



Social Media Impact on Womens' buying behaviour

**Investigating the Impact of Social Media like TikTok on
the French Women Buying Behaviour**

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Bachelor's thesis

April 2022

International Business

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Social Media Impact on Womens' buying behaviour, Investigating the Impact of Social Media like TikTok on the French Women Buying Behaviour

Jyväskylä: JAMK University of Applied Sciences, April 2022, 32 pages

Degree Program in International Business, Bachelor Thesis

Permission for web publication: Yes

Language of publication: English

Abstract

Social media usage is increasing year on year, for example, in 2015 there were 2.7 billion users. TikTok is the 6th most used social media in the world. We decided to study the TikTok app as our research topic because it is the latest social media to emerge with significant growth especially among the Z generation. The purposes of this research are to gather knowledge from existing studies and a qualitative survey in the form of a questionnaire to explore French generation Z women views and perceptions of TikTok as a social media platform. From these responses, we analysed 6 main themes: the perception of TikTok and brands, as well as influencers, advertising, customer experience and behaviour. We identify top three TikTok results factors influencing consumer behavior: the degree of entertainment, the source of advertisement and the advertising frequency. Future research can be aimed at identifying other factors of personalization on TikTok and their associated impact on consumer attitudes. Another line of research could be the effects of different types of personalization depending on the advertising format.

Keywords/tags (subjects)

Advertising, consumer behavior, brands, influenceur, social media, generation Z, TikTok

See Project Reporting Instructions, section 4.1.2

Miscellaneous (Confidential information)

No confidential information in this thesis

For example, the confidentiality marking of the thesis appendix, see Project Reporting Instructions, section 4.1.2

Contents

1	Introduction.....	2
1.1	Background, motivation, and purpose	3
1.2	Research objectives, questions and approach.....	3
1.3	Thesis structure.....	4
2	Literature review	5
3	Research methods and implementation	13
3.1	Research context.....	13
3.2	Research design	13
3.2.1	Research philosophy.....	14
3.2.2	Research purpose	14
3.2.3	Research approach	15
3.2.4	Research strategy/method/s.....	15
3.2.5	Methodological choice	15
3.2.6	Time horizon	15
3.3	Data collection	16
3.4	Data analysis	16
3.4.1	Qualitative data analysis.....	16
3.5	Ethical considerations	17
4	Research Results	17
4.1	Perception of TikTok	17
4.2	Perception of brands.....	18
4.3	Perception of influencers.....	18
4.4	Advertisement.....	19
4.5	Experience.....	20
4.6	Consumer Behavior.....	20
5	Discussion	21
5.1	Limitations, reliability and validity	21
5.2	Answering the research questions.....	22
5.3	Dialogue between key results and knowledge base.....	24
5.4	Compliance with research ethics guidelines.....	25

6	Conclusions.....	25
6.1	Key Findings	25
6.2	Managerial implications.....	26
6.3	Recommendations for future research.....	26

Figures

Figure 1	“Key factors influencing the purchase intention of activewear: an empirical study of US consumers” (Ting Chi, 2018)	11
Figure 2	<i>Proposed Research Model</i>	13
Figure 3	Word Frequency Query.....	16

Tables

Table 1	Top three TikTok impact factors on consumer behaviour base on empirical evidence from the survey (a sample of verbatim quotations).....	24
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background, motivation, and purpose

In January 2022, according to Data Reportal (see Appendix 1), 58,4% of the Mondial population (4,62 billion people) used Social Network (SN) applications, which represented more than half of the world. The use of SN is increasing year after year, for example, in 2015 there were 2.7 billion users, which shows the capacity for increasing the amount of SN users. Indeed, according to the same source, we can also see that the average time the world's population spends on SN is about 2h27 per day. This shows that SNs are very important in everyday life. Moreover, Data Reportal shows that TikTok is the 6th SN used in the world, about 1 billion people are using this application regularly; also, the most used SN platform remains Facebook with 2,91 billion active users, closely followed by Youtube with 2,6 users and WhatsApp with 2.000 million.

We decided to study the TikTok SN application as our research topic because it is the latest appearing SN with an important growth especially within the young generation. Indeed, we wish to show through our investigation the TikTok influence on SN users. Our motivation for this research topic comes first of all because we are ourselves users of this SN application; secondly, because our friends also use it. Therefore, it is important for us to better understand the high interest of the young generation about this application.

The purpose of our investigation is to study the impact of Social Media (SM) TikTok on women consumers' buying behaviour and its influence on consumers' brand choice.

1.2 Research objectives, questions and approach

The aim of this study is to explore the impacts of the TikTok social network on French women of generation Z, in particular on purchasing behaviour. The objectives of this survey are to gather knowledge from existing theories and qualitative survey in form of questionnaire to explore your views and opinions on TikTok as a marketing platform.

For this survey we have one main research question:

RQ1: How TikTok impacts French Women Generation-Z buying behaviour and their relationship with brands?

RQ1.1: What are the factors reflecting the TikTok Impact on French Women Generation-Z buying behaviour?

This study is carried out by applying an deductive approach.

Many brands have started to use TikTok as a new marketing tool and companies such as Ryanair, Zara, Coca-Cola, Tinder, Netflix, and Gymshark have started to implement themselves on this SN. These companies are involved in enticing these users and assessing the impact it has had on TikTok users by carrying out semi-structured surveys. This is allowing us to better understand the French Women Generation Z's thoughts on brands or product purchases via TikTok using this explorative feed. To aim for a better understanding on how these brands have a powerful impact on this generation and understand what leads a viewer to be a consumer. Identifying the aspect of a brand advertisement that is reaching a large audience as well as understanding the development.

The essence of TikTok and its content is mainly based on authenticity and other unfiltered feedback. Since French Female Generation Z consumers get inspired by social network influencers, brands decided to target influencers in order to promote their product. We analyze through a qualitative survey in the form of questionnaires how French females from Gen Z interact with brands, if they are ready to buy their product and how brands succeed in reaching them.

1.3 Thesis structure

This thesis consists of a total of six chapters. The first chapter is an introductory chapter to explain the context and then to explain the motivations that led us to study this topic and the objectives that we set for this research. In addition, in this first chapter we explain our questions and the approach to the research. In the second chapter of our thesis, we present the main concepts from the different works that have already taken place on this topic. This allows us to gather knowledge and information to be able to discuss this information in the research. The third chapter covers the research design. In the fourth chapter, we present the data collected through a qualitative sur-

vey in the form of a questionnaire. In the fifth chapter, we analyse the results in relation to the initial objectives and research questions. Finally, in chapter 6, we discuss the limitations of this research and present future research to deepen the subject.

2 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Alongside the new uses of the Internet since the beginning of the century, the advent of social media has changed the attitude of Internet users and influences the way they interact. Several billion people are now interconnected. In 2019, active daily social media users represented 43% of the world's population, with an average spending of three hours per day. Social media is generational, with a usage by 90.4% of Millennials, as compared to 77.5% for Generation X and 48.2% for Baby Boomers¹. Consumers are increasingly shifting from traditional ways to social media in order to search information, make purchase decisions, consume and share their experiences (Glynn Mangold et al., 2009). As a result, social media, primarily intended for their users, also provides advertising benefits for companies.

Indeed, 74% of consumers rely on social networks for their purchasing decisions³. In 2019, the global digital ad spending reached \$333 billion US dollars, and is expected to grow steadily to more than \$517 billion by 2024. The analysis of the data, and its fast collection, over an increasing number of users and across geographic boundaries, is a key targeting tool for advertising companies. Social media has a hybrid role, on the one hand, social media allows consumers to communicate with each other and, on the other hand, it allows companies to communicate with consumers. Each social media has its own particularities in terms of audience, number of users, number of interactions, etc. Companies must therefore analyse the possible alternatives in order to choose the best way to communicate with their target audience.

2.2 Social Media

Social media is a “consumer-generated media that describes a variety of new sources of online information that are created, initiated, circulated, and used by consumers intent on educating each

other about products, brands, services, personalities, and issues” (Blackshaw and Nazzaro, 2004). Social media follow a goal-derived categorization that users differentiate on the basis of goals and usage occasions. Social media main categories include social network, media sharing, microblogging, bookmarking sites and social news⁶. Social media may belong to one or more categories. Social network is a social media that connects people having the same interests and background, example includes Facebook and Instagram, as well as LinkedIn, a business networking site. Media sharing website offers to its user to share different types of media, it is sub-categorized according to the nature of media sharing, as video sharing and hosting sites like YouTube, photo sharing sites like Instagram and music sharing sites as TikTok. Microblogging site allows its users to share comments or thoughts, examples include Twitter and Facebook. Bookmarking site is aimed for its users to search, save, organise and share links to online resources and sites, such as Pinterest. Social news allows its users to post stories or links to external articles, the posts are subject to user votes, the one with the most votes will be posted first, with Reddit for example.

Every day, the Millennials connect to Facebook, Twitter, and especially to Instagram and Snapchat. The Millennial generation is defined as those born between 1981 and 2000. The millennial generation is reported to be more technologically advanced than its predecessors⁷. Within the Millennials, also known as generation Y, has emerged the generation Z, also known as generation C for ‘connected’. Generation C is defined as those born after 1990, they are truly digital natives because they were born after the popularisation of the internet and have grown up with improvements in technology.

2.3 TikTok

Since 2017, the new video-sharing social networking service TikTok, owned by the Chinese company ByteDance, has reversed trends in the use of social media. The company became the most popular social media in the world, among younger generations. TikTok offers to its users the possibility not only to watch, but also to create videos, as well as participate in lip-sync or challenges activities. TikTok offers a greater variety of features, as compared to other social networks such as Instagram, Facebook, YouTube or Snapchat. TikTok became an inevitable app for the younger generations with hyper-connected users and strong communities. TikTok is offering a new social media advertising model.

Actual research are designed to describe the variables impacting social media advertising, without distinguishing between the different platforms. Moreover, no consumer behaviour research has been conducted, to date, regarding TikTok platform. In order to analyse the efficient advertising strategic approaches, this research focuses on the influence that advertising features on the consumer attitudes toward TikTok as a retail platform. It is providing an insight for marketers to seize the opportunity to advertise and use TikTok as a retail platform.

The Chinese Tik Tok application created in September 2016 has exploded since its internationalisation in 2018. In 2020, TikTok was the most downloaded App in the world. The concept of short videos particularly appeals to the Generation C, who even prefer it to Instagram. TikTok video creators have access to filters, and multiple soundtracks to accompany the videos, as well as user-friendly editing functions. Users are strongly encouraged to interact with others through 'reply' videos and challenges, as well as 'duets', a feature for users to duplicate a video to add their contribution.

TikTok success can be explained by the relation between its features offering and the Generation C five main key attributes. The first is that they love creating and mashing content. Mashing is combining material from different sources to create new content. The second attribute is their tendency to form active communities on social media in which they participate in different discussions and get involved in cultural conversations. The third attribute is their desire to be in control of their own lives and express themselves. They are content with complexity and desire to work in creative industries and be less restricted by rigid social structures (by David et al., 2012). In addition, research has shown that Generation C is the most visually sophisticated of all generations. Among the Generation C, 69% are using their mobile phones to receive and distribute content and 64% are engaging in at least one type of content creation. On average, an individual has 8 social media accounts¹¹. There are five types of social media users, depending on the number of platforms on which they are active. On the population, 20% are Cold- Feet, rarely usage of social media, 13% are Social Ghosts, little usage, and interaction on social media, 28% are Brand Opportunists, generate a lot of brand commitment, 20% are Communic'Actives, representing women who are active in social media and generate little brand engagement, and 20% are Young Addict Fans, representing a young segment of the population, very connected to social media.¹² (Exhibit 1).

TikTok users Are the Young Addict Fans, composed by Millennials and Generation C social media users.

2.4 Social Media Users

Users are constantly feeding social media with diverse and varied content. The user profile is a central element of social media. Each user must register on social media and save personal data before being able to use it. In general, social media do not allow unregistered users to access the content of registered users. The profile is therefore a personal record that is structurally identical to all users. This common structure makes it possible, by means of algorithms, to connect this element of a profile with this element of another profile.

Social networks collect a large amount of information about users' interests every day, which provides a precise targeting for advertisements. Of course, each social network offers different options. The perceived trustworthiness of a media influences the consumer impression on the credibility of the given information (Dr. Robert A. Sevier, 2008). Moreover, research showed that advertising was generally accepted by its users as long as the social network remained free (Kelly, Kerr & Drennan). In other words, users do not accept advertising if they pay to use the service. Therefore, the selection of the media aimed for advertisement will influence consumer's attitude.

Consumers are shifting from traditional media towards social media for information searches and purchasing decisions as social media is perceived as more reliable for information, as compared to corporate-sponsored promotional communications. The traditional model of advertisement may not correspond to the level of consumer expectations; indeed, customers are looking for interesting and funny interactions with companies. Previous studies demonstrated that celebrity endorsement influences the customer attitude toward the brand (Petty et al., 1983).

Celebrity endorsement have been used as a communication tool for marketers to engage with consumers, however, social media generates its own celebrity model, called 'Influencers'.

Given the number of people these social media platforms reach, companies are increasingly using social media platforms as advertising tools.

Advertisement strategy must consider the TikTok trend and Advertising must follow this trend and adapt to users.

2.5 Advertising

The social media age has brought the anonymous to the forefront, alongside celebrities, they are called influencers. Influencers refer to individuals “who became famous via their social media presence, as opposed to traditional celebrities who are famous from film, music and TV shows” (Khamis et al., 2016). Consumers perceive a stronger connection toward influencers (Tran and Strutton, 2014) and a stronger authenticity (Stefanone et al., 2010). Influencers are recognized as ex-perts in their field and have a perfect command of social media, a strong popularity and generate a lot of commitment by a cohesive community. Studies show that an influencer’s number of followers is positively related to consumers’ attitudes, such as likeability and perceived popularity (Marijke De Veirman et al., 2017). Consumers perceive an Influencer as more trustworthy, having a stronger presence and felt more envy toward social media influencers than traditional celebrity endorsers (Maryam Mohsin, 2020). Moreover, influencers are perceived as more ‘down-to-earth’, having more proximity with his or her community.

Consumers aspire to have content that is customised to their interests as well as relevant. Marketers use personalization to reach their audience individually and improve the relationship with consumers in order to influence their brand attitude. Users are receptive to personalised advertising that is adapted to their lifestyles. With the features of TikTok, videos can be categorised by type with musical, challenges, storytelling, humoristic and daily activities. Therefore, preferred type of content can be an aspect of personalization. In TikTok, communities are formed by individuals with the same interests, lifestyle, or aspirations. To strengthen the bonds with his or her community, influencers and endorsers often give a name to their community, make content based on demand, install proximity and support to the community so that followers feel an exclusive sense of belonging. Based on data collected, match between the user interest and the product advertised can be an aspect of personalization. Therefore, advertising personalization independent variables are further analyzed with products interests and preferred type of content.

Entertainment in ads is qualified as “lively, amusing, imaginative, or clever” (Aaker and Bruzzone, 1981). The advertisement should therefore be attractive and a source of amusement throughout its viewing. Emotional and experiential dimensions are associated with the notion of entertainment. Entertainment is positively related to the capture of viewers’ attention (Josephine & Woltman, 2003) and improving brand attitudes (Johannes Ahlse et al., 2020). Examples of positive entertainment in selected advertisements include humour, visual imagery, upbeat music, or creative story. TikTok is an entertainment platform, a majority of video creators are famous for their fun and originality and takes up the characteristics of the examples mentioned above. By having entertaining advertising, viewers are more likely to put the audience in a good mood and therefore, decrease their resistance to be persuaded. Creative content has a direct influence on purchase intentions (Dr Robert et al., 2008).

TikTok offers two formats of advertising. On one hand, TikTok offers company-created communication by means of an advertising in the app opening or in users’ feed. On the other hand, TikTok offers user-generated communication by means of advertisement through influencers or celebrity accounts, as well as the advertising in form of a challenge, taken up by hashtags for users to participate and interact regarding the advertised brand. Social media accentuates the power of consumer-to-consumer interactions in the marketplace, by enabling one person to communicate with hundreds/thousands of consumers and therefore, creates word-of-mouth. According to Garretson, “Consumers increasingly use digital media not just to research products and services but to engage the companies they buy from as well as other consumers who may have valuable insights”. Any content created and published by a contributor is called user-generated content (UGC), for example, the post of an individual sharing his purchase experience on social media. UGC is a type of electronic word-of-mouth. The "push-pull" model of marketing communication demonstrates that consumers control the flow of information, making their attitude towards advertising a critical factor in determining whether a message is received. Consumers have the opportunity to create, publish and disseminate messages via the web, both individually and collectively.

The objective of advertising is to inform consumers, in order to reinforce the audience impression, marketers use repeated broadcasting of advertising. Repeated broadcasting is aimed to remind the audience, strengthen the information as well as reduce the audience resistance to be persuaded. Advertising frequency has a direct influence on the audience’s attitude toward the brand

and their purchase intentions (Harris, 2019). However, high frequency of advertising has negative effects on the audience, including a boredom feeling and less persuasion toward the advertisement. Therefore, the advertising frequency influences the effectiveness of an advertising. Advertising by an influencer is perceived as credible by the audience. If an influencer or an endorser restricts their number of advertisements, it is resulting in increased credibility on the advertised products.

2.6 Purchase intention

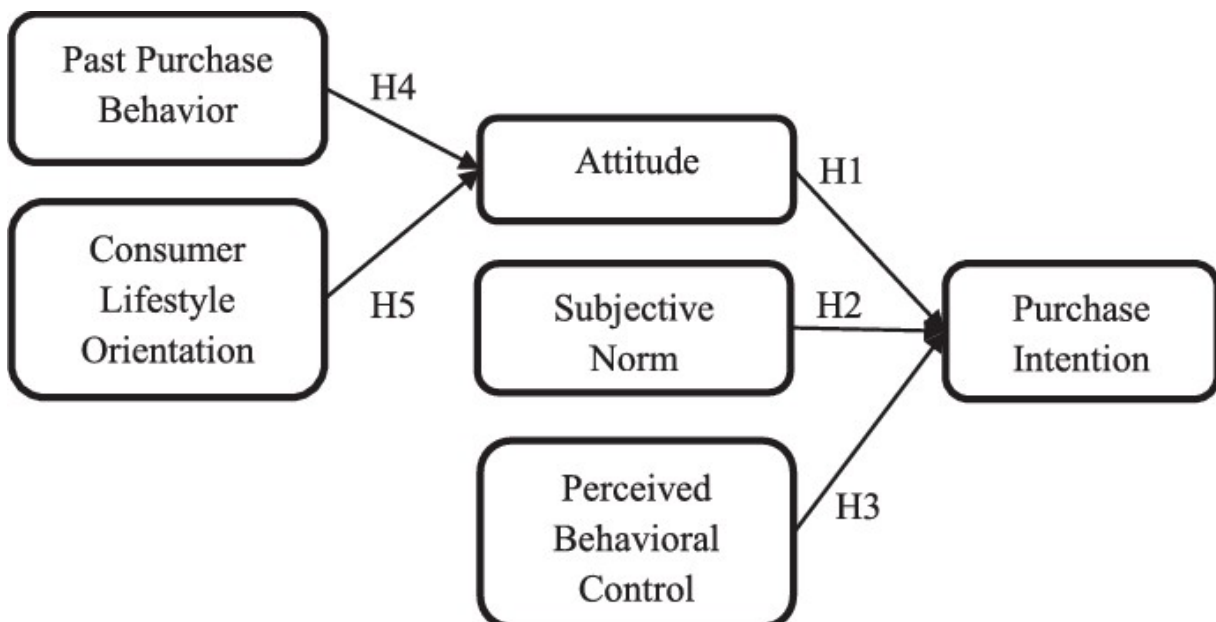


Figure 1 “Key factors influencing the purchase intention of activewear: an empirical study of US consumers” (Ting Chi, 2018)

According to the authors (Figure 1), the customer's behaviour is influenced by various factors, including past purchase behaviour, consumer lifestyle orientation, attitude, subjective norm, perceived behavioural control.

2.7 Identified Gap(s)

The motivations for using TikTok were studied by Li Xu et al. (2019), in order to understand the reasons that lead users to use the TikTok social media. Their study identifies and profiles the motivations of users. The results of their investigation identified different types of user motivations and understood the motivational effects. It also showed similarities in motivational effects between the social network TikTok and Instagram, as both allow access to short videos. Furthermore, Hou Liqian (2018) has identified the popularity of the TikTok app, his study showed that there is a positive relationship between product positioning, content variety, uniqueness, and perceived popularity of Tik Tok. The New Era of Influencer Marketing (Michael Haenlein & Ertan Anadol, 2020) reports about how influencer marketing has increased in relevance for many companies, especially for the fashion, beauty, and food industry. Moreover, they show that TikTok influencers marketing can be a huge success for brands and is usually directed by young's employees or interns. Through this research article we can identify how brands attract a certain segment such as generation Z who are frequent users of this type of platform. Furthermore, the analysis of the effect of the social media TikTok, on the consumer behaviour of French women has not been studied until now. Our investigation could overcome this gap as it can allow brands to better penetrate the French woman market.

2.8 Research Framework

Nowadays women are more educated and have more financial resources than before, which means that women consume more. Naresh Malhotra (2021) has studied women's consumption, shopping habits and motivation. More than the past generation, women today have more purchasing power and make their own decisions. Their motivation includes the need for power, independence, creativity, self-identity, and emotional needs. Today we are increasingly exposed to social networks, and this is not without consequences for the way we consume. Andrew T Stephen (2016), *Consumer Research in Digital and Social Media*, identified how social media influences user consumption behaviour. Analyse how emotion in the content affects the user, how to be exposed to other consumers' opinions can impact our behaviour (Figure 2).

This leads us to organise a survey for French women who use TikTok, as we take example from a previous thesis questionnaire (Martina Ngangom, 2020). After analysing our results, we discuss how brands' success in affecting women's buying behaviour while linking those two key concepts.

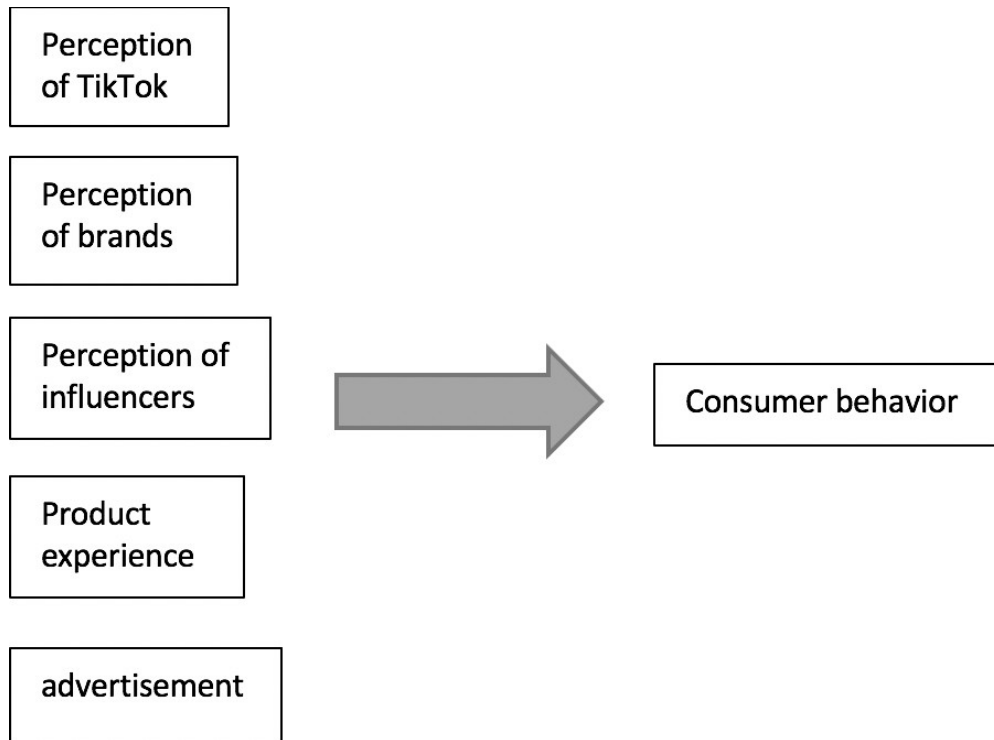


Figure 2 Proposed Research Model

3 Research methods and implementation

3.1 Research context

Our research focuses on the impact that TikTok has on its users. Indeed, we base our research on how TikTok has impacted the behaviour of French women of generation Z as well as the relationship they have with brands. Thanks to a qualitative research study in the form of a questionnaire, we were able to interact with women from generation Z to understand the impact that TikTok had on them. We asked these women to reflect on the effects of TikTok, if the fact that they saw a product or a brand on the application could influence their view of it and make them like or dislike the product or the brand. This reflection and the opinion of several women on the subject allows us to analyse their response to be able to study the subject better.

3.2 Research design

An online questionnaire is designed to collect data regarding factors affecting consumer attitudes toward TikTok platform. Research targets are French Female Generation Z, aged undergraduate

students, with a selection of respondents using TikTok social media. Participants are categorized in one group to respond to the same survey, as the research is based on a one subject design. The experimental group survey is designed to take part in a qualitative research study for our Bachelor thesis to understand your insights into TikTok and its influence on brand(s) consumption. Another variable that is to be manipulated is the advertisement degree of entertainment. The questionnaire starts collecting the participants' demographic data, and verifies the TikTok usage condition, while aiming to assess consumer attitudes toward TikTok as a retailing platform depending on the advertising source, personalization, level of entertainment, format, and frequency. Survey questions are answered via 3 demographic questions and 20 open questions. In this study, participants have been asked to participate in a qualitative survey in the form of a questionnaire to explore their views and opinions on TikTok as a marketing platform. The purpose of this study is to determine whether the use of this social media application has had an effect on your buying behavior, i.e. whether this application has influenced you to buy or consume products, and to examine any positive or negative changes in your behavior in relation to a brand. This study builds on a previous survey of Irish Generation-Z females completed in 2020 by Martina Ngangom as part of her master's degree thesis at Dublin Business School, Ireland.

3.2.1 Research philosophy

Our research philosophy is based on Interpretivism, which means that we rely on the subjectivity and interpretation of our perceptions. In effect we are relying on opinions, emotions and views, these things cannot be directly observed or even counted. In our research we asked for the opinions and views of French women of generation Z, we based our research philosophy on their opinions and experiences through TikTok. These opinions are unique to each individual, as well as the emotions and impact that the application has on the French women of generation Z. We based our data collection on survey and observation, focusing on people's subjective experiences.

3.2.2 Research purpose

We decided to use explanatory research to explore our topic which as limited information is available. We wanted to find out how brands marketed their product on the platforms and why the female generation Z was receptive to their advertisement. As TikTok is growing very fast and is now one of the most important SM, we want to assess what could happen in the future regarding the

potential of advertisement and marketing possibilities. Therefore, we decided to carry out an survey to get detailed answers that would help us answer our research questions. As we were seeking a more comprehensive understanding of the perception of TikTok and of brands, as well as influencer, advertising, experience, and customer behaviour, through the question types: why?, how?, and what?.

3.2.3 Research approach

Our research is based on the deductive approach. We have chosen to use deductive research, which consists of starting from an existing theory to develop a research strategy to test the hypothesis. This allows us to conclude based on existing theory and validate it through a questionnaire.

3.2.4 Research strategy/method/s

We chose our survey strategy to be qualitative in order to find in depth answers. As we want to understand our research topic better, we wanted our questionnaire to be filled with answers describing what they liked, didn't like or how they were using TikTok. After searching for professional articles and research papers, it became obvious that we couldn't find previous work on TikTok related to French women of generation Z; therefore, we decided to fill this gap through qualitative research. Our research strategy allowed us to find some advantages and weak points of how brands use TikTok; how satisfied the users were and what they were missing.

3.2.5 Methodological choice

Our research is based on the mono-method, which means that we use only one method for our study. We use a qualitative questionnaire. We designed an questionnaire in order to collect qualitative responses that we then analysed. This allows us to focus on a single method in order to provide a qualitative result.

3.2.6 Time horizon

We chose cross sectional research to make our research on your study as it involves looking at data from a population at one specific point in time. We wanted to collect data about how female

stress, more freedom to express, change the flow while omitting or adding details. An open questionnaire is conducted to discuss key topics and issues and allow us to store those answers and get more diversity.

3.5 Ethical considerations

First of all, our questionnaire was anonymous; so, we kept anonymous information regarding respondents in a way that they were feeling free to say what they wanted. We also put as an important point the transparency of our questions, there were no tricky questions, wrong or right answers. Then, we stipulated in our survey introduction an explanatory purpose of this questionnaire and that this questionnaire was solely for the case of a research study that would be anonymously reported. Participation in this survey was voluntary.

4 Research Results

Thanks to the data collection we made from a qualitative questionnaire with a sample of women from generation Z, we obtained a total of 23 answers. From these responses, we analysed 6 main themes: the perception of TikTok and of brands, as well as influencer, advertising, experience, and customer behaviour.

4.1 Perception of TikTok

TikTok is the first factor we decided to discuss. The first question of our questionnaire is "What is TikTok to you", 75% of the answers were "entertainment", 10% "a fun social media", 5% "a trendy application", and the rest "an addiction", "endless videos". We can see from the responses that most women of generation Z perceive this platform as an application to pass the time, to entertain themselves. There are many French women who use this SM when they need to decompress, but the negative side of this application can sometimes make its users addicted to this format, as we were able to share with you. Then we asked "When was the last time you used TikTok? How was your experience?", 90% of our respondents answered that they had used this application during the day, and the rest were only 1 or 2 days ago. In addition to those who responded today, others said they had only been using TikTok for 5-10 minutes, which may also show us the extent of this possible addiction to this entertainment platform. We can conclude that the French women of the

Z generation are very accustomed to this social network and are particularly fond of it. To finish on this factor, the last question asked them to describe TikTok in 3 words. The most similar words that came up were: hobby (unlimited entertainment and addictive scroll down); advice (lifestyle, product review, trend testing); creativity (lots of users offer lots of content, variation within the same content). All the words we received to describe TikTok were positive and once again proved that TikTok was indeed perceived as very entertaining, creative, and reaching the French women of generation Z.

4.2 Perception of brands

Our second factor is the perception of brands in order to understand the behaviour of French Generation Z. We started by asking "Which brands or influencers do you follow on TikTok?" The answers we got were very diverse for example: "I follow mostly small companies because I like to support them by buying their products and people who influence me in a positive way to get advice for my daily life"(R1), "Dior, following them inspires me for new clothes"(R12), "Gopro because they post extreme sport videos"(R14). We did not get any similar responses which shows us that TikTok is an application that contains a lot of diversity, as well as a large community of brands that have signed up to exchange with their consumers. Then we asked the question "Can you think of a time when you discovered a new brand or product on TikTok?", and again 100% of our respondents answered yes to this question. The responses were very diverse, and we had many more product quotes than brand quotes, for example "The Dyson Airwrap"(R1) "Kodac camera"(R7) "Alien computer"(R19). The French women are interested in a multitude of products and brands and so confirmed that this application had helped them discover some, so we asked them "what will help you in the discovery? The majority of responses were "because my friend sent it to me"(R12) or "that an influencer introduced them"(R4), which lead us to try and understand how generation Z women perceive influencers.

4.3 Perception of influencers

Users on TikTok have access to a wide range of content, most of which comes from individuals who are not necessarily defined as influencers. Indeed, when the application first started to become popular, only young people attracted by the novelty of the application were present. Influencers with millions of followers on Instagram had not yet taken the plunge into this new social

network. But as the application grew in popularity, influencers became more and more widespread. Today, a large part of the Instagram influencers also creates famous people on TikTok. In addition, many people from generation Z, who were not yet known at the time, have built up a strong community and have become well known directly on the TikTok app, and are now influencers. Indeed, if we take the example of the young American sisters Charlie and Dixie Damelio, they became very popular thanks to the TikTok application, in particular thanks to their dance content on the application. Today they are among the most followed influencers on the app and have a very large community. What makes influencers attractive to brands today is their community, as brands are interested in the influence an influencer has on their community. In fact, the influencers spoke about a product on his SN, and then managed to create enough publicity to make his community want to buy the product mentioned. This is an opportunity for brands looking for a new way to do influencer marketing.

In our questionnaire we focused on understanding the impact of the influencers on TikTok. We asked the participants: "What brands or influencers do you follow on TikTok and why?" The influencers mentioned were "Carla Ginola, Squeezie, Dixie Damelio, Hugo Décrypte". The vast majority of influencers quoted by our participants are young and French influencers. This allows us to understand that the French generation Z remains very attracted by content given in French-by-French influencers. Even if this generation is used to global and mostly English content, our sample showed us that they are still more attracted to French content. Furthermore, when we asked our participants "Can you tell me if using TikTok made you or influenced you to buy a product?" 100% of participants answered "yes". Our sample is therefore well aware that they are influenced in their purchasing decision when they use and follow the content of the TikTok application.

4.4 Advertisement

Brands use the TikTok application to generate advertising around their product. Indeed, whether it's through influencers, by creating content directly on the brand's account or by displaying ads directly on the application, the goal of brands is always the same and that is to influence us to buy their products or services. In our questionnaire we looked at whether TikTok made them like or dislike a brand or product. This is an interesting question because it allows us to understand the extent of the influence of the application on our sample. To this question most of the participants

answered yes. To enter more in detail one of the participants said “Of course, a trendy or humorous video can provoke interest or even attachment to the brand. The perception of a brand depends on its communication method. On TikTok, brands can use codes to get closer to their consumers and encourage sharing between users, or even a trend, such as the L'Oréal mascara which was shared as the best mascara. However, if the product does not live up to its promise, word of mouth from users can be very damaging to the image and credibility of the brand. Furthermore, inappropriate, or even controversial communication such as the size of SKIMS”(R3). It is interesting to see from this response that the content and the way the product is presented by the brand or influencer has a strong impact on the overall influence it will have on users. Indeed, as the participant points out, the use of "trends" has a strong influence effect on users, as the group effect adds excitement and interest around the product and the brand.

4.5 Experience

We wanted to find out what women of the Z generation experience through TikTok. We asked them "What are the product promotions you have encountered on TikTok?", we collected many examples of product promotions, "Video games like Fortnite"(R4), "Maybelline mascara"(R1), "Doja Cat's song, Woman"(R14). This shows us how the promotion of products is very diverse and also corresponds to people's tastes, there can be songs, like video games or even selfie videos of some products like for example RyanAir. The feedback on these types of ads has been positive, if we take the example of RyanAir, one respondent shared "I find that having humour on their products makes me want to use them because a touch of humour makes me appreciate the product"(R3), as well as another response was "one of my influencers shared the Maybelline mascara and showed us how effective it is"(R1). So we can see that French women appreciate a product promotion when they feel the authenticity and when they are distracted by a product that has been shown in a relevant or simply funny way.

4.6 Consumer Behavior

In order to further analyse the customer behaviour of our sample of French Generation Z women, we wanted to understand in more detail what made them like or dislike the TikTok application. One of our participants responded to this "There are many reasons why I like TikTok, like the power to influence people to buy things or the usefulness of staying informed about everything

that is going on in the world. What I dislike most is that it can influence people in a bad way by promoting unhealthy habits and giving bad advice related to, for example, mental illness."(R6) One of our participants replied "Seeing lip-sync or choreography taken seriously by young people - Insta is also about appearances, but they prevent thanks to copyrights, then principle of Instagram and targeted on showing one's daily life or beautiful pictures, unlike TikTok which can promote staging"(R14). Another one said "I like the fact that there are a lot of funny videos, the content is easily accessible and there is an infinity of videos, you can't get to the end of the feed like on Instagram. I don't like the fact that you can be hypnotised by the app and stay on it for hours without realising it because it's a waste of time."(R15) These three answers are interesting because they allow us to understand that to capture the attention of our sample the content that is sought is authentic and entertaining, it is through this type of content that brands can best target our sample.

5 Discussion

5.1 Limitations, reliability and validity

First of all, TikTok platform differs from other social media, by its very young users and its large portfolio of features. The sampling was done on a population that is not representing the youngest users of TikTok and solely on females. The questionnaire could be repeated for users with a younger age range and for both sexes.

Culture is an element that was not taken into account in this study. The use of TikTok and the relationship to celebrities may differ between cultures. Communication styles differ among cultures, Hofstede cultural dimensions that explain this communication variance are distance of power, individualism, and avoidance of uncertainty. Moreover, the concept of "self" is important in branding strategy, however, it is different between individualism/collectivism and masculine/feminine culture and also between generations. Further research should measure the effectiveness of various techniques in different cultural contexts to define the elements of advertising to standardise.

This research focuses on the effects of brand advertising on consumer attitudes. We explained the differences of consumer attitudes depending on their perception of proximity to the advertising source and on their perception of advertising reliability. It would be interesting to deepen other

variables that could justify the greater consumer attitudes. Examples of other factors can include consumer's loyalty or trust toward the influencer.

In addition, the personalization concept varies across cultures and is subject to interpretation. In our research, we have split it into two variables. The perceived match between a consumer's interest or lifestyle and the advertising type is not precise and can be interpreted differently by different respondents. This research concentrated on the personalization of advertising effect on consumer attitudes but did not explore the type of preferred content and the product category. Indeed, within the same community, advertising for a make-up product by an influencer making beauty videos does not have the same effect on consumers as an advertisement for a phone. Moreover, the factors used in this research as a basis for personalization are not representative of the whole concept. It is possible that other factors of personalization have a greater impact on consumer attitudes than the two we identified.

5.2 Answering the research questions

This research investigates the influence of advertising source, personalization, entertainment, format and frequency affecting consumer attitudes toward TikTok. Firstly, results highlight different advertising characteristics that affect consumer attitudes, at different levels. The variable with the greatest impact on consumer attitudes is the degree of entertainment (see Table 1 below). Viewers are demanding entertainment and is one of the reasons for which they registered on TikTok. Consumers are ready to be entertained, regardless of the source of the entertainment. The second variable having a great impact on consumer attitudes is the advertising source. Indeed, influencer advertising results in more positive consumer attitudes toward TikTok than celebrity advertising. One factor that could explain this difference is that TikTok users perceive a higher proximity toward influencers than toward celebrities. The third variable having an important impact on consumer attitudes is the advertising frequency. Viewers do not like to be overwhelmed by advertising and previous research has shown that high frequency of advertising results in decreased consumer persuasion. Our research reinforces these findings and indicates that consumers having greater attitudes under the influencer condition can be partly explained by the fact that influencers are perceived to have a lower advertising frequency, as compared to celebrities. The advertising format offered on TikTok also influences consumer attitudes. Indeed, user-generated advertising has a greater impact on consumer attitudes toward TikTok, compared to company-created

advertising. Consumers perceive a greater reliability when the advertising is made by an influencer, with TikTok users comments and experience sharing, than when the advertising is made by a celebrity, with videos at the app-opening or in the user's feed. In addition, results indicate that consumers have an improved attitude toward TikTok platform when advertising is personalised. When using the TikTok platform, two personalization factors, preferred type of content and product interest, are influencing consumer attitudes. Influencers are reported to have higher personalization than celebrities. Our results suggested that consumers value more the match between the advertised product and their interest more than the match of the type of advertising and their preferred type of content. This study emphasises the efficacy of a TikTok as a retail platform and can be a useful tool for brands' marketing. In order to target and reach more consumers as well as increase the efficiency of their advertising, brands can rely on the influencer strategy. The traditional celebrity advertising is not tailored for TikTok platform as consumers are seeking proximity with the endorser. This study shows that consumers' perceived proximity to influencers provides a powerful tool as a method for branding. Companies can take advantage of the proximity relationship established between an influencer and his community, in order to facilitate consumer persuasion and improve their attitudes. In a second phase, brands should personalise the advertising to design an effective promotion campaign. When designing the advertisement and selecting an influencer, marketers should find a 'fit' between the influencer's follower lifestyle or interest and the advertisement. TikTok data can be used in order to analyse influencer's communities that often share the same lifestyle or interest. However, the most important for brands is to design an advertising campaign with a high degree of entertainment. As a result, consumer attitudes would be maximised. Moreover, to reinforce consumer persuasion and attitudes, brands should emphasise on user-generated advertising. The optimised model of advertising should include the advertising on the influencer's TikTok account, challenges creations and encourages consumers to share their experiences. It would allow companies to increase consumer attitudes toward TikTok by increasing interactions regarding the advertised brand. Company-created advertisement can be displayed at the app-opening or in the users' feed, as a complement of the influencer strategy, as it is less efficient. Advertising made by an influencer can increase consumer attitudes in a short time, with word of mouth, however, marketers' choice for an influencer should not only rely on their popularity. Indeed, the frequency of advertisements influences consumer's attitudes. Selecting an influencer having a high frequency of advertising can have the opposite effect and reduce the attitudes toward TikTok, as consumers perceive a reduced credibility and be annoyed by too many advertisements.

Factors	The degree of entertainment	The advertising source	The advertising frequency
<p style="text-align: center;">Questionnaire answers</p>	<p>"I like the fact that there are a lot of funny videos, the content is easily accessible and there is an infinity of videos"</p>	<p>"One of my influencers shared the Maybelline mascara and showed us how effective it is"</p> <p>"I find that having humour on their products makes me want to use them because a touch of humour makes me appreciate the product"</p>	<p>"I don't like the fact that you can be hypnotised by the app and stay on it for hours without realising it because it's a waste of time"</p>

Table 1 Top three TikTok impact factors on consumer behaviour base on empirical evidence from the survey (a sample of verbatim quotations).

5.3 Dialogue between key results and knowledge base

According to Martina Ngangom (2020), and the three major themes that she identified (perception of brands, product consumption and preferred content) we can compare and identify some similarities and differences with our result. In fact, in our research as well as in her we can see that participants in her study as well as in our survey show that thanks to TikTok they feel closer to the brands. The participants in her study also added that they felt freer on TikTok and our participants did not reveal this feeling. In terms of product consumption, we can see that both studies show

that they feel strongly influenced by the content on TikTok in their product purchase decision. Finally, on preference content, our two questionnaires show that they are attracted by the fun and interactive content of the application, but in our study, we were able to identify that French women were more sensitive to French and original content. The language of the content is not a criterion that emerged in the study by Martina Ngangom.

5.4 Compliance with research ethics guidelines

As we are doing our Bachelor's research study at the University of Jamk Applied Science we follow the Jamk ethical rules as well as the Finnish rules. Indeed, as part of its RDI activities, JAMK Applied Science University is committed to the guidelines for responsible conduct of research and procedures for dealing with allegations of misconduct issued by the Finnish Advisory Board on Research Integrity. Accordingly, we must follow its rules.

To this end, we are committed to ensuring that any confidential information related to our questionnaire is kept anonymous. To inform participants in research and development projects of the interests involved in conducting research. To give due consideration to the work and achievements of other experts and researchers, respecting their work, citing their publications appropriately, and giving due credit and importance to their achievements in their own work and when publishing their results.

6 Conclusions

6.1 Key Findings

Our research study allowed us to understand better how French Female Generation Z consumer behaviour was impacted by brands and influencers on TikTok. First of all, we found out that purchasing behaviour of French Generation Z women after watching videos on TikTok showed that more than half of the participants are driven to purchase products and had made several purchases. The results of this study confirm that this application encouraged users to consume products, as they felt that the recommendations were made by genuine people like the influencers they follow. Brands advertisement also had an important role in how they were creating content,

the more the brand was using an interactive, creative approach the more the users are more likely to consume their products.

6.2 Managerial implications

To carry out our research we worked in pairs, which means that we set some management rules. We made appointments to progress our research throughout the year. We had meetings on Zoom when we couldn't meet in real life, especially because of the Covid 19 pandemic. Then we were in direct contact to provide fair work. On top of that we had several different meetings with our two thesis coordinators, which allowed us to keep in touch throughout our research study.

6.3 Recommendations for future research

Future research can be aimed at identifying other factors of personalization on TikTok and their associated impact on consumer attitudes. Another line of research could be the effects of different types of personalization depending on the advertising format.

Finally, our research does not provide a behavioural dimension for consumers to have such high attitudes toward TikTok when the frequency of advertisement is low. Further research can be made to test the relationship, one hypothesis is that curiosity mediates this relationship.

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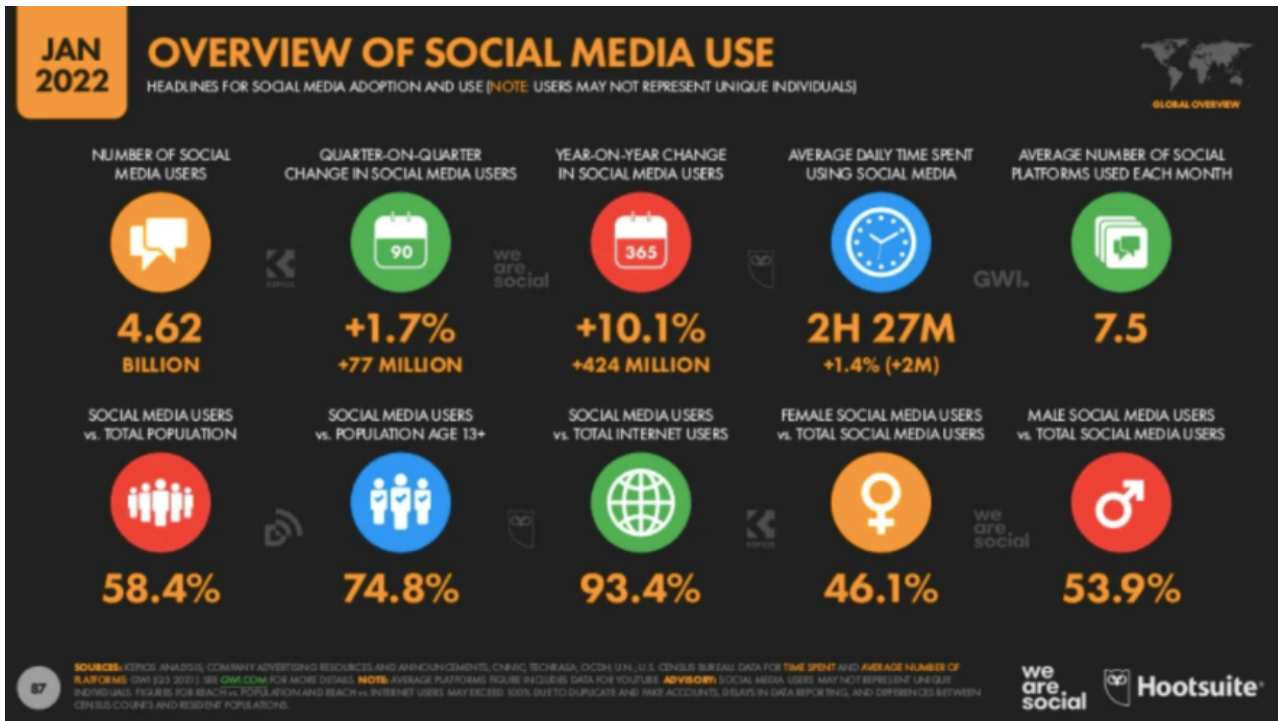
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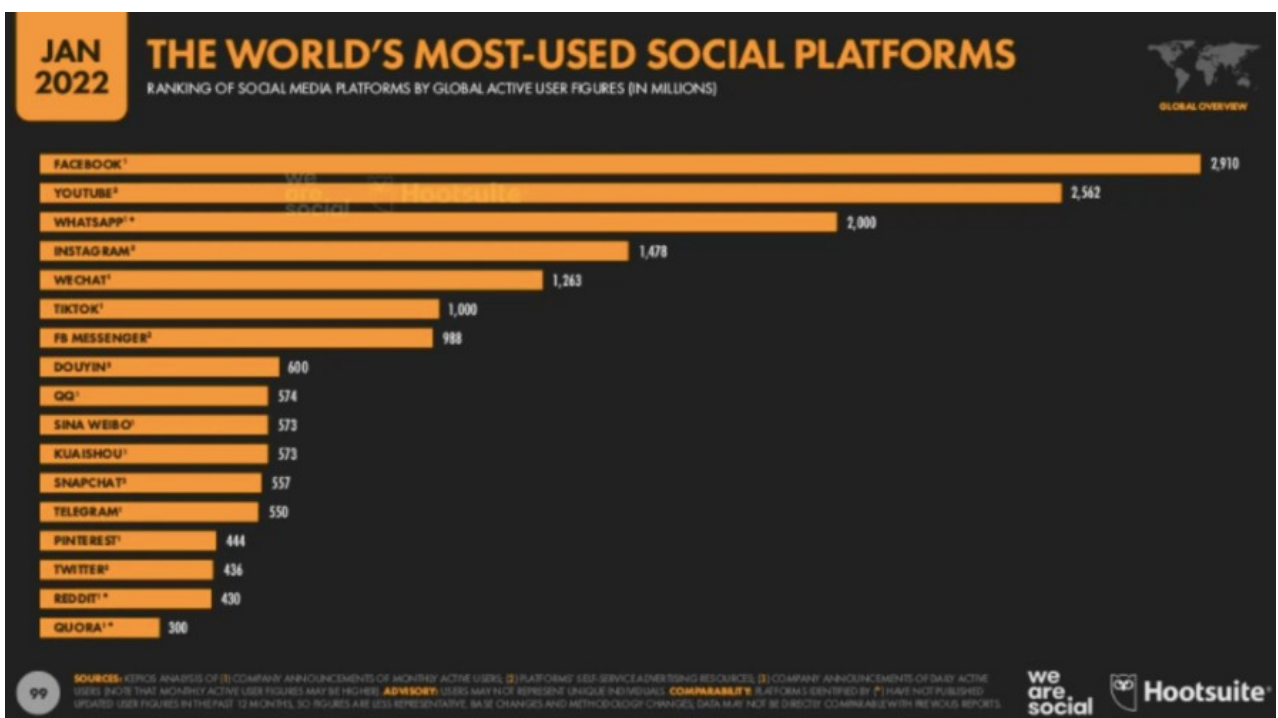
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Appendices

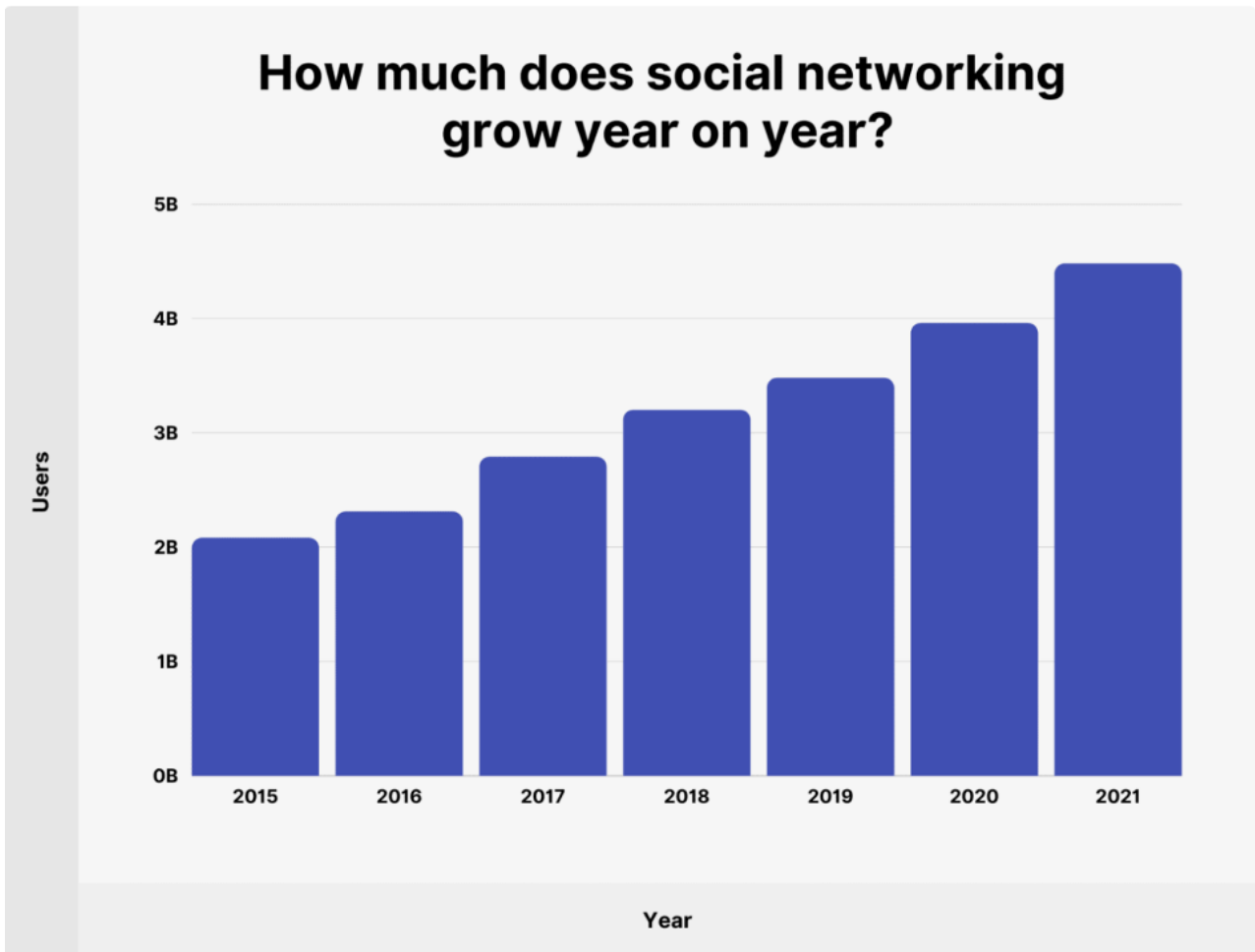
Appendix 1. Overview of social media use (source)



The world's most-used social platforms



How much does social networking grow year on year



Survey Questionnaire, Martina Ngangom (2020).**Demographic part**

DQ1. Your gender?

DQ2. Your age?

DQ3. Your nationality?

SQ1. What is TikTok to you?

SQ2. When was the last time you have used TikTok?

SQ2.1 How was your experience?

SQ3. Could you provide 3 words to describe TikTok?

SQ3.1 Please explain why you have chosen these words?

SQ4. What brands or influencers do you follow on TikTok and

SQ4.1 Why?

SQ5. Can you think of a time when you discovered a new brand or product on TikTok?

SQ5.1 Can you explain it?

SQ5.2 If not, what will help you in the discovery?

SQ7. Do you think TikTok made you like or dislike a brand or a product? Please state your reasons.

SQ8. Can you tell me if using TikTok made you or influenced you to buy a product? Please elaborate.

SQ9. What are the product promotions you have encountered on TikTok?

SQ9.1 Please share your experience

SQ10. What kind of content draws your attention toward a brand?

SQ11. Please explain what you like or dislike about TikTok? You can give a comparison with other social media platforms if you'd like.

