristics of a virus: reproduction and survival.

No virus can survive without a disease carrier and thus it can't reproduce itself either. The more disease carriers a virus has infected the better it feels. Spreading the virus means having an interesting, involving and relevant message in the eyes of the target group. To reproduce the message constantly needs to be modified and revitalized to maintain interest and involvement.

(Hird & Poulsen, Internetmarkedsføring, 2002)

## Appendix 6 - Lecture by John Hird - Viral Marketing (Recommender Role Matrix)

**High:**  
Benefits to all  
users depend on size  
of user base

### EXTERNALITIES

**Low:**  
Benefits users  
only

<b>Signaling Use, Group Membership (SGM)</b>  Recipients of PDF files are directed to Adobe's Web site to download the free reader. Senders in this case endorse the product implicitly.	<b>Motivated Evangelism</b>  Users at both ends – initiator and receiver are required to be using the software to communicate. Benefits accrue to both and hence active persuasion by early adoptors is common.
<b>Awareness Creation and Benefits Signaling (ACBS)</b>  Recipients get a personalized email message to visit the Web site and view the e-greeting. This creates awareness of product and services offered by the web site to the visitor	<b>Targeted Recommendation (TR)</b>  Offers an option for visitors to "send a story to af friend". Recipient is directed to ESPN's Web site for the story

Passive

Active

### RECOMMENDER ROLE

