

# Digital Marketing Strategies Driven by Wellbeing in Virtual Communities

## Literature Review

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**Abstract:** In the new era ushered in by Covid-19, priority has been given to peoples' wellbeing. Wellbeing in virtual communities was analysed from several perspectives, such as healthcare, technology, and social science: hence, the importance of a literature review that clarifies how studying health, happiness, comfort and quality of life of virtual communities' members could guide firms to conceive their digital communication and marketing strategies. This work presents a literature review of papers spanning from 2010 to 2021, and which study digital marketing strategies driven by wellbeing in virtual communities. Results indicate a growing research interest after the pandemic regarding both positive and negative wellbeing dimensions, especially as drivers for digital segmentation, targeting and positioning strategies. Moreover, results highlight the remarkable increase of papers focusing on the tourism industry, game related strategies, and marketing analytics as relevant tools that support digital communication and influence strategies towards virtual communities. Finally, this literature review provides researchers with guidance for future studies in terms of relevant methodologies and areas of research not yet explored.

**Keywords:** Virtual Communities, Wellbeing, Platforms, Marketing Strategies, Literature Review

## Introduction

The pandemic has significantly changed the way people all over the world live, as well as their ability to socialize and interact with one another due to incessant governmental restrictions

([Bajaj et al., 2020](#)). The restrictions imposed by Covid-19 led to a significant separation from important people, together with immeasurable financial and job losses that challenge health and wellbeing ([Pietromonaco & Overall, 2021](#)). It is in this context of disruptive human lifestyle that the issue of wellbeing has been dealt with in healthcare, computer science/technology and social science research ([Ayachi & Jallouli, 2021](#)). In addition, the study of wellbeing features related to virtual communities (VCs) from a business perspective is gaining more relevance and scope with the announcement of commercial mega projects focusing on the magnitude of augmented reality (AR) in people's lives over the next decade.

This study aims to answer the following questions: To what extent were dimensions of wellbeing studied as drivers for marketing strategies in the literature? Have these features been evoked from a positive or a negative perspective, or both? Which fields and methodologies were involved in this area of research? What are the main related platforms? Which marketing strategies were the most impacted by wellbeing in VCs, and what guidance could this study provide to future research in terms of methodologies and digital strategies?

This research consists of a literature review (LR) of papers published from January 2010 to December 2021 studying the dimensions of wellbeing that guide marketing strategies for VCs. The remainder of this paper is structured as follows: section 1 focuses on the concept of wellbeing and VC. Section 2 presents related works on wellbeing in VCs as drivers of digital marketing strategies. Section 3 is dedicated to explaining the methodology, and section 4 displays the main results and provides the reader with a structured discussion based on the important trends revealed by this LR. Finally, the conclusion section points to the study limitations and suggests orientations for future research.

## Definition of Concepts: Wellbeing and Virtual Communities

The concept of wellbeing has been defined from different perspectives. Strohmaier & Camic ([2017](#)) define wellbeing as an uncertain subjective state that entails happiness, feeling well and optimism. Other definitions of wellbeing encompass concepts including comfort, pleasure, interaction and positive thoughts; a sense of attachment to people, animals, and tasks; inclusion in a given community or practice of a certain activity; occupation like exercising, working, conversing with others or simply resting; identity like feeling healthy, having a sense of recognition, and a lifestyle continuity; and, finally, engagement, which entails self-determination, freedom of action, and independence ([Kaufmann & Engel, 2014](#)).

In this paper, wellbeing is considered as a construct that captures four main dimensions and involves both objective and subjective concepts. Objective concepts include physical and mental health, which according to the World Health Organization (WHO) is defined as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social well-being, and not merely the absence of any disease

or infirmity'. Happiness, quality of life, and comfort are three main subjective dimensions of wellbeing. Being a relative concept, happiness is associated with a general evaluation of one's typical wellbeing depending on different factors; including individual pursuit of tangible and intangible benefits ([Diener, Scollon & Lucas, 2009](#)), social justice ([Frey & Stutzer, 2010](#)), or simply social interactions ([Hall & Banaszek, 2014](#)). Closely associated with wellbeing, comfort seems to be more related to the symptoms of relief and/or reduction of imbalances or discomfort, inner peace, security and effective communication ([Pinto et al., 2017](#)). Finally, quality of life, which encompasses subjective perceptions of different areas presupposes a decent health situation and healthcare, good living conditions, an employment and a financial situation that meet daily needs, social relationships, and leisure activities ([Palepu et al., 2012](#)).

Wellbeing is a growing area of research due to the outbreak of Covid-19. Lockdowns and social distancing affected people's physical and mental health, as well as social life, causing mental health disorders, including stress, anxiety, depression, irritability, insomnia and decrease in attention ([Brooks et al., 2020](#)). The interest in people's wellbeing could be of some significance to marketers to know how to better align their strategies with the evolving physical, mental, and social states of targeted individuals and communities.

VCs can be defined as "groups of computer users that provide friendship, social resources, information and belongingness to each other" ([Wang, Ting & Wu, 2013](#)). Thanks to the emerging IT tools and platforms, social networks, including YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, WhatsApp, LinkedIn and Pinterest, among others, have become the daily environment for people to move from passive consumers to active ones by interacting and sharing information spontaneously ([Fondevila-Gascón et al., 2020](#)).

VCs have been classified into five main categories depending on their objectives: 1) commercial communities, generally associated with e-commerce, like e-bay; 2) information communities where users contribute information or knowledge, such as Wikipedia; 3) communities of practice (COPs) that share common interests and exchange ideas and solutions on platforms like virtual classes or platforms for professional associations; 4) virtual reality (VR) communities that use VR technologies to experience imaginary environments, such as Second Life; and, finally, 5) social communities that interact online to establish or maintain social or professional relationships, such as LinkedIn and Facebook ([Mata & Quesada, 2014](#)). VCs are becoming the main source of information related to brands and considered as a determinant of the success or the failure of companies ([Siuda, 2021](#)); hence the importance of businesses' focus on consumers' wellbeing.

## Marketing Strategies Driven by Wellbeing in Virtual Communities

In the digital environment associated with the worldwide pandemic, customers are more concerned about products and services that meet their wellbeing. Several studies have conducted research that converges the three concepts: i.e., VCs, wellbeing, and marketing. Relating VCs to the marketing field has been based on creating and preserving long-term valuable relationships with customers ([Das et al., 2019](#)). The evolution of Web 2.0 has empowered the customer in making the right decisions on what product or service to choose ([Zaidun, Muda & Hashima, 2020](#)). When considering customers as important stakeholders in the marketing experience, electronic word of mouth plays a significant role in the success or failure of businesses ([Van der Lans et al., 2010](#)). Electronic word of mouth in marketing, defined as any positive or negative announcement about the brand and the business posted by any online consumer, is particularly effective in attracting and retaining existing customers ([Chou & Sawang, 2015](#)): hence, the importance that firms give to collecting and analyzing social media data about the wellbeing of targeted VCs to conceive effective digital strategies ([Benslama & Jallouli, 2020; 2022](#)).

Negative and positive features of wellbeing in virtual communities are inherent in marketing. On the one hand and from a health perspective, it has long been known that marketing often shapes people's health and wellbeing by promoting the values of consumerism and overconsumption through attractive images of happy family lives, love, friendship and enjoyment, leading to a global health risk ([Watkins et al., 2022](#)). This is reinforced by exploitative advertising of fast food, sugar-sweetened drinks, alcohol, and e-cigarettes that mainly harm children's health ([Clark et al., 2020](#)). Ubiquitous media and marketing practices, including personal data extraction, considerable experimentation and behavioural manipulation are exposing people, and more particularly children, to additional abuse ([Golden & Garde, 2020](#)). On the other hand, in the new era ushered in by Covid-19, and thanks to a significant number of technologies, including Artificial Intelligence and Internet of Things, digital communication tools have made it possible for firms and experts to promote their services all over the world ([Mondal et al., 2022](#)), and for communities to support individuals in need of assistance. The interactivity allowed by Web 2.0 helped consumers and users to move from passive to active statutes ([Fondevila-Gascón et al., 2020](#)), building thereby a network that enhances wellbeing in VCs ([Kamboj et al., 2018](#)). However, in some cases, digital communication does not really meet the expected outcomes in terms of enhancing wellbeing. For example, based on a review by Almathami, Win & Vlahu-Gjorgievska ([2020](#)), patients are not unanimous about remotely communicating with healthcare professionals.

This reveals the importance of outlining both negative and positive dimensions of wellbeing related to professional online networks and COPs.

With regards to happiness in VCs and marketing strategies pairwise, web accessibility is double-edged. On the one hand, paying attention to drivers that affect customer happiness, which make up significant factors leading to customer retention and competitiveness, is becoming routine for firms ([Kumar, 2021](#)). In fact, social media can facilitate communication between consumers and brands' representatives, leading to growing trust and intention to buy ([Hajji, 2014](#)). On the other hand, unhappy customers can give negative feedback and therefore contribute to the company's failure and credibility loss ([Van der Lans et al., 2010](#); [Venkateswaran, Kumar & Gupta, 2021](#); [Tseng, 2014](#); [Zheng et al., 2015](#)).

Addressing quality of life in marketing is critical to the effectiveness of a business, given that the key goal of a marketing professional is to provide value to customers and preserve or improve a community's wellbeing ([Palepu et al., 2012](#)). By creating customers' meaningful experiences with brands to interact and engage with, digital communities' marketing yearns to adopt a combination of strategy, creativity and technology to contribute to the consumers' quality of life and at the same time enhance the business brand ([Dwivedi et al., 2021](#)).

## Methodology

This work aims to provide a comprehensive review of papers studying VC wellbeing, including one or more of its dimensions – namely, health, comfort, happiness, and quality of life – and digital marketing strategies. To this end, this study provides a Literature Review (LR) of research articles published between January 2010 and December 2021 that studied wellbeing in VCs, in association with marketing strategies, namely product and brand strategy, price strategy, communication and influence strategy, distribution strategy, and segmentation, targeting, and positioning (STP) strategy ([Campbell et al., 2020](#)).

The search method for this analysis was conducted in two phases: (1) a search by keywords and similar combinations of keywords to obtain articles from January 2010 to December 2021 dealing with VCs, wellbeing, and marketing; and (2) a content analysis, which in addition to identifying the three concepts under study, explored the relationship between them. The two stages are explained below.

### Keywords-based search

Keywords-based research was carried out to obtain articles dealing with VCs, wellbeing and marketing from January 2010 up to December 2021. To this end, relevant papers in English were collected from Google Scholar and ScienceDirect databases based on a search with the three key terms and using “review articles” and “research articles” as filters. “Online

communities” was used as a synonym for “VC”. In addition to “wellbeing”, the terms “happiness”, “health”, “comfort”, and “quality of life” were used. The key terms and their synonyms were employed interchangeably to form combinations of similar pairs.

This stage enabled the selection of 660 papers, including 162 results from Google Scholar, and 498 papers from ScienceDirect. Subsequently, a floating reading was carried out. It consisted of reading titles, keywords and abstracts of the retained papers and checking if these papers provide insight regarding the relationship between marketing, VCs and wellbeing. This step enabled the selection of 64 papers.

## Content analysis

In line with Erlingsson & Brysiewicz ([2017](#)), both quantitative and qualitative content analysis was used in the current literature review. Content analysis was carried out as follows: first, we read the retained papers going through titles, keywords and abstracts; second, we defined the units and categories of analysis; third, we developed coding rules, which enabled data coding; and, finally, we analyzed the results and drew conclusions.

The above-mentioned steps were implemented as follows: after reading the data, we defined units and categories of analysis by classifying the papers by order number, publisher, year, and context. To report the type of relationship between marketing strategies and wellbeing in VCs in the studied papers, we assigned a plus or a minus according to whether the type of relationship was positive or negative. Then the data were processed statistically. The final step required reading the full text of the retained papers to present an overview of the main results, draw conclusions, and suggest orientations for future research.

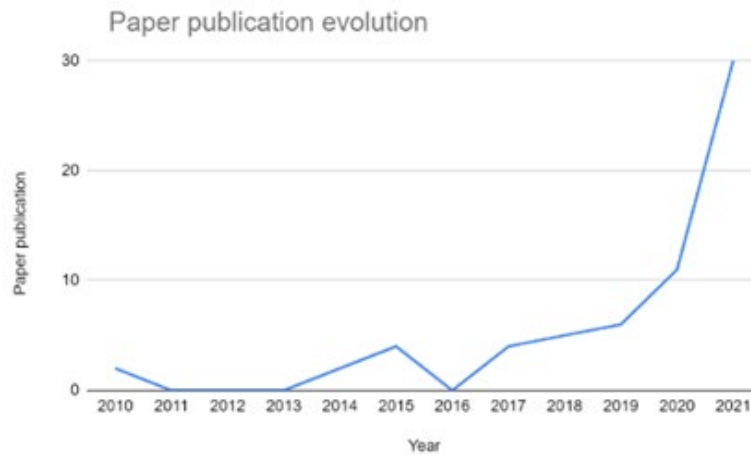
## Results and Discussion

This section presents the main trends revealed through the descriptive analysis. Then it shows relevance-based matching in the studied corpus between wellbeing features in VCs, digital marketing strategies, related methodologies and targeted platforms. The approach of the results’ presentation is as follows: first, we present a descriptive analysis of marketing approaches driven by wellbeing in VCs, the frequency per publisher, year and methodology type; second, we present a cross analysis, matching marketing strategies with wellbeing features and platforms.

### Remarkable number of papers in 2021 and predominance of positive wellbeing

Paper publication indicates a remarkable increase (30 papers) in 2021 as shown in Figure 1. The disastrous effect of Covid-19 on socio-economic life ([Long & Ren, 2022](#)), as well as

challenges to wellbeing known during the pandemic peak times, made people and businesses build some kind of resilience to face these challenges ([Beninger & Francis, 2021](#); [Pietromonaco & Overall, 2021](#)).



**Figure 1. Number of papers per year**

Table 1 provides a descriptive analysis of wellbeing and its related concepts: happiness, health, comfort, and quality of life. The objective is to gain a better understanding of the way the concept of wellbeing was addressed in the selected papers.

In line with Ayachi & Jallouli ([2021](#)), findings revealed a predominance of positive wellbeing (wellbeing+) and its four related concepts (Table 1). For example, only eight papers evoked wellbeing+ in 2020, against 25 papers in 2021. Such an increase in the positive dimension of wellbeing confirms the resilient side of human beings in the face of challenges and the importance of investing in effective digital strategies to enhance this trend ([Beninger & Francis, 2021](#)).

**Table 1. Occurrences of wellbeing dimensions per year**

Wellbeing	Years												Total
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	
Wellbeing+	2	0	0	0	2	4	0	4	5	5	8	25	<b>55</b>
Wellbeing-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	8	<b>11</b>
Happiness+	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	2	<b>5</b>
Happiness-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
Health+	2	0	0	0	2	1	0	3	0	2	3	11	<b>24</b>
Health-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	4	3	<b>8</b>
Comfort+	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	2	<b>4</b>
Comfort-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	<b>3</b>
QOL+	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1	2	3	2	5	<b>14</b>
QOL-	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>126</b>

## Research fields and methodologies

The papers were classified into three main fields with 37 papers in the social sciences field, followed by 19 papers in the computer/technology field, and finally 8 papers related to the healthcare field. Overlapping of fields and tools was revealed, and this emanates from addressing research issues from different perspectives. The main methodologies used in the studied papers included quantitative, qualitative, mixed, and review. Table 2 shows a breakdown of the methodology used according to the research field. The review methodology takes the lead, as it was adopted in 27 papers. Indeed, the review method can be used in disparate and interdisciplinary research, as it is a tool to synthesize existing research findings and uncover relevant areas in research (Snyder, 2019). The qualitative method follows with 19 papers, including 11 in social sciences and 8 papers in computer science/technology. Papers from computer science and technology (8) also used the qualitative method. For instance, Arsenyan & Mirowska (2021) adopted the qualitative method to study human-computer interactions on social media, and Mustafa, Nawaz & Lali (2015) applied the qualitative method for Search Engine Optimization to boost rankings, drive traffic and increase awareness among search engines.

The quantitative method was used in 12 papers including 8 in computer science/technology (e.g., Rauschnabel, Rossmann & Tom Dieck, 2017; Herz & Rauschnabel, 2018; Karikari *et al.*, 2017; Hajli *et al.*, 2015; Jin & Youn, 2021), and 4 in social sciences (Kamboj *et al.*, 2018; Pesco-Torres *et al.*, 2021; Deszczyński & Beręsewicz, 2021; Rather, 2021). Finally, the mixed method, associating quantitative and qualitative studies was identified in only five papers.

**Table 2. Methods and related research fields**

Method	Number of papers per research field			Total number of papers
	Computer Science/Technology	Healthcare	Social Science	
Quantitative	8	0	4	<b>12</b>
Qualitative	8	0	11	<b>19</b>
Mixed	0	1	4	<b>5</b>
Review	3	7	18	<b>28</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>64</b>

## Related platforms

Table 3 displays the frequency of wellbeing+ and wellbeing- through the different online platforms. According to Mata & Quesada (2014), these platforms are classified as follows: 1) social networks like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn and Instagram;



2) commercial websites and platforms; 3) AR/VR platforms; 4) information platforms; and 4) COP platforms.

Positive and negative wellbeing have been cited 492 times in different platforms, including social networks, commercial websites, VR/AR and COP platforms. No papers in the studied corpus evoked information platforms, such as Wikipedia, as a determinant of marketing strategies. Social networks were the most studied platforms in the literature providing insights on wellbeing in virtual communities that help shape digital strategies.

**Table 3. Wellbeing dimensions and related platforms**

Wellbeing dimension	Platforms cited in the studied corpus								
	Social networks					Commercial websites & platforms	VR/AR platforms	COP platforms	Total
	Facebook	Twitter	Instagram	LinkedIn	YouTube				
Wellbeing+	23	25	24	21	21	36	32	37	<b>219</b>
Wellbeing-	7	7	8	7	7	7	9	7	<b>59</b>
Happiness+	1	1	1	0	0	2	3	4	<b>12</b>
Happiness-	1	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	<b>5</b>
Health+	6	8	6	5	5	15	18	16	<b>79</b>
Health-	4	4	4	4	4	6	6	5	<b>37</b>
Comfort+	2	2	1	1	1	2	1	2	<b>12</b>
Comfort-	2	2	3	2	2	1	1	1	<b>14</b>
QOL+	6	6	7	5	5	7	6	5	<b>47</b>
QOL-	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	<b>8</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>57</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>78</b>	<b>492</b>

Table 3 shows that COP platforms are mainly associated with wellbeing+. In comparison to other online platforms like social networks, COPs allow for a concentration of users with common interests to solve particular problems (Gritsenko, 2016). Indeed, COPs include web users, web developers and bloggers who offer, for example, solutions to businesses in order to enhance their websites' ranking (Mustafa, Nawaz & Lali, 2015). Results show that sustaining consumers' brand-related happiness through a roller-coaster of emotions was revealed to be one motivation of COPs (Hollebeek & Belk, 2021). In addition, results outline the importance of shared COP interests to guide digital marketing strategies. These interests include value co-creation (Sorensen, 2021; Eletxigerra, Barrutia & Echebarria, 2018), common concerns and suggestions to protect children from digital food advertising abuse (Golden & Garde, 2020), enhanced customer service and loyalty development (Hollebeek & Macky, 2019), enhanced e-service delivery (Sharma, Mishra & Mishra, 2021), optimum use of filter mechanisms and recommender systems (Coombs *et al.*, 2021), social support, informational and emotional constructs (Hajli *et al.*, 2015), and, finally, online community trust to e-retailers (Bi, 2019).

Furthermore, results highlight the predominance of commercial communities in the corpus, like booking sites related to individualized room services and differentiated restaurant services. Service co-creation and innovation in the travel industry were largely studied ([Eletxigerra, Barrutia & Echebarria, 2018](#); [Oltra González, Camarero & San José Cabezudo, 2021](#)). In addition, useful information about any modification to the safety and hygiene measures was displayed to tourists, both on hotels' websites and Social Networks ([Pesco-Torres, Polo-pena & Froias-Jamelina, 2021](#)). Furthermore, results shed light on computer-mediated communication that facilitates online friendships, with the likelihood of improving the subjective wellbeing of users as one benefit of Social Networks and VR ([Karikari et al., 2017](#)). VR also offers interactive virtual tours to connect people to remote sites, which both increases awareness of cultural heritage and helps people to manage emotional and cognitive challenges, such as anxiety, that can be amplified during periods of isolation, loneliness, and uncertainty ([Bec et al., 2021](#)).

This literature review shows other benefits, such as health promotion opportunities on Facebook ([Loss, Lindacher & Curbach, 2014](#)); the emergence of different business potential encompassing brand awareness, brand loyalty and sales on social networks ([Hassanien et al., 2020](#)); as well as a sense of love, appreciation, acknowledgment, and a strong sense of positive emotions on Social Networks ([Neuhofer et al., 2021](#)).

Wellbeing- and its related concepts seem to be less evoked than the positive side, as displayed on the digital platforms. One example is wellbeing- that was displayed on VR/AR platforms, and caused by fear of health risks associated with VR glasses ([Herz & Rauschnabel, 2018](#)). Other avoidance of virtual tools has been expressed by patients who require consultation procedures that cannot be achieved through virtual means ([Wang et al., 2020](#)). Additional negative health related issues were evoked on Social Networks eliciting a rising discussion on the role of social media in exercising peer pressure resulting in problematic eating and negative impact on health ([Jacobsen et al., 2021](#)). From an employment security perspective, an employee's wellbeing might be challenged by digital transformation that could be perceived as a serious threat to the employee's job, like being replaced by technology ([Herhausen et al., 2020](#)).

As shown in Table 3, papers seem to study more positive aspects of wellbeing on the digital platforms than negative aspects. Concerns about wellbeing shared on these platforms are presented in the literature as challenges that need to be addressed ([Golden & Garde, 2020](#); [Coombs et al., 2021](#); [Herz & Rauschnabel, 2018](#); [Herhausen et al., 2020](#); [Wang et al., 2020](#)).

## Related digital marketing strategies

Table 4 shows that the STP strategy was the most studied in the corpus. STP strategy involves “developing an understanding of customer segments and assisting marketing managers in their targeting and positioning decisions” (Campbell *et al.*, 2020, p. 10).

**Table 4. Wellbeing dimensions and marketing strategies**

Wellbeing dimension	Marketing strategies					Total
	Product & Brand	Price	Communication & Influence	Distribution & Channels	Segmentation Targeting & Positioning	
Wellbeing+	9	1	14	3	38	<b>65</b>
Wellbeing-	1	0	4	1	7	<b>13</b>
Happiness+	2	1	2	0	4	<b>9</b>
Happiness-	1	0	0	0	0	<b>1</b>
Health+	3	1	5	0	21	<b>30</b>
Health-	1	0	2	0	6	<b>9</b>
Comfort+	1	0	1	0	4	<b>6</b>
Comfort-	1	0	1	0	1	<b>3</b>
QOL+	2	0	7	2	5	<b>16</b>
QOL-	0	0	1	0	0	<b>1</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>86</b>	<b>153</b>

Results show that the negative aspects of wellbeing are not numerous compared to wellbeing+ in the studied corpus. Negative features of wellbeing that overlapped with the STP strategy are mainly related to targeting children through digital food marketing, online games and virtual environments (Golden & Garde, 2020). In fact, these tools provoke childhood obesity, manipulate children’s behaviour by extracting their data through digital media, and violate their rights to privacy and freedom from exploitation.

Moreover, the STP strategy seems to be mostly associated with wellbeing+, including 21 times related to health+. New-age technologies help companies provide the right content to the right customer at the right time in addition to predicting customers’ future behaviours thanks to developing customer churn models (Kumar, Ramachandran & Kumar, 2020). Results show the growing role of emerging tools that guide market segmentation and targeting, especially AR- and VR-based marketing, marketing analytics and game-based marketing. For example, digital marketing through VR could reduce employee training costs, improve training effectiveness (Gupta, Kumar & Karam, 2020) and contribute to consumers’ health by offering them genetic information (Saukko *et al.*, 2010). Furthermore, marketing analytics help decision makers to manage customer relationship management, control retail sales/purchases, and examine trends (Kaabi & Jallouli, 2019; Kumar & Ramachandran, 2021); as well as provide the optimum medical and social support to patients suffering from mental health problems (Asamoah & Sharda, 2021). In the video game industry, after the launch of

new products, consumer conversations and comments are filtered to understand customers' needs, thereby enabling new products to be designed accordingly ([Chiarello, Bonaccorsi & Fantoni, 2020](#)).

Regarding the most studied field in terms of STP strategies, this LR shows the increasing number of papers focusing on wellbeing in the context of the travel/tourism industry. For example, companies are adapting the way they communicate with customers, whose profiles are changing by upgrading their services ([Joukes & Gerry, 2010](#)). Providing booking sites for customers to reserve individualized room services enhanced customer satisfaction and consequently increased sales ([Pereira & Da Silva, 2015](#)). Through VR, tourists can visit remote sites, preserve historical assets, and consequently generate revenue for the destination without visitation ([Bec et al., 2021](#)). Another important trend in the tourism field is promoting peer-to-peer hosting that improves quality of life, strengthens relationships with friends, helps experiment new things ([Dolnicar & Talebi, 2020](#)), and promotes customer engagement through brand co-creation ([Rather, 2021](#)). These strategies are linked to positive aspects of wellbeing, such as the sense of love, appreciation, strong positive emotions, and sensory engagement ([Neuhofer et al., 2021](#)).

The examination of the retained papers outlines the rise of several game-related strategies that offer enjoyable experiences to customers and increase their engagement ([Rasool, Shah & Islam, 2020](#)), help users track their wellness progress on a virtual map ([Sardi, Idri & Fernández-Alemán, 2017](#)), enhance children's diet ([Chow et al., 2020](#)), and promote physical activity ([Rauschnabel, Rossmann & Tom Dieck, 2017](#)). Related positive wellbeing concepts evoked in the corpus help to escape loneliness, boredom, and feelings of depression ([Mayor Poupis, Rubin & Lteif, 2021](#)), elicit feelings of fun, joy, amusement, and achievement ([Chapman, Chua & Fiedler, 2021](#)), learn more about destinations, enjoy thrills, and add more sensation experience when completing game challenges through VR ([Shen et al., 2020](#)). However, several negative apprehensions of game-related strategies were revealed, such as the potential risk of eyesight problems due to VR glasses and the concern about the misuse of or improper access to personal information ([Herz, & Rauschnabel, 2018](#)).

With regards to the communication strategy, which is ranked second in terms of frequency (Table 4), it often overlapped with the other marketing strategies. Indeed, shopping online impacts social wellbeing positively ([Papagiannidis et al., 2017](#)). Wellbeing+, altruistic value and social good result from some commercial brands' implementation of value-facilitating resources as well as co-creation interactions ([Sorensen, 2021](#)). In addition, interactions on social media with virtual influencers, instead of human influencers, may provide users with an intrinsic pleasure of the interaction and thereby consume promotional contents while at the

same time satisfy their needs for autonomy without being concerned about the wellbeing of the influencer behind the screen when turned off ([Arsenyan & Mirowskan, 2021](#)).

Unlike the STP strategy, communication strategy was linked to negative wellbeing. In fact, the highest occurrence concerns quality of life-, mentioned 7 times in relation to communication. Despite greater benefits delivered to the firms, like stronger brands, remarkable challenges may emerge from negative word of mouth as well as invasive and irritating online brand presence ([Dwivedi et al., 2021](#)). Tailoring communication to address preferences of VCs has become an essential part of a company's effective marketing strategy ([Siuda, 2021](#)). In fact, with the changing communication tools and customers' profiles, marketing strategies use diverse and flexible tools to meet new challenges and to be efficiently resilient ([Pereira & Da Silva, 2015](#)).

Overlapping with STP and communication, product strategy was associated with the travel/tourism industry. For instance, the travel community helped renovate and innovate travel services through processes of co-creation, thanks to a sense of trust, motivation, and inspiration ([Oltra González, Camarero & San José Cabezudo, 2021](#)). Furthermore, some health-related businesses like spa services changed into a tourist attraction thanks to customers changing profiles and skills ([Joukes & Gerry, 2010](#)). In fact, young and technology savvy users forced these businesses to adapt their services to a growing and loyal client base. In [Kamboj et al. \(2018\)](#), customers' interactions in online brand communities resulted in brand trust and loyalty, which led to branding co-creation on social media. In line with [Fondevila-Gascón et al. \(2020\)](#), VCs seem to be empowered thanks to their being allowed to co-create products and services ([Siuda, 2021](#); [Eletxigerra, Barrutia & Echebarria, 2018](#); [Rather, 2021](#); [Sorensen, 2021](#)).

Price and distribution strategies, mainly related to positive features of wellbeing, are evoked respectively 3 and 6 times out of 153. Future studies are invited to focus on this area and to explore the role of e-commerce distribution in delivering products and services with advantageous prices and conditions, and this leads to a positive impact on several features of wellbeing, such as happiness and quality of life.

The next section will synthesize the main results and present some limitations that can be a springboard for future works.

## Conclusions and Orientation for Future Research

This paper reviewed a corpus of 64 papers spanning from January 2010 to December 2021 relating VCs, wellbeing and digital marketing strategies. The review consisted of exploring digital marketing strategies that were guided by wellbeing features in VCs, in addition to

related platforms and adopted methodologies in the studied papers. Results indicated a significant increase in the number of papers in 2021 and showed, therefore, a growing interest in exploring wellbeing dimensions for business strategic purposes during the Covid-19 crisis.

With very few exceptions, the trend indicated the predominance of positive features of wellbeing related to digital marketing strategies, and, more particularly, positive health, comfort, happiness, and quality of life owing to interacting online. Regarding the adopted research methodologies in the studied papers, results highlighted a predominance of the literature review method, followed by the qualitative one especially in social science research.

Concerning the platforms related to positive wellbeing, COP platforms were mostly used, followed by commercial websites, VR/AR platforms, and then social networks like Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook. Furthermore, with respect to digital marketing strategies, STP was revealed to be the most studied strategy and was associated with a positive impact on wellbeing, including mainly the positive impact on health. Few publications revealed negative aspects of wellbeing.

Moreover, results showed the growing focus of studies on the tourism/travel industry. Indeed, the huge amount of data available on online platforms such as Trip Advisor help hotels and related firms collect and analyse customers' preferences and profiles to conceive effective STP, communication and product strategies. Marketing analytics and game-related strategies are also revealed as key tools applied to support these digital strategies.

This piece of research outlines several theoretical gaps related mainly to the limited number of papers that have adopted qualitative methodologies. The studies focusing on digital marketing strategies driven by negative wellbeing dimensions were also lacking. Future research could extend the number of studied papers and consider conference and book contents in addition to journal papers. Finally, in addition to the examined marketing strategies in this paper, more specific and emerging strategies, such as the digital brand-content strategy (Grissa, 2016), the social media analytics strategy or the technology-enabled personalization strategy (Riegger et al., 2021, Khemiri & Jallouli, 2022), might be relevant to investigate in future work.

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