Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey

EGADE Business School

Monterrey



Well-Being and Brand Relationships in Adolescence

A dissertation presented by

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Submitted to the

EGADE Business School

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

In

Business Administration

Major in Consumer Behavior and Conscious Marketing

Monterrey/Nuevo León, 25/11/2020

Dedication

This dissertation is dedicated to my parents.

To the memory of my beloved father, Miguel Ángel Rodríguez Salgado.

To my beloved mother, Irma Bertha Ontiveros Olvera.

For all your guide, inspiration, love, encouragement and support on everything I do.

Also,

To my grandfather Fortunato, for his wise, curious and exceptional mind.

To my grandmother Clarita, for teaching me to enjoy the little things of life.

To my aunt, Ma. Del Socorro Ontiveros.

To my best friend, Richo.

To family and loved friends.

To those who have inspired me and who have mentored me.

To those fighting for their ideals, to believe challenges can be met.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude to EGADE Business School and Tecnológico de Monterrey for the support on tuition. To the staff of the doctoral program in business administration, Dr. José Ernesto Amorós, Dr. Jorge Rocha, Patricia Mier and Ana Patricia Meraz for their guidance throughout the entire process. Also, I want to thank CONACyt for the support for living during my doctoral program.

Special thanks to my thesis committee: My advisor, Dra. Claudia Quintanilla Domínguez, Dr. Edgar Centeno Velázquez and Dra. Raquel Castaño González for their contribution to my thesis.

To my friend and colleague, Dra. Nancy Ortiz Alvarado, for the emotional support and intellectual contribution, as well as the companionship during this journey. To Ernesto del Castillo for his intellectual contribution and knowledge.

To my mentors, classmates and colleagues for the shared experience, knowledge and support.

Deeply grateful with my family, for all their love and support. Specially, with my parents, aunts and uncles, godmothers and godfathers.

Also, very grateful with my closest, deeply loved friends, which are an important pillar in my life: Alejandra Arellano, Ania Cerecero, Deborah Canales, Denisse Fernández, Edgar Cruz, Héctor García, Liliana Pérez, Lupita Díaz, Mary Carmen Payés, Mildred Martínez, Natalia Sandoval, Oscar Estrada, Oscar Orta, Ricardo Flores, Rosa Bertha González, Sheyla Cid and Viviana Diaz.

I

Well-Being and Brand Relationships in Adolescence

By

Marisol Rodríguez Ontiveros

Abstract

Well-Being is a complex construct that has been studied through diverse perspectives due to the multiple elements it comprises. One of these elements considers interpersonal relationships, since they are important predictors of well-being. Bullying is a negative form of socialization, particularly in the young, considered a form of violence since it lowers a person’s self-esteem and well-being. Bullying behaviors appear in both offline and online contexts where adolescents gather to interact with others; contexts in which products and brands are immersed. Brands play a major role in young consumers´ lives (Hemar-Nicolas et al., 2015), since they help them in the construction, preservation and improvement of their self-concepts (Sirgy, 1982). Brands are important due to the symbolic meanings they produce (Schultz, Kleine, & Kernan, 1989). This symbolism reaches its height in adolescence, due to socialization processes. Brands not only have an impact on how individuals relate with others, but also on individuals´ well-being. Thus, the present research aims to advance knowledge on the relationship between well-being, bullying and brands in adolescents, since scarce research on well-being is present in the consumer behavior literature, especially on the adolescent segment. Three studies are presented addressing questions regarding how well-being has been measured, the relationship between bullying and well-being in adolescents and the interaction of brands in this relationship, how brands can promote aggressive behaviors between peers, as well as the effect of social media on this phenomenon. Results show that 1) well-being has been measured through the use of scales, quantitatively and through the diverse branches it composes, resulting in a proliferation of scales generating ambiguity, 2) bullying affects negatively adolescents´ well-being and that brands have an effect on this relationship, and 3) social media generates a compulsive drive in adolescents to search and share brand information, social pressure and competition between adolescents in social media generates and intensifies brand-related cyberbullying, and that this behavior is likely to occur on women; thus, girls are more likely than men to generate and receive this type of aggression. Also, that bullies are more likely to engage in conspicuous consumption on social media for exerting power over peers. Finally, this research contributes to the well-being and consumer behavior literature by adding knowledge on theory regarding brands, brand relationships and online consumption; and discusses important implications for managers in businesses and policy makers.

*Keywords: well-being, bullying, brand relationships, adolescence*

Contents

Abstract v

1 Introduction 1

1.1 Motivation . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .. 2

1.2 Problem Statement and Context . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 2

1.3 Research Objective and Research Questions . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 3

1.4 Solution Overview . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .. 3

2 Three Decades of Well-being Assessment: A Review, Synthetization

and Categorization of Measurement Scales 4

3 Bullying and Brands in Well-being: A social networks approach 21

4 Adolescents in social media: Exploring digital compulsive

consumption, brand relationships and brand-related bullying 40

5 Conclusions 61

5.1 Contributions . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 61

5.2 Conclusions. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .. 61

5.3 Future work. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .. 62

Appendixes. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .. 64

References……………………………………………………………………… 88

Curriculum Vitae 112

List of tables

2.1 Categorization of the prevalent scales used to measure well-being . . . . . . 13

3.1 Descriptive statistics of calculated variables. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 31

3.2 Regression analysis (H1). The dependent variable is the well-being

variable. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .. 33

3.3 Logistic analysis (H2, H3). The dependent variable is the high reception

of bullying. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 35

4.1 Profile of participants: adolescents. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .. . . . . . . . . …… 47

4.2 Profile of participants: teachers. . . . . .. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 47

4.3 Initial and final themes (theoretical and emergent) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 48

4.4 Main categories mentioned by adolescents for consumption on social

media . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 49

4.5 Positive and negative characteristics of adolescents´ brand relationships

on social media . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 50

4.6 Relationship characteristics mentioned for social media brands

(positive and negative) . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 51

4.7 Types of posts shared on social media by adolescents. . . . . . . . . . . . . . .. 52

4.8 Types of brand-related cyberbullying. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 53

4.9 Gender differences on brand-related cyberbulling. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .. 54

4.10 The role of brands on cyberbullying. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 55

4.11 Brands associated to bullying characteristics. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . .. 55

List of figures

3.1 Bullying network . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . 32

Chapter 1

Introduction

The understanding of well-being is complex due to its multiple branches (Stiglitz, Sen, & Fitoussi, 2009). Despite the fact that there is no consensus in the literature regarding its definition, it can be described as a multi-dimensional construct that is therefore measured according to several elements (Seligman, 2011). These elements have emerged in literature on the topic and are considered important components and predictors of overall well-being (Snyder & Lopez, 2009), such as relationships, physical and mental health, spirituality, emotions, among others (Andrews, 1991; Bettencourt & Sheldon, 2001; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). The study of well-being is rooted in two philosophies: hedonism and eudaimonism (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Hedonism posits to a view of well-being that consists of the experiences of pleasure, happiness, satisfaction with life, and pain avoidance (Diener et al., 1999). Eudaimonism considers well-being to be the realization and fulfilment of one´s potential and the living of a meaningful and purposeful life through the development of personal strengths and contributing to society (Ryff, 1989). The different components of well-being are rooted on these two philosophies. Although the term *well-being* has been used indistinctively to describe a state of happiness (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schekade, 2005), well-being is considered to be more than just a state of happiness (Shah & Marks, 2004). Thus, for the present study, we distinguish *well-being* from *happiness* and consider happiness to be an emotional, positive aspect of well-being.

A phenomenon that has globally affected the well-being of individuals, is one related to social relationships, known as bullying, especially among teenagers and adolescents (Juvonen & Graham, 2014; Nansel et al., 2001; Unesco, 2019). Bullying is considered a form of violence, in which a physically stronger or socially more prominent individual abuses his or her power to humiliate or threat others (Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017; Olweus, 1993). Bullying can be present not only as a physical aggression, but as other forms of negative behaviors, such as threats, name-calling, spread of rumors, exclusion, humiliations, as well as others (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). These direct and indirect bullying behaviors (Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, & Peltonen, 1988) appear in both offline and online contexts where adolescents gather as part of their socialization processes (Wentzel, 1998); in spaces where brands are also immersed. Thus, brands have an impact on the way adolescents relate with the others, and hence, on their well-being.

Research has suggested that consumers purchase and use products not only because of a utilitarian function, but for the symbolic meanings that goods produce (Schultz, Kleine, & Kernan, 1989). In adolescence, brands become important agents to create and manage their self-concepts and identities (Belk, 1988). These identities are important since they also help consumers connect with others, by strengthening their belongingness to social groups and reduce their feelings of social exclusion (Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Fournier, 1998; Loveland, Smeesters, & Mandel, 2010). Although these has been broadly explored previously in literature, it becomes relevant to investigate how brands can be related to the different types of bullying, due to the increment of aggressions on adolescence reported recently (Unesco, 2019) and the knowledge that materialism can be developed as compensation for dissatisfaction with life (Ku, 2015). This becomes relevant since victims of bullying have reported different psychological and physical problems, that can lead to lower levels of well-being (Hawker & Boulton, 2000). Also, by considering teenagers and adolescents are now more connected to brands than previous generations due to technology, especially social media, where these consumers follow brands and become co-creators with businesses by generating content and value (Hendrix, 2014; Lawlor et al., 2016). Thus, we aim to advance research to understand the relationship between well-being, bullying and brands.

* 1. Motivation

During the past years, businesses have been recognizing the importance of promoting the well-being and happiness throughout their activities with their stakeholders. In 2017, the OECD organized a workshop with the objective to highlight businesses´ impacts on societal well-being, as well as to establish the emerging practice of well-being on the corporate, community and policy levels (OECD, 2017). In the marketing and consumer behavior field, the growing interest in happiness and well-being has been evident since businesses are looking to connect with their customers by providing them positive emotions and to cultivate a state of well-being (Mogilner, Aaker, & Kamvar, 2012). Thus, researchers in different fields have been making efforts in studying and measuring well-being (Diener & Chan, 2011; Diener & Seligman, 2002; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). Specifically, marketing researchers have been interested in exploring how to create and manage brands that promote consumers´ well-being (Isen, Labroo, & Durlach, 2004; Mogilner & Aaker, 2009); as well as how to design businesses that increase their stakeholders´ happiness and well-being (Hsieh, 2010; Lyubomirsky, King, & Diener, 2005). Furthermore, the relevance of well-being becomes evident as we watch the Covid-19 pandemic unfold and as we experience isolation, insecurity and uncertainty due to the lockdown, resulting in severe risks to people´s well-being (Bonanno et al., 2010). Research has confirmed relatively high levels of anxiety, depression and stress symptoms (Wang et al., 2020).

* 1. Problem Statement and Context

First, we address issues regarding the measurement of well-being. Throughout the years, researchers have developed a diversity of tools to assess well-being. However, due to the multidimensionality of the construct, this has generated a proliferation of scales, leading to ambiguity and confusion regarding the proper assessment of well-being (Pollard & Lee, 2003). Thus, we identified a void in literature for the development of a guideline that synthetizes and categorizes the prevalent tools used to measure well-being in these main elements that comprise well-being (Snyder & Lopez, 2009). Also, bullying has been a relevant topic since millions of students suffer different types of aggressions. Data has shown that almost one in every three students (32%) reported being bullied in school at least once per month (UNESCO, 2019). A recent qualitative study developed by Williams and Littlefield (2018) showed a direct relationship between brands and bullying. The authors stressed out the importance of understanding this phenomenon due to the importance of brands for adolescents and due to the symbolism brands provide (Chaplin & Roedder John, 2005). Furthermore, the study of this relationship in the young becomes critical since they are now more connected to technology and brands (Lawlor et al., 2016) and have been considered important decision makers in consumption processes due to reverse socialization (Kaur & Medury, 2011).

1.3 Research Objective and Research Questions

The present research has the objective to advance knowledge on the relationship between well-being, bullying and brands in adolescents, since scarce research on well-being is present in the consumer behavior and marketing literature, especially on the adolescent segment. Three studies are presented, which address questions regarding how well-being has been measured, the relationship between bullying and well-being in adolescents and the interaction of brands in this relationship, how adolescents relate to brands in social media, how they relate with social media brands and how is brand-related cyberbullying generated and intensified by social media.

1.4 Solution Overview

In the first study we used a qualitative approach to present a literature review of the prevalent scales used in empirical studies on well-being, on the past three decades, in order to contribute with a synthetization and categorization of tools on seven main branches of well-being. These main branches are different aspects of human life and have been considered important components and predictors of overall well-being such as emotions, personal relationships, community, health and others (Snyder & Lopez, 2009). For our literature review, we based our search process on other review articles (Shepherd, Williams, & Patzelt, 2015; Wang & Rajagopalan, 2015). Once we gather our data from this search process, we categorized the scales in each of the components of well-being. The second study presents a case study that tests empirically in a private school in Mexico, through a social networks methodology if school bullying in a network has a negative effect on adolescents´ well-being and if brands can serve as a defense mechanism for bullying, functioning as a safeguard to their well-being. Social networks analysis consists of several statistical and algebraic techniques that enable to represent social structure properties when analyzing data. These techniques are useful to generate specific measures associated to individuals and/or pairs of individuals to further develop hypothesis testing (Huitsing & Veenstra, 2012). Finally, the third study explores, through a qualitative methodology based on personal in-depth interviews (Creswell, 2007), how adolescents relate with brands on social media, including social media brands and brand-related cyberbullying in social media.

Chapter 2

Study 1: Three Decades of Well-Being Assessment: A Review, Synthetization and Categorization of Measurement Scales

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to compile a literature review to identify, synthetize, and categorize the prevalent scales that are used to assess well-being and its main domains in empirical studies. We contribute a general and functional classification of the measures, to provide researchers and practitioners guidance on the selection of the suitable instruments when measuring the different components of well-being. Well-being is a complex construct that is comprised of diverse elements, so accurately measuring it represents a challenge for researchers. A wide scope of instruments and tools has been previously employed to deal with this complexity; however, they are all characterized by ambiguity. We conducted this study between 20 January 2017 and 1 March 2017, reviewing 73 articles published between 1985 and 2017 in three highly rated journals in the area of psychology. Throughout our research, we *identified* that well-being has mostly been measured quantitatively with the use of scales. We synthetized and classified these instruments into some of the main components of overall well-being: *Subjective Well-Being, Psychological Well-Being, Spiritual Well-Being, Physical Well-Being, Relational Well-Being, Mental Well-Being, and Social Well-Being.* These main components emerged from our literature review and are considered important elements that comprise well-being. In addition, we decomposed these main categories to provide a more profound classification system. We identified 39 scales, presented as a guideline with general information, psychometric properties and recommendations for use. The results suggest disagreement on and misunderstanding of the conceptualization of well-being and its components has generated confusion in developing and using well-being assessment scales.

*Keywords: Literature Review, Psychology, Well-Being, Components of Well-Being, Measures, Scales, Instruments*

Introduction

Well-being is a complex construct that is comprised of diverse components (Diener, 1984), representing a challenge for researchers in different fields, such as psychology, sociology, economics and business, among others, for its accurate measurement (Diener et al., 1999; Dolan et al., 2008; Thomas, 2009). Thus, a variety of tools have been created to deal with this complexity (Pollard & Lee, 2003). In this literature review, we identified that well-being has primarily been measured quantitatively with the use of scales. This has engendered the proliferation of many different scales, generated ambiguity and uncertainty regarding their use and raised questions regarding their proper assessment—*i.e.* which scale to use in different and specific contexts. These findings highlight the need for the synthesis and categorization of the prevalent scales used to assess well-being and its components in an effort to advance a general and functional classification system that provides clarity and guidance on their use for researchers and practitioners in the field. This is the main contribution of our study.

The purpose of this research is to review the different scales used in empirical studies on well-being from three psychology journals published between 1984 and 2017 to organize and categorize them. We selected three top psychology journals according to their impact factors and rankings in the field according to Scopus and Scimago and considering their focus and interest in the topic. We extend theory in well-being literature by proposing a general and functional classification and categorization of the prevalent scales used to assess well-being into seven main components that we identified throughout our literature review. These components are considered important elements of overall well-being: Subjective, Psychological, Spiritual, Physical, Relational, Mental and Social Well-Being. This in order to contribute with a practical guideline of tools that can aid on the selection of the accurate instruments when measuring the different components of well-being. Also, we offer a deeper understanding of the scales by providing a second-order classification of sub-categories for the main components of well-being. To our knowledge, this is the first study that provides a profound and in-depth classification system for the scales that measure well-being, including its main components as well as reports of psychometric properties, and offers general recommendations for their use.

The paper is organized as follows. First, we present the conceptual framework of the topic of well-being. Second, a detailed explanation of the process followed for our literature review is provided. Third, the results are presented. Fourth, a discussion, further research, practical implications and conclusions are presented.

Conceptual Framework

*Understanding Well-Being*

The understanding of well-being is complex and diverse due to its multiple branches (Stiglitz, Sen, & Fitoussi, 2009). Despite the fact that there is no consensus in the literature regarding its definition, it can be described as a multi-dimensional construct that is therefore measured according to several elements (Seligman, 2011). Although the study of well-being seems to be salient over the last few decades (Diener, 1984; Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999; Seligman, 2011), one seminal study can be traced to 1969, when N. M. Bradburn distinguished between a positive and a negative affect and defined happiness as the balance of the two (Bradburn, 1969). Numerous contributions over the years (*e.g.* Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985; Ryff, 1989; Bradley, 1994; Gomez & Fisher, 2003) have incorporated different methodologies, developing new ways to define and measure this positive state of an individual. Since then, the term *well-being* has been used indistinctively to describe a state of happiness (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). Although happiness is considered to be a beneficial attribute in an individual’s well-being (Raibley, 2012), well-being is considered to be more than just a state of happiness (Shah & Marks, 2004). For the present review, we distinguish *well-being* from *happiness* and consider happiness to be an emotional, positive aspect of well-being.

The study of well-being is rooted in two philosophies: hedonism and eudaimonism (Ryan & Deci, 2001). Hedonism posits a view of well-being that consists of the experiences of pleasure, pain avoidance, happiness, and satisfaction with life (Diener et al., 1999). Eudaimonism considers well-being to be the realization and fulfilment of one’s potential and the living of a meaningful and purposeful life through the development of personal strengths and contributing to society (Ryff, 1989). Evidence has shown that hedonism and eudaimonia are both overlapping and distinct and that the understanding of well-being may be enhanced by measuring it in different forms (Compton et al., 1996; King & Napa, 1998). Debate between both philosophies is still present and will not be resolved herein. However, these perspectives are important to theory and practice since they have generated much research on the topic (Ryan & Deci, 2001).

From these two approaches, different streams in the literature on the topic of well-being have emerged involving different dimensions of the individual (Snyder & Lopez, 2009). These diverse dimensions of human life have been considered important components of well-being such as emotions, relationships, community, health and others (Andrews, 1991; Bettencourt & Sheldon, 2001; Diener, 1984; Ryff & Keyes, 1995). The identification and understanding of these elements are relevant for the purpose of proper conceptualization and measurement. Thus, we aim to identify these main components in order to categorize the prevalent scales used to assess well-being in the last three decades with the objective to contribute with a practical guideline of tools that can aid on the selection of the accurate instruments when measuring the different components of well-being.

Methods

For this review, we used the Web of Science database to search for certain keywords in business and general psychology journals, consistent with the process in other review articles (Shepherd, Williams, & Patzelt, 2015; Wang & Rajagopalan, 2015). Our initial objective was to search for publications on well-being not only in psychology journals, considering the topic has mainly and widely studied in this field, but also in marketing journals to explore the construct and offer a glimpse of the prevalent assessment methods on well-being in the literature of both fields. After we selected our initial and main topics and keywords in the Web of Science, we divided them into seven of the database’s sub-categories: *psychology multidisciplinary, social science interdisciplinary, management, business, psychology interdisciplinary, psychology social* and *psychology*. We chose three marketing and three psychology journals based on the following criteria: 1) a high impact factor compared to others in their field and 2) a top journal in their discipline ranked Q1, according to Scimago and Scopus. The following journals were included (impact factor): *Journal of Marketing (3.885), Journal of Marketing Research (3.109), Journal of Consumer Research (3.187), Journal of Happiness Studies (1.846), Journal of Personality and Social Psychology (4.736) and Journal of Personality Assessment (2.258)*.

Although well-being has been studied in the field of psychology for decades (Bradburn, 1969; Kraut, 1979), it was not until the past three decades that investigations on the topic have evolved with the publication of Ed Diener’s seminal work (1984) on subjective well-being. Thus, the scope of our search included papers published between 1984 and 2017. After our journal selection and to collect our first list of papers, we searched each journal for the following keywords: *methods, methodologies,* and *scales.* In this initial search, we found 2,863 papers. We then refined our list by taking the next three steps: (1) searching for the keywords *wellbeing* and *well-being,* since the construct has been denoted in the literature both with and without a hyphen (obtaining 226 papers), (2)considering the influence of studies in terms of citations by selecting those papers with a minimum of two citations per year (obtaining 100 papers) and 3) by identifying, in each paper that well-being was empirically measured in adults, children or the elderly (obtaining 74 papers). The search of the Web of Science was performed from 20 January 2017 through 1 March 2017.

Throughout our search, we only identified one paper in the three marketing journals selected that met our inclusion criteria. Thus, we decided to focus the review on the psychology literature, with 73 papers finally being selected. In addition, we identified that well-being has been mainly approached quantitatively with the use of scales. Thus, we focused on categorizing the scales to measure well-being used in the psychology literature; including only scales in our review. The search of the Web of Science, as well as the discussion and analysis of the data, was conducted by both researchers. Inter-rater reliability was established between researchers during the search process and the analysis of the information.

Throughout our literature review, we identified scales that measured different aspects of our topic of interest. However, we included those that measured well-being and its main components, excluding tools associated with ill-being such as anxiety, depression, stress, burnout, and others. Finally, we reported 39 scales.

Findings

Components of Well-Being

1. *Subjective Well-Being*

The prevalent approach among hedonic psychologists is to determine well-being subjectively based on three independent (Diener & Emmons, 1984) components: life satisfaction, the presence of positive affect and the absence of negative affect (Diener et al., 1999; Larsen et al., 1985). Researchers in this stream consider the subjective element to be essential when assessing well-being since social factors or indicators do not determine peoples’ evaluations of their lives (Diener & Suh, 1997).

This approach includes two dimensions. The first is the affective component, also considered as *emotional well-being*, representing moods and emotions considered as affect (pleasant and unpleasant), of individuals’ evaluations of events in their lives (Salovey et al., 1995). The second is the cognitive component, in which people evaluate life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1999; Wills, 2009). Happiness is part of the subjective component of well-being, considered to be the frequency, not the intensity, of positive affect necessary and sufficient to produce happiness (Pavot et al., 1991).

Although subjective measures are considered simple, efficient and easily understood (Cheung & Lucas, 2014), the process by which participants must recall, evaluate, and weigh the significance of life events and experiences becomes a difficult task (Lucas, Freedman, & Carr, 2019). To deal with this complexity, researchers have developed experienced measures (*experiential well-being*), by repeatedly sampling peoples’ affective reactions to obtain momentary data, providing a measure rooted in the present (Kahneman, Diener, & Schwarz, 1999).

In our review, we identified that the *subjective* approach was predominant in the literature. This becomes critical since much research has been approached based on a hedonic perspective; thus, hedonism has been dominant in literature. This could be due to the solid understanding of the concept and its robust and broad research development (Diener et al., 1999). Specifically, more than half of the papers reviewed in the present study used the ‘Satisfaction with Life’ scale (Diener et al., 1985), which, aside from its high recognition and popularity for assessing well-being, must be used carefully since the scale measures only one of the components of subjective well-being, life satisfaction. Therefore, researchers must be aware that the subjective component of well-being involves life satisfaction and affect and that tools exist to assess them either separately or together.

1. *Psychological Well-Being*

Increased attention to the study of psychological well-being in the literature surges from the recognition of conceptions of well-being, neglecting important aspects of positive functioning. Researchers in psychological well-being view Aristotle’s conception of happiness as more than just a balance between a positive and a negative affect. Psychological well-being is rooted in an eudamionian philosophy (Ryff, 1989).

Carol Ryff (1989) first theorized the concept of psychological well-being, describing well-being as ‘the striving for perfection that represents the realization of one’s true potential’ (Ryff, 1995, p. 100). He proposed six dimensions for assessing psychological well-being: self-acceptance, positive relations with others, autonomy, environmental mastery, purpose in life and personal growth; dimensions influenced from perspectives aimed at defining positive functioning (Maslow, 1968; Allport, 1961).

It is important to note that the first study on the topic was not strongly theory-guided and that instruments developed for other purposes became agents for defining this state of positive functioning (Ryff, 1989). Since in Ryff’s first conceptualization of this approach, he proposed six dimensions, little evidence exists of any research that extended his model. Our literature review shows that the scope of the scales for this component is narrow, focusing on the assessment of meaning and purpose of life and considering a single dimension of psychological well-being.

1. *Spiritual Well-Being*

Spiritual well-being has been recognized as important to the understanding and conceptualization of well-being (Gomez & Fisher, 2003; Sawatzky, Ratner, & Chiu, 2005). Spiritual well-being refers to the enhancement of one’s inner resources (Hay, 1989) and the development of inner strength (Burkhardt, 1989). It can be interpreted as a lifelong pursuit and an affirmation of living life in direct connection with the self, the community, the environment and the sacred (Dierendonck & Mohan, 2006).

Spirituality transcends religiosity (Bai & Lazenby, 2015), recognizing that an individual is part of a greater whole that influences individual’s actions. Spiritual resources provide a feeling of strength and function as a guide to finding significance in life (Waterman, 1993).

The importance of spirituality in the field of well-being is demonstrated by studies that have discovered that people who have spiritual experiences are in the normal range of well-being and tend to report more positive feelings than those without spiritual experiences (Kennedy & Kanthamani, 1995).

This component of well-being is less salient in literature than others, such as the subjective and psychological elements. In our review we identified three scales. This might be possible since the attention on the spiritual element of well-being has been placed in more recent years than other components. Due to increased interest in spirituality over the recent decades (Gomez & Fisher, 2003; Weaver, Pargament, Flannelly, & Oppenheimer, 2006), we expect that more research will be generated on this topic.

1. *Physical Well-Being*

Physical well-being is an important component of overall well-being (Scheier & Carver, 1992; McKee-Ryan et al., 2005) since physical conditions are essential to consider in evaluating an individual’s basic functioning (Ware & Sherbourne, 1992).

Researchers in the medical field have developed measures to determine evaluations of individuals’ physical functioning. These tools include criteria such as body functioning, pain levels, general health and health perception (Derogatis & Spencer, 1982; McHorney et al., 1993), and its use has not been limited to patients but also for the general population.

Physical well-being measures have been categorized as being subjective, which involve self-reports of physical symptoms (reporting either specific or general health complaints, such as headaches) (Schwarzer, Jerusalem, & Hahn, 1994); or objective, which involve measures of more objective medical reports or indices, such as blood pressure (McKee-Ryan et al., 2005). In our review, we identified only one scale that assess physical well-being.

1. *Relational Well-Being*

Since well-being can be understood as something that also belongs to and emerges through relationships with others (Christopher, 1999), the relational aspect becomes relevant to consider when evaluating well-being (McCubbin et al., 2013). Scholars have used the term ‘relational well-being’ to highlight the importance of the health and quality of relationships as well as the work people provide to maintain them for their overall well-being (Huovinen & Blackmore, 2016).

Having and maintaining supportive and stable relationships, caring for, developing emotional connections with people, feeling an important member in social groups and receiving social support are important aspects that contribute to the well-being of an individual (Bettencourt & Sheldon, 2001; Cohen & Syme, 1985; Gable & Gosnell, 2011; Reis & Gable, 2003). Thus, researchers have developed measures determining the quality and strength of individuals’ relationships with others (Winefield, Winefield, & Tiggemann, 1992).

In our review, we identified scales assessing important aspects such as social support, quality, commitment, and closeness in relationships; focusing more on social support and tools for romantic relationships.

1. *Mental Well-Being*

Increased interest in the concept of positive mental health has been manifested in the literature and in public policy, and the term has been used interchangeably with mental well-being since positive mental health has been recognized as foundational to well-being and effective individual and community functioning (World Health Organization, 2004; Tennant et al., 2007).

Mental well-being includes both affect and psychological functioning, grounded in hedonism and eudaimonia, respectively (Ryan & Deci, 2001). It can be defined as a state that enables people to exploit their abilities, cope with life stressors, work productively, contribute to their community and engage in satisfying and enduring relationships (World Health Organization, 2001). Mental well-being is recognized as producing the consequences of health and social outcomes (Huppert & Wittington, 2004). However, the field is considered under-researched mainly due to a lack of appropriate population-based measures (Hu et al., 2007). We identified only one scale that measures mental well-being in our review.

1. *Social Well-Being*

The literature recognizes potential benefits in an individual’s social life, such as social integration and cohesion, a sense of interdependence and belonging and a sense of shared consciousness and collective fate (Durkheim, 1952). These benefits provide a foundation to what is known as ‘social well-being’. Social well-being can be defined as the ‘appraisal of one’s circumstance and functioning in society’ (Keyes, 1998, p. 122).

Although other existing components have emphasized private aspects of well-being, such as emotional well-being or physical well-being, social well-being posits that individuals are part of social structures, communities and environments (Larson, 1993; Keyes, 1998). Social well-being differs from relational well-being in that it covers aspects related to community and society; considering people to feel integrated in a community and to perceive their neighborhoods as safe and comfortable (Keyes, 1998).

These seven main components constitute important aspects of well-being and therefore serve as markers of flourishing or optimal human functioning (Ryan & Deci, 2001; Fredrickson, 2002). These elements comprise overall well-being and include aspects of both hedonic and eudaimonic perspectives of well-being. While some of the components are associated to one or both philosophies (i.e. the subjective element is rooted in hedonism, the psychological element in eudaimonia and the mental element in both hedonism and eudaimonia), it becomes unclear for others. Also, due to the overlap of both perspectives (Compton et al., 1996), boundaries between elements are not that clear, resulting in the proliferation of measurement tools; thus, generating a challenge for researchers in accurately assessing well-being (Pollard & Lee, 2003).

Categorization of scales used to measure well-being

Table 1 reports general information, psychometric properties, as well as general recommendations for the 39 scales categorized in the seven main components identified throughout our review. This is the main contribution of this study. We identified instruments that were difficult to classify in only one component of well-being; thus, we included an additional category for those instruments that were associated with more than one component of well-being, such as the Well-Being Questionnaire (Bradley, 1994) and the Oxford Happiness Questionnaire (Hills & Argyle, 2002). Each of the scales presented in this review was analyzed and evaluated by the authors to be placed in the appropriate component.







We identified that most of the scales reported were developed during the 1980s and 1990s, years during which interest and attention in the topic of well-being increased and important seminal publications of consolidated researchers emerged (*e.g.* Larsen, 1985; Diener, 1984; Ryff, 1989; Bradley, 1994). Throughout these years of research, one can observe a significant evolution and sophistication of the techniques used for the developmental process of scales. This can be observed with ‘recent’ studies developing and reporting deeper analysis with information regarding factor analysis, consistency over time and with different age samples, as well as confirmatory and discriminatory analysis for validation of the scales (Lee et al., 2013; Lyubomirsky & Lepper, 1999; Scheier et al., 2006) than older studies. The sophistication of techniques can be seen since technology has been helpful in the development of software that facilitates this scale development process, such as the software AMOS (DeVellis, 2016).

In addition, we noticed that a majority—32 of the 39 scales reported—of the scales were developed in the United States. Other settings reported were Australia, Canada, London, Russia, and Taiwan. Only one scale was developed in Taiwan. This is important to consider since the majority of the tools developed to assess well-being show a strong influence of Western cultures, in which a high-arousal positive affect is often favored (Diener et al., 1995; Suh, 2002) and more valued (Lee et al., 2013) than in Asian and Chinese cultures. Considering that cultural influences can shape different meanings of well-being and happiness, this focus on Western cultures has provoked a limited understanding and conceptualization of well-being and its dimensions and therefore generated measurement issues.

Regarding differences in population groups, 95% of the scales reported were developed for the general adult population. Two of the scales were initially developed for the elderly, namely, the Memorial University of Newfoundland Scale and the Life Purpose Questionnaire, whereas no tool was identified to assess well-being in children and teenagers. This is congruent with literature that demonstrates that even though the topic of well-being and positive functioning has received increased attention over the past decades (Diener, 2000), research has been slow in developing studies on well-being, as well as its branches, for other population groups such as children, teenagers and the elderly (Park & Peterson, 2006); one reason for this lack of research is a scarce of engaging instruments that are suitable for the different samples (Chaplin, 2009).

In relation to the psychometric properties of the scales presented (79.4% of the scales reported at least one reliability coefficient), we identified that the majority reported reliability coefficients of at least .80 to over .90, demonstrating acceptable values for the scales to be considered reliable (DeVellis, 2016; Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Some scales reported ample ranges of reliability coefficients, such as the Life Engagement Test (.72 to .87) and the Medical Outcomes Study 36-Item Short-Form Health Survey (.78 to .93). One scale reported low coefficients for two of its dimensions, the Beliefs about Well-Being Scale; the scale that showed poorer reliability is Bradburns’ Affect Balance Scale (1969). Other scales, to our knowledge, did not report this type of information, making it difficult to evaluate them. Also, 56.4% of the scales reported included at least one test-retest reliability coefficient and 66.6% reported validity evidence.

Discussion

As previously stated, well-being has been considered as a multidimensional construct, thus, composed of several elements. Each one of these components is important for human flourish and for the achievement of a pleasant life. Thus, the identification and understanding of each of these components becomes critical for the study and assessment of well-being. Due to its relevance, we focused on categorizing scales on each of the main components of well-being, according to literature.

Evidence shows that tools for measuring well-being have been broadly developed over the past three decades. A wide variety of scales measuring the different components and aspects of well-being, as shown in our results, have been helpful for researchers and practitioners in the field for assessing well-being. However, there are important considerations that might be relevant when assessing well-being.

Special attention must be taken regarding the overlap between the different components of well-being, since some of them cover similar elements (i.e. mental well-being and psychological well-being consider positive relations with others as an element; mental well-being considers affect, such as the subjective component). Although aspects might be related to one another, it is important to establish clear differences and boundaries between them to avoid overlapping dimensions and therefore fuzziness and ambiguity, as in the case of *mental* and *psychological* well-being, which consider a similar perspective of well-being.

We identified a concentration of scales in some components. This might be due to the evolution of the conceptualization of well-being in which some dimensions have been recently explored and incorporated (*e.g. spiritual* and *social well-being*) versus others that have been in literature for a longer period of time and are fundamental in the field (*e.g.* *subjective* and *psychological well-being*). However, the subjective (hedonic) approach to well-being has been dominant.

Dominance of this subjective (hedonic) approach is more evident since research has focused on one popular tool for assessing well-being. More than half of the papers in our review used the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener et al., 1985). Although it has proven to be a simple and reliable scale, is important to consider that it measures only one (cognitive) aspect of well-being—life satisfaction. This draws attention to the fact that the Temporal Satisfaction with Life Scale, which includes a temporal dimension, allows for a more comprehensive examination of levels of life satisfaction (Pavot, Diener, & Suh, 1998), is not as salient in the literature as the former scale.

Perhaps the most critical aspect to consider is the importance of understanding the different components associated with overall well-being. Well-being is composed of diverse layers based on different perspectives. Thus, it becomes relevant to decompose the construct to understand it, not only to develop reliable instruments that measure precisely what they are intended to measure since the understanding of the construct is critical to the scale development process (DeVellis, 2016), but also for researchers to select those scales that best fit the requirements of their research purposes and objectives. The present study contributes and advances a classification system of the prevalent tools used to assess well-being and its main components to provide guidance on the selection of the proper instruments, for an accurate measure of well-being.

Further research

Despite the vast diversity of tools developed for assessing well-being, there is still research required to further understand the different meanings of well-being throughout different cultures for diverse populations. Research has pointed out these different meanings across cultures (Tsai, Knutson, & Fung, 2006) and age ranges (Mogilner, Aaker, & Kamvar, 2012). Thus, further research might consider the development of additional tools that accommodate for these differences. Also, it might be desirable to explore more distinct and overlapping elements between both hedonism and eudaimonia, to develop instruments that either complement both perspectives and others rooted in a single philosophy. Moreover, we encourage the development of measures that assess more than one component of well-being, like those listed at the end of Table 1.

Another relevant topic to investigate is whether each of the categories affects an individual’s well-being in a similar or a different manner. For example, if a disease (affecting health) could have a greater impact on an individual’s well-being when compared to a lack of faith (affecting spiritual well-being), such scales could help practitioners to understand the relevance of each category in an overall evaluation of well-being as well as to identify the differences of this relevance for different ages, genders and cultural groups.

We identified that well-being has been mostly studied in the adult population, generating a void for the development of instruments for other population groups such as the elderly, children and adolescents. Evidence shows that, in the case of happiness, the affective component of well-being shifts steadily throughout the course of life from excited when young to peaceful happiness when older (Mogilner, Aaker, & Kamvar, 2012). Thus, it is important to generate tools that address these differences according to the knowledge of what happiness and well-being mean for specific populations. Although scales have been adapted to study other age-related groups (Laurent et al., 1999), we encourage researchers to generate instruments conceptualized in nature for different populations.

Regarding the components of well-being, it would be desirable to develop updated studies on the conceptualization and assessment of psychological well-being, which is highly influenced by eudaimonia. In the case of physical and mental well-being, we encourage researchers to update or develop simple measures for the general population to assess general health and mental aspects. In the case of relational well-being, researchers might explore different types of relationships and ties (such as security, guidance and nurturance, among others), that can predict or contribute to an individual’s well-being.

Despite the fact that the components and aspects presented have been interrelated and have considered important sources and predictors of well-being, there are some measures that have not been conceptualized and developed with a focus on well-being, such as the case of the relational aspect of well-being, wherein correlations with other measures have contributed to an understanding of the relationship between social support and indices of positive well-being (Sarason et al., 1983). Nevertheless, there is little evidence of tools measuring relational aspects using a well-being approach. Thus, an important avenue for future research is the development of measures on the components of well-being less studied in research that address their direct relationships with well-being.

We encourage researchers to adopt other new types of methods for assessing well-being, such as qualitative and other mixed methodologies by taking advantage of technological advances in fields such as neuroscience; or in social media, with the use of sentiment analysis. We identified the Day Reconstruction Method as a method to assess *experiential well-being*, part of the subjective well-being approach. This method consists on repeatedly sampling individual´s affective reactions; individuals respond to questions about their feelings and their daily activities (Kahneman et al., 2004). We did not include it in our review since it is a method, not a scale. However, further research might explore new methods and tools that are free from the bias effects of memory, positivity or prejudice, considering the negative aspects of self-reported measures (Hox, Mass, & Brinkhuis, 2010; Mellor-Marsá et al., 2016), which have been predominantly used in past decades to measure well-being.

Additionally, we encourage researchers in other fields such as in management, marketing and others to develop studies and specific tools to provide knowledge on well-being according to their own perspectives and theories to advance and enrich literature. As stated earlier, our initial objective was to review the tools used to assess well-being in the general psychology and marketing literature; however, we identified a lack of studies on the topic of well-being in the marketing and consumer behavior literature, a void that could be explored further.

The present review has limitations that should be considered. First, we identified prevalent tools for assessing well-being from publications published between 1984 and 2017; however, it might be possible that certain measures were not found. Second, this general classification, which includes some of the main categories of well-being, may have limited the detailed analysis of each domain. Third, as research on the topic of well-being evolves, other components and branches will emerge that might be important to consider and incorporate into future studies.

Practical implications

It becomes critical for researchers to identify and understand the different layers and components of overall well-being as well as the methods and instruments that have been developed to assess these diverse aspects to either evaluate the tools for their proper use when measuring well-being as well as to recognize opportunities to develop new research processes and methods to advance the field.

Our study contributes to the literature by advancing a functional classification system that provides guidance for researchers and practitioners in psychology and other fields who are interested in the topic as well as in the assessment of well-being. Evidence shows a lack of clarity on the assessment of well-being due to a proliferation of tools in the area. The present review sheds light by explaining and decomposing the different layers and branches that compose well-being and the measures that assess them so that researchers might be able to identify these tools and select those that have a better fit to the objectives and requirements of their studies.

Governments and policymakers might also benefit from the present research since assessing levels of well-being in populations is critical to generating statistics and reports that reflect the way people live a positive and satisfying life. Thus, a guideline to the diversity of prevalent tools for measuring well-being might provide an important resource for generating this type of information.

Furthermore, this guideline may also be relevant to those interested in educating people by showing that well-being is something that can be cultivated and provides benefit by alleviating depression, anxiety and other mental issues that have increased over recent years (OECD, 2015). This shows that the assessment of well-being should be established as a critical and important element for governments, businesses, education, and communities.

Conclusions

Finally, we identified some of the prevalent scales used to measure well-being and its main branches over the last 30 years by proposing a seven-category classification to organize the variety of tools that we discovered throughout our literature review. This study offers an initial approach to a classification system for the different measures used to assess well-being and its components. Considering that boundaries between the different components of well-being are not as clear in the literature and therefore generate confusion in their conceptualization and measurement, we identified a gap for the synthesis of scales. Therefore, our main contribution is in the identification, organization and categorization of measurement scales through an understanding of well-being as a multi-dimensional construct, providing researchers and practitioners interested in the study of well-being with a guideline to the information and general recommendations for the accurate use of these distinct and diverse tools.

Chapter 3

Study 2: Bullying and Brands in Well-being: A social networks approach

Abstract

Interpersonal relationships are important in everyone´s life, because they become important means for achieving states of happiness and well-being. This becomes especially relevant in adolescence, when individuals develop their daily social and school activities to build and maintain relationships, especially with peers. Bullying is a form of violence, in which an individual abuse his or her power to humiliate or threat others and is considered to have negative implications on peoples’ well-being. Despite a vast body of literature in school bullying, to the best of the authors´ knowledge, this is the first empirical research conducted with the use of social networks techniques. These techniques provide a rich understanding of bullying since it enables the identification of critical positions individuals occupy socially. Also, in the consumer behavior field, there is scarce evidence on the role of brands in the association of bullying and well-being. Thus, the purpose of this study is to establish a direct relationship between bullying and brands by empirically examining a private school in Mexico to test the effect of bullying on students´ well-being and the role of brands in this relationship. Results indicate a negative effect of bullying on well-being, especially on both dimensions of happiness and connectedness. Also, we provide evidence by showing that individuals that 1) gave greater importance to brands and 2) were more accepted by their peers due to the use of the same brands, were significantly less likely to be high receptors of bullying; suggesting brands could serve as defense mechanisms for individuals against bullying, functioning as a safeguard to their well-being.

*Keywords: School bullying, adolescents, well-being, brands, brand relationships*

Introduction

A UNESCO report confirmed that bullying and school violence are major problems worldwide. They included data from 144 countries and regions, revealing that almost one in every three students (32%) reported being bullied by their peers at school at least once per month (UNESCO, 2019).

Bullying is considered a type of negative interpersonal relationship mainly associated with a dominant position or an abuse of power (Olweus, 1993; Juvonen & Graham, 2014). Bullies leverage their power to attack and/or humiliate victims (Juvonen & Graham, 2001). Thus, it remains an important topic for multiple fields because of the implications it has on well-being, especially for young people in school. Being bullied has been associated with severe health and emotional problems, such as low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression (Hawker & Boulton, 2000).

Bullying behaviors are mostly present in school. Schools act as an early context of socialization behavior (Wentzel, 1998; Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). These spaces allow individuals to interact with school personnel and mates. Brands are also immersed during socialization processes in school. Individuals began recognizing brand symbols and making social class status associations as early as 6 years of age (Belk, Bahn, & Mayer, 1982; Ji, 2002). Connections with brands become deeper as individuals age, especially in adolescence, where brands are seen for their symbolism of group membership (Chaplin & Roedder John, 2005). Possessions become important sources of identity formation and management (Belk, 1988).

In adolescence, brand status attitudes can be so strongly held that individuals privilege peers wearing fashion branded items, who wore those brands themselves to avoid peer rejection, the undesired self and teasing (Elliott & Leonard, 2004; Hogg & Banister, 2001). Williams and Littlefield (2018) found branded products were used to maintain social hierarchical structures and to exclude non-conforming students through violence. They identified a “circle of safety”, resulting from brand conformity or compliance to the norm, in which individuals embrace dominant brands in order to avoid bullying behavior.

Although the relationship between bullying and well-being has been studied (Cook et al., 2010; Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Juvonen et al., 2003), to the best of our knowledge, this is the first empirical research on bullying that tests its relationship with well-being using social networks techniques. Also, scarce research has explored the role of brands in this relationship, especially in adolescents, despite the growing literature in the consumer behavior field on brand relationships (Macinnis & Folkes, 2017). Thus, we contribute by providing evidence from a case study at a private school in Mexico, the effect of school bullying on adolescents´ well-being; we also contribute by establishing a direct relationship between brands and bullying; arguing that the use of brands creates a halo effect that shields and protects young individuals from being targets of high levels of bullying.

Conceptual Framework and Hypothesis Development

*Network Analysis of Social Structure*

Researchers in the field of social science have been concerned with some methodological issues that arise in the consumer behavior literature. One of the main problems they are concern with involves the relationship between individual behavior and social structure. That is, an individual´s decisions and the nature of the social networks in which individuals find themselves. To overcome this main issue, researchers have found the way to represent social structure properties when analyzing data. One promising approach has been the use of what is called “social network analysis”.

The study of social networks dates back to the 1930s with Jacob Moreno´s sociometry, a work in which he conceptualized the structures of small groups that produced patterns and interactions (Moreno, 1953). Social network techniques are useful to generate specific measures associated to individuals and/or pairs of individuals embedded in a network, to further develop hypothesis testing (Huitsing & Veenstra, 2012). Social network analysis has been used in different fields, such as sociology, anthropology, psychology, and others. However, in the consumer behavior literature research is scarce (Reingen et al., 1984).

A network is a set of agents or actors connected by a set of ties (Scott, 1988). These actors, also called “nodes” can be persons, organizations, concepts, as well as other elements. Ties connect pairs of actors, also called “dyads”. These pairs of actors can be directed (e.g. as in giving advice to someone) or undirected (e.g. as being physically close); also, they can be dichotomous (e.g. as if whether two people are friends or not) or valued (e.g. as measured on a scale, such as the strength of a friendship) (Borgatti & Foster, 2003). Thus, social network analysis enables to explain the patterns exhibited in the links of those social connections (Scott, 1988).

Social network analysis consists of several statistical and algebraic techniques (Knoke & Kuklinski, 1982). At the node level of analysis, one of the most popular and widely studied is centrality, which considers several properties that relate to the structural importance or prominence of a node (actor) in a network. Centrality is important because it shows who occupies critical positions in a network (Borgatti, Mehra, Brass, & Labianca, 2009). However, it is important to understand that different kinds of ties typically function differently. Thus, centrality in the “who has conflicts with whom” network has different implications for an actor than centrality in the “who trusts whom” network. (Borgatti & Foster, 2003).

There are several measures of centrality (Borgatti et al., 2009). The degree centrality is the most easily interpretable and popular measure. It indicates the relative importance of a node within the network and is defined as the count of the total number of connections linked to a node (Hansen, Shneiderman & Smith, 2011). Degree centrality has the advantage of easy identification of most influential nodes and can be interpreted in terms of the risk of a node for catching whatever is flowing through a network. For directed networks, two separate measures of degree centrality are defined, in-degree and out-degree. In-degree centrality is defined as the number of connections that point towards a node. Out-degree is the number of connections that originate at a node and point outward to other nodes (Srinivas & Velusamy, 2015).

Considering bullying is a critical and complex phenomenon that affects individuals and groups (Huitsing & Veenstra, 2012), the study of this phenomenon as a group process with a social networks approach becomes appropriate. This is an important contribution of our study.

*Adolescents´ interpersonal relationships and well-being*

Adolescence is a transitional period of growth and development between childhood and adulthood (Simmons & Blyth, 1987). The adolescent stage is characterized as a period of change, wherein individuals face several challenges during their social and school lives by experiencing social adjustments to their interpersonal relationships. It further reflects a growing psychological and emotional independence from adults and a corresponding dependence on peer relationships in which people establish and maintain positive perceptions of their selves (Wentzel, 1998). School life is one of the most important parts of a young individuals´ life, because of its significant role in the development of emotional health and well-being (Eccles et al., 1993).

Well-being refers to a state of feeling good and positive functioning (Huppert & So, 2013). Positive functioning not only considers the absence of psychological or behavioral problems, but also the presence of strengths and wellness (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). Although there are no universal definitions of well-being and other related terms (Coleman, 2009), numerous models have been proposed to assess it (Huppert & So, 2013). Seligman (2011) introduced the PERMA model, in which well-being is defined in terms of five domains: Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment. Kern, Benson, Steinberg, and Steinberg (2016) extended the PERMA model to adolescents by defining five positive characteristics in youth that contribute to the promotion of prosperity and may influence the PERMA domains in adulthood: Engagement, Perseverance, Optimism, Connectedness, and Happiness.

Interpersonal relationships are important predictors of happiness and well-being, because people enjoy spending time with others and relating with them, fulfilling needs for identity, affiliation, and recreation (Gable & Gosnell, 2011). Studies have found that happier people reported having more positive relationships with friends, family and romantic partners than those less happy (Diener & Seligman, 2002) and that people with close social ties are less likely to fall prey to stressful events, more likely to survive fatal illnesses and less vulnerable to premature death (Myers, 2000). Relationships in school are critical (Giordano, 2003). Evidence suggests that students having positive interpersonal relationships received more support from teachers and peers and thus report higher levels of well-being (Chu, Saucier, & Hafner, 2010). However, individuals having poor-quality relationships were less likely to obtain support (Demaray & Malecki, 2003), leading to loneliness (Woodhouse, Dykas, & Cassidy, 2012) and depression (Perlman & Peplau, 1981).

In this study, we focused in a well-being perspective considering adolescents spend a considerable amount of time in the classroom. In school, they socialize and interact with their classmates, teachers, and other staff members. Experiences in school are therefore key to understand how happy and satisfied students are, how connected to others they feel, and whether they enjoy positive mental and psychological health (OECD, 2017).

*Bullying at school*

Bullying is associated mainly with the abuse of power and maneuvering for a dominant position within a group (Juvonen & Graham, 2014; Olweus, 1993). This is enabled when a physically stronger or socially prominent person is allowed to abuse her or his power in order to threaten, humiliate, or intimidate others. It involves more than aggressions, implicating negative relationships and interactions between an aggressors and victims (Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Menesini & Salmivalli, 2017). Studies have shown that, during school, bullying is the most common form of violence (Nansel et al., 2001). Bullying behaviors peak during middle school years (i.e. 12-15 years) and tends to decrease by the end of high school (Hymel & Swearer, 2015).

Research has shown that group dynamics are important for understanding school bullying (Espelage, Holt, & Henkel, 2003; O´ Connel, Pepler, & Craig, 1999). Furthermore, bullying is a complex phenomenon that not only involves bullies and victims but also includes other roles. Thus, it can be regarded as a group process. Apart from the primary bullies that commit and propagate the abuse, there are students that assist them and reinforce them via complicity (Burns, Maycock, Cross, & Brown, 2008). Additionally, some students adopt roles of defenders by helping victims and intervening (Sainio, Veenstra, Huitsing, & Salmivalli, 2011). They can also act as outsiders and merely observe the bullying without intervening. This is often considered complicity (Huitsing & Veenstra, 2012).

Types of bullying have been classified as direct and indirect (Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, & Peltonen, 1988; Rivers & Smith, 1994). Direct confrontation involves physical aggression, threats, and name-calling. Indirect behavior is associated to relational manipulation. It can include rumor-spreading, internet shaming, and ostracism (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995).

Plenty of research has been accomplished to identify the different types of negative interactions, focusing on variables, such as gender and personality. In the case of gender, conventional wisdom implies that boys are more likely than girls to commit physical forms of bullying, specifically hitting, kicking, and shoving (Card, Stucky, Sawalani, & Little, 2008). Girls are also physically aggressive during bullying (Broidy et. al., 2003). Although girls are not considered to be the most physically aggressive, they do develop aggressive relational behaviors (Artz, 2005), including rumor-spreading, bad-mouthing,--- ostracism, and more (Juvonen & Graham, 2001).

Regarding personality trait differences, bullies dominate and execute control on peer behaviors (Pellegrini, Bartini, & Brooks, 1999), because they respond positively when asked about the importance of being influential, visible, and admired (Sijtsema, Veenstra, Lindenberg, & Salmivalli, 2009). However, victims are often considered anxious, submissive, insecure, and sensitive, and they often cry in response to aggression. There have been studies that suggested that this lack of confidence increased the risk of being bullied (Salmivalli & Isaacs, 2005).

*Bullying and its implications on students´ well-being*

Differences among bullies, victims, and bullies that are also victims have been shown to be related to well-being. Evidence has shown that bullies are assumed to have superior mental health, a lack of psychological stress, and fewer adjustment problems, mainly because of the social prestige they enjoy over their classmates (Juvonen, Graham, & Schuster, 2003). However, literature has also found that bullies are created by poor mental health, psychological stresses and poor adjustment (Rigby, 1996; Baldry, 2003).

Alternatively, victims of bullying are considered to have different psychological and physical problems, including depression, anxiety (Hawker & Boulton, 2000), headaches, stomachaches (Gini & Pozzoli, 2009), and academic difficulties (Nakamoto & Schwartz, 2010), which leads to further low well-being. They also suffer emotional distress and social marginalization (Juvonen et al., 2003). Bullies that are also victims are considered to be the most socially ostracized by their peers and most likely to display conduct problems. They are likely to be the least engaged in school, and they report elevated levels of depression and loneliness, which leads to lower levels of well-being (Juvonen et al., 2003).

Although researchers have addressed relationships between bullying and well-being suggesting that bullied individuals report lower levels of well-being (Sharp, 1995; Juvonen et al., 2003), to the best of our knowledge, this is the first study that tests this relationship using social networks techniques. Therefore, we expect the following:

H1: Individuals that receive more bullying (in-degree centrality) have lower levels of well-being.

The present study also aims to explore the role of brands in bullying, since brands are immersed in socialization processes of the young, in school. Thus, having an effect on bullying.

*Brand relationships in adolescence*

Consumer behavior research has suggested that consumers do not depend upon utilitarian functionality to make purchases. Instead, they do so because of symbolic meanings and self-identification (Elliot & Wattanasuwan, 1998; Roberts & Pettigrew, 2013). In adolescence, this reaches its height as individuals learn about the different symbolic meanings of goods (Gunter & Furnham, 1998) due to socialization processes (Belk, Bahn, & Mayer, 1982).

Belk (1988) identified four stages in which the functions of human development involved possessions: (1) the child distinguishes self from the environment, (2) the child distinguishes self from others, (3) adolescents and adults use possessions to manage their identities, and (4) possessions help old people to develop a sense of continuity and preparation for death. Stage three suggests adolescents use brands and products to construct, manage, preserve, improve and express their self-concepts (Sirgy, 1982). Young individuals often cite their possessions when asked to describe themselves, developing self-brand connections, which have been shown to increase with age as they view brands as being more connected with their self-concepts. These brand connections become stronger due to similarities in personalities, characteristics or reference group affiliation between self-concepts and brands (Chaplin & Roedder John, 2005; Ji, 2002; Swaminathan et al., 2007).

Also, emotional aspects are important since individuals who are emotionally attached to a brand show greater commitment to it (Holbrook & Hirschman, 1982; Thomson et al., 2005), promote a long-lasting relationship with that brand (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006) and enhance loyalty and love, particularly in the young (Park et al., 2006; Hwang & Kandampully, 2012).

Brands play a major role in young consumers´ lives (Hemar-Nicolas et al., 2015). Adolescents have shown to give more importance and loyalty to brands than adults since they avoid taking risks in products, especially in those associated to appearance, such as clothing, trainers, and other fashion items (Hogg, Bruce, & Hill, 1998; Zollo, 1999). Also, they tend to use these types of branded items to make social class status attributions (Dittmar, 2008; Belk, Bahn, & Mayer, 1982).

*Brands and group affiliation*

Brands also play an important role to signal group affiliation (Schultz, Kleine, & Kernan, 1989). Identities that are associated with brands can help consumers connect with others, reduce feelings of social exclusion, and strengthen their sense of belonging (Escalas & Bettman, 2005; Fournier, 1998). Thus, consumers might engage in sacrificing personally and financially for the sake of social well-being via the consumption of different products and brands (Mead et al., 2011).

Studies have explored the influence of peers, including friends and siblings (Elliot & Leonard, 2004; Pilgrim & Lawrence, 2001), usually starting as early as age 6 (McNeal, 1987). In adolescence, this influence becomes particularly significant as individuals socialize with their peers and learn about brands and evaluate products (Gunter & Furnham, 1998); especially when relating to symbolic goods, such as clothes and fashion items (Hogg, Bruce, & Hill, 1998).

Interactions with peers provide insights about brands, helping individuals to distinguish amongst brands and products that are peer-approved from those that are not (Jones & Glynn, 2019). Thus, adolescents focus on the adoption of specific brands that their peers use as a way to fit in a determined social group (Chaplin & Roedder John, 2005; Moses, 2000) and/or avoid peer rejection (Banerjee & Dittmar, 2008).

*Brands as a defense mechanism against school bullying*

Explored perceptions of product ownership and consumer stereotypes among young individuals have shown that product owners who were judged to be more successful were also more likely to be the subjects of aspiration (Achenreiner, 1997). Brand status attitudes can be so strongly held in adolescence that individuals privilege peers wearing fashion branded items, who wore those brands themselves to avoid peer rejection, the undesired self and teasing (Elliott & Leonard, 2004; Hogg & Banister, 2001). A qualitative study developed in the UK focused on the use of different brands of trainers, demonstrating that individuals having decent trainers appeared to be popular with their peers and fit into gangs and groups easily. The study also showed that exclusion behaviors could take place when adolescents lacked appropriate clothing and that they vocalized the desire to have branded trainers to use as a defense mechanism against bullying (Elliot & Leonard, 2004).

Recently, Williams and Littlefield (2018) found branded products were used to maintain social hierarchical structures and to exclude those non-conforming individuals through violence. Thus, we expect that adolescents will use brands not only to establish positive perceptions of their selves, but also as defense mechanisms to reduce their risks of being bullied and protect their well-being; proposing the following two hypotheses:

H2: Individuals that use the same brands as their peers, are less likely to be high receptors of bullying.

H3: Individuals that give more importance to brands are less likely to be high receptors of bullying.

Methodology

We developed a case study at a private school located in the northeastern region of Mexico. Monterrey is a major metropolitan city with a human development index similar to developed countries such as the USA. This private school is located in one of the wealthiest regions of the country. It has fewer students compared to other schools of the same level, around thirty students per grade. Students are from middle-class and upper-middle-class families.

*Sample*

Network questions were collected from 61 middle-school students at a private school located in a northern Mexico. In these schools, students normally remain with the same classmates from their pre-school years. Thus, this peer group is important, because most students form social ties longer than 6 years. Data were collected from 31 students in seventh grade (12-13 years) and 30 students in eighth grade (13-14 years). We studied a single school due to its own characteristics previously mentioned, that distinguish it from other private schools of the region.

*Procedure*

After parental consent was obtained, students completed an online survey using Qualtrics. Seventh-grade and eighth-grade students were divided into two groups per grade, giving us 7thA, 7THB, 8THA, and 8THB. Four continuous sessions of 30-40 minutes each were programmed during school time, so that each of the four groups could adequately answer the online survey. During each of the four sessions, two researchers supervised. They first provided a brief introduction with instructions, emphasizing that all information provided would be kept confidential from everyone, including parents and school officials. To further assure confidentiality, researchers did not interact with students or school personnel during the field work. Additionally, during the assignment, no other school members were present, owing to the sensitivity of the topic.

*Questionnaire: Demographics, dyadic Peer Nominations and scales*

Students responded to an online survey that was designed and applied via Qualtrics, with the following information:

* *Demographics:* Name,age, gender, grade, and classroom.
* *Dyadic peer nominations:* Students received a list of all classmates and were asked to nominate them for different bullying types of behaviors. These bullying behaviors were taken as reference from measures included in a report of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2017) about student well-being. The number of nominations was unlimited. From this, information was obtained regarding the relationship between each pair of students for each of the four classrooms (Veenstra et al., 2007). Questions such as “Please indicate from the following list who or which of your classmates have been made fun of you” were asked.
* *Well-Being scale:* The Engagement, Perseverance, Optimism, Connectedness, and Happiness (EPOCH) scale was applied to measure adolescent well-being. It has 20 items that apply a 5-point scale. Questions such as “When something good happens to me, I have people who I like to share the good news with,” and “I am optimistic about my future” were asked. From this, we calculated an overall well-being score for each participant. The global score and its dimensional summary statistics are presented in Table 1.
* *Questions on the use of brands:* We developed questions about the use of brands, such as “How important is for you to use branded products” in which participants rated their responses using a 3-point scale of “a lot”, “some” or “none”. For the questions, we calculated an indicator *(dummy)* variable coded as 1 if the participant answered “a lot”, and 0 if otherwise. Thus, the calculated variables only considered those having a higher perception of brand.

*Measures*

*Bullying intensity score:* To measure the intensity of bullying, we constructed a score at the dyadic level. We considered the prominence of each behavior and action included in the OECD report on students´ well-being (OECD, 2017), taken as a reference for the questions on bullying that included dyadic peer nominations. Bullying-related behaviors included given nicknames, made fun of, threatened, stolen or destroyed belongings, hit or pushed, spread rumors, and being excluded. Then, we assigned values from 1 to 3 according to the perceived levels of aggression based on our understanding from the literature on bullying. Given nicknames was rated as 1; made fun of was rated as 1; threatened was rated as 2; stolen or destroyed belongings was rated as 2; hit or pushed was rated as 3; spread rumors was rated as 2; and being excluded was rated as 2. Then, for each dyadic relationship, we obtained a bullying intensity score, summing the associated values for the seven questions. Thus, the higher the calculated score, the higher the bullying intensity.

*Bullying degree Centrality:* In network theory, centrality describes how close an actor (node) is to the center of a network. There are several measures of centrality (Borgatti et al., 2009). However, because we were interested in detecting the actors within the network who were most exposed to bullying, we employed the degree centrality, which is the most easily interpretable measure. It is a popularity measure, defined as the count of the total number of connections linked to a node (Hansen, Shneiderman & Smith, 2011). For directed networks, as in our case, we differentiated between in-degree centrality and out-degree centrality. In-degree centrality is defined as the number of connections that point towards a node. Out-degree is the number of connections that originate at a node and point outward to other nodes. Because we wanted to identify the actors who are recipients of bullying (by asking them to nominate their classmates for *receiving* different bullying types of behaviors), we estimated the in-degree centrality measure for each actor in the bullying network. Table 1 shows that the average in-degree centrality was 3.49.

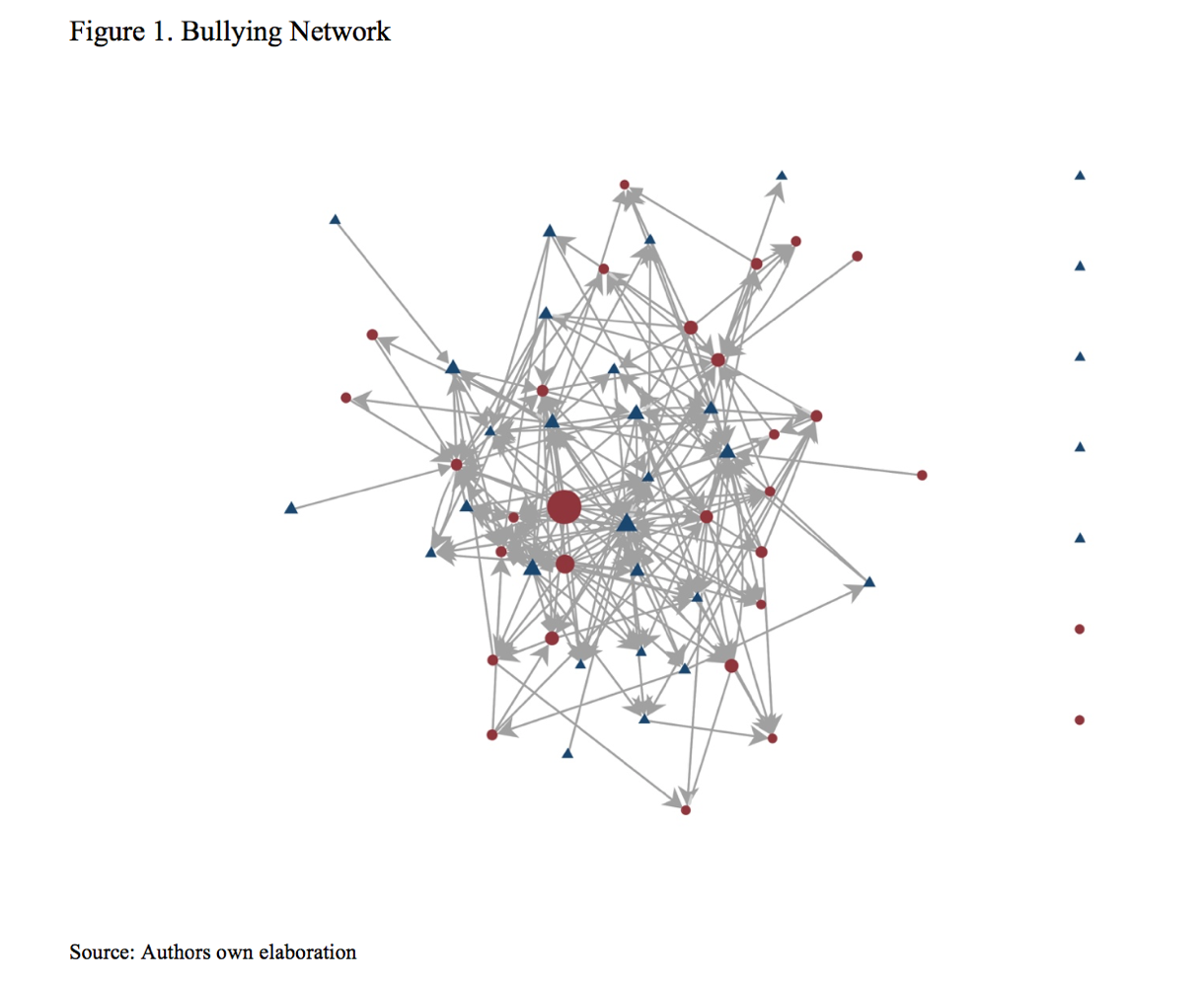
*High receptor of bullying:* On the basis of the in-degree centrality measure, we constructed a dummy variable to identify recipients of higher levels of bullying. The calculated variable was coded 1 if the in-degree centrality was above average (3.49) and 0 if otherwise.



Results

*Network Analysis*

The dataset was analyzed using STATA 14. Social network analysis was performed using the package *nwcommands*, as developed by Grund (2015). To further provide a qualitative interpretation of the bullying relationships, we plotted a network graph representing the structure of individuals’ bullying recipience. Figure 1 depicts 61 nodes (individuals) and 209 vertices (bullying relationships); circles represent females, whereas triangles represent males; and the symbol size is a function of the bullying intensity score. Thus, the larger the symbol, the more bullied the individual. Overall, the network density of 5.7% indicates that 209 of 3,660 possible bullying relationships were present. Notice that the most bullied actors (the larger symbols) were the most central to the network. We analyzed a single bullying network considering both seventh and eighth grade students know themselves and interact due to the characteristics of the school.



*Hypothesis Testing*

The hypotheses were tested using regression analysis at individual (node) levels to support them empirically. Owing to the nature of our dataset, we tested the first hypothesis (H1) using linear regression and the second hypothesis (H2) by means of logistic regression. Our results provide evidence supporting both.

Our first hypothesis (H1) stated that individuals that receive more bullying (in-degree centrality), have lower levels of well-being. We ran several regression models controlled by gender and using different measures of well-being as the dependent variable. Although model 1 uses the overall well-being score, models 2-6 use the five pillars of the well-being score. Table 2 shows the regression results.



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| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
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Table 2 shows the consistency across estimations. However, the results were not significant for the pillars of perseverance and engagement. In both cases, the calculated F statistic was close to zero, which suggests that the models were no better than the null model. Thus, the results of both models should be interpreted with caution. For the rest of the models, the F statistic suggests the models had enough predictive power. Thus, the adjusted R2 explained around 7.4% of the variance for the overall well-being model, but it increased to 19.1% for the happiness pillar.

Although the gender dummy variable (*female*) coefficients consistently showed a negative sign, suggesting that females reported lower levels of well-being than males, this is consistent with literature, which stated that girls were more likely to develop emotion dysregulation and were more prone to experience negative feelings than boys (Bender, Reinholdt-Dunne, Esbjørn, & Pons, 2012). However, the variable was not significant under any model. Thus, we could not report a significant difference across gender.[[1]](#footnote-1)

Regarding the in-degree centrality measure, we observed the expected negative coefficient in all models, except for that of the engagement pillar. This could be caused by the effect of some developmental strengths associated with school, such as motivation or resilience, which could have decreased the victimization experienced by bullied individuals (Donnon, 2010). This result indicates that the levels of received bullying affected the levels of almost all pillars of well-being. However, the coefficient having the highest magnitude corresponded to the happiness pillar (-0.092). Moreover, the coefficients were significant (at least at 5%) in all cases, except for pillars of perseverance and engagement. Although the overall score was significant, we found higher significance in models 2 (*connectedness*) and 5 (*happiness*), which allowed us to reject the null hypothesis at a 1% confidence. As a robustness check, we estimated models 1-6 using the overall bullying score as the independent variable. Thus, we obtained consistently negative coefficients for all pillars and similar significance results.[[2]](#footnote-2) Overall, these results indicated that being a receptor of bullying lowered the levels of well-being, especially those of happiness and connectedness. This is consistent with research suggesting that bullying has a strong correlation with school dissatisfaction, which then generated strong negative emotions in adolescents (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002). It also supports psychological research that emphasized the importance of positive relationships for health, well-being, and survival, considering social connections as a primary psychological need and an essential motivator for human development (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Seppala, Rossomando, & Doty, 2013).

Regarding our second and third hypothesis, which state that (H2) individuals that use the same brands as their peers are less likely to be high receptors of bullying and (H3) individuals that give more importance to brands are less likely to be high receptors of bullying, owing to the categorical nature of the variable (highly bullied or not), we used logistic regression analysis for testing, leveraging the general logit regression model:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| . | (1) |

The probability that Yi =1 is a function of those observations, and Xij, b1, and b2 are constants to be estimated. Here Yi is defined as

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| , |  |

and the functional form of Eq. (1) is the logistic function

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| , | (2) |

where Wi is a linear combination of independent variables and a set of coeﬃcients to be estimated.

Imagen que contiene objeto

Descripción generada automáticamente.

Thus, Wi is an index of an individual´s propensity to be a high receptor of bullying. We assume that there is a linear combination, Wi, with the independent variables that are positively related to the probability of being a high receptor of bullying, depending on the individual values of xi1, xi2, …, xiM. Therefore, in our model, Wi is a linear combination of the following independent variables:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| = | dummy variable. In model A, it takes the value of 1 if the individual feels accepted much when using the same brands than his/her friends and 0 if otherwise. In model B, it takes the value of 1 if the individual declares much brand importance and 0 if otherwise. |
| = | dummy variable. Gender (female = 1, male= 0). |

We estimate Eq. (2) using the maximum likelihood, because “it yields estimates that are consistent and asymptotically efficient” (Cramer, 2003). Estimation results for the set of parameters in models A and B are shown in Table 3.



|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  |  |  |  |

Table 3 shows the consistency across both models. The two models present similar significance (p-value < 0.01), explained variance (8.5%), predictive power (67.2%), and coefficient magnitudes. For the female variable, we found that coefficients consistently showed a negative sign. However, the variable was not significant. Regarding brand importance, we observed the expected negative sign in both models. This result suggests that individuals who declared greater importance of brands (model B), or those who felt greater peer acceptance through the use of the same brands (model A) were significantly less likely to be a high receptor of bullying.

Discussion

Our study contributes by testing the effect of bullying on the well-being of students from a private school in Mexico, showing bullying has a negative effect on adolescents´ well-being, especially on their happiness and connectedness levels. Also, we provide empirical evidence on the effect of brands on bullying. Over the past years, brands have been associated indirectly to bullying in literature (Elliott & Leonard, 2004). However, this study adds to theory by explicitly connecting brands and bullying, quantitatively, by showing that individuals that gave greater importance to brands and those who use the same brands as their peers, were significantly less likely to be high receptors of bullying. Arguably, the use of brands created a halo effect that shielded young individuals from being targets of high levels of bullying. In doing so, we contribute to the collection of well-being, consumer socialization through bullying and brand relationship theories. Results suggest that brands can be used for 1) maintaining a hierarchical structure among their friends and peers due to the symbolism of brands (Williams & Littlefield, 2018); considering children recognize brands and associate them with status since young ages (Belk et al., 1982) and 2) safeguarding their well-being by using brands as defense mechanisms against bullying.

School bullying has become a wide research topic due to the high rates of aggressions reported worldwide (Polanin & Vera, 2013) and due to its implications on psychological and physical well-being (Bosworth et al., 1999). However, it also becomes relevant to study and understand bullying by examining consumer socialization and the role of brands in it due to the increased exposure to brands and marketing messages in the young with technology and social media (Barber, 2013). The use of brands for peer acceptance, group membership and defense mechanisms against bullying might develop other negative behaviors in the young such as compulsive buying, consumerism, and materialism due to insecurity (Chan, 2013; Chaplin & Roedder John, 2007; Kasser et al., 2004). Thus, the importance of understanding the effect of brands in school bullying.

This study shows that socialization by peers not only develop positive outcomes, but also negative ones. Research on consumer behavior has shown that brands can serve as important agents for individuals for achieving a desired state or coping with feelings and life situations (Reimann, Nuñez & Castaño, 2017; Mead et al., 2011). Bullying is considered a form of violence and includes different types of aggressions (OECD, 2017). The present research adds to literature, expanding the typology of brand relationships, by testing the relationship between brands and bullying on school and showing that violence can be diminished when using the right brands. Students who don´t use the same brands as their peers and give little importance to brands have a greater probability to receive bullying (Williams & Littlefield, 2018).

Moreover, we tested the effect of bullying on overall well-being and its five components, according to the EPOCH scale, which measures adolescents´ well-being. Results indicate that being a receptor of bullying lowered the levels of well-being, especially on both pillars of happiness and connectedness. This is consistent with literature suggesting negative emotions are prevalent in bullied students, generating dissatisfaction (Verkuyten & Thijs, 2002) and feelings of dread, sadness, and depression (Bosworth et al., 1999). Connectedness refers to more than simply having people in your life, but feeling supported, loved, and valued by others; feeling close to others (Kern et al., 2016). This dimension also affects strongly the well-being of bullied teenagers, since positive relationships and social connections are crucial and primary sources for health and well-being (Seppala, Rossomando, & Doty, 2013), especially in adolescents (Gulland, 2006).

Furthermore, we contribute in methodology by measuring bullying with a social networks approach. Theory on social networks has been used in different fields (Scott, 1988). Social network analysis has been used in the bullying literature since researchers have understand bullying as a group process and a social structure (Huitsing & Veenstra, 2012; Sentse et al., 2014). Our research contributes to this literature by measuring bullying with social networks techniques in order to test its effect on adolescents´ well-being. This provides a rich understanding of the negative effects of bullying on the well-being of students embedded in a network by showing the different positions they occupy in a social structure (Scott, 1988). Additionally, we included an overall measurement of bullying focusing on the different types and modes of aggressions that were derived directly from participants (made fun of, threatened, stolen or destroyed belongings, hit or pushed, spread rumors, being excluded), as encouraged by Volk, Veenstra, and Espelage (2017); not only asking individuals to report if they have been receptors of bullying or not; thus, avoiding the generation of participant-researcher differences regarding the definitions of bullying, which can lead to measurement problems.

Further research

Some limitations should be considered before generalizing the findings reported in the present study. One important limitation is the sample size. For a case study is appropriate (Yin, 1994), however further research might consider including a bigger sample to benefit literature and advance our research. Also, the context of our study was in Mexico, an emerging country with high school bullying rates. Thus, it will be interesting to focus other studies in other regions and countries to explore differences.

Additionally, research might benefit in studying these relationships in other socioeconomical contexts (both private and public schools) to compare results and gain further insights on the role of wealth. Furthermore, research should replicate our study using students in groups of varying ages to compare levels of bullying, well-being, and other brand variables. Also, researchers might consider a deeper understanding on the levels of engagement on the well-being of bullied teenagers, since it appeared as a variable not affected, which might suggest a possibility that its enforcement might contribute to the overall well-being of bullied teenagers.

Also, it becomes relevant to address the tension that can be created by and associated to brands in school bullying. Thus, not only brands might focus in achieving status in these young consumers but also in maintaining a positive presence. Further research should consider a deeper understanding of this relationship of bullying and brands by exploring whether certain elements or characteristics of brands might contribute to bullying behaviors. Another avenue for further research is the examination of corporate responses to this phenomenon, as well as the influence of social media, where adolescents are most of their time seeking for information and socializing with peers (Barber, 2013); sentiment analysis might be useful to gain insights of brand-related bullying in social media.

Practical implications

This study offers implications for different areas, including psychology, education and consumer behavior. In the education and psychology fields, findings are important for school administrators (e.g., teachers, directors, coordinators, and psychologists) who need to understand these effects to implement, control, and evaluate anti-bullying programs. We collected data from one of the wealthiest private schools in Mexico, where teachers, coordinators, and directors were aware of the problems faced by their students and were committed to eradicating them. Owing to the low numbers of students in each grade, school officials knew each student. Thus, supervision and control were easily verified. However, by analyzing the data, we noticed bullying aggressions were affecting the entire network. Also, our study becomes important for psychologists, providing a broader understanding of bullying in the understanding that bullying behaviors can also be generated by other means, such as on the use of branded items, and not only due to physical characteristics or personality issues as literature on bullying has mainly focused.

Regarding the marketing and consumer behavior fields, it is important for brand managers to understand the role that brands play in teenagers´ lives since behaviors developed during young ages persist throughout adulthood (Connell, Brucks, & Nielsen, 2014). It becomes critical for them to be aware of the issues and challenges these young consumers are facing in their school lives and how are this related to their brands and marketing practices in order to address different concerns in the creation and management of brand relationships. Also, on the creation and orientation of brands for this segment that promote protection, friendship, kindness, happiness and inclusion, which can be of real aid for them during their transition from childhood to adulthood for safeguarding and enhancing their well-being.

Conclusions

Finally, we recommend building upon this paper in future studies to better understand this marketing phenomenon. We also encourage brand managers to develop communication strategies designed to preserve adolescents´ well-being since they are vulnerable consumers and future purchasers; to enhance and promote positive values associated with brands to generate inclusiveness, companionship, empathy, diversity, kindness, and thus, lower school violence. Brands can become allies and important agents for achieving happiness and well-being.

Chapter 4

Study 3: Adolescents in social media: Exploring brand-related cyberbullying and brand relationships

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to understand how adolescents relate to brands on social media; including social media brands. Also, we aim to explore and comprehend brand-related cyberbullying in these social media platforms. Twenty in-depth interviews were conducted among 12 to17-year-old adolescents (female and male) in Mexico, from upper-middle-class families and with high involvement in social media platforms (heavy users). Additionally, three in-depth interviews were developed with teachers of students interviewed, for triangulation. Findings highlight that 1) social media generates a compulsive drive in adolescents to search and share brand information, 2) social pressure and competition between adolescents in social media generates and intensifies brand-related cyberbullying, 3) girls are more likely than boys to generate and receive brand-related cyberbullying and 4) bullies are more likely to engage in conspicuous consumption in social media for exerting power over peers.

*Keywords: adolescents, social media, cyberbullying, brand-related cyberbullying, brand relationships, compulsive behavior*

Introduction

Adolescence is a vulnerable period of transition between childhood and adulthood, marked by change. This stage is critical since individuals are defining their own identities and at the same time, intending to relate successfully to others (Gulland, 2006). Interest for this age group has grown on the past decades for researchers since they have been reporting an increase in their spending power (Sommer, 2012), considered important decision-makers in family purchases (Gil et al., 2012), and due to their high exposure to social media (Barber, 2013) which makes them to be better informed about things.

These new developments present both challenges and opportunities for marketers for the creation of strong and positive relationships between their brands and these young, high potential consumers (Hendrix, 2014; Lee et al., 2011). Also, it becomes critical to build brand relationships with adolescents that cultivate and enhance their well-being due to the risks involved with the use of social media (Vanacker & Heider, 2012), such as dependence on online environments, alienation from real life, violence and bullying (Herring, 2008). Being connected to online platforms generates diverse behaviors relevant for consumption purposes. Evidence has shown that the intense use of social media can lead individuals to consume and behave in a more irrational way (Thoumrungroje, 2014), which can produce negative outcomes, such as compulsiveness and other negative behaviors (Islam et al., 2018).

Recent studies have found that more than a quarter of students are exposed to bullying behaviors (Polanin & Vera, 2013) or are victims of bullying (Lessne & Harmalkar, 2013). Cyberbullying is a form of bullying that uses information and communication technologies. It can include insults, harassment, trolling (e.g. commenting in an intentionally provocative way), and social exclusion in social media (Greene, 2000; Olweus, 1999; Todd, 2014). Recently, research has linked the use of brands to bullying due to evidence suggesting branded products are used to maintain social hierarchical structures and to exclude individuals that don´t conform to these norms through violence (Williams & Littlefield, 2018).

Although previous studies have been developed to understand relationships with brands, research on brand relationships in the young is scarce (Lopez & Rodriguez, 2018). Even more limited is research considering the influence of social media. Thus, the present research aims to contribute to literature by exploring how adolescents relate with brands in social media and how they relate with different social media platforms. We also attempt to understand how social media contributes and intensifies brand-related bullying. Thus, this research contributes to the consumer socialization and brand relationships literature by addressing cyberbullying and its association to brands on social media. The understanding of this behavior becomes relevant for brand managers to develop the proper communication strategies for this particular segment by addressing the need to promote messages of kindness and inclusion.

Conceptual framework

*Adolescents in social media*

Online environments and social media platforms are a prevalent part of adolescents’ lives. According to Pewinternet (2013), 95% of young individuals use internet at home, school and in other environments. They use social media for entertainment (Espinosa et al., 2015), socializing with friends and peers (Ahn, 2013), for identity development (Anderson & McCabe, 2012) and for seeking information (Chen & Hung, 2015). Additionally, due to the current COVID-19 pandemic, adolescents have increased their use in and out of classroom relying on social media for social connection and to seek information (Wiederhold, 2020).

Social media access generates the opportunity to build skills and attributes to function as technologically literate individuals (Jones & Glynn, 2019), fostering autonomy, creativity, innovation and interaction (Bolton et al., 2013). Evidence has also shown a more spontaneous self-disclosure and disinhibition (Brito, 2012). Additionally, evidence has shown social media also develops other negative behaviors, such as depression, anxiety and addiction (Keles, McCrae, & Grealish, 2020) and violence through online bullying, or cyberbullying (Rice et al., 2015). This has become also more prevalent due to the COVID-19 lockdown and research has provided evidence on the increase of online bullying behaviors (Das, Kim, & Karmakar, 2020). Furthermore, regarding brands and products, expertise gained by the use of digital technologies since young ages becomes a potential element for helping them when building brand relationships.

*Brand symbolism in adolescence*

Brands play a major role in young consumers´ lives (Hemar-Nicolas et al., 2015). Since young ages, individuals understand the meaning and symbolism that brands offer (Belk et al., 1984). They use products and brands for self-concept expression, thus, developing self-brand connections (Chaplin & Roedder John, 2005).

These becomes particularly relevant in adolescence, where individuals are shaping their identities (Simmons & Blyth, 1987) and material goods represent an “extended self” (Belk, 1988), playing a fundamental role in the construction, preservation, and improvement of their self-concepts (Sirgy, 1982). At these ages, individuals tend to use branded products since they are easily to recognize and because they serve as a status symbol (Wooten, 2006).

*Brand relationships in adolescence and social media*

Theory on brand-consumer relationship has been developed in recent decades (MacInnis & Folkes, 2017) since relationships with brands have been important to understand consumer behaviors. One of the first empirical studies in this domain is the seminal work conducted by Susan Fournier (1998). The study offers evidence from 3 three women on how they develop consumer-brand bonds during their lives, in three different life stages.

Nowadays, consumer´s relationships with brands are facilitated, developed, and intensified by social media (Confos & Davis, 2016; Hendrix, 2014; Lawlor et al., 2016; Nairn et al., 2008). Being digitally born and growing up with technology and social media represent new ways for individuals to find out, learn, and interact with brands (Barber, 2013). Online platforms have shifted the marketing landscape, by moving especially the youth, from being passive receptors of messages to active individuals that generate their own information and stories, creating larger-scale brand interaction (Gensler et al., 2013).

Online interactions help these young individuals to interpret symbolic meanings and visual representations of brands, facilitating the obtainment of brand knowledge and the development of brand affiliations, which are expected to determine the strength and quality of their brand relationships in their future (Jones & Glynn, 2019). Also, with the raise of technology, new and different online platforms are developed, offering a diversity of applications for adolescents to consume. These young consumers interact daily with these different platforms, thus developing attachment (Dwivedi et al., 2019) and strong bonds with them, as they do with other product-related brands.

The intense use of social media can lead individuals to consume in a more irrational manner and to increase their expenditures on branded products and luxury goods, engaging in conspicuous consumption practices (Wilcox & Stephen, 2013; Thoumrungroje, 2014). Conspicuous consumption becomes a motivational process in which individuals engage in order to improve their social standing by the use of goods that symbolize status for them and the surrounding others (Eastman, Goldsmith, & Flynn, 1999), transmit their self-image, and increase their self-esteem (Souiden, M´Saad, & Pons, 2011).

*Socialization with peers in social media*

The age of adolescence is the most crucial time in socialization (Niu, 2013). Socialization agents are sources of influence, transferring motivations, attitudes, norms, and behaviors. Peers become a strong influence in adolescence (Pilgrim & Lawrence, 2001). During these ages, individuals “learn” about the symbolic meaning of goods from their peers, taking their product favorites into account when evaluating goods on their own (Gunter & Furnham, 1998). Interactions with peers provide insights and brand conversations, helping them to distinguish amongst brands that are peer-approved from those that are not (Jones & Glynn, 2019). They also focus on the adoption of specific brands that their peers use as a way to fit in a determined social group (Chaplin & Roedder John, 2005; Moses, 2000) and/or avoid peer rejection (Banerjee & Dittmar, 2008).

Young consumers are frequently exposed to brand content shared by their friends and peers (Lawlor et al., 2016), and thus, develop plenty of opportunities to know and learn about their peers´ brand connections as part of their daily use of social media. This social online interaction creates a comparative behavior between individuals, affecting their consumption habits. Yue and Cheung (2000) found that comparison of possessions with peers and celebrities is frequent among adolescents. Comparisons are needed for self- reference, to examine capabilities, opinions and performance with respect to others (Villardefrancos & Otero-López, 2016). However, social comparison in social media represents a risk since it raises materialism (Islam et al., 2018) and negative emotions (Chou & Edge, 2012); materialism can be generated because users compare their possessions with other peers and media celebrities and negative emotions can arise since individuals are likely to perceive other social media users to be happier and having better lives.

These interaction and activity between peers and brands in social media, as well as the high visibility and self-presentation of its users (Chua & Chang, 2016) and the opportunity to act anonymously (Vanacker & Heider, 2012) can also lead users to interact in a negative way with peers, through cyberbullying. This happens when users exert violence over other users in the form of negative comments, gossips, spread of rumors, exclusion, among others; this can also occur due to the use or not use of certain products and brands, known as brand-related bullying.

*Cyberbullying and brand-related cyberbullying*

Bullying is associated with the abuse of power and maneuvering for a dominant position (Olweus, 1993). This is enabled when a physically stronger or socially prominent person abuses her or his power in order to threaten, humiliate, or intimidate others. The newest form of bullying studied in literature is cyberbullying, which involves behaviors such as texting hurtful messages, pictures or threats (Cook et al., 2010), and using social media platforms to bully (Rice et al., 2015). Cyberbullying permits aggressions reach beyond the classroom and playground and into the victim´s private space at home augmenting the power of the bully.

Types of bullying have been classified as direct and indirect (Lagerspetz, Björkqvist & Peltonen, 1988). Direct confrontation involves physical aggression, threats, and name-calling. Indirect behavior is associated to relational manipulation. It can include rumor-spreading, internet shaming, and ostracism (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). This relational bullying considered less obvious and is usually associated with female bullying (McCormac, 2014; Simmons, 2002).

Traditional bullying and cyberbullying frequently co-occur, thus, victims of traditional bullying are likely to be also victims in the cyberworld (Tokunaga, 2010). Research on cyberbullying has identified diverse behaviors (Kansara & Shekokar, 2015; Willard, 2007), such as: (1) harassment, refers to bullies sending offensive, rude and threatening messages, (2) faming, describes to an online fight, (3) exclusion, considered as the act of consciously singling and leaving an individual out; rejecting, (4) outing, refers to online posting of sensitive and private information about someone without its consent, (5) masquerading, considers the use of a fake identity to harass an individual anonymously, (6) fraping, refers to illegally logging into someone social network account, (7) dissing, the act of sharing or posting cruel information to damage an individual´s reputation of friendships with others, (8) trickery, refers to the act of gaining trust so that someone reveals secrets or information to share it publicly, (9) trolling, the act of provoking a response through the use of insults, (10) catfishing, when someone steals somebody´s online identity for negative purposes and (11) slandering, refers to hurting an individual by spreading bad rumors.

Evidence has shown girls are cyberbullied more frequent than boys (Ybarra & Mitchell, 2008), however research has also found no differences between gender in representations in cyberbullying (Tokunaga, 2010). Also, the anonymity and hidden environment of online platforms has pointed out to better suit the indirect and relational form of bullying, which is more associated to girls (Lagerspetz, Bjökqvist, & Peltonen, 1988).

One of the first studies in the consumer behavior literature implying a relationship between the use of brands and bullying behaviors in school was one developed by Elliot and Leonard (2004). This study provided evidence that exclusion behaviors can take place when students lacked the appropriate brands. It also showed individuals wanted to use brands in trainers as a protective mechanism against bullying behaviors, suggesting brands could be considered elements that could be used as defense mechanism, safeguarding their well-being.

Brand status attitudes can be so strongly held that individuals interact privileging peers wearing expensive fashion brands, who wore those brands themselves to avoid rejection, “teasing” or avoidance of the undesired self (Elliott & Leonard, 2004; Hogg & Banister, 2001). This avoidance of peer rejection serves to develop materialistic values among the young, particularly vulnerable to this peer influence (Banerjee & Dittmar, 2008), since the possession of branded products may be an aspect of “symbolic self-completion” where individuals who perceive themselves as lacking in a personal quality attempt to fill the gap using symbolic resources (Gollwitzer, Wicklund, & Hilton, 1982). Clothing is an important consumption good to signal in-group status among young consumers (Hogg, Bruce, & Hill, 1998), as well as food choices (Stead, McDermott, MacKintosh, & Adamson, 2011) and electronic devices (Wilska, 2003).

Recently, Williams and Littlefield (2018) provided evidence for the role of brands and branded products in bullying, by interviewing college students and using retrospective reflection of their experiences with bullying when younger. They found branded products were used to maintain social hierarchical structures and to exclude non-conforming students through violence. Also, they identified a “circle of safety”, resulting from brand conformity or compliance to the norm, in which individuals embrace dominant brands in order to avoid bullying behavior. Thus, the present study extends findings by providing evidence of brand-related bullying on social media, identifying some characteristics related to consumption and also by identifying brands associated to it.

Methodology

In order to explore how adolescents´ relate to brands, develop peer pressure and brand-related bullying behaviors in social media, we used a qualitative approach. To develop the study, twenty in-depth interviews were conducted among 12-17-year-old adolescents (male and female) from upper-middle-class families. Participants were also selected based on their high involvement in social media platforms (i.e., spend more than 4 hours a day on social media platforms, according to the Mexican Internet Association (AMIPCI 2017). The selection of the participants relied on theoretical purposeful sampling (Suri, 2011) and the selection of the final number of participants was guided by theoretical saturation criteria (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The interviews were conducted online in Monterrey, Mexico (a major metropolitan city with a human development index similar to developed countries such as the USA), which lasted between 60-75 minutes. Due to the high rates of covid-19 infections in the country during fieldwork, researchers used Zoom platform to develop the interviews, which were all recorded. In all cases, at least one parent allowed the interview to be carried out; thus, if the adolescent agreed to participate and a parent gave his/her consent, the interview was conducted.

Online communication provided some advantages, such as increased availability and greater flexibility during fieldwork. Being at home enabled participants to feel relaxed and safe in a familiar environment. Skills on the use of technology for the interviews did not represent a complication for our study since young individuals are “digital natives”, experts of the online environments, acting more skillfully than adults (Turkle, 2011). However, to overcome the limitation of not having the participants face-to-face, we followed recommendations for developing effective online in-depth interviews (Salmons, 2015) by encouraging participants to turn off other communications, to look for a “safe space” where they could talk privately and turn on their camera for a focused and synchronized real-time dialogue. Also, establishing a small talk to make a rapport at the beginning of each session was important by asking questions to participants about hobbies and interests in order to build trust and confidence. The profile of participants is shown in Table 1.



The data collection method used throughout the study was the in-depth interview guide, which asked adolescents questions regarding their use of social media, brands they relate to on social media, as well as peer influence and brand-related bullying on social media. Projective techniques were used to encourage participants to dialogue during the interviews (Campos et al., 2020). Adolescents were asked to visualize different individuals related to bullying in order to describe each one of them on aspects such as behaviors, use of social media, clothing and use of brands. Additionally, participants were asked to associate social media platforms (Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, WhatsApp and YouTube) to emotions and aspects that “come to mind first” to them; and also, to associate several emotions to brands; emotions selected based on literature on bullying (Juvonen & Graham, 2001; Olweus, 1993).

Furthermore, 3 in-depth interviews were developed online with teachers, in order to triangulate data (Creswell & Miller, 2000). These participants were teachers of students of the same ages as the adolescents interviewed in our study and of a private school in Monterrey, Mexico. Questions regarding students´ social media use, offline and online behaviors, as well as the use of brands and bullying were asked. Interviews lasted between 60-75 minutes. Table 2 shows the profile of participants.



An iterative process (Spiggle, 1994) was developed for the analysis of information that emerged on our interviews. Initially, notes were taken during the interviews. 323 pages result as an outcome of the verbatim transcripts that were read and reread; notes were also taken during this process. This enabled us to continue our analysis by identifying patterns, themes, subthemes and codes; categorizations were changed as new themes emerged from the data. Attributes and characteristics of the main categories were explored and recognized to integrate our results. When no new themes emerged, we finished analyzing data. Table 3 shows the lists of the initial and final themes of our research, both theoretical and emergent.



Findings

Since interviews were originally conducted in Spanish, we translated the quotes without altering the original meanings. Derived from the analysis, we provide a conceptualization of the phenomena under study as well as four propositions to be empirically tested for further research.

Relationships with brands on social media

Adolescents manifested a strong attachment to social media platforms. Even the younger participants reported spending much part of their day online, congruent with literature that states that the use of social media has dropped to 12-13 years old (Oberst et al., 2016). This provides adolescents the opportunity to frequently interact with brands. Participants reported being intensively and compulsively searching, looking and sharing brand information on social media; especially on appearance-related products. Table 4 shows the main categories mentioned for consumption on social media. One key finding is that some participants declared not following brands on social media, however, these participants showed an equal behavior with those others who declared to follow brands by reporting to be actively searching and looking for products. Furthermore, participants mentioned Instagram as the application they preferred to consume brands and products due to several characteristics of the platform such as the visual elements, ease of use, interactivity, flow and immediacy of information.



Additionally, this intensive brand interaction on social media facilitates the development of relationships between adolescents and brands. Participants mentioned some characteristics of these relationships. Table 5 reports both positive and negative characteristics of adolescents´ brand relationships. These positive and negative characteristics were classified in subdimensions that explain the type of relationship. Positive relationships: aspiration, convenience, entertainment, familiarity, friendship, inspiration, peer influence, support and trust and negative relationships: anger, antipathy, aversion and boredom.



Also, due to the daily interaction adolescents have with the different social media platforms, they reported relationships with brands of these online applications. Participants manifested relating with these intangible brands in a similar way as they do with other product-related brands. Table 6 reports some of the characteristics of these relationships mentioned for different social media brands, classified either positive or negative according to the connotation given by our participants during the interviews. Instagram is the platform that is perceived more positively, and Facebook is the application perceived more negatively, by adolescents.



Emotional bonds were found between adolescents and social media brands, showing evidence on how these relationships can be formed, maintained, consolidated and dissoluted as with other product-related brands.

*“This application (TikTok) for me is a waste of time, I have learned to tolerate it…this platform infested all, it´s annoying!” (Participant 12, age 15, male).*

*“(About Instagram) I don´t think I will get used to use another application because there was a time that Snapchat or Facebook were more used than Instagram, but I didn´t like them more than Instagram. I love Instagram” (Participant 18, age 17, female).*

Social pressure and competition on social media

Participants manifested to experience an atmosphere of pressure and competition on social media, which generated to develop certain shared and learned behaviors in order to obtain approval and acceptance in the form of gaining likes and followers: 1) Posting frequently with the use of hashtags and in specific days and hours, 2) Posting high-quality and good-looking pictures and videos, 3) Reflecting a positive and happy life and 4) Posting pictures in which they “look good” and with “cool” stuff. Table 7 shows the types of posts that adolescents share on social media. Girls vocalized how hard is to deal with judgements related to what they post and how they post, thus perceiving themselves to be under more pressure than boys.



*“We, as women, are judged a lot for how we dress or how we use makeup, or how we pose, what we post, how we talk, and men, the truth is that I don´t see much that they are treated in the same way” (Participant 11, age 15, female).*

*“They feel accepted and admired…and these applications depending on all the followers, they feel admired…they are always looking the number of friends they have, when you have more you are more popular, they are like feeding their own ego” (Participant 23, age 42).*

Brand-related Cyberbullying

Results show how the social pressure generated by social media has also provoked the intensification of negative behaviors in the form of cyberbullying, which is also related to consumption and brands. Due to the anonymity of people interacting online, these negative behaviors are easier to develop and thus, frequent.

1. Relationships between cyberbullying actors and brands

Participants described different roles that brands can play on cyberbullying as well as several behaviors they undergo on social media platforms related to these roles and consumption practices. The implicit knowledge of adolescents on social media (on the number of likes, the number of followers, among others) is the need to dominate the use and management of the online network; thus, having an influence on cyberbullying associated to consumption. Table 8 shows the diverse roles brands can play on cyberbullying, extending previous findings of Williams and Littlefield (2018) suggesting branded products can become protective elements against traditional bullying behaviors.



Also, participants related brands to some bullying characteristics and emotions, according to literature on bullying (Hawker & Boulton, 2000; Olweus, 1993). Interestingly, participants also related social media brands to bullying characteristics. Table 9 reports these brand associations.



*“Nike is a powerful brand. It sells you status, but also quality, and that is very powerful. Their sales are huge, and that also makes it a powerful brand. The number of people that follow Nike on social media is exorbitant, is people that maybe has only one pair of shoes, but they love them” (Participant 12, age 15, male).*

Participants reported some cyberbullying behaviors associated to brands and consumption. Harassment was reported as the most common form of cyberbullying associated with brands, in which adolescents comment negatively directly on social media platforms, primarily Instagram, about how they look and the things they wear. Table 10 shows the types of brand-related bullying behaviors present on social media. These brand-related cyberbullying behaviors became more evident on adolescents aged 15 to 17. Participants also mentioned some offline brand-bullying behaviors that are generated from what happens on social media, mostly associated with indirect bullying in the form of gossip. Moreover, girls both are more likely to generate these bullying behaviors associated with products and brands on social media and also are more likely to receive aggressions as well. Girls exhibited a strong desire for gossiping on social media about how the others look on their posts, regarding aspects of the types of clothes used and the brands the others wear. Girls showed to be very interested on details regarding appearance of others, “seeing things boys often don´t”; thus, using this information to generate offensive behaviors. Girls also reported being frequent targets of cyberbullying from women and men. Table 11 reports gender differences between brand-related cyberbullying.





1. Brand actions against cyberbullying

Participants manifested cyberbullying is bad and that consequences by social media platforms should be established, such as warnings, advices and temporal banning for those accounts generating aggressions. However, adolescents also manifested brands and businesses could be of aid to overcome cyberbullying by becoming allies through the development of movements and campaigns directed to users in social media.

*“Yes, brands can do something. They can teach what is good and what is bad, they can give hints so people can see. Finally, you do what brands do, or what the influencer does, so I feel they can teach good things or develop good messages so the ones that we see them can react to those messages” (Participant 10, age 15, female).*

*“With the power brands have on people, I think maybe they can help to change the way they think. A brand can do a lot, it can change the thinking of many people” (Participant 12, age 15, male).*

1. Cyberbullying towards self-branding

A key finding is participants described a large-scale bullying behavior associated with brands also present on social media which is bullying that is generated to personal branding, which involves individuals that develop a public image for commercial gain (Khamis et al., 2017), known as influencers, bloggers, reviewers, among others. Adolescents mentioned this cyberbullying can be generated due to 1) consumption, which is principally related to appearance, such as clothing, 2) personal characteristics, and for 3) supporting and/or promoting certain brands and products.

1. Consumption: *“…in bloggers it can be seen also (cyberbullying), like the jacket looks very ugly, or it is fake…you can immediately see that people start to criticize on social media” (Participant 17, age 16, male).*
2. Personal characteristics: *“I see (influencer name), well, they bully her a lot…she is very dumb, but they tell her very bad things. They threat her and attack her, and is very bad” (Participant 19, age 17, female).*
3. Supporting and/or promoting certain brands and products: *"Bloggers that have done reviews of brands like Shein, are receiving a lot of aggressions for supporting those brands and for not supporting others that are more sustainable” (Participant 20, age 17, female).*

Finally, based on our findings, we can state that social media generates a compulsive drive in adolescents for searching and sharing brand information. Also, that social pressure and competition on social media generates and intensifies brand-related cyberbullying, especially on girls. Moreover, that aggressors (bullies) can exert power through social media use, through conspicuous consumption on social media. Therefore, 4 propositions are presented:

Proposition 1: Social media generates a strong drive of compulsiveness in the search and share of brand information in adolescents.

Proposition 2: Social pressure and competition between adolescents on social media generates and intensifies brand-related cyberbullying.

Proposition 3: Women are more likely than men to generate and receive cyberbullying aggressions associated to consumption and brands on social media platforms; and are more susceptible and emotional affected to these behaviors than men.

Proposition 4: Bullies on social media are likely to engage in online conspicuous consumption for exerting power over other users.

Discussion

This paper contributes to the consumer socialization literature, brand relationships and social media literature. Based on existing literature, research on brand relationships is scarce in adolescents (Lopez & Rodriguez, 2018) and even more limited on social media. We address this gap by exploring how these young consumers relate to brands and brand-related bullying in social media. Moreover, we also explore social media platforms as brands, since these applications are heavily used by this particular segment, and thus, also develop relationships with them.

Social media platforms are an important part in adolescents´ lives because they spend much of their time online (Tuukkanen & Wilska, 2015). However, we found adolescents are becoming more pressured with the use of social media in search of acceptance, approval and self-esteem; by “ranking themselves” and evaluating their performance through the number of likes and reactions they receive. Also, the use of these platforms has developed a compulsive type of behavior in an urge to search and share brand information.

Also, results show how “intangible” brands, as those of social media platforms, can relate similarly with consumers as those other product-related brands (Fournier, 1998); i.e. Instagram is associated with power and status, such as Gucci, Prada, Nike, Jacquemus, among others. As technology advances, new social media platforms will emerge, competing for users and attention; and developing, maintaining, and breaking up with consumers as other product-related brands do; Facebook is now perceived by adolescents as boring, uninteresting and outdated; and Snapchat as out of dated, no longer “cool”.

Results indicated adolescents preferred the use of Instagram. This online platform makes them “reach” much more people, get to access to plenty of information about other users and brands in an immediate way, provide them with visual elements that are easier for them to process and ease of use; at a simple touch they get the possibility to explore, absorb and share brand information within seconds. For brands, these characteristics enable them to connect in a more emotional and strong way with consumers and the opportunity to build long-lasting and positive relationships (Carroll & Ahuvia, 2006). Also, being on social media represent important challenges for brands, to develop the most suitable communication messages and to stand out in an atmosphere full of competition and with less control; especially for this particular segment, with high influence and expertise.

Furthermore, we showed bullying associated with brands is present in different ways and is intensified in social media. Bullying in the form of physical threats is considered often as more severe than other aggressive behaviors such as exclusion, rejection or rumors (Crick & Grotpeter, 1995). However, according to our conversations with participants physical threats are painful, but momentary; and these other forms of aggressions that are not physical (prevalent on social media) are often long-lasting and severe. These behaviors can generate deeper negative psychological outcomes in the lives of this individuals, affecting their self-esteem and confidence for their future. Regarding brands, we extend Williams and Littlefield (2018) by showing victims of bullying not only use unbranded products, but also branded ones; but differences with the use of brands with bullies are that bullies are more likely to use “extravagant” items and to engage in conspicuous consumption on social media.

Additionally, we included opinions and perceptions of private school teachers, which showed similarities with those of our young participants. This enabled us to validate our findings and to provide a richer and profound understanding of the behaviors of adolescents (Creswell & Miller, 2000).

Further research

Based on our findings we identified several topics for further research. We encourage researchers to further develop studies on negative socialization on social media, through hate, aggressions and bullying, since we observed this type of behaviors are prevalent since very young ages with the early use of social media. Bullying and violence towards brands and personal branding such as influencers, reviewers and youtubers is something that should be addressed, since brands are immersed and may be prejudiced in these negative atmospheres. Thus, questions regarding how managers should “defend” their brands from online violence, how consumers perceive brands that are “violented” or “bullied”, how ewom affects this phenomenon and impact of cyberbullying on personal branding are topics that should be addressed.

Moreover, research might continue to explore and test this relationship between cyberbullying and brands through other types of methodologies such as netnographies in different social media platforms. Also, through neuroscience, to evaluate different tools that might gain insights on consumers´ neuronal activity and reaction. These will provide a deeper understanding of the behaviors generated by adolescents in online applications.

Also, other interesting future research concerning our findings is the emotionality and susceptibility of girls due to the pressure they experience on social media. This emotionality and the behaviors that were properly associated to girls (they see things boys don´t) might be explored deeply due to the effects they may have on consumption.

Another important avenue of research is to explore brand loyalty and brand love in adolescents since they are exposed to multiple products and brands on social media. Thus, it will be interesting to explore if these constructs are present, how, as well as the differences or similarities with adults.

Some limitations should be considered before generalizing the findings here described. One important limitation is that adolescents interviewed were from upper-middle-class families, thus future research might include adolescents from different economic backgrounds. Also, the context was an emerging country, Mexico, thus, future research should explore differences between countries or regions.

Practical implications

Our study has important implications for brand managers and businesses, since social media platforms have become important spaces were relationships with brands are developed since very young ages. It becomes a challenge for brands to position and to connect with customers, especially these young, expert, demanding and vulnerable consumers. Thus, brands and brand managers have to be conscious about brand-related bullying, take actions against it and avoid the promotion of these negative behaviors through the development and management of communication strategies targeted to this particular, vulnerable segment.

Our research shows the need of promoting messages of kindness, inclusion, and other positive elements to foster adolescents´ well-being; considering consumption is highly important for the development of positive emotions and well-being (Mogilner, Aaker, & Kamvar, 2012); especially for these young consumers.

Also, the study offers implications for parents and teachers due to the effect on the use of social media on young individuals. These online platforms can foster a strong attachment and in some cases addiction, having important implications for their mental and physical well-being. Bullying and negative socialization is also present in social media. Users feel more disinhibited and due to the anonymity of these online environments, it becomes easier to generate violence. Thus, parents and teachers must be aware of the consequences and outcomes of the use of social media; and to counteract its use by encouraging the promotion of offline activities and developing a strong dialogue and communication with these young individuals. In the case of schools, we encourage the promotion of information not only of cyberbullying, but also on social media. It becomes crucial for parents to understand the behaviors that might be developed through the use of these online environments.

Furthermore, the present research offers implications for developers of social media applications and brands, since new behaviors emerge as these global brands of social media incorporate new tools and designs for interactions. Thus, these worldwide used applications must be constantly aware of all these behaviors that emerge through social media, especially those that present a risk for the online community; and generate actions to prevent and manage these negative outcomes, in the form of campaigns, polices, and the promotion of positive messages.

Conclusions

Finally, we encourage the development of studies that continue to explore the way in which adolescents behave and relate to brands in social media. As this particular segment gains more influence in their families due to technology and their expertise, and as they are more connected to more people and brands due to social media, they represent a powerful segment and an important target for brands and businesses worldwide, which also have the responsibility to preserve and encourage their happiness and well-being.

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge and thank Dr. Nancy Ortiz Alvarado for the recruitment and development of 3 of the 20 interviews with adolescents. Also, we acknowledge and thank psychologist María Guadalupe Diaz Quintero for the validation of the interview guide and recruitment of the teachers.

Chapter 5

Conclusions

5.1 Contributions

The present research contributes to the well-being, consumer behavior and marketing literature, by adding knowledge on theory regarding brand relationships and online consumption patterns. The first study, which reviews how well-being has been assessed, contributes to theory, by generating an understanding, through a synthetization of information, on the diverse perspectives well-being has been conceptualized. Also, the study provides guidance not only for researchers, but also for managers, policy makers, governments, and those interested in the topic. The second study contributes mainly in methodology, since to our knowledge, is the first study that establishes a relationship between bullying, well-being and brands under a social networks approach. Additionally, it contributes to theory on consumer behavior by studying bullying and brands, since scarce research on the field has linked and studied these relationship (Elliot & Leonard, 2004; Williams & Littlefield, 2018).

The third study contributes to the well-being and consumer behavior theory, by exploring a recent phenomenon regarding online marketing and a particular segment that was not been considered as profitable and potential as others, but that in recent years has been of growing interest due to technology and reverse socialization processes (Kaur & Medury, 2011), in which teenagers and adolescents are developing as consumers with expertise and important members as value co-creators with brands and businesses (Kuhn & Eischen, 1997). The study has also important implications for practice, since marketing managers might be interested in the understanding of the specific needs of adolescents as consumers, as well as on how they interact with their brands, by acknowledging the potential of this segment and the impact of their business activities on their well-being, for the development of proper strategies.

Throughout the three studies presented in this research, we contribute to literature through the understanding of well-being and its relationship with brands and bullying, both on offline and online contexts, by identifying a void in the consumer behavior and marketing literature regarding studies that address this type of phenomenon; and by showing that brands can become important allies and partners for individuals during adolescence, dealing with them in this period where they experience complex situations, such as aggressions in the form of bullying. Thus, becoming a starting point for further development of research on the topic.

* 1. Conclusions

Broadly, results showed that well-being has been mostly measured through the use of scales, quantitatively; and also, through the different elements it composes, such as emotions, life satisfaction, spirituality, relationships, health, as well as others; resulting in a proliferation of scales and causing ambiguity and fuzziness; that bullying does has a negative effect on adolescents´ well-being and brands have an effect on this relationship and that social media generated and intensifies behaviors related to consumption.

Specifically, the first study reported a proliferation of scales measuring different aspects of well-being, that generate ambiguity and confusion, a focus on an occidental perspective on well-being and happiness due that the majority of scales were developed on the USA, and for and adult population. Also, the subjective approach of well-being has been more salient in literature than other well-being components and an overuse of Diener´s life satisfaction scale. Study 2 indicated that as higher the bullying is in a network, among teenagers, lower is their well-being, that teenagers that use the same brands as their peers are less likely to be high receptors of bullying and also, that teenagers that give more importance to brands are less likely to receive high levels of bullying aggressions. Finally, study 3 showed 1) social media generates a compulsive drive in adolescents to search and share brand information, 2) social pressure and competition between adolescents in social media generates and intensifies brand-related cyberbullying, 3) girls are more likely than boys to generate and receive brand-related cyberbullying and 4) bullies are more likely to engage in conspicuous consumption in social media for exerting power over peers.

* 1. Future work

The present research has limitations that must be taken in consideration. In the first study, the search strategy was limited to psychology journals, due to the interest in this field in the topic of well-being. However, as the well-being approach has recently been considered in the consumer behavior field, further research might explore how is well-being conceptualized and measured as an emerging topic in the area of marketing. Also, as new dimensions of well-being might emerge, it will be relevant to consider them for further study. Another limitation is regarding the context in which information was obtained and analyzed, specifically in the second and third study. Since studies were developed in Mexico, it will be relevant to consider the differences that might be present in other countries. Also, study two presents a case study, that might be of interest to further test in a larger sample.

Additionally, the three studies presented advance research and recognize a potential and relevant stream in literature by considering interpersonal relationships as important sources and predictors of overall well-being and by relating this to a nowadays growing stream on the consumer behavior literature, of brand relationships (Fournier, 1998; Fetscherin & Heinrich, 2015). These relationship raises questions of interest for researchers and for marketing professionals, such as if brands might not only develop and produce positive relationships with its consumers, but if also these brands might contribute significantly to their happiness and well-being throughout their different life stages. As well, as if brands might also develop negative emotions and relationships that might produce low levels of happiness and well-being in individuals. Also, it will be relevant to explore brand relationships in online and offline experiences, as well as in communication strategies and activities, with a well-being approach.

APPENDIXES

Guía de Entrevista/ Adolescentes

Segmento: Adolescentes, hombres o mujeres, de 12 a 17 años de clase media-alta, y que además utilizan redes sociales.

Bienvenida

* Rapport
* Instrucciones: Dar a conocer el objetivo del estudio, autorización para grabar la entrevista, anonimato y confidencialidad, dudas, consentimiento para continuar con la entrevista.

Social media

1. ¿Cuántos dispositivos electrónicos tienen en casa? (celular, tablet, pc, laptop) ¿Hay alguno que es tuyo? ¿Qué solo tú lo uses?
2. ¿Utilizas redes sociales? ¿Cuáles? ¿Desde cuándo? ¿Cuál es tu preferida? ¿Por qué?
3. Tú, ¿Publicas cosas? ¿Qué es lo que generalmente publicas? (i.e. hay personas que publican naturaleza, comida, lugares, personas) ¿Cuál es el “mejor” momento para subir algo a una plataforma y generar más likes/reacciones de personas?
4. ¿Cuál ha sido la publicación que MÁS likes tuvo? ¿La recuerdas? ¿De qué era? ¿Por qué consideras que tuvo tanto like? ¿Cómo te sentiste?
5. ¿Qué sientes cuando te dan “likes”? ¿Alguna vez te ha pasado que subes una publicación y no tenga muchos likes? ¿Qué has sentido? ¿Qué ocasión fue? ¿La recuerdas? ¿Me puedes contar un poco más al respecto?
6. ¿Le tienes miedo a algo? ¿A qué?

Brands and social media

1. ¿Cómo te “enteras” de las marcas? ¿Cómo te “enteras” de los productos más nuevos?
2. ¿Sigues marcas en redes sociales? ¿Cómo cuáles? ¿Qué es lo que te hace seguir a una marca? (Ejemplo, marca favorita, marca que les gusta a mis amigos, marca que me gusta el contenido, número de seguidores etc.)

* ¿Todas las marcas que sigues son marcas que te gustan?
* ¿Todas las marcas que sigues son marcas que has comprado? Las que no has comprado… ¿Por qué no las has comprado? ¿Piensas llegar a comprarlas?
* ¿Has seguido marcas por recomendación de alguien? ¿De quien? ¿Cuáles marcas? ¿De qué categoría de productos son? ¿Las has comprado?

1. ¿Cuáles categorías de productos sigues más en redes sociales?
2. ¿En cuál plataforma te gusta más “ver” marcas? o ¿Cuáles? ¿Por qué?
3. ¿Por qué dejarías de seguir una marca? ¿Alguna experiencia negativa?

Social consumption and social media

1. ¿Tus amigos y/o compañeros te “avisan” de que algo les gusta para que tú lo veas? ¿De qué forma lo hacen? ¿Cómo les “avisas” tú que algo te gusta? ¿Me puedes contar alguna anécdota de marca que has seguido de esta manera? ¿Se dan cuenta tus amigos o compañeros si finalmente compras algo de lo que te enseñaron? ¿Qué te dicen (si lo compraste o no lo compraste)?
2. ¿Sigues cuentas de influencers, bloggers, etc? ¿Qué es lo que hace que las o los sigas?

Brand-related bullying and social media

1. ¿Crees que el uso de ciertas marcas ayuda a que te lleves con tus amigos, compañeros y en general con la gente? ¿Por qué? ¿Alguna vez te han hecho sentir mal por no tener ciertas cosas? ¿Sabes de gente que sí le ha pasado esto?
2. ¿Has sabido de alguien a quien le hayan hecho bullying en redes sociales?
3. ¿Tú porque crees que bullean en redes sociales? ¿Más hombres ó mujeres?
4. PROYECTIVA. Vamos a hacer un ejercicio. Imaginemos a alguien a quien no le hacen nada de bullying (¿Cómo es esa persona?, ¿Cómo se viste?, ¿Cómo se comporta en redes sociales? ¿Qué marcas usa?). Ahora, imaginemos a alguien a quien le hacen bullying (¿Cómo es esa persona?, ¿Cómo se viste?, ¿Cómo se comporta en redes sociales? ¿Qué marcas usa?) ¿Alguien que bullea?
5. ¿Qué opinas sobre las personas que publican o hacen comentarios ofensivos en redes sociales? ¿Cuál crees que sería la consecuencia que se deba aplicar en este tipo de casos?

Interview: Participant 12

M: Cuantos dispositivos electrónicos tienen en tu casa?

P. 12: Bueno están…aproximadamente 8

M: Y de esos 8, hay alguno que sea tuyo? Que uses nada más solo tú

P. 12: Si, mi celular

M: Ok. ¿Utilizas tú redes sociales?

P.12: Si

M: Si. Cuáles?

P.12: Si, Instagram y WhatsApp

M: Entonces tienes IG y WhatsApp. Más o menos recuerdas desde cuando las manejas?

P.12: Instagram ya tengo un año o dos años. WhatsApp desde sexto.

M: Ok. Tienes más con WhatsApp?

P.12: Sí

M: Y ¿cuál de esas dos es tu preferida?

P.12: Ammm. Se me hace que WhatsApp me gusta más

M: Te gusta más que Instagram, por qué?

P.12: Más que nada porque ya estoy más familiarizado con esa aplicación, como tengo más tiempo con esa app de WhatsApp, ya sé más cosas sobre WhatsApp, ya sé como esto como se maneja lo otro, o sea yo ya sé si quiero hacer llamada con alguien ya sé cuál es la capacidad límite de las personas que puedo meter a esa llamada. Y también este siento que el sistema de mensajes esta my sencillo y muy fácil de usar.

M: En tus redes sociales, ¿Tú publicas cosas?

P.12: Instagram ya no. Si llegué a publicar un par de veces pero ya no. Más que nada lo uso para ver, ver y ver, y WhatsApp si lo uso…

M: Ahorita dijiste que antes sí publicabas cosas y ahorita ya no tanto, ¿por qué?

P.12: Amm no sé como que se me hizo, no para qué? Para qué público? entonces por así decirlo no pierdo mi tiempo en andar publicando y ya está bien. Además que flojera andar publique y publique y andarte pegado a Instagram cuando puedes estar haciendo muchas otras cosas.

M: Ok. Por ejemplo de lo que tú publicabas antes, que era lo que publicabas? ¿Qué es lo que más publicabas tú?

P.12: Eran fotos mías

M: ¿Fotos tuyas?

P.12: Sí

M: Y por ejemplo esto que dices que hay un chorro de gente subiendo cosas y publica y publica y publica, ¿Como que hace esa gente? ¿Por qué lo hace?

P.12: Eh no sé, la verdad si siento que si ganan muchos likes que uy mira saque un chorro de likes. Pero si no tienen, como que equis, no hay falla

M: Ok, ¿No les importa?

P.12: Si no tienen muchos likes no les importa y si tienen muchos likes son como que sí.

M: ¿Tú te acuerdas de lo que tú has subido crees que alguna publicación tuya tuvo muchos likes?

P.12: No

M: Cómo cuantos serian los likes que tú identificas que alguien tiene “muchos” likes?

P.12: Promedio por ahí 500, 700, alrededor de eso

M: Y a ti… ¿Te interesa como cuantos likes recibes o cuantas reacciones le dan a una foto o una historia?

P.12: No, me da igual

M: ¿Te gustaría?

P.12: No, no es algo en lo que este muy metido. Como no estoy muy metido en esta red no me interesa mucho tener los likes o las reacciones que sean.

M: Ahora dime tú …¿Cómo te enteras de las marcas?

P.12: Anuncios en Youtube

M: Ah ¿usas también Youtube entonces?

P.12: Ah sí, es más como de entretenimiento, yo nada más la veo. Yo uso Youtube más que nada ahorita en la cuarentena la estoy usando más. Y si me llegan muchos anuncios de eso, también en videojuegos que yo tengo este salen muchos anuncios y también en Instagram me salen anuncios de Adidas o de audífonos o de boletos de viajes. Como de vez en cuando lo uso ahí si me salen anuncios de todas esas cosas.

M: Y tu por ejemplo, ¿sigues marcas?

P.12: Te suscribes a la marca y no, no que yo sepa no. No estoy suscrito ni sigo a ninguna.

M: ¿Y eso por qué? Hay alguna razón?...por la que no la sigas

P.12: No, no hay razón. Simplemente para que sigo a la marca?

M: Ok

P.12: Si de todos modos me salen los anuncios, si de todos modos me entero de todo lo que está pasando ahí entonces para que lo sigo?

M: Ok, pero por ejemplo dices que como quiera te están avisando, ¿eso te gusta o no?

P.12: Ammm. Meeh de repente si me molesta porque digo Youtube ahorita que hubo una actualización que te ponen dos anuncios en vez de uno. Entonces eso si me molesta bastante porque luego no puedes saltarte los anuncios, y me lo tengo que chutar todo para seguir viendo lo que estoy viendo.

M: Y por ejemplo ya cuando estas ahí en las redes sociales osea si hay marcas que ves?

P.12: Sí

M: Cómo cuales marcas?

P.12: Nike, Adidas, que más, de repente me salen de esas marcas prestigio de Prada, Gucci y si la verdad yo digo mucho dinero, pero si esta bonito. Hay un par de modelos que si me gustan.

M: Ok, y no has pensado en algún punto seguirlos?

P.12: así si

M: Y hay algunas que has identificado que dices como que esta padre el contenido?

P.12: Hmm se me hace que no…nada más digo ah que bonito. Pero hasta ahí. No es como que digo todo el contenido que me llega esta muy bueno, déjame seguirlo.

M: Ni con tus marcas…¿Tienes alguna marca favorita?

P.12: No

M: Osea favorita no?

P.12: Hay muchas que me gustan

M: Ok

P.12: pero así favorita favorita no tengo

M: ¿Cómo cuales te gustan?

P.12: Hay una marca de audífonos que me gusta muchísimo, que se llama xxx. La caja es está

M: ¿Y esa marca te gusta?

P.12: Si, me gusta bastante

M: ¿Alguna o otra?

P.12: Ah otra marca que me gusta mucho IKEA

M: Aja si

P.12: Ahh, Motorola. Los celulares Motorola me gustan bastante. También esta… Como se llama Lenovo, que es parte del mismo Motorola, me gusta muchísimo. Y creo que… tengo ropa Adidas, tengo ropa un poquito de todo y la verdad lo que tengo…. Ah también tengo un desodorante que me gusta mucho es Rexona y creo que ya.

M: Oye y de las marcas que me dijiste ahorita algunas, has comprado algo de todas esas marcas? O hay cosas que digas me gusta mucho pero pues no lo he comprado todavía?

P.12: pero yo la verdad, si digo están muy bonitas, si me las quisiera comprar perooo están muy caras. Entonces por ese tema yo digo mejor no, mejor me lo gasto en otra cosa o en algo más económico.

M: ¿Te ha pasado que a lo mejor algún amigo te recomendó, te dijo de cierta marca y te fuiste ahí a buscar…te ha pasado algo de eso?

P.12: No, nadie.

M: Y por ejemplo de los tipos de productos que te gustan y que de repente te salen ahí en las redes sociales, cuales serian? Me dijiste ropa, tipo Adidas, Nike…que más te sale? ¿Que otra cosa?

P.12: Me sale también marcas de audífonos, creo que también me salen computadoras de repente me salen laptops y esas cosas y creo que y ya. Me sale mayormente ropa, este de repente me salen audífonos y de repente las computadoras pero ya a lo mucho

M: Como de tecnología?

P.12: Si, si

M: Oye y entonces ya sé que no sigues marcas pero te ha pasado alguna vez como que alguna marca ya no te gusta y ya no la ves?

P.12: Si, de hecho me paso. Había una marca que se llama Supra…Y no sé de repente los modelos me dejaron de gustar, se me hacían muy, muy toscos, el diseño. Y simplemente me dejaron de gustar. No fue como que ay hizo esto la marca o daño su prestigio o lo que sea pero perdí el gusto por ese diseño y así, y lo deje de comprar y ya

M: Ok alguna otra experiencia que tengas? Que te acuerdes?

P.12: No, nada más la de Supra

M: ¿Tú sabes si la gente de tu edad, tus amigos o compañeros como se avisan en las redes sociales que algo les gusta?

P.12: Pues ponen cosas de esa marca, ponen en post o en las stories…nada más que pongan en stories o que suban algo diciendo que les gusta este producto.

M: ¿Tú has hecho algo así o no?

P.12: No

M: ¿Y si llegan a comprar las cosas que los mismos amigos ahí como que comparten?

P.12: Yo no he visto, pero no dudo que haya pasado ni dudo que llegue a pasar.

M: Ok, ¿por qué?

P.12: Porque así funciona esto, como las personas están muy metidas en este rollo ven las cosas y dicen oh que bonito deja checo el precio o checo la marca a ver qué otras cosas tienen. Y como tu dijiste yo no hago eso, pero no dudo que la otra gente si lo haga. Qué bonito contenido tiene esta marca que bonitos diseños y así y no dudo que por una promoción que hizo una persona, otra persona se haya comprado productos de esa marca o de ese estilo.

M: …y tú qué crees que la gente que lo “promocionó” se da cuenta? Y dicen mira si se compro los tenis que subí?

P.12: Así funciona ese rollo de la mercadotecnia eso de los post y también más que nada tiene que ver con los gustos de la otra gente. A lo mejor se compró ese producto y se tomó una foto con ese producto y la posteo y esa persona que la compró primero vio que ahora la está promocionando y así se da cuenta de que lo promocionó.

M: Y tu por ejemplo has odio de los influencers? Sigues o no sigues?

P.12: Si, a un par.

M: ¿Como a quienes? A ver si los conozco…

P.12: Luisito comunica, un vato q juega video juegos y es muy reconocido, este xxx, quien más? No son tanto influencers, son youtubers pero son muy famosos entonces siento que de alguna manera se vuelven influencers. También esta quien más? Hooka no sé si lo conozcas, también es amigo de Luisito. Xxx también lo sigo, ehh quien más? No sé quien más. De los que me acuerdo ahorita hasta ahí.

M: Ok. Y por ejemplo ¿Qué hace que tú los sigas?

P.12: Son diferentes cosas

M: a ver, ¿cuáles?

P.12: Este porque esa gente que yo he visto me cae bien. Se ve que son buenas personas. Me gusta el contenido que suben. Tratan de variar el contenido, la diversidad de contenido también es otra cosa. Obviamente me gusta lo que hacen ellos, son parte de mis gustos y así. Y creo que también porque disfruto ver, lo disfruto mucho. A lo mejor muchos lo ven como pérdida de tiempo porque estoy perdiendo tiempo viendo videos o viendo stories, pero yo la verdad disfruto mucho ver estas cosas.

M: ¿Tú crees que el uso de ciertas marcas les ayude a ciertos chavos como a llevarse o a integrarse en ciertos grupos.

P.12: Sí, la verdad sí.

M: ¿Cómo se da esto o que piensas de esto?

P.12: Una persona quiere meterse a un grupo, por ejemplo algo que yo veo mucho con las personas populares, mis compañeros. Una persona nueva se quiere integrar y yo me entero que les dicen a ellos que tienen que hacer ciertas cosas, que tienen que comprar cierta cosa, que tienen que tener un estilo de ese tipo o vestirse de alguna manera o seguir algún rumbo, y de alguna manera esas personas sí lo hacen para encajar en ese grupo entonces tú ves que la mayoría del tiempo dicen mira me gustó mucho por qué no te lo compras, si me lo voy a comprar y a la semana siguiente ya tienen ese producto. Siento que lo hacen por querer estar en ese grupo o para poder encajar.

M: y tú qué crees que esto también en las redes sociales…también influye las redes sociales en eso?

P.12: Si, si mucho como que para poder entrar a un grupo tienen que influir las redes sociales en eso. Le dicen tienes que tener tantos followers, tantos likes en promedio, tienes que tener cierto tipo de fotos y bla bla bla, y esta persona de cierta manera lo logra, entonces siento que también influye como te va en las redes sociales para ver cómo te va en este grupo.

M: ¿Las marcas?

P.12: Sí, las marcas que usas, las marcas que te gustan…todo eso influye si entras a ese grupo en especifico o no

M: ¿y tú crees que luego hacen sentir mal por no tener esas marcas o por no tener esa popularidad en redes sociales?

P.12: Sí, siento que dicen no tienes esta marca entonces yo y mis amigos te vamos a desprestigiar a ti. Entonces como a lo mejor echan un chisme o lo que sea, y la hacen sentir mal o lo que sea. Entonces si siento que es algo muy complicado, siento que es un tema que no me gusta a mí en lo personal porque no tienes que cambiar la forma de cómo eres por entrar a un grupo y si lo haces simplemente te estás cambiando por una felicidad temporal. Sí siento que es triste eso, pero es su decisión, no me meto mucho en ese rollo.

M: ahorita que hablabas de desprestigiar, ¿cómo es que desprestigian? O sea como le hacen para desprestigiar a alguien? De que maneras lo hacen?

P.12: Supongo que cyberbullying, o sea les dicen de que comentarios negativos, está feo, tu ropa está horrible, no me gusta esa foto, voy a decirle a todos mis amigos que te dejen de seguir y así. Y luego como a esa gente le importa mucho ese prestigio que quieren tener, si reducen ese prestigio como que los hacen sentir peor, y así la otra persona que lo que quería esa desprestigiar a esa persona pues consiguió lo que quería que era desprestigiarla.

M: ahora quiero que me digas, sabes lo que es el bullying de hecho salió el tema del cyberbullying, ¿Tú por qué crees que la gente bulea en redes sociales?

P.12: para conseguir que la otra gente se ponga de cierta forma o que se sienta de cierta forma para que la otra persona que lo buleo consiga cierta satisfacción, no sé, por hacerle eso a esa persona. Siento que está un tanto enfermo eso, que como consigues cierta satisfacción por poner triste o desprestigiar de cierta forma a una persona. Ese rollo no me gusta nada, yo procuro apoyar a la gente que … y como procuro hacer eso si otra gente trata de .. Yo obviamente como buen amigo que yo quiero ser de esa persona, pues yo lo defiendo o trato de decirle consejos para que no se ponga de esa manera, para que así la otra persona que lo quiere desprestigiar o hacer sentir mal pues no lo haga y pues así se enoje o el sea el que se sienta mal, por no hacer sentir mal a esa persona, más que nada sentiría como que le sale el tiro por la culata.

M: ¿Y tú crees que en redes sociales bulean más los niños o las niñas?

P.12: siento que las niñas, las niñas bulean más en redes sociales y los niños más en persona. Porque como se ha hecho la idea de que las niñas simplemente se secretean o inventan chismes para atacar a esa persona y no se atacan directamente, entonces siento que como esto de las redes sociales se generó y se globalizó totalmente es como la manera más directa de atacar a esa persona y como las redes sociales aceleran mucho pasarte mensajes o así entonces el crear chismes o lo que sea se hace todavía más rápido. Y yo digo obviamente que no siempre esta así, porque digo hay mujeres que también bulean a otras mujeres personalmente pero lo que más se da, o lo que yo he visto que más se da es que las mujeres bulean más este por el medio digital que por el medio personal.

M: La siguiente pregunta va a ser muy general, puedes decirme lo que se te venga a la mente, tú le tienes miedo a algo?

P.12: Sí

M: ¿A qué?

P.12: Sí, es un miedo muy extraño el que yo tengo. Tengo varios. Miedo a la oscuridad, no es que me da miedo, miedo, miedo, siento como raro, siento como que alguien me está viendo o me está siguiendo, es un miedo muy extraño un sentimiento muy extraño ese que siento cuando estoy en la oscuridad, pero obviamente siento que no soy el único que siente eso. Por ejemplo cuando yo estoy en las escaleras y ya soy el ultimo en subirme y tengo que apagar las luces, yo por lo general prendo la lámpara de mi celular y me lo pongo en la espalda y como yo tengo la vista para enfrente veo todo lo que esta y como a tras tengo la luz sé que nada me esta siguiendo…pero cuando tengo las manos ocupadas o así, me lo tengo que chutar aunque diga alguien me está siguiendo una cosa aquí atrás pero no hay falla.

M: Ok, ¿Alguna otra cosa más…además de la oscuridad?

P.12: El otro miedo que tengo siento que es mucho más profundo. Tengo miedo a crecer, ese es un miedo que he tenido toda mi vida que de alguna manera hoy en día lo he sabido sobrellevar pero de todos modos sigue ahí. Es un miedo muy extraño porque es inevitable el crecer y es inevitable el saber que algún día vas a ser un adulto vas a tener una familia o a lo mejor, vas a tener que crecer al final del día ese es un miedo que me atormenta mucho que obviamente yo no quisiera ese miedo, pero lo tengo y gracias a que yo he pensado mucho y así, he aprendido a sobrellevar este miedo. Obviamente de repente si me llega el golpe de que chale tengo que crecer, siento que es más miedo a la incertidumbre de que va a pasar cuando crezca. Esa es la raíz de mi miedo a crecer, pero digo, una de las cosas que yo he aprendido para sobrellevar este problema es que todo lo que hagamos en el futuro es un salto de fe. Obviamente no sabemos lo que va a pasar en el futuro pero tenemos que tener fe de que todo va a estar bien y probablemente nada va a estar bien, pero hay una posibilidad de que todo salga bien, y quiero que esa posibilidad de que todo va a estar bien en el futuro y que las decisiones que tome van a ser las mejores para mi, siento que eso es lo que mejor me ha llevado a sobrellevar ese miedo a crecer, el vivir un día a la vez, momento por momento.

M: Muy bien, muchas gracias por compartirlos. Ahora vamos a hacer un ejercicio, vamos a imaginarnos a 3 personas, vamos con la primera. Vamos a imaginarnos a una persona que no recibe nada de bullying ni ataca, vamos a empezarla a construir, entonces dime primero sería hombre o mujer?

P.12: Sería hombre

M: ¿y cómo se comportaría este hombre? ¿Cómo seria?

P.12: Sería una persona buena, ya que no tienen ninguna experiencia mala, siento que muy inteligente en el aspecto académico, sin embargo no tiene tanto conocimiento en el aspecto social ya que no le ha pasado nada de bullying. Sería una persona buen, inocente y tiene muchos amigos y amigas y se desenvuelve de una manera muy sana en el aspecto social.

M: y este chavo como se vestiría? No sé…¿con que tipo de ropa subiría sus fotos en redes sociales?

P.12: No sé tipo una camisa de manga larga de botones, pantalón de mezclilla y zapatos.

M: ¿Usaría marcas o no?

P.12: A él no le importaría l marca. Se vestiría de una manera relajada pero formal.

M: ¿Y en redes sociales como seria esta persona? Seguiría gente? Subiría cosas?

P.12: Seguiría a gente, si. No subiría cosas porque tiene cosas más importantes, tiene tarea o se preocupa mucho por la tarea entonces no tiene tiempo para andar subiendo cosas. No le importa mucho la marca que usa, con tal de que este cómodo con la ropa que tiene o como luce con la esa ropa que tiene, con eso está perfecto. Y seguiría de todo tipo de personas, a influencers a personas que se la viven pegadas en las redes sociales y a personas que no suben nada igual que él.

M: …ahora otra persona que sí recibe bullying. ¿Sería hombre o mujer?

P.12: Mujer

M: y…¿Cómo seria este personaje?

P.12: Sería muy inteligente también en el aspecto académico y tendría mucho conocimiento en el aspecto social o sabría como actuar de cierta forma, ya que como está recibiendo bullying ya tiene el conocimiento tiene la sabiduría de cómo actuar en esas situaciones. Es una persona reservada, muy reservada, introvertida pero sería una persona con mucha personalidad si la llegas a conocer.

M: ¿Y cesta chavita como se vestiría, con que tipo de ropa subiría fotos? Que marcas usaría o tampoco las usaría?

P.12: Se vestiría de una forma variada, se vestiría con camisa, pantalón, pants, tenis, y una hoodie o yo que sé.

M: ¿Usaría marcas o no?

P.12: Usaría las marcas no tan conocidas, pero también conocidas..Usaría los tenis que yo siempre he visto que están en el closet de una niña que son los Adidas superstar, no usaría marcas de ropa pero si tenis. También usaría joyería, no mucha, a lo mejor un collarcito. No tan notable, muy discreta.

M: ¿Y como seria esta chica en redes sociales? Seguiría gente? Subiría cosas?

P.12: Subiría un par de cosas, raramente. Este, no, subiría cosas no tan regularmente, sube un par de stories y esas cosas, pero no sube tanto post.

M: y ¿Seguiría marcas ella?

P.12: hmmm, a lo mejor una o dos. No muchas.

M: Ahora…¿Qué pasaría con el que bulea? Sería hombre o mujer?

P.12: Sería un hombre

M: Este chavo, ¿Cómo seria?

P.12: Sería un chavo que si le importa mucho las marcas, que usaría las marcas caras o más reconocidas. Sería una persona un tanto agresiva pero nada que si le dices algo que no le gusta o si le dices algo que no le parece ahí si se pondría muy agresivo contigo.

M: ok. Y este chavo, ¿Cómo seria en redes sociales?

P.12: Seria activo, sería muy activo.

M: Y, ¿Qué tipo de cosas subiría?

P.12: Subiría fotos de él posando en paisajes pero con ropa de marca.

M: ¿Cómo que tipo de ropa?

P.12: A lo mejor un outfit todo Adidas, este unos tenis Gucci, un pantalón x y lo mejor una camisa polo, y así estaría en paisajes de una persona con mucho dinero. Por ejemplo esta en un campo de golf o yo que se.

M: y… ¿Crees que este chavo seguiría mucho marcas, o sea así como las usa también las seguiría?

P.12: Sí

M: ¿Seguiría gente también?

P.12: Sí

M: muy bien, entonces ahora vamos a hacer el último ejercicio. No sé si has visto que te ponen una imagen o una palabra y tú tienes que decir lo primero que se te viene a la mente de emociones o sentimientos. Primero vamos a hacerlo con redes sociales, aunque no las utilices me imagino las ubicas.

P.12: Ok

M: Instagram

P.12: Euphoria

M: Snapchat

P.12: Tristeza

M: Facebook

P.12: Nerviosismo…jajjaj fue lo primero que se vino a la mente

M: Twitter

P.12: Rabia,..Porque la gente en Twitter tiene mucha rabia. Hay mucho hater. De hecho es la app con mas haters.

M: Tiktok

P.12: Ira…porque no me gusta…esa app si se me hace una pérdida de tiempo, no me gusta. Obviamente he aprendido a convivir con ella porque esa app se adueñó de todas las redes sociales, o sea de Facebook, de Instagram, de Twitter se infestó de esa app.

M: WhatsApp

P.12: Alegria

M: YouTube

P.12: Cansancio… porque siento que Youtube es mucho es una app que exige mucho, hay comunidades que son muy buenas…las personas que son youtubers se ven muy presionados, se ve mucho que son presionados por esa comunidad. Y que están exige, exige, que exige y se cansan demasiado o terminan por explotar o dejar totalmente Youtube hasta el punto de olvidar Youtube.

M: Ahora vamos a la segunda parte del ejercicio. Vamos a ver las palabras y tú me tienes que decir la primera marca que se te venga a la mente. Diversión

P.12: Motorola

M: Estatus

P.12: Apple…definitivo, no hay duda.

M: ¿Por qué?

P.12: Más que nada Apple se convirtió en una marca que te vende el estatus, como que tienes Apple oh mira eres rico. Y tienes estatus por tener esa marca, que la verdad siento que es muy cara, la calidad de sus productos y el precio es muy caro. Que el precio-calidad no, te venden es más la marca que el producto.

M: Tristeza

P.12: Paso

M: Miedo

P.12: Louis Voitton, se me ocurrió así. Si, son de esas marcas prestigio entonces si son muy intimidantes

M: Felicidad

P.12: Lego, me gusta bastante

M: Poder

P.12: Nike, porque es una marca muy, muy poderosa

M: Para ti, ¿Qué es una marca poderosa?

P.12: Te vende el estatus, te vende calidad y eso si es muy poderoso que la calidad y el precio si estén…a lo mejor disparejos pero parejos a la vez.

M: ¿Será que también hay otra cosa además de calidad?

P.12: Las ventas que tienen son muy grandes y la gente que sigue a esa marca es demasiada, es una cantidad exorbitante de personas que siguen esa marca, tanto así de que yo adoro Nike tengo todo Nike. Tantas personas así como los que tienen solo un par de tenis pero esos tenis los llevo usando un año seguido. Osea es gente que le gusta demasiado esa marca.

M: Ya para cerrar la entrevista, con todo este tema del bullying, los haters, las redes sociales y las marcas. Yo quiero que me digas que opinas de las personas que publican o hacen comentarios ofensivos en las redes sociales.

P.12: Que a lo mejor esas personas a veces no tienen nada que hacer, entonces nada más hacen eso por hacerlo, pero también hay mucha gente que a lo mejor le tiene rencor a esa persona por algo minúsculo.

M: Ok, y ¿Tú crees que deba de haber consecuencias a esto?

P.12: Pues esto del bullying ha sido un problema muy grande desde tiempos de antaño y no hemos tomado consecuencias de eso. Entonces hacer un cambio tan drástico en tan poco tiempo obviamente va a generar mucha polémica.

M: ¿Tú crees que las marcas pudieran hacer algo?

P.12: Si. Probablemente con el poder que tienen esas marcas sobre la gente, a lo mejor y sí podrían cambiar la mentalidad de la gente en el sentido de que sean más abiertos al dialogo y que puedan encontrar la solución a estos problemas. Podrían hacer mucho. Podrían cambiar el pensamiento de tanta gente.

Interview: Participant 15

M: ¿Cuántos dispositivos electrónicos hay en tu casa?

P.15: Pues a ver, como unos 13…

M: Y de esos ¿Cuantos son tuyos? Los que nada más tú utilizas…

P.15: 2…Celular y la laptop

M: ¿Redes sociales, cuáles son las que utilizas?

P.15: Instagram, Whastapp cuenta?

M: Si, tambien

P.15: Whastapp, Instagram, y TikTok a veces, osea Snapchat, o sea tengo mi cuenta pero no la uso

M: Y de esas que me dices, ¿Cuál es tu preferida?

P.15: Instagram

M: ¿Por qué?

P.15: Pues me gusta, no sé me gusta pasar el rato, me gusta porque hay de todo, noticias, más que nada es porque me gusta ver más que nada, tiendas y ropa y cosas así….osea me gusta de que a veces ver bloggers de que por cómo se visten…

M: OK, ahorita entramos un poquito a ese tema. Primero dime, ¿Tú publicas cosas?

P.15: Sí

M ¿Qué es lo que generalmente públicas?

P.15: No subo mucho, pero pues se puede decir que stories

M: Y más cómo de que …o sea tú más o menos que es lo que más públicas?

P.15: Pues sí, o sea como el mar, o a veces subo de que la arena o así. No pues no siempre, eso es más como a mis closers y cuando subo stories a todo el mundo es cuando alguien cumple años o así, digamos con mis amigas.

M: ¿Y publicas fotos?

P.15: Ehh, o sea muy muy poco.

M: Y cuando públicas, ¿Qué publicas más?

P.15: mmm…fotos mías

M: Y por ejemplo, ¿Crees que para subir cosas hay algún mejor momento para que tenga más reacciones o likes?

P.15: ¿De que una hora?

M: En general…

P.15: Bueno yo siento, a mi me valen los likes, la verdad, me gustan mucho de que los feeds y así tipo ….. o sea diferentes… de que lo subo por mí no por la gente ni por los likes, pero si sé que mucha gente es de que súbelo mejor de que a las 8 porque a esa hora de que más gente está en IG, tipo por esas horas, entonces probablemente tenga más likes o más comments o cosas así. Osea a mi no me importa pero sé que a mucha gente sí le importa eso, de que, o sea ahorita mis fotos las subo pues como que combinen, con el mismo filtro o asi, para que se vea como parejo.

M: y ahorita que dijiste de que hay un chorro de gente que si le importa, ¿Cómo te das cuenta que les importa?

P.15: Porque están preguntando mucho de que a qué hora subo foto? O de que mejor lo voy a subir, de que te preguntan ayudame a escoger una foto, tipo se toman una foto y le ayudas a escoger una y dicen de que bueno ok, pero mejor la subo más tarde para tener más likes y así…

M: ¿Y cuál es como un buen numero de likes que pueda tener alguien en redes sociales?

P.15: Pues ahorita, osea al principio cuando estaba más chiquita o sea tener de que 200 era Ay Wow, y ahorita pues hay mucha gente que a partir de los 400 o así, es de que ahh ok llegue a un buen número…pero hay gente que tiene de 400 a 800 o hasta mil, verdad. A mi me vale, yo tengo de que 200 y me vale la verdad…

M: Y ¿Tú crees que hay gente que si se siente mal cuando no llega a esos likes?

P.15: Osea si hay gente así, pero depende mucho, se escucha muy feo pero hay mucha gente que lo ve como tengo más likes, voy a ser más popular. Entonces pienso que mucha gente aquí si lo ve así.

M: Y ahora hablando de las marcas…Tú por ejemplo, ¿Cómo te enteras de ellas?

P.15: Me gusta más como stalkearlas, o no se como se llame en español

M: ¿Cómo las stalkeas?

P.15: Osea a través de tipo influencers o bloggers o así…o a veces que pues estoy en el explore y te sale a veces de que shop o hay muchas opciones nuevas. Pues a veces me salen ahí de que en recomendadas o así..y pues me gusta, pero me gusta más como para inspirarme a mí. De que ay me gusto esta prenda, a lo mejor no lo compro ahí, pero tengo algo parecido o a lo mejor se lo he visto a mi mamá o así y veo que está de moda…o sea es más como para inspirarme.

M: ¿Tú sigues marcas en redes sociales?

P.15: Muy pocas

M: ¿Te acuerdas como cuáles?

P.15: Si, ¿Te las digo? Bueno algunas, la verdad no me acuerdo de todas.

M: Si, las que se te vengan a la mente.

P.15: Rosa Gitana que es de joyería. Una nueva que se llama Elements Active Wear que es de ropa para ejercicio, Lululemon de ejercicio…Una que otra de joyería la verdad no me acuerdo cuales…pero no muchas…

M: Y las que sigues, por qué las sigues?

P.15: Por ejemplo la de Lululemon es porque me gusta mucho la marca y a veces suben nuevos productos y así, aunque no los vaya a comprar me gusta verlos. Y las otras de ejercicio son marcas que he escuchado que son buenas, pero que nunca he comprado pero he escuchado que tienen buenos reviews y sé que ahí las venden y pues me gusta por si algún día me gustaría, pues ya sé que ahí lo consigo.

M: ¿Sigues marcas que le gustan a tus amigos tambien? O no?

P.15: Pues no, es más que me gustan a mi

M: ¿Te han recomendado marcas?

P.15: Si, pero no siempre las sigo la verdad

M: Y sigues marcas con contenido padre?

P.15: Hmm. No, me pasa más con páginas como… pues es que no … o sea por ejemplo hay una página que se llama como xxx, algo asi, se supone que son bloggers pero pues en realidad es más de que suben de que fotos tipo pasarelas o asi, que eso si es diferente, o sea no es una marca pero están fomentando de que eso, no sé…

M: ¿Qué me dices de marcas de lujo?

P.15: No, no las sigo porque siento que a veces suben mucho y no me gusta porque la verdad es que últimamente me he dado cuenta, bueno eso a lo mejor es otra pregunta. Que siempre, osea, como ya es tanta la adicción de estar en IG de que si no acabo las stories no me puedo dormir o sea o algo así …de que ya es algo que es parte de mi rutina, antes de dormirme o antes de lavarme los dientes o así, tipo acabo de ver las stories o así, entonces siento que suben mucho contenido y eso me ha pasado que dejo de seguir porque suben mucho.

M: ¿Te da como ansiedad?

P.15: Si, pero nada más si me gusta de repente pues buscarlas y stalkearlas pero no seguirlas

M: Osea que por ejemplo en redes sociales podríamos decir que sigues más por ejemplo ropa deportiva, joyería?

P.15: Si, pues moda en general, bolsas

M: ¿Y en donde te gusta ver las marcas en redes sociales, alguna aplicación?

P.15: Sí, en Instagram … la verdad TikTok ni lo uso, nada más hay veces que mis amigas me dicen vean este video y ya. La verdad cero. Si hago tiktoks ni los subo, los guardo para mí o con mis amigas.

M: ¿Por qué te gusta verlas en Instagram?

P.15: Siento que hay como mucha comunicación con el, mucha comunicación aunque no sea personal, frente a frente te pueden poner de que hoy hay tal promoción, o que suben nuevos productos, siento que hay mucha comunicación así, si te metes a la página no siempre te van a estar recordando… también siento que tipo el feed o las fotos que suben pues te hacen como ay está padre como se ve o que te dan más ganas de comprarlo. La verdad no he comprado mucho a través de, pero si me ha tocado que por ejemplo ahorita en la cuarentena de que me gustaron esos aretes de que los pedía por DM o cosas asi…

M: ¿Has dejado de seguir marcas? ¿Por qué?

P.15: Si, no sé porque su contenido era los mismo…ya me las sabia…

M: ¿Alguna otra cosa para dar unfollow?

P.15: La verdad no me gusta seguir tanto marcas porque o sea muchas muchas porque siento que si es mucha, eso más bloggers o sea tipo es mucho ya es demasiado siento que a lo mejor está padre tenerlas ahí, de que vi que tal persona uso este arete y ya lo buscas, siento que está más a la mano pero si la verdad nunca he sido de seguir muchas marcas.

M: Y eso por ejemplo de ver, ¿Ves lo que usan otros en redes sociales?

P.15: Sí, me ha pasado muchas veces, y de hecho a través de ahí me doy cuenta de que marca es… o sea porque a veces a lo mejor es incómodo preguntar en donde la compraste y a lo mejor a través de Instagram, pues bueno me ha pasado que a través de Instagram encuentro algo parecido o la marca de la cosa…

M: ¿Y cómo das con la marca?

P.15: Si, a veces en los hashtags o así

M: ¿Y entre tus amigas se avisan de cosas?

P.15: Sí, tenemos un chat en DM y pues ahí a veces nos mandamos cosas

M: ¿Sigues influencers?

P.15: Sí, malamente

M: ¿Cómo a quien sigues?

P.15: Ay pues no sé, por ejemplo, hay una que se llama Mariana es una chavita muy chavita pero me gusta mucho como se viste y su contenido está muy …. osea no sé, es como una inspiración..esa si, las demás las sigo la verdad por lo que promocionan. También así la que más me gusta por esa razón es esa. Y pues la otra que se llama xxx que no es tanto blogger, osea sí pero no, no sé cómo explicarlo, yo siento que no, pero los sigo más por la inspiración, de que hoy vi que está de moda el amarillo …

M: ¿Osea que le sigues más al tema de la moda?

P.15: Aja,sí

M: ¿Y tú crees que hay gente que por ejemplo utiliza ciertas marcas como para llevarse mejor con sus amigos o para integrarse a un grupo social?

P.15: Pues osea que siento que sí hay gente que dice no voy a usar esto porque si se enteran de que marca que me van a ver. Yo siento que hay gente así, pero no sé si necesariamente lo hacen por los demás o lo hacen por ellos.

M: Y crees que de repente hay gente que a lo mejor de forma inconsciente hace sentir mal a otras por no usar ciertas cosas?

P.15: Osea siento que ahorita yo en la prepa tipo que acabo de entrar que llevo apenas un año sí me di cuenta que si hay mucho ese tema o ses en mi campus si hay mucho ese tema, osea que todo el mundo trae los mismos tenis, como cosas así. Pero no creo, bueno yo, no creo que sea una razón para clasificar pero si sé que es mucho de que ay los tienes, de que se viste chido, si cae bien.

M: ¿Has visto de gente que recibe bullying en redes sociales?

P.15: Si, si me ha pasado.

M: ¿Como pasa esto?¿Por qué hacen bullying?

P.15: Hubo una época en que mi mamá me quitó Instagram porque habían cuentas como falsas, como de chismes o de gente …hacen cuentas como de que hay chismes mty, guapos mty, y a veces subían fotos de los Instagram de la gente con comentarios negativos o les ponían sobrenombres, por como se veían, o como se vestían…

M: ¿Y tú por que crees que hay gente que de repente bulea en redes sociales?

P.15: Porque se les hace difícil hacerlo a la cara, o más bien se les hace más fácil que hacerlo cara a cara

M: ¿Crees que en redes sociales hacen más esto los hombres o las mujeres?

P.15: Siento que está muy igual, osea esta muy parejo. A lo mejor las mujeres un poquito más, pero siento que está muy parejo. Como que los hombres no lo dicen tanto, pero las mujeres sí hacen mucho rollo, como que lo hacen muy público de que a ver me hicieron esto. Y los hombres si lo hacen no te enteras.

M: Saliendo del tema del bullying, ¿Tú le tienes miedo a algo?

P.15: A los elevadores, que me secuestren o que me hagan algo, quedarme sola sin mi familia, perderme o algo así eso me pone muy nerviosa. Cuando salgo así tipo si me da miedo que me vaya a pasar algo.

M: Faltan 2 ejercicios súper rápidos, el primero es que vamos a construir a 3 personas diferentes pero es má un tema de imaginación. Se vale que me digas lo que sea, no es que hay una respuesta correcta, es simplemente como lo primero que se te venga a la mente. El primer escenario es que te imagines a una persona que no recibe nada de bullying y no hace tampoco bullying, entonces esta persona que seria? ¿Sería hombre o mujer?

P.15: Mujer

M: ¿Como sería esta niña o esta chava?

P.15: Siento que sería muy insegura porque está acostumbrada a no recibir eso, como que muy insegura, pero al mismo tiempo feliz. Siento que sería alguien que se note que le vale todo, o sea no sé cómo explicarlo, o sea como no me importa pero por dentro si es alguien insegura.

M: ¿Y esta niña cómo se vestiría, con que tipo de ropa postearía en redes sociales? ¿Cómo te la imaginas?

P.15: Siento que sería la popular, se vestiría padre, a lo mejor tenis de marca no sé a lo mejor…

M: ¿Y cómo sería en redes sociales? ¿Subiría cosas, muchas cosas?

P.15: Siento que subiría muchas cosas y muy seguido

M: ¿Tendrá followers o no?

P.15: Sí, a lo mejor tendría su cuenta pública

M: En el otro escenario imagínate una persona que recibe el bullying, ¿Esta persona como seria?

P.15: Como que ni seguro ni inseguro, como en la mitad. Seria neutral. A lo mejor en el momento que le hacen bullying se siente insegura, pero que si es una persona segura. Que si le preocupa lo que la gente diga de ella o de él.

M: ¿Sería mujer o hombre?

P.15: Mujer, se me hace que cualquiera de los dos lo pudiera tener y siento que el bullying hacia la mujer y el hombre puede ser o muy igual o polos opuestos.

M: ¿Cómo?

P.15: Porque los hombres son más llevaditos entre ellos, osea puede que por dentro, osea puede que sea bullying pero jaja que risa y siento que entre niñas si te lo dicen, puede que actúes de la misma manera pero realmente si te está lastimando.

M: ¿Esta persona buleada como se vestiría, que usaría en sus redes sociales? ¿Cómo te la imaginas?

P.15: A lo mejor que no le eche tantas ganas. O sea intermedio o que le vale.

M: ¿Usaría marcas o no?

P.15: Pues está en intermedio, a lo mejor si. Pero a lo mejor no show off.

M: Osea, ¿No presumiría?

P.15: Ajá. Siento que lo haría más como me los pude comprar y los uso

M: Y, ¿Cómo sería en redes sociales? ¿Subiría fotos? ¿Tendría followers?

P.15: Tendría intermedio de followers , normal…subiría fotos muy insegura, a lo mejor sin mirar a la cámara o de espaldas o sea como que muy pocas o a lo mejor que las sube y luego las borra...

M: Ahora…el que bulea, ¿Sería niño o sería niña?

P.15: Niña

M: Y esta niña que bulea, ¿Cómo es?

P.15: Es como que intermedio pero se cree que…osea se viste casual, se cree mucho, se cree que sí es, se cree más de lo que es…

M: Y ¿cómo se vestiría esta niña, en redes sociales?

P.15: Pues entre casual, tipo no fachoso y así.

M: ¿Usaría marcas?

P.15: Si, las usaría para presumirlas. No tanto de me las compré porque me gustaron sino más como esto está de moda me lo compro para que todos me vean

M: ¿Como seria en redes sociales? Subiría muchas cosas? Tendría muchos followers?

P.15: Sí, subiría muchas cosas y tendría muchos followers

M: Ya casi acabamos, solo nos queda un ejercicio súper rápido. Lo que vamos a hacer es que yo te voy a enseñar, voy a compartir mi pantalla. En la primera parte te voy a mostrar logotipos de redes sociales, muchos de los que ya me dijiste que ya utilizabas y la idea es que tú al ver el logotipo me digas lo primero que se te viene a la mente. Que me digas algún sentimiento o alguna emoción asocias con estas plataformas.

P.15: Instagram, felicidad

P.15: Snapchat ay no sé, pues es que como la verdad ya no lo uso, no sé que siento o sea la verdad es que me meto para ver memories, puede ser recuerdos pero no es una emoción…nostalgia

P.15: Facebook no uso la app, no tengo

P.15: Twitter, desahogo

P.15: Tiktok, diversión

P.15: Whatsapp, convivencia

P.15: Youtube, relajación

M: Segunda parte, yo te doy la palabra y tú me dices la primera marca, la primera que se te venga a la mente y si no sabes la respuesta me dices paso.

P.15: Diversión, Lululemon

P.15: Estatus, Louis Vuitton

P.15: Amor, un detalle

P.15: Tristeza, paso

P.15: Miedo, Twitter

P.15: Felicidad, Nike

P.15: Poder, Instagram

M: La última pregunta es…¿Tu qué opinas de la gente que publica o hace comentarios ofensivos en redes sociales?

P.15: Pues que no tienen valor de decirlo en persona, que lo digan directo, cual es la necesidad de…

M: ¿Crees que deba haber alguna consecuencia para eso?

P.15: Siento que es algo muy abstracto, puede ser una cuenta falsa, a veces no puedes saber de quién viene, es algo muy difícil pero siento que yo creo que existe el karma se te va a regresar en algún punto. O sea sí, debería haber una consecuencia, pero siento que es muy difícil…

M: Ahora sí la ultima pregunta, ¿Tú crees que las marcas podrían hacer algo para ayudar a aminorar esto?

P.15: Sí, por medio de sus mensajes, el generar campañas o no sé…

M: Ya acabamos, muchas gracias.

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Curriculum Vitae

Marisol Rodríguez Ontiveros was born in Monterrey, México, on September 9, 1985. She earned the bachelor’s degree from the *Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey*, Monterrey Campus in December 2008. She also earned a master’s degree from the *EGADE Business School*, Monterrey Campus in July 2010. Later, on August 2016 she was accepted in the doctoral program on business administration in *EGADE Business school* and member of the Consumer Behavior and Conscious Marketing Research Group. Marisol recently published on the Journal of Psychology and the Journal of International Consumer Marketing. She has been lecturer on different marketing and administration courses and her research interests are in the areas of consumer behavior, conscious marketing, digital marketing and well-being.

Marisol has professional experience on the areas of marketing, administration, communication, education and social responsibility. On *Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey*, Monterrey Campus, she was in charge of a social program aimed to provide education to communities with low opportunities for development. She was responsible of the communication with national and international allies, both public and private organizations, that contribute with the program. Part of her achievements were an increment of 40% on the number of allies, the coordination for the opening of around 100 educative centers, including one with the aid of the OECD, directed for people with certain types of physical disabilities. Marisol was also part, as panelist, on a program named “Avancemos” of Ashoka México (a global network of social entrepreneurs) and on other governmental events; representing *Instituto Tecnológico y de Estudios Superiores de Monterrey.*

Marisol has also professional experience on the private industry, on small businesses, on administrative and marketing areas. Furthermore, she has worked as a consultant for diverse industries, by providing assistance on topics such as branding, corporate communication and market research.

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1. As a robustness check, we try the six models using interactions between gender and the high receptor of bullying dummy variable, but we did not find significant differences across genders. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. For limited space reasons, we did not include the robustness regressions, but the results are available upon request. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)