

Facebook Marketplace To Purchase Second-Hand Vehicles In Morocco: Buyer-Seller Communication Patterns And Channels

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Abstract-

Facebook Marketplace has been gaining popularity among Moroccans who intend to purchase second-hand vehicles. Patterns and channels of communication used by the buyers and sellers on this social medium require investigation and examination as they exhibit distinctive characteristics. The objective of this study is to analyze and inquire about how buyers and sellers are communicating, and through which channels they interact when they intend to purchase used cars on Facebook Marketplace. This study abides by a quantitative method that requires a descriptive design to describe this arising phenomenon. The instrument by which this study collects data is an online questionnaire designed on Google Forms and distributed among the participants in some Moroccan cities. It is assumed that buyers and sellers use distinctive patterns and channels of communication, but face-to-face communication remains indispensable for transactions because channeled communication is not as trustworthy as face-to-face communication. The findings of this study uncover many patterns of communication used by the participants, and they manifest preferences and reasons for choosing a channel of communication over another along with the desired characteristics of the used channels. Put in comparison with data collected from literature review, the data collected in this study appear compatible and not very different from what buyers and sellers are doing elsewhere in the world when using Facebook Marketplace to purchase items. In brief, this paper studies how and through which channels communication occurs to serve the end of purchasing used cars announced on Facebook Marketplace in different locations in Morocco.

Keywords: *Facebook Marketplace, Patterns, Channels, Face-to-Face Communication.*

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I. Introduction

With the advent of social media that offers people chances to search for items for sale and buy them, people have shifted their attention to these websites whenever they feel the urge to buy their desired items. Facebook Marketplace is a quintessential online marketplace where many people search for second-hand vehicles to buy. This onscreen marketplace is a space where the seller and the buyer can easily communicate to accomplish their transactions. Buyer-seller communication, though primarily initiated by Facebook, can be carried out through different channels such as Messenger, WhatsApp, phone calls, for example. In Morocco, this virtual marketplace has been gaining popularity over the recent years as the number of Facebook users continuously increase. In this study, the communicative patterns of communication of the sellers and buyers are analyzed along with the channels through which communication occurs.

To conduct this study, literature was reviewed to visit the previous studies which could have dealt with this topic, or the issues related to it. To begin with, Facebook Marketplace was defined in detail with focus on the points which can be linked to the seller-buyer communication patterns and channels. To well construct this study, it was narrowed to only buyers and sellers of used cars because they are typically considered as high-involvement products in which “the consumer takes some time and trouble over deciding to buy them or not” (Hackley and Hackley, 2021: 154). Communication patterns and channels can be examined as well as studied with more precision with these high-involvement products since they are given much attention by the communicators. Moreover, it was deemed important to have an idea about the estimated number of Facebook users not only to be aware of how many people are finding it useful, but also to establish that almost half of the inhabitants of the

world is already familiar with this marketplace. Definitions of communication channels and patterns also required a precise examination so as not to confuse their meanings in this study with other connotations.

Intended to lead a field investigation on this phenomenon, literature review was followed by a practical part directed by a methodology according to which a quantitative study was conducted. A descriptive quantitative design was opted for as it is adequate for this study. The participants are all from different regions of Morocco. They were sent a questionnaire to fill in with demographic and topic-related questions. Afterwards, the data collected were analyzed and organized in graphics to determine facts about communication patterns and channels related to this enquiry.

II. Theoretical Background

What is Facebook Marketplace?

Facebook, one of the most popular social media, is a social networking website that offers multiple uses, one of which is access to Facebook Marketplace where Facebook users can post picture, ads, videos or posts of what they have to offer for sale. Potential buyers, who are often from closer locations, browse and search on Facebook Marketplace for items to purchase. DiMarzio defines Facebook Marketplace as “an area of Facebook where users can list items they have for sale” (2022: 193). He assimilates it to “a giant yard sale” (2022: 193). Indeed, once accessed, it seems like you are having a walk in a large yard where people present the items they want to sell. Martínez-López et al. refer to Facebook Marketplace as “an online marketplace by which a user can find photographs of items that people near him/her have posted for sale” (2022: 50). Although photographs are the most used way to identify the items for sale, sellers sometimes use announces or videos to feature the items they are selling.

Facebook Marketplace has a search bar that simplifies the searching process. By a click on that bar’s icon and typing the words referring to the desired item, any available item for sale that is near the location of the buyer may be found. In most cases, photographs, the item prices together with the seller’s phone number are all shown accompanied with brief descriptive expressions. If no specified setting were made, the search is carried out “within 50 miles” or about 80 kilometers of the buyer’s location (Miller, 2011: 258). However, any buyer can set the area of the search. Facebook has “incorporated AI, hence positively impacting” (Kaddoura (ed.), 2023: 165) its search engine, thereby making it easy for buyers to find the used cars. With such high-tech, Facebook Marketplace can integrate selling-buying groups “to the marketplace”, so that “you can look at different Facebook Groups for specific towns and cities” (Leonard, 2022: 187) while browsing Facebook Marketplace.

Can you buy used cars from Facebook Marketplace?

Facebook Marketplace allows users to offer for sell anything that is not legally banned. It has strongly warned against taking “chances by trying to sell prohibited things” (Diamond, 2022: 537). Thus, unless the car is stolen or is an illegal situation, it can be offered for sell on Facebook Marketplace. Used cars are among the most popular items that you can put for sale on Facebook Marketplace. Most probably, they are presented because of Facebook Marketplace’s policy that “encourages secondhand shopping” (Seferian, 2021). Krasniak and Zimmerman confirm that vehicles are listed as items that can be sold there (2021: 369). This online marketplace is considered as one “of the most helpful places” when searching for a car to buy (Moesner, 2022: 14). Other studies also call for checking out “local Facebook Marketplace to find great car deals” (Remsen and Sloan, 2021: 188). Used cars are always available on this platform which makes people resort to it as a first location to start their search.

How many people use Facebook Marketplace?

The present graph shows the increasing number of Facebook Marketplace users in the world (Dixon, 2023). Ranked by monthly users, Facebook is considered as one of the “most popular social networks worldwide as of January 2023” (Dixon, 2023) with an approximate number of 2958 million. This estimated number of Facebook users is confirmed by other statistical studies. Ford and Seah (2022:121) mention that Facebook has the biggest number of users “with over 2.6 billion monthly active users as of the first quarter of 2020.” This huge number of Facebook users, which has already surpassed 2.7 billion users by the second quarter of 2020, “has constantly grown in use since its inception” (Strohmeier (ed), 2022: 90). This confirms the previous estimated number of 3 billion users in 2023. It is important to understand that the more users Facebook has, the more chances are for transactions to take place.

In Morocco, there is a significant number of Facebook users as well. According to Internet World Stats website, there are 24,953,100 Moroccan Facebook users in January 2022 with a penetration rate of 66.3%. Saifaddin Galal (2023) has published a statistical study which specifies that there are about “22 million users” of Facebook in Morocco with a rate of 55.5 percent of the Moroccan population as of January 2023. The number of Facebook accounts can also consolidate the findings of these studies. It was found that “18.9 million have Facebook accounts in Morocco” (Radomir et al (eds.), 2023: 210). Napoleoncat Website, however, conducted

another statistical study according to which “there were 25 803 600 Facebook users in Morocco in March 2022, which accounted for 67.1% of its entire population”. All these statistics and other observed indicators confirm that Facebook is widely used by a large population of Moroccans.

On April 26th, 2023, Saifaddin Galal published a statistical survey that categorizes the users of Facebook by age groups in Morocco. The findings were as follows:

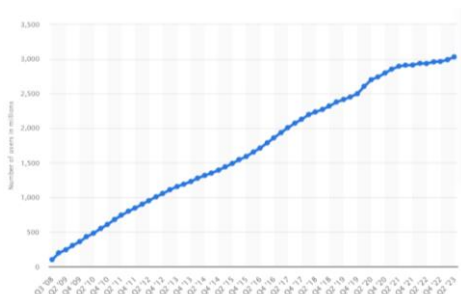


Fig. 1a. Number of Monthly Active Facebook Users Worldwide as of 2nd Quarter 2023.

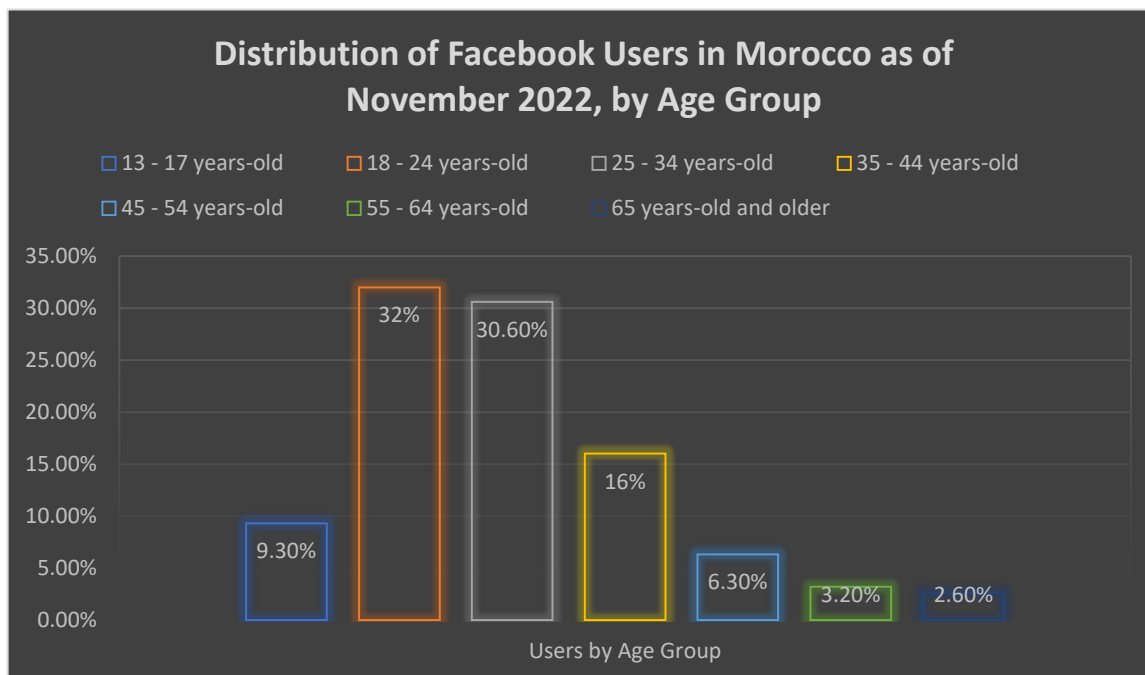


Fig. 1b. Distribution of Facebook Users in Morocco as of November 2022, by Age Group.

It is noticed that figure 1b and the other statistics are somehow compatible with one another. Thus, it can be clearly seen that Facebook Marketplace is widely used by Moroccans. Based on these statistics, studying communication patterns and channels used by Moroccan Facebook Marketplace users appears to have strong statistical foundations. With more Moroccan users, more used cars for sales and more buyers would participate in the selling-buying process on Facebook Marketplace, thereby making communication patterns and channels easier to observe and study.

Patterns of Communication: Concept Definition

Various as they are, definitions of patterns of communication share several pieces of meanings, which should be synthesized to produce and establish a precise idea of what is meant by ‘patterns of communication’. Reviewing literature revealed some distinctive definitions in recent studies. Communication patterns could be conceived of as the “repeated exchanges of messages” (Reis, 2009: 1024). Similarly, they can be defined as “the

repetitive flow and exchange of information within a network” (Sorenson (ed.), 2011: 26). Another sophisticated study approaches communication patterns as rituals and regular or routine activities (Sorenson (ed.), 2011: 26). Besides, it illustrates that “the frequency and nature of information exchange is a part of communication patterns” (Sorenson (ed.), 2011: 26). Thus, it could be inferred that the repetition of ways of exchanging messages and information constitutes a ‘pattern’ of communication.

In fact, patterns of communication should be understood in the light of other insightful studies conducted by communication scholars and researchers. They see “verbal communication processes” “as patterns of interconnections or as relational states, whether they occur between two people or between an individual and a larger audience” (Reis, 2009: 267). This means that patterns of communication are often regarded as the process of interpersonal or public verbal communication.

McCool (2009) categorizes communication patterns into high-context patterns and low-context ones. The former emphasizes “external signals, including mannerism, eye movement, and touch” while the latter “focuses on the explicit message through precision and content” (2009: 30). High-context communication focuses on content and uses language effectively along with being explicit and concise. Low-context communication tends to be implicit, focuses on context, employs language ineffectively, and it is characterized by flowery (McCool, 2007: 6).

To further understand the meaning of communication patterns, a close look can be deduced from the meaning of ‘speech patterns’, which are determined as “the way an individual speaks, including the rate of speech, the use of filler words, and the use of pauses and hesitations” (Stone (ed.), 2023). Hence, communication patterns would constitute the style which distinguishes a speaker’s speech from other speakers. These patterns are said to have the ability to “convey confidence and competence” (Stone (ed.), 2023) and other states of the speaker. Thatcher’s (2012: 5) concept of communication patterns, which analyses patterns of social groups, resembles this previous one. For him,

“Communication patterns are usually the only tangible manifestation of deeply rooted, yet hidden conceptions of the self, thinking patterns, and social behavior, and thus, a miscommunication is not simply an improper transfer of information.”

Interested in how social groups have distinctive patterns of communication, Thatcher (2012) sees them as observable traits that mark a style of communication of a social group from another.

Further, communication patterns can also be referred to as traits constituting a style of communication are the researcher who uphold them as “conversational traits” which include “level of formality, level of directness and explicitness, and show of emotion” (Trusty et al, 2002: 264). Accordingly, patterns of communication would create a style of communication that is characterized by how formal a speech is, how explicit it is, and how emotional and effective it is.

Based on the previous definitions of communication patterns, it is concluded that they would, hereafter, be conceived of as the traits that distinguish the styles of communication of buyers and sellers who use Facebook Marketplace to buy used cars. Provided that no field research can uncover all the human communication patterns, this study is an attempt to analyze the patterns which the participants exhibit.

Channel of Communication

In this context, literature will be revisited to indicate how channels throughout different works take the meaning adopted in this study. They are regarded as the roadway or “the way in which flow of information occurs from one person to another” (Kaushik, 2023: 340). Sang et al. (2014: 317) suggest a similar definition that sees the channels of communication as “the medium, the path or even the actual frequency range used to convey information from a transmitter to a receiver.” They exemplify these channels by radios and telephones. Likewise, Corcoran (2010:26) believes that channels of communication constitute “the main types of media used (for example, television, leaflets, face-to-face).” In accordance with the previous illuminations, channels of communication are defined as the pathways through which communication is carried out between people.

Channels are seen as “the path through which the information is transmitted” (Shankar, 2019), can include multiple manifestations such as email, radio, television, telephone, etc. Pedersen et al. (2021:91) argue that “typical communication channels include email, phone, and social media.” However, this meaning of a channel does not refute the fact that face-to-face communication is also another form of communication channels. Musadiq (2019:389) highlights “interactive channels of communication like face-to-face communication and phones” and considers them among the usual communication channels. Joseph and Thattil (2021:102) speak of “different channels of communication like face-to-face interaction through the internet, mobile phones, etc.” In this paper, channels of communication are defined as the pathways via which exchange of information and messages occurs, and they include face-to-face communication, smartphones, Facebook, Messenger, WhatsApp, phones, computers, tablets, etc.

It is possible, in this age of digitalization, to find communication traveling or flowing through more than one channel between two individuals. To explain, for two individuals in two different locations, communicating

using WhatsApp would require, for example, a smartphone, the WhatsApp application, and their verbal (oral or written) communication. As a result, their communication would appear to travel through three tubes as it is shown in figure 2:

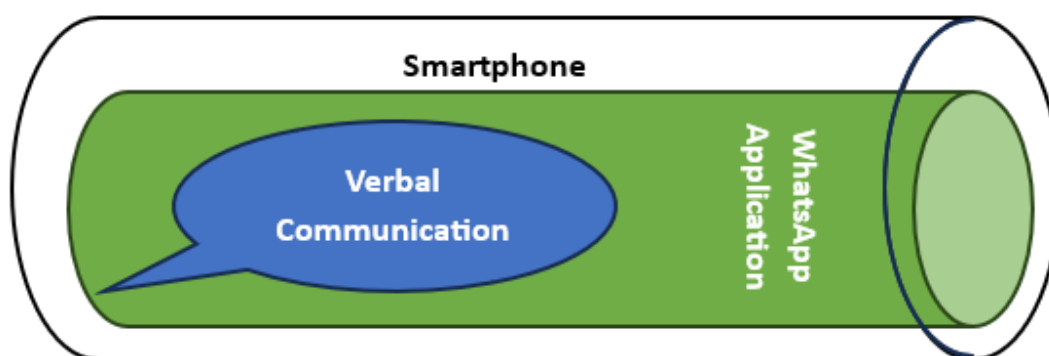


Fig. 2. Channels within Other Channels of Communication.

The buyer and the seller, speaking to each other through WhatsApp, are well aware of what channels they are employing as well as the value or significance of these channels. In this study, an analysis and examination of the participants' use of different channels shall be provided.

Using a channel that leads to another channel of communication will also be studied in this paper while enquiring about the channels used by sellers and buyers to find and buy used cars announced on Facebook Marketplace. In literature, QR (Quick Response) code has been considered as a channel that leads to another. It is said that it "provides the mean to access a second channel" (Lawson et al, 2019: 62). QR code must first be scanned to lead to another channel which may be an image, a video, a website, etc. and it is this second channel that contain the message. Channels of communication are going to be studied in accordance with this perspective.

Another way of looking at the use of channels of communication could resemble the way in which the TV show director Chuck "Lorre found a way to create his own channel within a channel" (McCracken, 2012: 104) after having a dispute with Charlie Sheen, the star of a famous TV show titled *Two and a Half Men*. Sheen, who believes that the show would not continue without him, left the show after his dispute with the director. However, the director found a way to deliver his own messages through the original show with Sheen and kept on delivering them after Sheen left. In the case of this study, not only are cars offers found on Facebook Marketplace, but also they can be found elsewhere on Facebook as we shall see. Conclusively, different are the ways in which channels are used by the buyers and sellers of used cars through Facebook Marketplace. Studying these channels would require an explanation and examination of the common uses of these channels with regards to how they are used empirically.

III. Methodology

Research design

This paper aims at examining communicative patterns governing the process of used cars buying by Moroccans through Facebook Marketplace and determining the factors leading people to resort to Facebook Marketplace rather than the traditional ways of buying used cars. To accomplish the goals of this study, a descriptive quantitative design was employed. This design is referred to as the "one that collects quantitative data at one point in time," and it can "allow a researcher to describe a particular situation through numerical data and to find trends within the research context" (Mat Roni et al, 2019: 19). To elaborate, this design assembles data from a number of people at a certain time with the intention to scientifically describe a certain phenomenon. In this study, data is gathered from Moroccan people from various cities, who have some experience of using Facebook Marketplace to buy used cars. Based on the collected data, the communication patterns characterizing the interaction of the sellers and buyers initiated by Facebook Marketplace shall be described.

Research Questions

This study is an attempt to describe the communicative patterns of Moroccan buyers and sellers who use Facebook Marketplace to buy used cars.

1. Have Moroccan people started depending on Facebook Marketplace when they want to buy used cars?
2. Does Facebook allow searching methods that are easy enough for Moroccan people to use?
3. What device is the most used to access Facebook Marketplace?

4. How do buyers reach out to the sellers?
5. What channels of communication do buyers and sellers use?
6. Do buyers trust the sellers they communicate with that are found on Facebook Marketplace?
7. What channels of communication are the best when bargaining the price between buyers and sellers?

Research Hypotheses

This paper also intends to demonstrate three hypotheses, which are listed below:

1. Facebooks has made communication easier for Moroccans, who are interested in buying used cars by providing a free online marketplace.
2. Buyers and sellers still cannot trust each other when communicating through channels of communication provided by Facebook.
3. Face-to-face communication is optimal when negotiating the price.

Participants

A number of 210 people who said that they have bought a used car via Facebook Marketplace have participated in this quantitative study. Since buyers of used cars in Morocco rarely find the cars that they are looking for in the same location where they live, this study should not be confined to a single city or region in Morocco; instead, participants from any city in Morocco can take part in the survey prepared to conduct this research since they constitute members of the same population. Otherwise, it would be quite difficult to find an important number of participants to conduct this study. Moreover, unlike countries whose laws are different from a region to another, Moroccan laws are unified and apply everywhere in Morocco which is common among all the participants in this study. All the participants are older than 18 years old because it is not usual for minors to buy cars in Morocco except with the legal consent of their guardians.

Instrument

To collect the data, a questionnaire was designed on Google forms with three demographic questions. Around sixteen questions are delivered to check how to search for a car to buy. These questions are based on how Facebook Marketplace functions and the options provided for Facebookers to use. They are not meant to capture every aspect of communication that characterizes all the interactional patterns between the buyers and sellers of used cars through Facebook Marketplace. They are, however, intended to describe and examine some of the communicative patterns which determine how buyers and sellers communicate.

Data Collection

A questionnaire designed on Google Forms platform was designed and used to collect data from the participants in this quantitative study. It was shared through the commonly used social media. Many of the participants in this study were contacted directly on their personal phones or accounts and asked to fill in the chosen questionnaire. In order to have the participants avoid unsure answers such as 'sometimes', 'it depends' or 'maybe', some answers were restricted to either 'yes' or 'no'. Thus, participants would concentrate deeper and give the answer in which they truly believe. To process the collected data, they were transformed into graphic organizers using Microsoft Office Excel and Google Forms' graphic organizers. To do so, certain statistical operations were made to ensure that data are taken from the participants and organized visually.

IV. Results

In this part, the data gathered from the survey were examined and clearly presented in graphs. To begin with, three demographic questions reveal that participants belong to different cities in Morocco. In addition, there are different age groups as well as the sample of participants consists of both males and females.

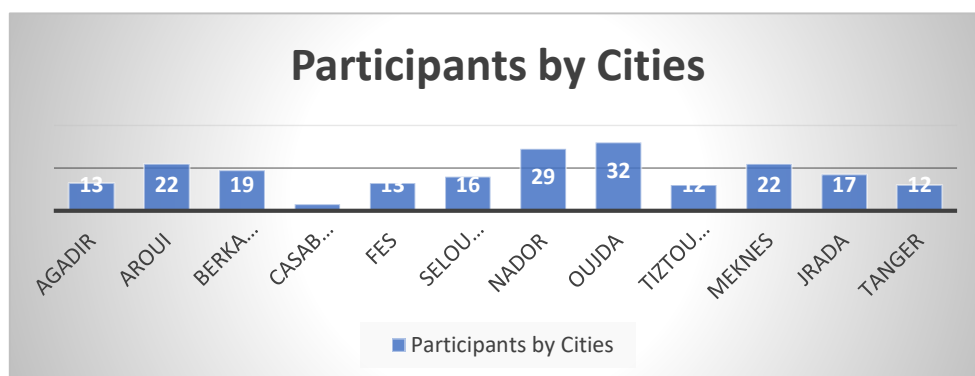


Fig. 3. Participants by Cities

figure 3 reveals the cities where the participants in this study live. There are 32 participants from Oujda and 29 from Nador. These cities have the largest numbers because these are the areas where these questionnaires started being distributed. It should be mentioned that there are other participants from other places, who could be reached by the distributed questionnaires.

Participants in this study are aged from 18 years old and older because minors rarely buy cars in Morocco because of both legal constraints and their financial incapacity to purchase cars. Figure 4 demonstrates that the largest number of participants are aged from 25 years old to 48 years old.

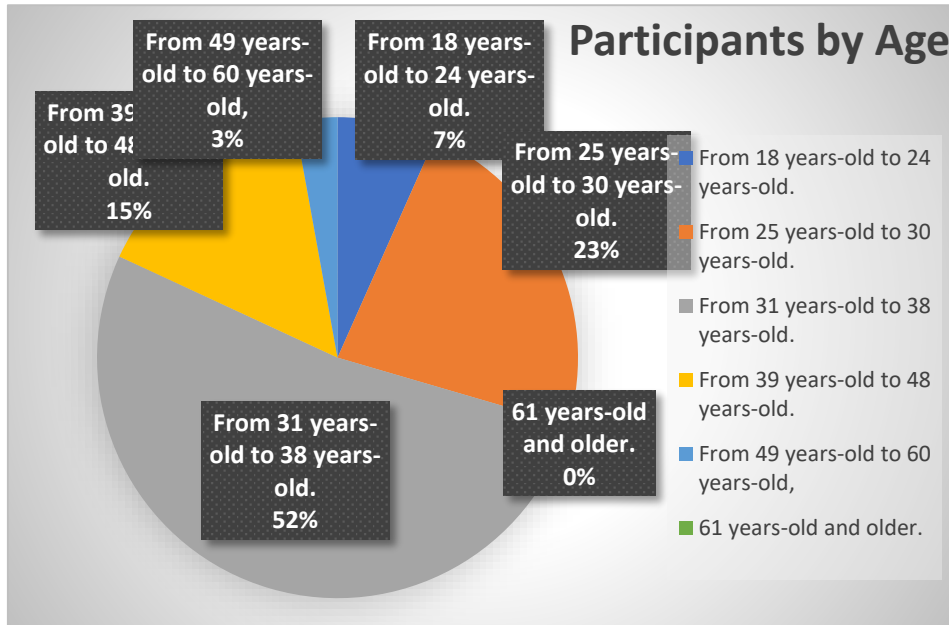


Fig. 4. Participants by Age

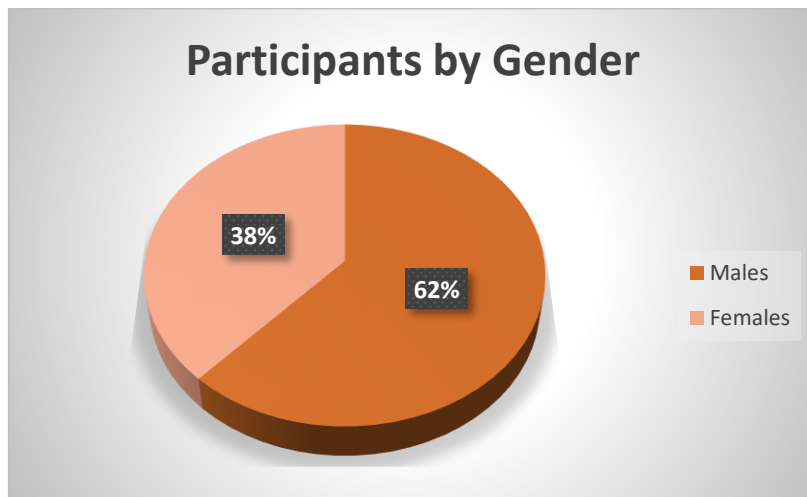


Fig. 5. Participants by Gender

Figure 5 reveals that 62% of the participants are males, while 38% are females. Perhaps, these data can display more than one fact. First of all, the number of male participants is higher perhaps because they are more likely to buy new cars. Also, these data might exhibit that females are starting to be interested in buying cars. This situation might be new in the Moroccan society because of the new changes and evolutions society has undergone.

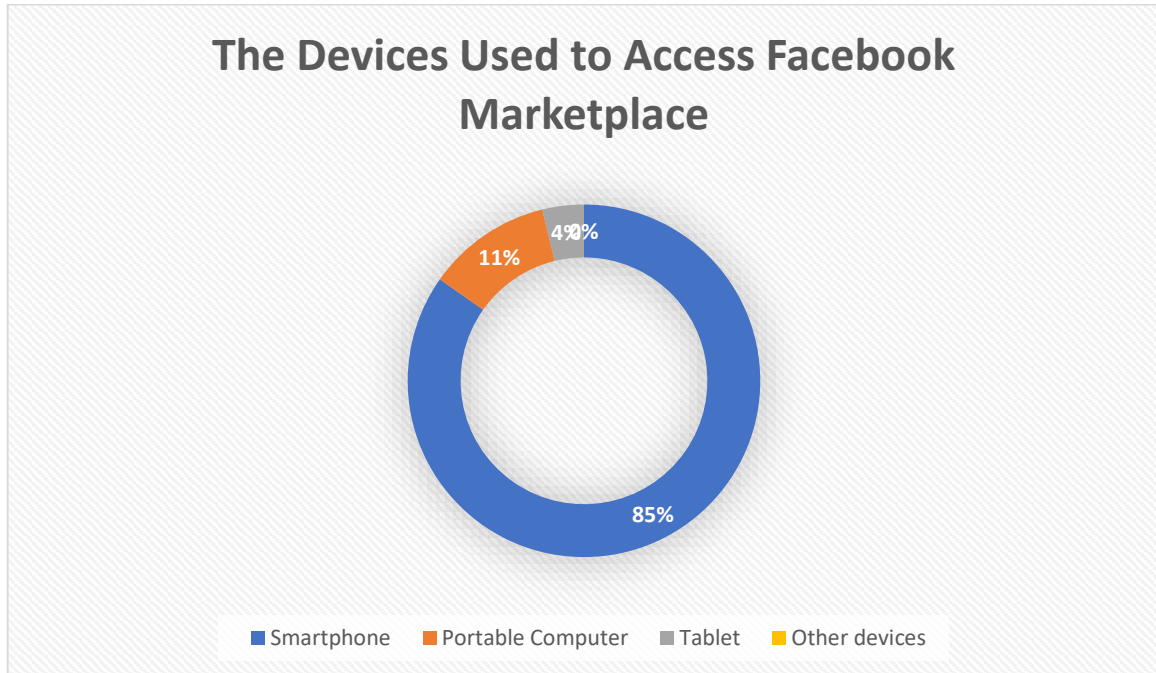


Fig. 6. The Devices Used to Access Facebook Marketplace.

In accordance with the data manifested in figure 6, the majority of users rely on their smartphones to access Facebook Marketplace. 178 participants showed preference for using their smartphones over other devices when they access this virtual marketplace. Lap-tops are also used to enter this marketplace as shown by the 24 participants who said they use their PCs. Tablets, however, are not often used by many Facebook users. Only 8 participants claimed they use it.

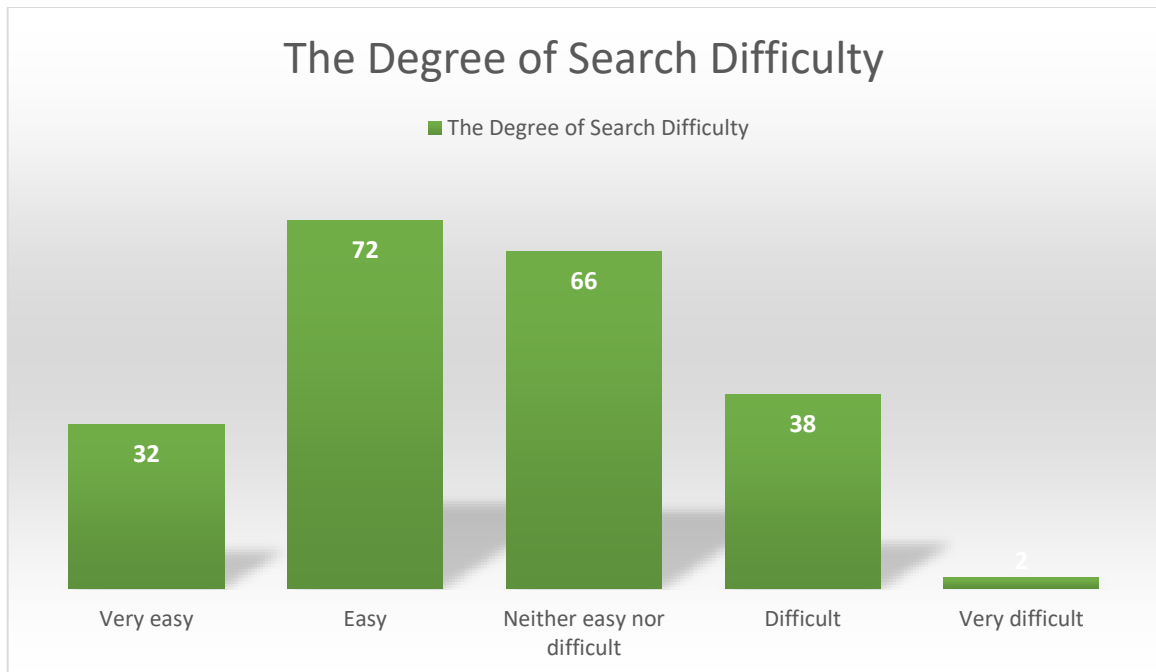


Fig. 7. The Degree of Search Difficulty

Before analyzing the data revealed on the graph, it is worth noting that the middle choice could have been chosen because of people’s human inclination to settle on a common ground so that their choice may not be mistaken. In psychology, this is known as ‘edge-aversion’ which is defined as “a human tendency to select middle items” (Haladyna and Rodriguez, 2013: 390). Studies in psychology have found results that explain this tendency

towards the choice of the middle ground. An experiment was effectuated confirms that when asked, “it is common to jump for the middle choice and avoid the extreme dimensions” (Payne, 2013: 147). Based on that the conclusion that “the middle choice is safe in many areas of life” (Payne, 2013: 147) was drawn.

It is crucial to keep in mind the previous clarification of ‘edge-aversion’ before analyzing the data in the figure below. It is exhibited, in figure 7, that there are 66 of the participants who think that the search is neither difficult nor easy in Facebook Marketplace. 72 participants believe that the search is easy, and 32 participants see that it is very easy. Also, a number of 38 participants insisted that it was difficult, whereas only 2 of the 210 participants believed it is very difficult.

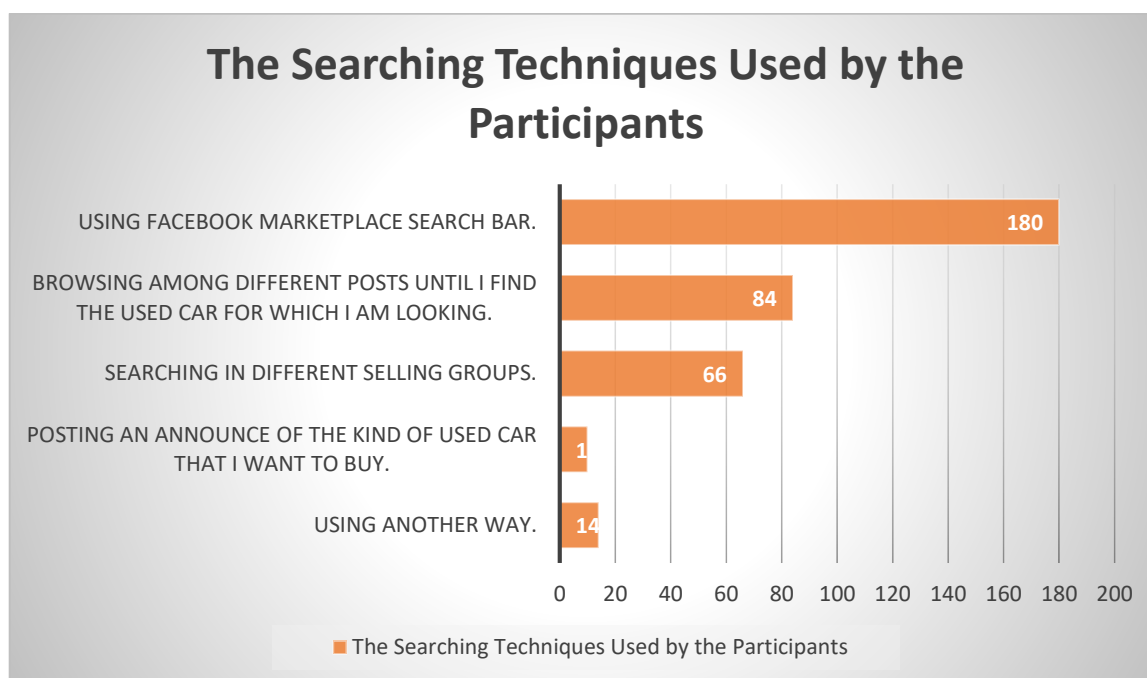


Fig. 8. The Searching Techniques Used by the Participants.

To find second-hand cars they are looking for on Facebook Marketplace, participants use many techniques. According to figure 8, 180 of the participants use Facebook Marketplace search bar. 84 participants keep browsing among different posts until they find the used car for which they are looking. Another 66 of the participants opt for searching in groups where offers of used cars are posted, whereas 10 of them argue that they post their own posts in which they write the description of the car they want, and sellers respond to their posts. In the end, 14 participants said that they have other ways to search for the cars they want to buy on Facebook Marketplace.

V. Discussion

Based on the demographic data illustrated in figures 3, 4 and 5, it can be displayed that participants belong to various cities in Morocco, and ranging between 18 years old and more. There are, also, both males and females included. Hence, it could be assumed that the chosen sample did not exclude any Moroccan who is older to 17 years old. Demographic questions can serve for two reasons. The first is that they can explain several differences between the groups or individuals among participants. The second is that they can be used to compare data with other groups in other studies in the same research area (Information Resources Management Association (ed.), 2019: 62). In this study, demographic questions provide data related to participants from Moroccan users of Facebook Marketplace. These data can illustrate both specific illustration of communication channels as well as patterns and results to be comparable with data from other studies.

Empirical questions, in the questionnaire, begin with asking the participants if they have ever had the experience of using Facebook Marketplace to purchase a car. Like elsewhere in the world where Facebook Marketplace is used “to do shopping” by and approximate number of “800 million people” (Kirch, 2021: 26), all the participants have shown their preference of using Facebook Marketplace to purchase used cars. Intriguingly, 57.14 % of the 210 participants would rather look for used cars that are near their locations. A number of 30 of the participants who do so are women while 60 of them are males. These results may challenge psychological research that holds that women fear from “from traveling in unfamiliar places” (McCarthy et al, 2013: 232). Again, gender may not be the only reason to explain this reluctancy of searching for cars that are in distant locations.

Instead, explanation of this tendency could be related to “the lack of reliable or factual travel information” about the distant locations where the sellers are (Birkett, 2021: 34). It is worth noting that participants showing this pattern of fear are possibly delivering a message to the seller saying they cannot buy the cars they are offering for sale unless they take the initiative to bring them closer to the locations of the buyers.

In figure 6, we find 178 participants who opted for using their smartphones rather than using other devices to access Facebook Marketplace. Reference to other works validates a compatibility with this result. There is a general tendency to “prefer smartphones over any other device especially among people aging from 14 years old to 34 years old.” (Mansfield, 2014: 14). In particular, data collected on Moroccans in other works supports the findings of this paper as they “seem to prefer smartphones over computers” (Burgos et al, 2020: 192). Thus, and as far as the participants in this study are concerned, it could be concluded that Moroccans who intend to purchase a used car from Facebook Marketplace offers have a wide-ranging propensity towards using their smartphone to access this virtual marketplace. This specific device may constitute one of the patterns of communication generally preferred by Facebook Marketplace customers. It should also be noted that the device in question is also a channel through which buyers can communicate with the sellers.

According to figure 7 and figure 8, participants have shown several patterns of communication they found easy and deemed necessary to find the cars they desire to buy. Using Facebook Marketplace search bar is the most used pattern as 180 participants say they liked to deal with it. Another frequent pattern is the participants’ browsing among different posts until finding a car that suits their taste. In this regard, 84 participants consider this way as useful and simple to encounter a seller with a suitable car offer. It should be noted that these ‘search pattern’ are processed, saved and used to profile Facebook users which determine the search object of Facebook Marketplace users and simplifies their search. It should be stated that Facebook has been incorporating artificial intelligence which means that a user’s searching patterns “can be used to provide better services and recommendation to the user for future visits” (Tiwari et al, (eds.), 2018: 70). Thus, patterns exhibited on figure 8 could be justified and explained in terms of how artificial intelligence has been playing a central role to make searching patterns easy.

In addition to this, figure 9 points out some of the frequently used ways of reaching out to the sellers on Facebook Marketplace. A search pattern is defined by Yun Wan (2009: 275) as “the shape of the consumer search process” or the strategy buyers employ when seeking information to help them make their buying decisions. Accordingly, 150 participants in Figure 9 displayed a pattern of sending an already prepared message set by Facebook that says “Hello, is this still available?”. This majority’s method choice might emanate from Facebook policies. It is advised by Facebook that using this method to reach out to the seller is the best to make contact, and Facebook warns against using other methods to contact sellers (Crookes, 2020). Simple though it may appear, this mechanism of sending this automated question (Is this still available?) operates with complex measures that allows Facebook to gather, rate and know several information related to the seller like “fair pricing, communication, friendliness, accurate description and punctuality” (Ertz (ed.), 2021: 140). In return, Facebook promote such offers and makes them reachable by buyers, thereby increasing the likelihood for this communication pattern to reoccur.

To examine the channels of communication used by buyers and sellers of used cars announced on Facebook Marketplace, it is important to observe data on figures 10, 11, 12, 16, and 17. Synthetically, these figures demonstrate the channels used by the participants, the preferences and the reasons making a channel better than the other one, be them pertinent to information exchanging or price negotiation. In analysis of channel choices of the participants, it appears, regardless of what channel is in question, that 62% keep the same channel of communication with which they made contact in the first place according to figure 10. In contrast, 38% of the participants say that they use a different channel after making contact via another one. With reference to data shown on figures 9 and 11, participants generally use Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp or phone calls to communicate with the sellers. Using these channels seems to be popular among the participants in this study and among others which rank Facebook and WhatsApp as the top channels of communication (Fuchs, 2021: 144). The habitual or daily use of these two channels may also be a significant factor to explain their use by the participants (Information Resources Management Association, (ed.), (2022: 1710).

There are many specific uses of each social medium. Figure 12 shows some of the reasons of choosing a channel over the other. Participants seem to be attracted to Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp or calling seller on their phones owing to the properties which characterize each of them. The choice of a channel over the other depends on the options offered by each one. Some of these options may include, oral or written communication, synchronous or asynchronous communication, visual communication, seriousness, availability, low cost, habitual use of a channel, simplicity of use and fondness of a channel. In research, it is common to find benefits of each of these channels which make them appealing to the users. WhatsApp, for instance, is preferred for being used to lower “speaking anxiety” (Fernández-Amaya, 2022: 52), and to “provide many benefits to users especially the ones with low self-esteem” (Luaran et al, (eds.), 2016: 448). Facebook Messenger is also favored over email for allowing “more chances of immediate response” (Guan, 2019: 28). Conclusively, channels of communication are chosen for their benefits and for the options they allow along with many practical reasons.

Data on Figure 16 consolidate the fact that “face-to-face communication is better than any method of communicating using technology” (Frederick, 2021: 167) because 122 of the participants thought that face-to-face communication is the best way to bargain the price. Perhaps the participants were led to choose this type of communication over mediated communication because of their awareness of its many advantages such as its promotion of “high social presence” by non-verbal characteristics like “eye gaze and nods” which help “to reduce disruptions in communication” (Khosrow-Pour, 2008: 158). Choosing face-to-face communication by the participants can be explained by other advantageous properties like allowing people to “the body language” of the other party (Jain, 2008: 42). It is crucial to understand that “mediated communication cannot achieve the same level of richness as face-to-face conversations” (Kaunda (ed), 2020: 252) which might have led the 122 participants to choose face-to-face communication.

Figures 16 and 17 present data also displays 88 of the participants, who would rather communicate through Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp or phone calls. Channeled communication can be advantageous because it can “stretch communication over spatial and temporal distances” (Fuchs, 2020: 156), so that people in different locations can communicate without moving to a common location. Channels of communication can also help timid and shy people get in touch as it allows them to hide their identities until negotiations come to an end. In case of disagreement about the price or any other instances, they would feel no pressure as they may never have to expose their “unidentifiable information” (Information Resources Management Association (ed.), 2021: 443) with which they have been negotiating the price. These 88 participants might also prefer channeled communication because it “allows information to be sent in audio, video, and text form” (Pistikou et al, (eds.), 2021: 135). It should be admitted that Facebook, for example, has “become an excellent channel of communication between consumers and businesses” (Teixeira and Ferreira (eds.), 2019: 161) although participants have expressed a propensity to face-to-face communication. In all cases, channels of communication offer lots of privileges for its users. Thus, price negotiation is also possible, in this study, for people who avoid face-to-face communication.

According to figures 13, 14, 15, and 18, it appears that the majority of the participants prefers to take someone with them to check the vehicle, have doubts about the safety of the transaction and cannot perform online transactions. This might be a result of not trusting people behind screens. Channels of communication, namely Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp and phone calls, can be used to spam buyers. Thus, data on the three figures under consideration tells us that face-to-face up till this moment remains indispensable for transactions of the kind studied to happen. Channels of communication, also referred to as media, remain untrusted elsewhere as well. Data under study can demonstrate that people are taking precautions not to be scammed. It is warned against that “in the Facebook world, especially Facebook's marketplace, scams are particularly effective at drawing people” (Beer, 2022). In fact, it is well known that online shopping scams comes in a variety of ways” such as “something you see on Facebook Marketplace” (Pedrayes, 2022: 94), and people should be vigilant so as not to fall a victim for such scams. Data shows that people do not trust channeled communication and would better communicate face-to-face preferably with someone by their side.

VI. Conclusions and Recommendations

Using Facebook Marketplace to purchase second-hand vehicles has been gaining popularity in Morocco especially among adults younger than 50 years old. Statistics about Moroccan Facebook users are exponentially growing as they are depending on this digital marketplace to buy used cars. Many conditions are facilitating access to this platform such as its simplicity, popularity, availability, low cost, the intelligent systems by which it operates and others. It has succeeded in creating a marketplace which people are browsing on regular basis if not daily to search for items to buy including cars.

Through literature, it has been established that Facebook allows access to this virtual marketplace for all users everywhere and suggests sale offers within the reach of buyers according to the data it collects about both users and buyers. In addition, Facebook suggests several ways of communication that do not necessarily compel users to stick to Facebook Messenger or Facebook comment as an only way to communicate. Instead, it allows sellers to share WhatsApp contact, email, phone numbers, etc. Thus, users feel free to opt for whatever channel they want.

In the field study, the instrument questionnaire used to collect the data has helped collect both demographic and empirical one about the participants in this study. Then, these data were processed and examined to help the questions leading this study meet the hypotheses suggested as answers so as to validate or refute them. On this foundation, the first hypothesis can be confirmed because Facebook has, as data shows, facilitated and made buyers and sellers within the reach of each other with no mentionable cost. Furthermore, data, presented on figures 13, 14, 15 and 18, confirms the second hypothesis that buyers and sellers still cannot trust each other when it comes to buying or selling cars online. Moreover, the third hypothesis face-to-face communication better than channeled communication has also been proven as far as the data of this study are concerned.

Many other conclusions could be drawn from this study. The participants do not use a single pattern of communication. They have different ways of reaching out to the sellers and communicating with them, be it

through a channel or face-to-face. Some begin with one click to send a default message on Facebook Marketplace that says, "Hello, is this still available?" and wait for the seller to respond. Others, however, have a more direct approach of calling the seller on his or her phone number in case it was announced. Other participants use other patterns such as writing their own messages on Facebook Messenger or using video calls etc. Data have demonstrated many of these patterns that are deemed necessary to contact the sellers.

Channels of communication have a significant role to allow communication between buyers and sellers. In this study, it appears that the most popular channels of communication are Facebook Messenger, WhatsApp and phone calls. Participants have shown different preferences and justified such preferences by many reasons that make them choose a channel over the other. Nonetheless, channels have been considered untrusted because participants expressed their fear from online transaction, and they needed someone else to accompany them when checking the vehicles because they have doubts about the safety of the transaction.

Face-to-face communication has been shown as crucial because almost no participant can make the transaction without encountering the seller. This type of communication, according to the data, has the ability to eliminate doubts about the transactions and the participants insist on meeting the seller, checking the used car before buying it and they even need someone else to be present with them.

Studying channels and patterns of communication when it comes to similar areas of research require objective description of the details shown by the data collected. Therefore, it is recommended that researchers should be aware of such details and pay close attention to the smallest pieces of information, so that analysis can be more accurate. It is also advised to use applications and data organizers in order to simplify data examinations and analyses. Research questions should also be clearly stated, and hypotheses suggested as potential answers for such questions should be a map for the researcher to check whether or not it would be sufficient to satisfy the research questions.

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