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# **The impact of social media marketing on the buying behaviour of millennial and Generation Z consumers**

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## **Thesis abstract**

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Social media has become an increasingly important tool for businesses looking to engage with their target audience. However, as the demographics of social media users continue to shift towards younger generations such as millennials and Gen Z, businesses must adapt their social media marketing strategies to meet the unique needs and preferences of these two groups.

The aim of this thesis was to investigate the impact of social media marketing on the buying behaviour of millennial and Generation Z consumers. Through a quantitative research approach, the study aimed to answer three main research questions: the extent to which social media marketing influences buying behaviour, popular social media platforms and approaches for marketing, and future trends for optimizing social media marketing to target and retain these target groups.

The thesis is structured into five chapters, beginning with a detailed introduction and literature review, followed by a methodology section, a comprehensive results section, and a conclusion that summarizes the key findings and discusses their implications for targeting millennial and Gen Z consumers on social media.

The main findings of this thesis indicate that social media marketing has a significant impact on the buying behaviour of millennials and Gen Z, with Instagram being the most popular platform for marketing. Personalized content and influencer collaborations were found to be effective strategies for engaging with these generations. Overall, this thesis provides valuable insights into how businesses can adapt their social media marketing strategies to effectively engage with younger generations.

<sup>1</sup> Keywords: social media marketing, consumer buying behaviour, millennial, generation Z

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## Terms and Abbreviations

<b>Millennials</b>	People who were born between 1981 and 1996 and are currently aged between 27 and 42.
<b>Gen Z</b>	People who were born between 1997 and 2012 and are currently between the ages of 10 and 25.
<b>UGC</b>	User-generated content
<b>SeAMK</b>	Seinäjoki University of Applied Sciences
<b>N</b>	Total number of participants
<b>%</b>	Percentage



# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 Background

Social media has become an indispensable aspect of daily life for people of all ages, but it holds a particular significance for millennials and Generation Z. According to a report by Statista (2022a), there were 4.88 billion social media users worldwide in 2021, and this number is expected to reach 5.43 billion by 2025. Additionally, according to the Global Digital Overview report (Datareportal, 2022), there is a current global trend in digital usage. The report reveals that the number of unique mobile phone users worldwide has reached 5.22 billion, with 4.66 billion of them accessing the internet. The global internet penetration rate stands at 59%, with the highest percentages in North America (95%) and Europe (85%). In terms of social media, the report shows that its usage is rapidly increasing, with over 4.48 billion people worldwide now using it. Among the most popular social media platforms, Facebook remains the most widely used, followed by YouTube and WhatsApp. Additionally, video consumption is on the rise, and YouTube is the most favored platform for watching videos online.

The Global Digital Overview report by Datareportal (2022) indicates that e-commerce has gained immense popularity worldwide, with the COVID-19 pandemic playing a significant role in accelerating this trend. As per the report, there are now 2.14 billion digital buyers globally. Mobile commerce is also on the rise, with some countries recording more than 50% of their online shopping transactions being carried out through mobile devices. The report underscores the sustained growth of digital usage worldwide, primarily fueled by mobile phones and social media platforms. This trend is expected to persist as digital connectivity becomes increasingly crucial for socializing, conducting business, and working.

To clarify, millennials and Generation Z are two distinct generational groups that are frequently compared and contrasted because of their unique experiences and characteristics. Individuals who were born between 1981 and 1996 and are currently between the ages of 27 and 42, are typically referred to as millennials (Dimock, 2019). While Generation Z, also known as the post-millennial generation, is typically defined as those born between 1997 and 2012, which means they are currently between the ages of 10 and 25.

According to Twenge (2017), the period in which millennials reached adulthood was characterized by significant changes in technology and society, and they are often characterized as highly educated, socially conscious, and diverse. Economic difficulties, such as the Great Recession, have affected their attitudes towards work, education, and financial stability. Meanwhile, Generation Z is the first cohort to have been raised entirely in the age of digital technology. They are highly connected and tech-savvy, with a strong emphasis on personalization and individuality. Furthermore, they are the most diverse generation, exhibiting greater acceptance of differences in gender identity, sexual orientation, and cultural background. Both groups have been shaped by their experiences and historical events and will likely continue to shape the future.

Hence, millennials and Generation Z are the two largest consumer groups in the world, accounting for a significant portion of the global population. These two generations have grown up in a digital age and are highly engaged with social media platforms. Millennials are those born between 1981 and 1996, while Generation Z includes individuals born between 1997 and 2012 (Dimock, 2019). Together, these two generations make up the largest consumer group, accounting for over 40% of the global population. Moreover, these consumers are known for their significant purchasing power and are estimated to have a combined spending power of \$4.1 trillion in 2020.

Therefore, understanding their unique characteristics and behaviours is crucial in developing effective marketing strategies. According to Accenture (2017), millennials and Generation Z are more likely to make purchase decisions based on social media recommendations and reviews. This highlights the impact of social media marketing on their buying decisions, and businesses must tailor their marketing strategies to cater to these generations. As a result, millennials and Generation Z consumers have become the most important market segment for businesses due to their size and purchasing power.

As a result, social media has become an integral part of the lives of millennials and Generation Z. With the rise of millennial and Generation Z consumers and the growth of social media, it has become increasingly important for companies to understand how social media marketing impacts the buying behaviour of these key demographics.

In conclusion, this research will provide valuable insights into the impact of social media marketing on the buying behaviour of Millennial and Generation Z consumers and find out the

future trends of social media marketing in order to effectively target and retain millennials and gen z. By investigating the factors that influence their purchasing behaviour and the effectiveness of different social media marketing strategies, businesses can create effective marketing campaigns that resonate with these demographics. This study will also contribute to the existing literature on social media marketing and provide practical implications for marketers looking to target Millennial and Generation Z consumers.

## **1.2 Research problem and objectives**

The aim of this research is to investigate the impact of social media marketing on the buying behaviour of millennial and Generation Z consumers.

The study will explore the relationship between social media marketing and purchasing decisions by examining the factors that influence the decision-making process. Furthermore, the research will examine how social media marketing strategies affect the perception of the brand, product quality, and customer loyalty.

There are three main research questions for this thesis:

- Firstly, to what extent does social media marketing influence the buying behaviour of millennial and Generation Z consumers?
- Secondly, what are the popular social media platforms and approaches for marketing to millennial and Generation Z consumers?
- Lastly, what are the future trends for social media marketing and how can it be optimized to effectively target and retain millennial and Generation Z consumers?

To reach these objectives, I will employ a quantitative methods approach, which will involve a questionnaire of millennial and Generation Z consumers to gather quantitative data on their social media usage, perceptions of social media marketing, and buying behaviours.

## **2 LITERATURE REVIEW**

In this literature review, basic concepts about social media and social media marketing are explained in order to let the readers have a better understanding of the research topic. It will begin with the definition of social media and explanation of it and how businesses are utilizing social media to engage with potential customers.

### **2.1 Social media**

Before explaining the concept of social media marketing, it is essential to understand the term 'social media'. Since 2008, the use of social media platforms has increased significantly, including Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn, which has grown in popularity as a way of online communication and interaction, as well as a platform for peer engagement. Social media is an internet-accessible medium that provides a wide range of capabilities for displaying our own emotions (Chaffey & Chadwick, 2022). It facilitates the interactive connection of peer-to-peer and individual, which is also a marketing objective for businesses. Besides, it allows businesses to create a competitive edge for each sort of connection or targeted audience, which provides real-time access to customized algorithms based on user experiences.

According to Ahmad et al. (2022), social media play a vital part in the success of internet marketing. Organizations can benefit from social media by increasing brand popularity, promoting word-of-mouth communication, increasing sales, sharing data in a corporate sense, and building consumer social support. Instead, social media networking demonstrates principles that have a beneficial influence on customer trust. Therefore, through confidence-building processes, social media can definitely help businesses develop marketing tactics that impact customer intents to buy their products or services.

With the advent of social networks, a new field of content creation has emerged, where anybody may easily exchange knowledge and expertise with others (Ahmad et al., 2020). For both enterprises and organizations, online communities give an incentive and a venue for a stronger customer service management system. Bringing in a new era where companies may improve efficiency. Members can also connect on sites that give a potential source of trust and social encounters.

## 2.2 Social media marketing

The growth of social media presents the opportunity for businesses to use it as an effective marketing tool. According to Ahmad et al. (2020), social media marketing is defined as marketing that utilizes social media platforms as a method of distribution. Social media is a key strategy for economic growth since it allows for two-way communication and low-cost marketing to collect information, interact with customers, and build relationships (Hanlon, 2022).

There are many types of social media networks which are platforms that facilitate social networking, provide entertainment and showcase our profiles online, as well as enable organisations to market to consumers.

Hanlon (2022) mentions this is a useful approach to categorizing social media networks, but it is difficult to just classify all social media networks into one category, especially when many platforms continue to evolve, adding new features to keep users involved. For example, LinkedIn is a professional networking platform that is adopting Facebook-like practices such as 'liking' articles to enhance engagement.

Social media channels have become an essential component of contemporary marketing strategies due to their vast user base and the ability to target specific groups. However, with the increasing number of social media platforms, it can be challenging to decide which channels to analyze in this research. Therefore, this study focuses exclusively on Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram. The reason behind this is the popularity of these platforms among the target groups and the availability of extensive research on these platforms, including other platforms that could make the research too broad and lack the necessary depth to draw meaningful conclusions. The research will provide a comprehensive analysis with a solid foundation of the most widely used and popular social media platforms by focusing on these three platforms.

According to Statista (2022a), the top three most popular social media platforms in terms of monthly active users are Facebook, YouTube, and Instagram.

### 2.2.1 YouTube

YouTube was founded by Steven Chen in 2005. It is a great medium for uploading videos with friends, colleagues, clients, or any other stakeholders, which is operated by Google.

According to YouTube (n.d.), “our mission is to give everyone a voice and show them the world”, and the founder believes that everyone deserves a voice and a platform to broadcast themselves, which people can listen, comment, share, and build a community through YouTube.

In recent years, YouTube has rapidly grown in popularity, due to the emergence of professional video bloggers or YouTubers. According to Degengard (2021), YouTube's global user base will be roughly 2,240.03 million people. The global number of YouTube users is expected to reach 2,854.14 million by 2025.

One of the key benefits of using YouTube for marketing is its ability to engage with audiences. According to a study by Google, over 70% of YouTube viewers say that they watch YouTube videos to learn something new, be entertained, or for help with a problem they are facing. This presents an opportunity for businesses to create content that is informative and helpful, as well as entertaining. The more engaging the content, the more likely viewers are to share it, comment on it, and subscribe to the channel.

According to Uparimart (2019), they found that audience engagement on YouTube was positively related to brand loyalty and purchase intention. The study also found that interactive features, such as comments and ratings, played an important role in engaging audiences. This underscores the significance of producing content that prompts engagement and responses from the audience.

Moreover, another important benefit of YouTube marketing is its ability to increase brand awareness. According to a study by Google (n.d.), over 90% of YouTube users say that they discover new brands and products on the platform. This presents an opportunity for businesses to create content that introduces their brand and products to new audiences.

YouTube can also have a significant influence on purchase behaviour. In a study by Google (n.d.), it was found that over 60% of YouTube users said they had made a purchase after seeing a product or service advertised on the platform. This highlights the potential of YouTube to drive sales and revenue for businesses.

Overall, YouTube provides an efficient way for businesses to connect with their intended audience, enhance brand recognition, and boost sales. Creating engaging, informative, and

entertaining content that is relevant to the target audience is key to success on the platform. Measuring success can be challenging, but tracking metrics such as views, watch time, engagement, and conversions can help businesses understand how their content is performing and make adjustments as needed.

### **2.2.2 Facebook**

According to Statista (2022b), Facebook is the most popular online social network in the world, with around 2.96 billion active members as of the third quarter of 2022. Facebook is a social media platform that facilitates communication and information sharing among friends and family online. Mark Zuckerberg founded Facebook in 2004 when he was still studying at Harvard University, and it was initially created for college students.

The features of Facebook are designed for businesses that want to build genuine relationships with their customers (Conley, n.d.). It helps businesses to generate and distribute high-quality content that is valuable to users. It also enables sales and customer support representatives to communicate with people who are interested in the brand by using the comments sections or Facebook Messenger.

Moreover, Facebook has evolved into a significant e-commerce platform where businesses can sell their products directly to customers. Facebook's Marketplace and Shops features provide businesses with an excellent opportunity to increase their sales and customer reach. A study by Statista (2022b) revealed that in the United States, the number of active Facebook users who purchased products on the platform increased from 103 million in 2019 to 127 million in 2020. The study also found that Facebook's e-commerce features have a higher conversion rate than other online shopping platforms.

In addition to Facebook Ads, businesses can use other marketing strategies to promote their products or services on the platform. These include creating and sharing engaging content, collaborating with influencers, and hosting contests and giveaways. A study by Raleigh and Arbor (n.d.) found that businesses that use these strategies have a higher engagement rate and a better chance of increasing their customer base. The study also found that businesses that engage with their customers by replying to their comments and messages have a higher chance of building brand loyalty.

### **2.2.3 Instagram**

Instagram is a social networking platform that focuses on photo and video sharing founded by Kevin Systrom and Mike Krieger in 2010, which acquired by Facebook in 2012 (Forsey, 2023). As long as your account is public, you may take, edit, and share visual material for both followers and non-followers. Users may engage with your material by liking, commenting, sharing, and saving it.

Basically, Instagram attracts a younger population, but as Facebook now acquired Instagram, which makes more people of different ages are also using it and undoubtedly become more influential. According to Coles (2015, p. 168), some companies are now more frequently encouraging their consumers to post photos on Instagram when they are wearing their products or using the brand's products in some way, generally for a raffle or giveaway. They may locate and aggregate them for their own marketing objectives by encouraging the customer to use the hashtag.

An innovative all-in-one ad creation tool called Ads Manager. According to Meta (2022), it allows marketers to create multi-platform campaigns for Instagram, Facebook, and Messenger, which makes it easier for businesses to advertise and monitor their performance on both Facebook and Instagram.

### **2.2.4 Marketing tactics**

Marketing tactics have evolved significantly over the years with the advancement of technology and the widespread use of social media platforms. According to Matin et al. (2022), one of the most popular tactics used by marketers to increase brand awareness and engagement on social media is the use of hashtags. It enables users to search for and find specific content on social media, making it easier for marketers to reach their target audience (Alalwan et al., 2017). Hashtags are also used to organize social media campaigns and contests, encouraging user-generated content (UGC) and engagement.

According to Lawrowski (2023), pop-up ads are another popular marketing tactic used by companies to attract consumers' attention to their products or services. These ads are specifically designed to appear suddenly on a user's screen while they are browsing a website or



using an app. While some users find pop-up ads annoying and intrusive, they can be effective in increasing website traffic and conversion rate.

Follow or like gating promotion is a marketing tactic commonly used to boost social media followers and engagement. This strategy involves requiring users to follow or like a brand's social media account to access exclusive content, discounts, or promotions. According to Lin & Lu (2011), while follow or like gating promotion can be effective in driving social media engagement and increasing followers, it can also attract low-quality followers who are only interested in accessing exclusive content or promotions.

Sponsored posts are another popular marketing tactic used by brands to promote their products or services on social media (Loomly, 2023). Sponsored posts are created by companies and paid for by them to appear on social media feeds or stories of their target audience. Sponsored posts have become an effective tool for increasing brand awareness and reaching a larger audience, especially among younger demographics. By leveraging sponsored posts, companies can generate buzz around their brand, engage with potential customers, and ultimately drive sales.

In conclusion, marketing tactics have evolved significantly in recent years, with social media platforms playing a significant role in their development and effectiveness. Hashtags, pop-up ads, follow/like gating promotion, and sponsored posts are some popular examples of the tactics used by marketers to reach and engage with their target audience. While these tactics can be effective in increasing brand awareness and engagement, it is important for marketers to use them ethically and with consideration for the consumer experience.

### **2.3 Social media influencers**

Social media influencers have become a significant strategy for marketing and promoting products and services. These influencers are individuals with a great number of following on social media and are often perceived as experts in their specific domains. They may be celebrities, industry leaders, or ordinary people who have amassed a large following through their social media presence. Influencer marketing includes collaborating with these individuals to endorse products or services to promote followers.

Over the past few years, the popularity of social media has led to a surge in the utilization of social media influencers for marketing purposes. According to Klear (2019), influencer marketing has seen a 325% rise between 2016 and 2019. It is a type of word-of-mouth marketing that leverages the trust and credibility that influencers have established with their followers. Influencers are perceived as being more genuine than conventional ads because they have gained their reputation and following through their content.

The marketing strategy of influencer marketing has demonstrated its effectiveness, particularly for businesses that aim to reach out to younger demographics. According to Santora (2023), 63% of consumers aged between 18-34 rely more on influencers rather than traditional advertising. Influencers are perceived to be more authentic and relatable than traditional ads as they are people who have established their followership through their content and proficiency in a specific area. By partnering with an influencer who has a following within a brand's target audience, the brand can effectively promote their products or services to that audience.

Although influencer marketing has many advantages to companies, it's important to note that it also has its fair share of challenges. One such challenge is finding an influencer who is in line with the brand's values and messaging. Additionally, there is a risk of influencer fraud, which involves the use of fake followers or engagement to increase an influencer's reach and credibility.

Therefore, social media influencers have become an important marketing tactic for promoting products and services to a broad audience. The level of trust and credibility with their followers, ability to reach a targeted audience, and combined with the rapid growth of social media platforms, make influencer marketing a valuable strategy for businesses looking to increase brand awareness and drive sales.

## **2.4 Traditional marketing**

Traditional marketing means the use of conventional approaches to promote a product or service, such as print ads, billboards, TV and radio commercials, and direct mail. For many years, traditional marketing has been a reliable and effective way to reach a wide audience. However, in recent times, digital marketing has become more popular, resulting in a decrease in the use of traditional marketing methods. Nevertheless, traditional marketing is still

commonly used, particularly by small businesses that cannot afford to invest in digital marketing.

According to Course Sidekick (n.d.), they indicated that traditional marketing continues to play a crucial role in influencing consumer behaviour. Also, traditional marketing methods tend to create a stronger emotional connection with consumers than digital marketing. For example, print advertisements can be more effective than digital ads in terms of memorability and persuasion. This is because print ads are tangible and can be physically touched, which can leave a more lasting impression on the consumer.

However, traditional marketing has some drawbacks, such as being costly and making it challenging for small businesses to compete with larger ones that have more marketing resources (Nielsen, 2021). In addition, traditional marketing methods are less focused than digital marketing techniques. For example, a TV advertisement is seen by everyone who is watching TV at that moment, regardless of whether they are interested in the product or service being promoted.

Nevertheless, traditional marketing still plays a crucial role in advertising, particularly for companies that cannot afford to invest in digital marketing. Despite its limitations, it can still have a significant influence on consumer behaviour and reach a large audience. Marketers should understand both the benefits and drawbacks of traditional marketing and choose the appropriate strategies that best suit their business needs.

## **2.5 Consumer buying behaviour**

According to Orji et al. (2017), consumer behaviour refers to the study of people's demands, motives, and thoughts processes when choosing one product over another, as well as their purchase habits for various goods and services.

Consumers are at the center of all retail purchases, and numerous issues have been raised regarding how consumers determine which products, brands and stores to buy them from (Ertemel & Ammoura, 2016). As a result, it is critical to understand how customers make purchasing decisions in order to develop effective marketing strategies and tactics.

There are several other important concepts and definitions related to consumer behaviour that are relevant to this research. Understanding these concepts can provide a broader context for analysis and help to develop a more comprehensive knowledge of how social media marketing impacts the buying behaviour of millennials and Generation Z consumers.

One important concept related to consumer behaviour is consumer decision-making, which refers to the process by which consumers identify, evaluate, and choose products and services. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), consumer decision-making is influenced by various factors, including personal, social, cultural and situational factors, such as time constraints and available information. For example, some purchases are made quickly and impulsively, while others involve a more extended and deliberate decision-making process. Additionally, some purchases are made individually, while others involve input and influence from others, such as family members or friends (Schiffman et al., 2020). Understanding the decision-making process involved in consumer purchases can help businesses develop appropriate marketing strategies to appeal to the appropriate level of involvement and decision-making effort.

The degree of consumer involvement is another essential concept related to consumer behaviour. It refers to the level of interest and emotional connection that consumers have towards a specific product or service. High-involvement purchases are those that are important to the consumer and involve a significant amount of risk or benefit. Examples of such purchases are buying a car or a house. On the other hand, low-involvement purchases are those that are routine, inexpensive, and involve little risk to the consumer, such as buying groceries or household items (Solomon, 2020). Understanding the level of involvement of consumers can help businesses in developing marketing strategies that are appropriate to their level of interest and effort required to make a decision.

There are also four common types of consumer behaviour which reflect the diverse range of factors that influence consumer behaviour, beginning with complex buying behaviour and dissonance-reducing buying behaviour, followed by habitual buying behaviour, and variety-seeking buying behaviour. The table below shows the detailed description and relevance of social media marketing regarding the four types of consumer buying behaviour.

Table 1. Description and relevance of social media marketing regarding the four types of consumer buying behaviour.

Type of consumer buying behaviour	Description	Relevance to Social Media Marketing
Complex buying behaviour	High level of involvement and a significant amount of research and evaluation before making a purchase since the product is expensive or risky (Solomon, 2020). Such as a car or house.	Social media marketing can be used to provide comprehensive product information, customer reviews, testimonials, and comparison with similar products offered by competitors. Influencers can also be leveraged to provide authentic and relatable product recommendations.
Dissonance-reducing buying behaviour	Engel et al. (2012) mentions when consumers experience post-purchase dissonance or anxiety, which feel unsure or uncertain about their purchase decision and may actively seek out information to confirm their choice.	Social media has the potential to shape this type of consumer behaviour by granting them access to reviews, feedback, and recommendations from other consumers who have previously used the same product. This access can effectively mitigate uncertainty and anxiety linked to the purchase decision, thereby bolstering the consumer's confidence in their selection.
Habitual buying behaviour	Low involvement and minimal information search and evaluation (Kotler & Keller, 2016). The consumer purchases products out of habit or	The use of social media marketing can serve as a tool to establish brand recognition and sustain visibility, consequently leading to an increased

	convenience, without much thought or effort.	frequency of purchases and top-of-mind recall.
Variety-seeking buying behaviour	When consumers actively seek out new products and experiences, they are often driven by a desire for novelty and variety. (Solomon, 2020). Consumers may be more inclined to try new products and switch brands frequently.	Social media marketing can be utilized to prompt consumers to explore various products and users' experiences, while also presenting them with valuable insights and recommendations from fellow consumers. This exposure may foster a willingness to try new products and switch brands more often, and simultaneously enable brands to stand out from competitors.

In this study, I will focus on these four types of consumer buying behaviour, which are particularly relevant to understanding the impact of social media marketing on the buying behaviour of millennials and Generation Z consumers. It will be further analyzed to explore how social media affects different aspects of the purchase decision-making process. By examining each type of buying behaviour separately, this research will provide a deeper understanding of how social media marketing impacts the overall consumer behaviour of these important demographic groups and provide valuable insights for marketers.

## 2.6 Target groups and user personas

Target groups refer to a particular group of consumers that a business aims to cater with their products or services. It is crucial for businesses to comprehend the attributes of their target groups to develop marketing strategies that can successfully entice and maintain customers (Kotler & Keller, 2016). Market research, data analytics, and segmentation analysis are some of the techniques that businesses employ to gain insights into their target groups.

Identifying target groups allows businesses to build up more effective marketing strategies. By understanding the traits and preferences of potential customers, businesses can create

marketing campaigns effectively that are more likely to resonate with them. This can result in an increased customer base and increased sales. According to HubSpot (2020), companies that focus on marketing strategies based on specific customer personas are twice as likely to surpass their revenue targets compared to those that do not prioritize this approach.

Another advantage of understanding target groups is that it enables businesses to develop more personalized marketing messages. By having a clear understanding of the individual needs and preferences of potential customers, a business can customize its marketing messages to address these specific requirements. This approach can foster a stronger emotional bond between the business and its customers. According to Neil (n.d.), personalized marketing messages can result in a conversion rate increase of up to 10%.

User personas are fictional representations of a company's ideal customer. They are based on research and data and provide a clear understanding of the characteristics, behaviour, and needs of the target audience (Raitaluoto, 2023). Developing user personas is an essential part of crafting successful marketing tactics, as it helps businesses tailor their messaging and content to their target audience's specific needs and preferences.

When creating user personas, it is important to consider the demographic characteristics of the target audience, such as age, gender, income, education, and geographic location. For example, a business targeting millennials and Generation Z consumers may focus on creating user personas that reflect the unique needs and preferences of this age group. Millennials and Generation Z consumers tend to be tech-savvy, value authenticity and transparency, and are socially conscious (Curtis, n.d.). These characteristics can inform the development of targeted marketing strategies that resonate with this demographic group.

According to Sethulakshmi (2023), a user persona is a comprehensive outline of the intended audience, which includes their demographic characteristics, behaviour, and preferences. User personas are usually created using various research methods, including surveys, interviews, and focus groups. By gathering information on the target audience, businesses can create a fictional representation of their ideal customer and develop targeted marketing strategies that are more likely to resonate with their audience.

In addition, when it comes to creating user personas for specific target groups, it is essential to consider the unique characteristics and behaviour of the audience. For example,

millennials and Generation Z consumers are highly influenced by social media marketing (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2011). A variety of tools on social media platforms can be utilized by businesses to promote their products or services and connect with their desired audience.. These platforms allow businesses to create personalized content that resonates with their target audience and build strong relationships with their customers (Muntinga et al., 2011).

Therefore, understanding target groups is essential for businesses to create effective marketing strategies that satisfy the needs and preferences of their customers. While user persona is a tool that businesses can use to create a comprehensive representation of their target groups and develop customized marketing messages. This approach can lead to increased customer engagement, retention, and revenue for businesses.

## **2.7 Millennials and Generation Z**

The target groups in my research are millennials and Generation Z. They are two distinct demographic groups that are often studied and targeted by businesses and marketers. Millennials, also known as Generation Y, are typically defined as those born between the early 1980s and the mid-1990s, although there is some variation in the exact dates used to define this generation. Millennials are often characterized as being tech-savvy, socially conscious, and ambitious, and are the first generation to have grown up with widespread access to the internet and digital technology.

Generation Z, also known as the iGeneration or Gen Z, are typically defined as those born from the mid-1990s to the mid-2010s, although again, there is some variation in the exact dates used to define this generation. Generation Z is often characterized as being even more tech-savvy and digitally native than millennials, having grown up entirely in the age of smartphones, social media, and instant access to information. They are also often characterized as being more diverse and socially conscious than previous generations.

It is important to mention that these generational definitions are not fixed and may differ based on the circumstances and the particular definition employed. Additionally, there is some overlap between these generations, and individuals may identify with traits from both groups. However, understanding these generational definitions can be helpful in studying consumer behaviour and marketing strategies.



According to GlobalWebIndex (2021), the most popular social media platforms among millennials and generation z users worldwide are Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Facebook is the most commonly used platform, with 81% of generation z and 83% of millennials using it. Instagram is the second most popular, with 71% of generation z and 64% of millennials users. YouTube comes in third, with 82% of generation z and 79% of millennials using it.

The report indicated that millennials and generation z spend an average of around 2 hours and 22 minutes on social media every day. Among the social media platforms, YouTube is the most time-consuming, with an average of 40 minutes spent per day. Instagram comes in second place, with an average of 30 minutes per day, and Facebook is the third most time-consuming platform, with an average of 25 minutes spent per day (GlobalWebIndex, 2021). The report also indicates that popular content among these demographics includes memes, videos, and stories (op. cit.). Millennials and generation z tend to be drawn to visual and interactive content that is authentic, visually appealing, and emotionally engaging. In addition, they tend to appreciate UGC and influencer marketing.

These statistics highlight the significant influence of Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube among millennials and generation z, which underscores the importance for businesses to leverage these platforms to engage and connect with these audiences. By creating content that resonates with their interests and behaviours on these platforms, businesses can improve their chances of capturing their attention and driving engagement.

### **3 DATA COLLECTION**

In this research, the quantitative method will be conducted to collect data from millennials and Generation Z. The aim of this questionnaire is to explore how consumers engage with social media platforms, the types of social media marketing they are exposed to, and how this marketing influences their purchasing decisions.

#### **3.1 Quantitative method**

Quantitative research is a research method that employs numerical data to comprehend and draw inferences about a specific phenomenon. Its objective is to explicate and illustrate a phenomenon by utilizing statistical methods. According to Hair et al. (2019), this type of research is commonly utilized to examine hypotheses and detect correlations between variables. It necessitates the utilization of structured questionnaires and surveys to gather data that is later scrutinized using statistical approaches. There are numerous strengths in using this research approach, including the capability to gather numerical data that can be subjected to statistical analysis, yielding precise and dependable outcomes (Neuman, 2014). It is also a methodical approach that can be employed to assess hypotheses and determine causal associations between variables. However, quantitative research has certain drawbacks, such as the possibility of oversimplifying multifaceted phenomena and the challenge of capturing the intricacy and richness of human experiences.

The research will focus on collecting data from millennials and Generation Z consumers using an online survey tool called Webropol. The survey will primarily consist of closed-ended questions designed to evaluate their social media usage, the effectiveness of social media marketing, and buying behaviour. Statistical analysis will be employed to analyze the data collected from the survey, and the findings will be displayed in tables and graphs. In order to ensure the reliability and validity of the study, established measures will be used, the survey questions will be pilot-tested, and a large enough sample size will be selected to identify significant effects.

The data collection process will also involve ethical considerations such as informed consent and confidentiality. Informed consent will be obtained from the participants before doing the questionnaire, informing them about the study's purpose, the questionnaire's contents, and the expected duration of the survey. The participants will also be assured of the

confidentiality of their responses and that their data will be used for research purposes only (Saunders et al., 2019). To ensure the ethical conduct of the study, all participation in this study is completely voluntary, and the collected data will be kept anonymous. The study will also adhere to the ethical guidelines prescribed by the Finnish National Board on Research Integrity (TENK), which protects the rights and well-being of human subjects in research studies.

In this research, a questionnaire will be carried out in order to find out to what extent social media ads influence people's buying decisions with the target group aged from 11 to 42. I will collect data from various channels, including the student's intranet of SeAMK, LinkedIn, Whatsapp and Facebook, to make the result as accurate as possible.

### **3.2 Research design and sampling method**

The questionnaire will comprise questions that have a fixed set of options to choose from, known as closed-ended and multiple-choice questions, which are simpler to analyze using quantitative methods. In addition, demographic information, such as age, will also be included (Dillman, 2014). Closed-ended questions enable respondents to answer quickly and effectively to collect information on social media use, purchasing behaviour, and perceptions of social media marketing. Furthermore, multiple-choice questions can provide standardized and dependable data, reducing bias and improving the reliability of the data. The use of standardized responses makes it easier for data entry and analysis, allowing for the identification of patterns and trends using statistical methods.

Sampling techniques are crucial in research for obtaining data that accurately represents the target population (Groves et al., 2011). There are various sampling methods for quantitative research, with one of the most widely used methods being the census method. This method involves collecting data from the entire participants of interest, providing an equal opportunity for all members of the population to be included in the study. The use of census method can minimize sampling bias by assuring that each member of the population has an equal opportunity of being selected for the questionnaire. It helps in reducing selection bias, where some groups of the population are either overrepresented or underrepresented in the sample.

Moreover, Census sampling can improve the generalizability of study outcomes by involving all population members in the sample (Maxfield & Babbie, 2019). This raises the external

validity of the study, as the sample better represents the population and its characteristics and diversity. Consequently, the findings of the study may have greater applicability and relevance to the broader population, thereby enhancing the potential impact and significance of the research.

Therefore, census sampling is an effective method of ensuring that all responses are included in a study. It can eventually improve the precision and accuracy of the study's findings and enhance the validity and reliability of the research. And the data collected from the questionnaire will help identify trends and patterns in the participants' social media usage and their perception of social media marketing. The findings will also contribute to the existing literature on the topic and provide recommendations for marketers and businesses looking to target these demographics.

## 4 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the impact of social media marketing on the buying behaviour of millennial and Generation Z consumers. In order to achieve this, a questionnaire was conducted to explore the social media usage and preferences of millennials and Generation Z. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: demographics and media consumption, social media usage habits, and brand engagement and influence.

The first section of the questionnaire collected information on the respondents' age and their media consumption habits, such as the time they spend on using social media and traditional media. In which the first 3 questions are under this section. It aimed to identify any patterns or trends in media consumption among millennials and Generation Z.

The second section of the questionnaire explored the respondents' social media usage habits. It asked about the frequency of making purchases after seeing advertisements or sponsored content on social media, the types of social media platform that is effective for discovering new products or brands. Question 4 to question 7 are belong to the second section. This section aimed to explore the level of trust that millennials and Generation Z consumers have in social media advertising compared to traditional forms of advertising.

The third section of the questionnaire focused on brand engagement and influence. It asked about the respondents' exposure to social media marketing, their attitudes towards social media marketing, and how social media marketing influences their purchasing decisions. Question 8 to question 18 are belong to the third section. This section aimed to understand how important it is for a brand or business to engage with their followers on social media, and which types of social media content are most influential when considering a product or service purchase.

### 4.1 Questionnaire data analysis

The questionnaire data analysis is a crucial step in the research process as it provides insights into the responses collected from the survey participants. In this section, the data analysis process involved the examination of the responses to each of the questions and the identification of patterns, trends, and relationships within the data. The analysis aimed to

provide a comprehensive understanding of the respondents' characteristics, opinions, and behaviours related to their social media usage.

The questionnaire was conducted online, a total of 205 responses were received from 12 April to 28 April 2023. The detail of the questionnaire can be found in the appendixes. The questionnaire was designed to gather insights from millennial and Generation Z individuals. Millennials are generally considered to be born between 1981 and 1996, so they are currently between the ages of 27 and 42. Generation Z, also known as the post-millennial generation, are born between 1997 and 2012, so they are currently between the ages of 11 and 26.

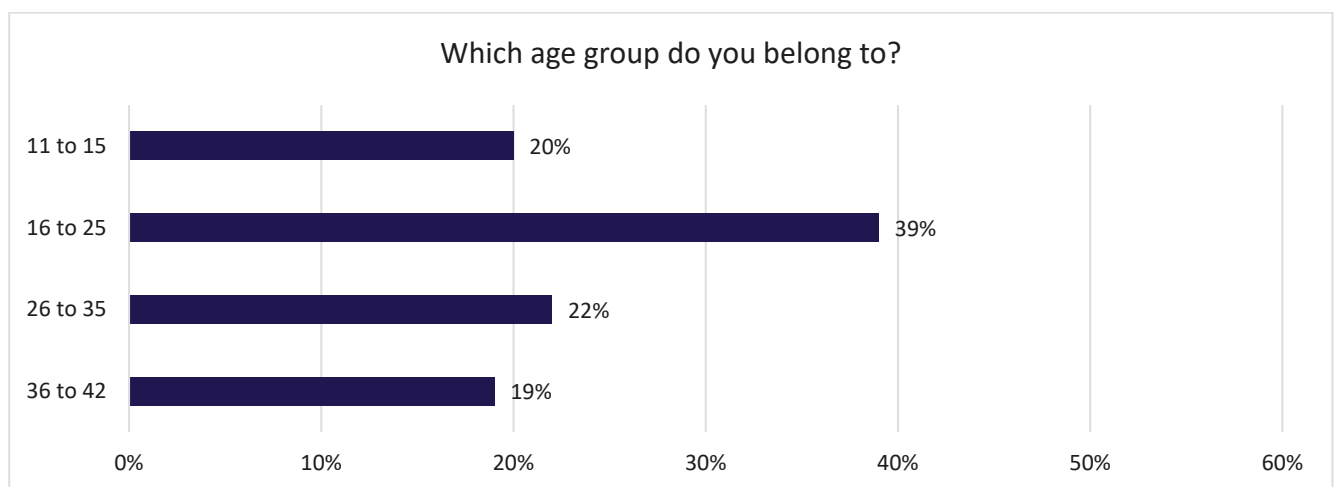


Figure 1. Which age group do you belong to? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=205).

The first question asked the respondents which age group they belonged to. According to Figure 1, it indicates that there are 80 respondents (39%) belong to the age group of 16 to 25 years old, while 46 respondents (22%) belong to the age group of 26 to 35 years old. The remaining respondents are distributed across two other age groups: 41 respondents (20%) are aged between 11 and 15 years old, while 38 of them (19%) are aged 36 to 42.

It is worth noting that the sample size of each age group is not equal due to the questionnaire being distributed through various channels, including Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and the student's intranet of SeAMK.

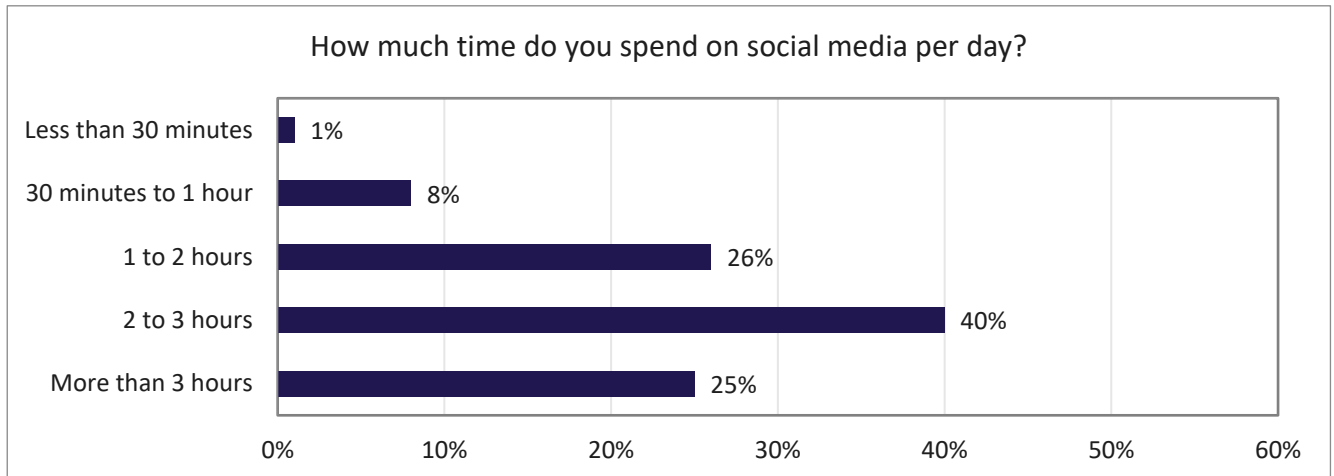


Figure 2. How much time do you spend on social media per day? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=205).

The second question of the questionnaire aims to understand the social media usage habits of the respondents. Figure 2 shows that 82 respondents (40%) spend 2 to 3 hours, while 51 respondents (25%) spend more than 3 hours on social media per day, which indicates that social media is an integral part of their daily routine. Moreover, 53 respondents (26%) spend 1 to 2 hours on social media per day, while only 17 respondents (8%) spend 30 minutes to 1 hour and 1% spend less than 30 minutes on social media. This suggests that social media is a popular and widely used platform among the millennial and Generation Z population, and businesses and marketers should consider leveraging social media as a tool for reaching out to this demographic.

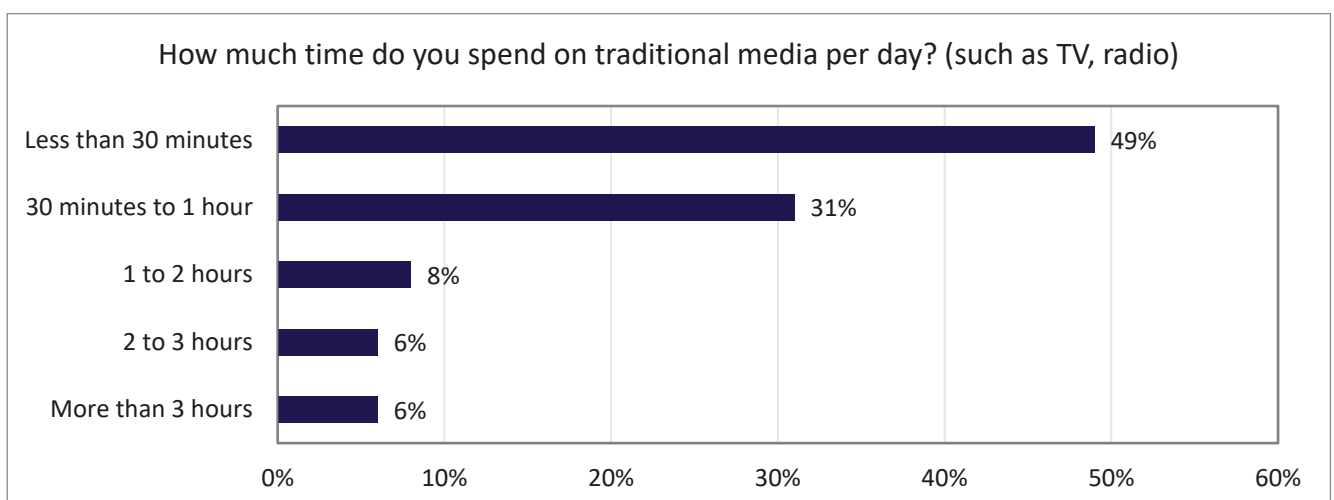


Figure 3. How much time do you spend on traditional media per day? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=205).

In the third question, the aim is to understand how much time the respondents spend on traditional media such as TV and radio. According to Figure 3, 100 respondents (49%) reported

spending less than 30 minutes per day on traditional media such as TV and radio. 64 respondents (31%) reported spending 30 minutes to 1 hour per day on traditional media, while 8% reported spending 1 to 2 hours, 6% reported spending 2 to 3 hours, and another 6% reported spending more than 3 hours per day on traditional media.

This indicates that social media is a more prevalent form of media consumption for this sample of respondents compared to traditional media. The data suggests that businesses and marketers may need to prioritize their social media marketing strategies to effectively reach these consumers, rather than relying solely on traditional media channels.

It is also important to mention that the majority of respondents spend less than 30 minutes per day on traditional media, indicating a potential shift away from traditional media consumption habits among millennials and Generation Z consumers. This trend may continue as more individuals rely on social media and other digital platforms for entertainment and information.

Based on the responses, it is evident that the majority of respondents spend more time on social media than traditional media. 40% of respondents reported spending 2-3 hours on social media per day, while only 8% reported spending the same amount of time on traditional media. Additionally, 25% of respondents spend more than 3 hours on social media, while only 6% reported spending the same amount of time on traditional media. The data also shows that a significant proportion of respondents spend less than 30 minutes on traditional media, with 49% reporting this as their answer. This may be due to the rise of on-demand streaming services that allow viewers to watch content at their convenience, rather than being tied to traditional broadcast schedules.

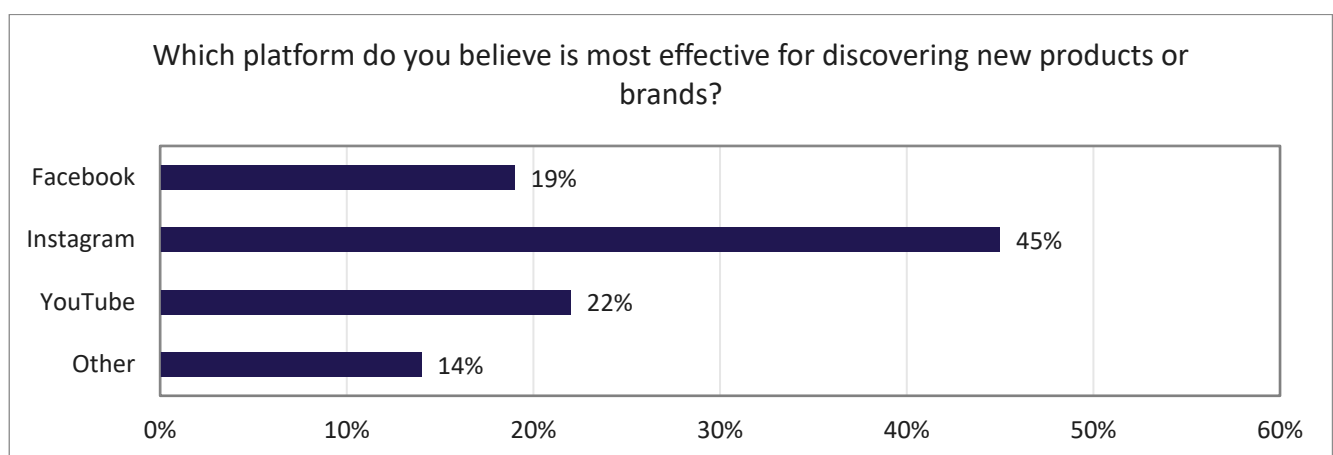


Figure 4. Which platform do you believe is most effective for discovering new products? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=205).



The fourth question asked participants which platform they believed was most effective for discovering new products or brands. According to Figure 4, 38 (19%) chose Facebook, 93 (45%) chose Instagram, 46 (22%) chose YouTube, and 28 (14%) chose "Other" platforms, with all of them specifying TikTok as their preferred platform.

The results specify that Instagram is the most popular platform among respondents for discovering new products or brands, with almost half of the participants selecting it as their top choice. This could be attributed to Instagram's highly visual nature, which makes it a popular platform for product and brand promotion through images and videos. The 14% of respondents who selected "Other" platforms, with all of them specifying TikTok as their preferred platform, indicate a growing trend towards the use of newer social media platforms for discovering new products or brands. This suggests that marketers should not overlook the potential of newer social media platforms for promoting their products or brands, especially among younger generations who are more likely to use these platforms.

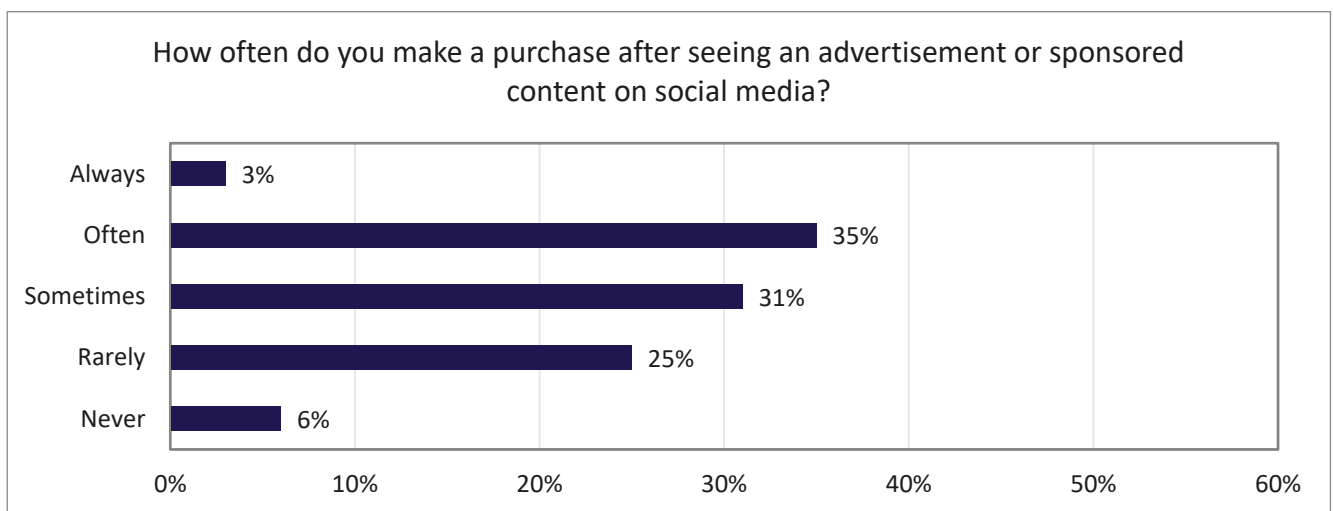


Figure 5. How often do you make a purchase after seeing an advertisement or sponsored content on social media? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=205).

The fifth question asked the respondents how often you make a purchase after seeing an advertisement or sponsored content on social media. Figure 5 shows that 73 respondents (35%) make a purchase often after seeing an advertisement or sponsored content. This is followed by sometimes (31%), rarely (25%), never (6%), and always (3%). This suggests that social media marketing does have an impact on the purchasing decisions of millennials and Generation Z consumers, but it may not always lead to an immediate purchase. It's also essential to point out that the "sometimes" and "rarely" categories combined make up more than half of the responses, indicating that there is some level of resistance or skepticism

towards advertising and sponsored content on social media platforms. Overall, these results highlight the importance of creating effective and targeted social media marketing campaigns that can overcome this resistance and effectively persuade consumers to make a purchase.

The sixth question asked respondents to rate the importance of a brand or business engaging with their followers on social media on a scale from 1 to 5. The average rating was 3.7, indicating that respondents felt it was moderately important for brands to engage with their followers on social media. The median rating was slightly higher at 4.0, indicating that more respondents rated it as important rather than unimportant. Therefore, these results point out that brands and businesses should prioritize engaging with their followers on social media, as it is considered to be at least moderately important by the majority of respondents. However, it is important to note that there may be individual differences in how strongly consumers feel about this issue, and brands may need to tailor their social media engagement strategies accordingly.

The seventh question explores the level of trust that respondents have in social media advertisements or sponsored content compared to traditional forms of advertising. The responses were rated on a scale of 1 to 5, with 1 indicating a low level of trust and 5 indicating a high level of trust. The average response was 2.3, which indicates that the respondents have a relatively low level of trust in social media advertisements and sponsored content. The median response of 2.0 is lower than the average, which suggests that there may be some respondents who have an extremely low level of trust in social media advertising. Thus, these results suggest that businesses and marketers may need to work harder to establish trust with consumers when it comes to social media advertising and sponsored content. This could involve strategies such as using influencer marketing to build credibility and authenticity, or ensuring that advertisements are clearly labeled as sponsored content to avoid any perception of deception.

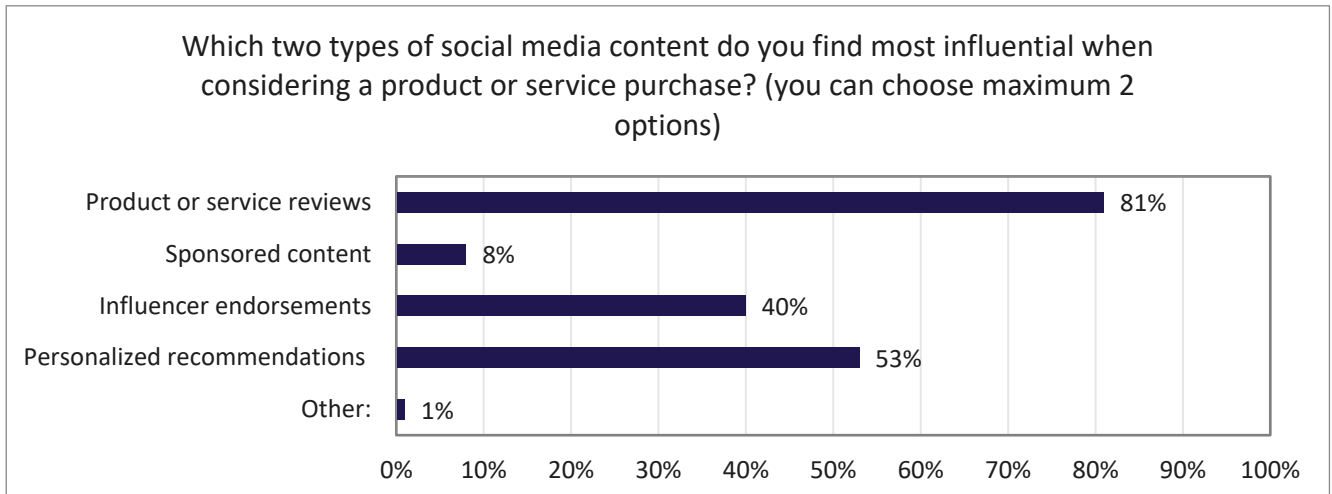


Figure 6. Which two types of social media content do you find most influential when considering a product or service purchase? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=378).

The eighth question asked the respondents to choose two types of social media content that they find most influential when considering a product or service purchase. The options provided are product or service reviews, sponsored content, influencer endorsements, personalized recommendations based on browsing history, and other.

According to Figure 6, 167 respondents (81%) chose product or service reviews, indicating that a large majority of respondents find this type of content to be the most influential when making purchasing decisions. This suggests that consumers place a high value on the opinions of other customers who have used the product or service in question. 17 respondents (8%) chose sponsored content, which suggests that this type of advertising has some influence on purchasing decisions but is not as widely trusted as product or service reviews. 83 respondents (40%) chose influencer endorsements, indicating that social media influencers can be an effective way for brands to reach their target audience and influence purchasing decisions. 109 respondents (53%) chose personalized recommendations based on their interests or browsing history, indicating that consumers value targeted advertising that is tailored to their individual preferences. Only 2 respondents (1%) chose "other," with one respondent citing the influence of peer-to-peer discussions and product recommendations in Facebook groups, and the other citing recommendations from friends or family on their pages.

Hence, the results suggest that social media content that provides information about a product or service, such as reviews or personalized recommendations, is the most influential when it comes to purchasing decisions. However, influencer endorsements can also be

effective, particularly for reaching younger audiences. Sponsored content appears to have less influence on consumers, but it may still be a useful tool for some businesses.



Figure 7. What are the top 3 reasons you follow a brand or business on social media? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=550).

The ninth question asked respondents to select up to three reasons for following a brand or business on social media. According to Figure 7, 177 respondents (86%) selected "To stay up-to-date on new products or services" as one of their top three reasons for following a brand or business on social media. This suggests that consumers are interested in hearing about new products or services from brands they follow on social media. The second most common reason for following a brand or business on social media was "To receive promotions or discounts," 166 respondents (81%) selecting this option. This shows that brands can attract and retain followers on social media by offering exclusive discounts and promotions to their social media followers. The third most common reason for following a brand or business on social media was "To support a brand or business that I believe in," with 146 respondents (71 %) selecting this option. It indicates that some consumers are motivated to follow brands on social media because they feel a personal connection to the brand's mission or values.

Finally, 59 respondents (29%) selected "To be entertained by the content" as one of their top three reasons for following a brand or business on social media. This suggests that brands can also engage followers by creating entertaining content that captures their attention and keeps them coming back for more.

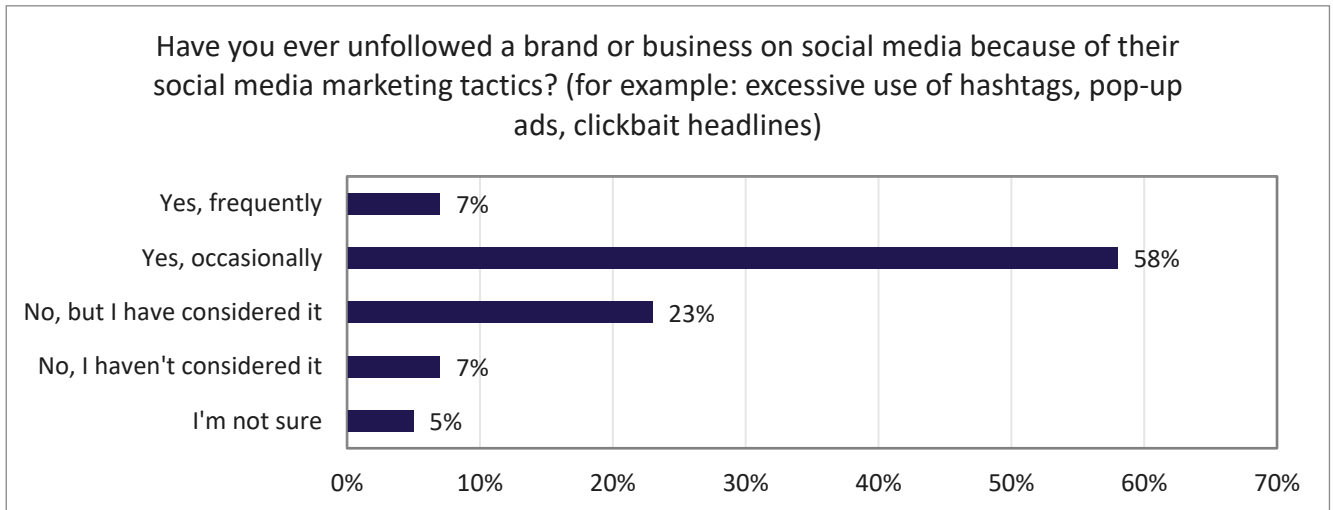


Figure 8. Have you ever unfollowed a brand or business on social media because of their social media marketing tactics? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=205).

The tenth question asks respondents about their experience with social media marketing tactics and whether it has led them to unfollow a brand or business. The results show that a majority of respondents have unfollowed a brand or business at least occasionally due to their social media marketing tactics. Specifically, 118 respondents (58%) have unfollowed a brand or business occasionally, while 15 (7%) have unfollowed frequently.

Moreover, 48 respondents (23%) have not unfollowed a brand or business, but have considered it, indicating that marketing tactics can have a negative impact on their perception of the brand. Only a small percentage of respondents (7%) have not considered unfollowing a brand or business due to its social media marketing tactics, while 5% are unsure.

It shows that brands and businesses need to be mindful of their social media marketing tactics and avoid using excessive hashtags, pop-up ads, or clickbait headlines, as these tactics can lead to negative feedback and loss of followers. It is important for businesses to prioritize quality over quantity in their social media marketing efforts to retain and attract followers.

The eleventh question asked the participants to rate, on a scale of 1 to 5, to what extent they think their purchasing behaviour has been affected by social media content. The average response was 3.1, the median response was 3.0. The results indicated that, on average, social media content does have an impact on purchasing behaviour, although the extent of this impact varies among individuals. The median response of 3.0 indicates that about half of the respondents feel that their purchasing behaviour is moderately affected by social media content. It's worth noting that the scale used in this question is relatively broad, with only five

points available for respondents to rate the extent of their purchasing behaviour's impact. As a result, it's possible that some participants may have wanted to provide a more nuanced response but were limited by the scale. Nevertheless, this question provides insight into how much social media content influences purchasing behaviour for this particular group of respondents.

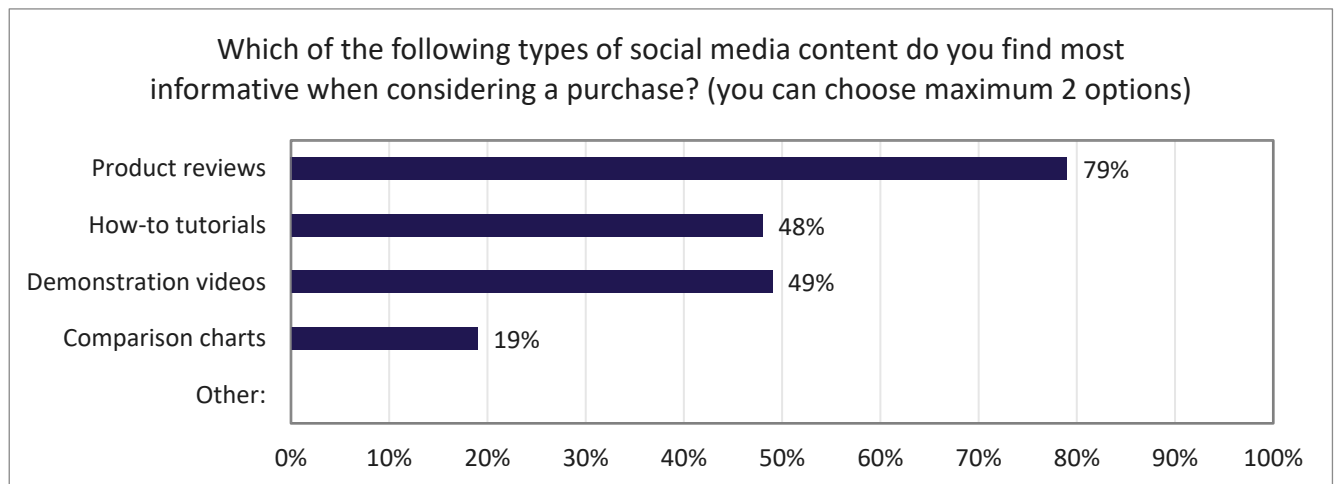


Figure 9. Which of the following types of social media content do you find most informative when considering a purchase? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=398).

Based on the responses to the twelfth question, it is clear that product reviews are the most informative type of social media content when considering a purchase. Figure 9 shows that a significant majority of respondents, accounting for 79% of the total, selected product reviews as one of the two most informative types of social media content. This suggests that consumers value the opinions of others when making purchasing decisions.

The second most selected type of social media content was how-to tutorials, chosen by 48% of respondents, followed closely by demonstration videos, chosen by 49% of respondents. This indicates that consumers also value instructional and educational content that helps them understand how a product works or how to use it effectively.

Finally, comparison charts were the least selected type of social media content, with only 19% of respondents choosing it. This suggests that while consumers may appreciate a side-by-side comparison of different products, they may not find it as informative as product reviews or instructional content.

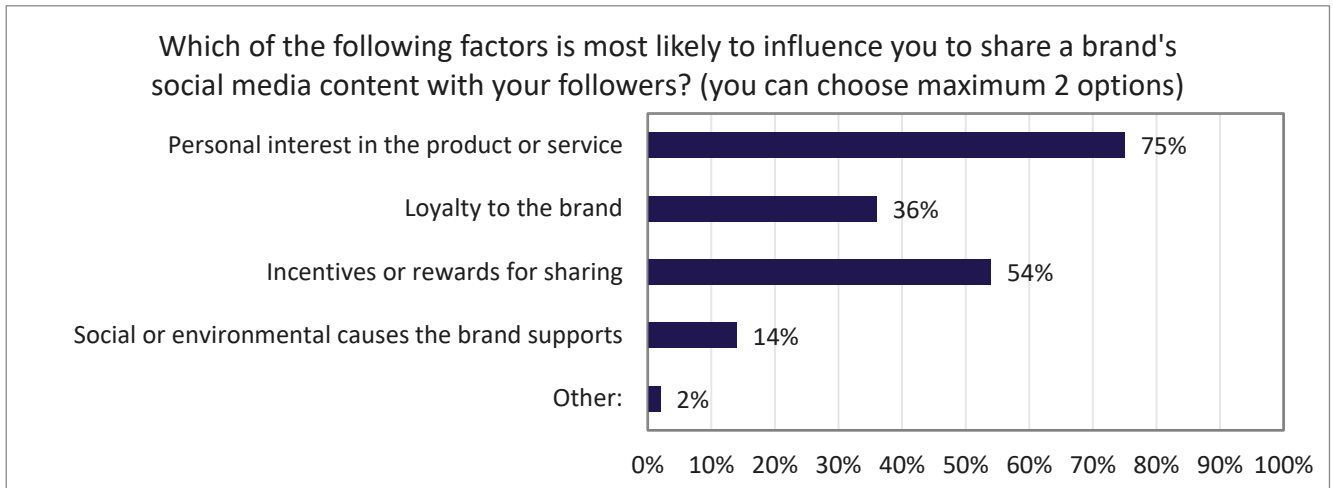


Figure 10. Which of the following factors is most likely to influence you to share a brand's social media content with your followers? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=369).

According to the responses of the thirteenth question, the most common factor that influences people to share a brand's social media content with their followers is personal interest in the product or service, with 75% of respondents selecting this option. This suggests that brands need to create content that is relevant and interesting to their target audience to encourage them to share it with others. Incentives or rewards for sharing was also a popular factor, with 54% of respondents selecting this option. This highlights the importance of incentivizing social media sharing to increase brand reach and engagement. Loyalty to the brand was selected by 36% of respondents, indicating that brand advocacy and loyalty can also play a role in social media sharing. This suggests that brands need to focus on building strong relationships with their customers to encourage them to share their content. Social or environmental causes that the brand supports were selected by only 14% of respondents, suggesting that while social responsibility is important, it may not be a primary factor in driving social media sharing.

Overall, the results suggest that brands need to focus on creating content that is relevant, interesting, and valuable to their target audience, while also incentivizing social sharing to increase reach and engagement. Building strong relationships with customers and fostering brand loyalty can also play a role in driving social media sharing.

The fourteenth question asked the respondents to rate from 1 to 5 on how much influence do social media advertisements have on their overall perception of a brand. The respondents' average rating for the influence of social media advertisements on their overall perception of a brand is 3.0, with a median of 3.0. This suggests that social media advertisements have a

moderate influence on the respondents' overall perception of a brand. The fact that the median and average are the same indicates that the responses are evenly distributed around the midpoint, with no extreme values skewing the data.

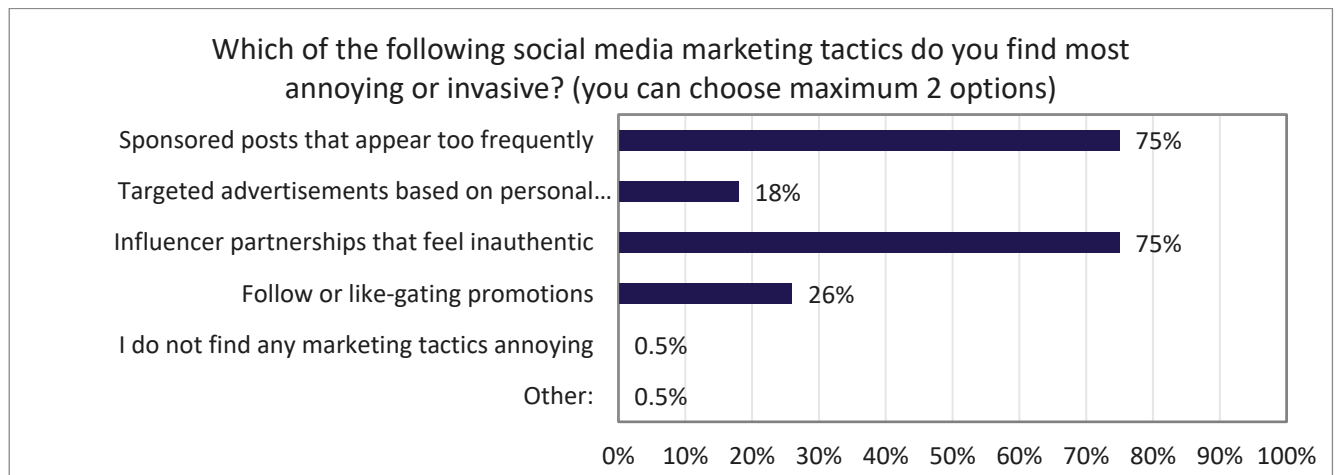


Figure 11. Which of the following social media marketing tactics do you find most annoying or invasive? (n=398)

The fifteenth question asked the respondents which of the following social media marketing tactics do they find the most annoying or invasive. According to Figure 11, the majority of the respondents (75%) find sponsored posts that appear too frequently to be the most annoying or invasive social media marketing tactic. This could suggest that brands need to carefully consider the frequency at which they show sponsored posts to their target audience in order to avoid annoying them.

Another tactic that respondents found to be annoying or invasive was influencer partnerships that feel inauthentic (75%). This highlights the importance of authenticity in influencer marketing, and suggests that audiences can easily spot when an influencer's endorsement is not genuine or when it does not align with their values.

Follow or like-gating promotions were also found to be annoying or invasive by 26% of the respondents. This tactic involves offering a reward or incentive for users to follow or like a brand's social media page, which can be seen as manipulative by some audiences.

Only a small number of respondents (0.5%) did not find any social media marketing tactics to be annoying or invasive, while one respondent mentioned excessive emails as another tactic they found to be annoying or invasive. This suggests that brands should be mindful of the frequency and content of their email marketing campaigns as well.



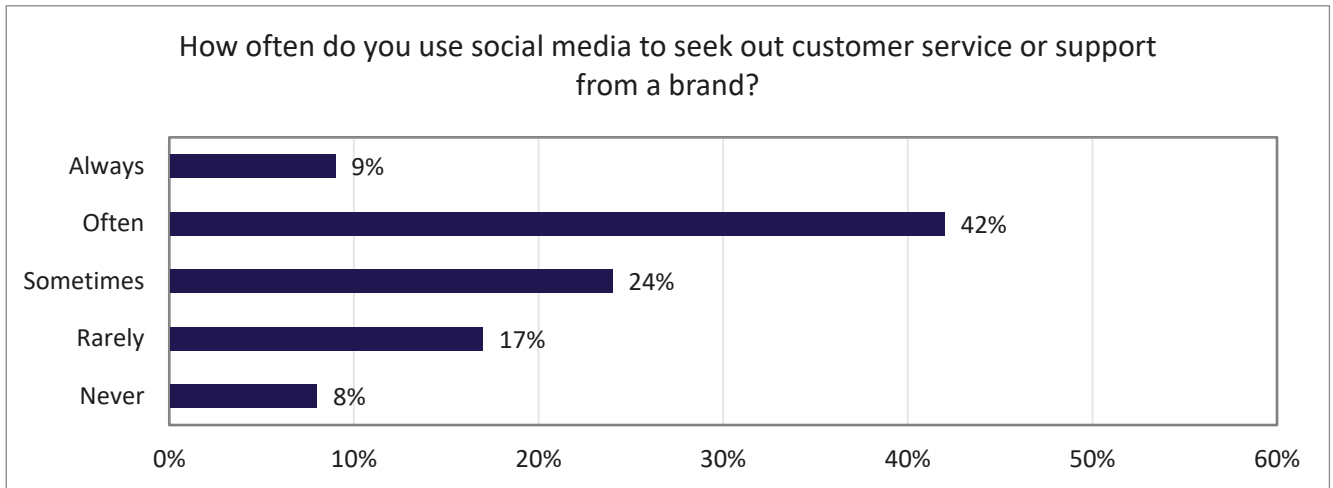


Figure 12. How often do you use social media to seek out customer service or support from a brand? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=205).

The sixteenth question examined the participants on how often do they use social media to seek out customer service or support from a brand. Figure 12 shows that 51% of the participants (105 respondents) use social media to seek customer service or support from a brand either always or often. This indicates that social media has become an important platform for customers to engage with brands for customer support. Additionally, 24% of the respondents (49) said they sometimes use social media for customer service or support, while 17% (35) said they rarely use it. Only 8% of the respondents (16) said they never use social media to seek customer service or support from a brand.

This suggests that brands should have a strong social media presence and use it as a channel to provide customer support to their customers. They should ensure that their social media accounts are monitored regularly and that they respond promptly to any customer inquiries or complaints. Failure to do so could lead to negative perceptions of the brand and potential loss of customers.

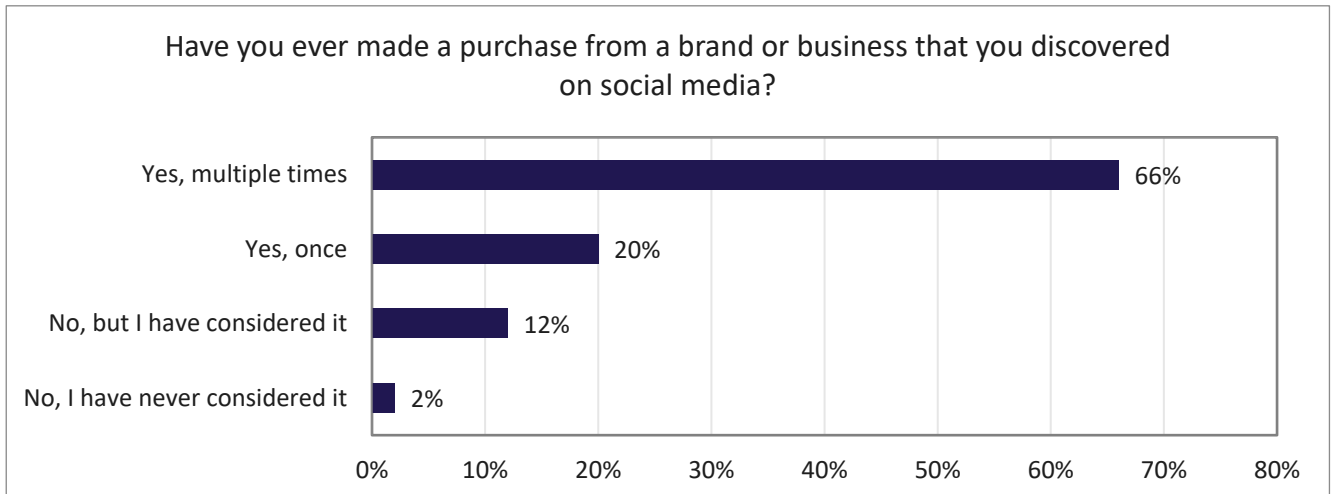


Figure 13. Have you ever made a purchase from a brand or business that you discovered on social media? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=205).

The seventeenth question asked the respondents if they ever made a purchase from a brand or business that you discovered on social media. Based on Figure 13, it can be seen that a majority of the respondents (86%) have discovered a brand or business on social media that they have considered making a purchase from or have made a purchase from. Out of these respondents, 66% have made multiple purchases from brands they discovered on social media while 20% have made one purchase. It represents that social media can be an effective platform for brands to reach potential customers and convert them into paying customers. It also indicates that consumers are willing to trust and make purchases from brands they discover on social media.

As a result, it is important for brands to have a strong social media presence and a well-planned social media strategy to attract and retain customers on these platforms. Brands can consider using various social media features such as influencer collaborations, product reviews, and demonstrations, as identified in previous questions, to attract potential customers and enhance their brand image.

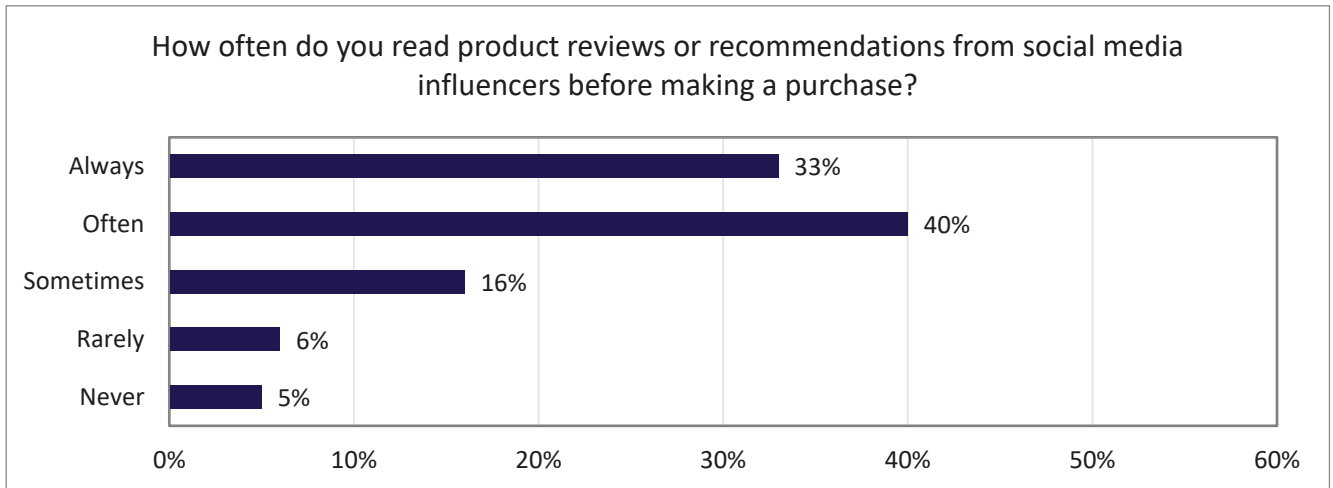


Figure 14. How often do you read product reviews or recommendations from social media influencers before making a purchase? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=205).

The last question asked the respondents on how often they read product reviews or recommendations from social media influencers before making a purchase. According to Figure 14, 73% of the respondents read product reviews or recommendations from social media influencers often or always before making a purchase, while only 11% of the respondents rarely or never read them. This suggests that social media influencers play a significant role in the purchasing decisions of consumers.

It is worth noting that a considerable portion of the respondents (16%) only sometimes read product reviews or recommendations from influencers. This could imply that they still consider other factors, such as price or brand reputation, more important in their decision-making process. Nevertheless, the results suggest that social media influencers have become an essential factor in shaping consumer behaviour and that their influence is likely to continue to grow in the future.

## 4.2 How these groups differ from each other

The purpose of this section is to analyze how social media usage differs between different age groups among millennial and Generation Z who participated in the questionnaire. In particular, the researcher will examine the individuals in four different age groups (11–15, 16–25, 26–35, and 36–42). By comparing the data with significant differences between these age groups, the analysis will provide insights into how social media usage changes as individuals age and potentially uncover patterns or trends in social media usage that are specific to

different age groups. Understanding these differences can be valuable for businesses and marketers who want to target specific age groups on social media.

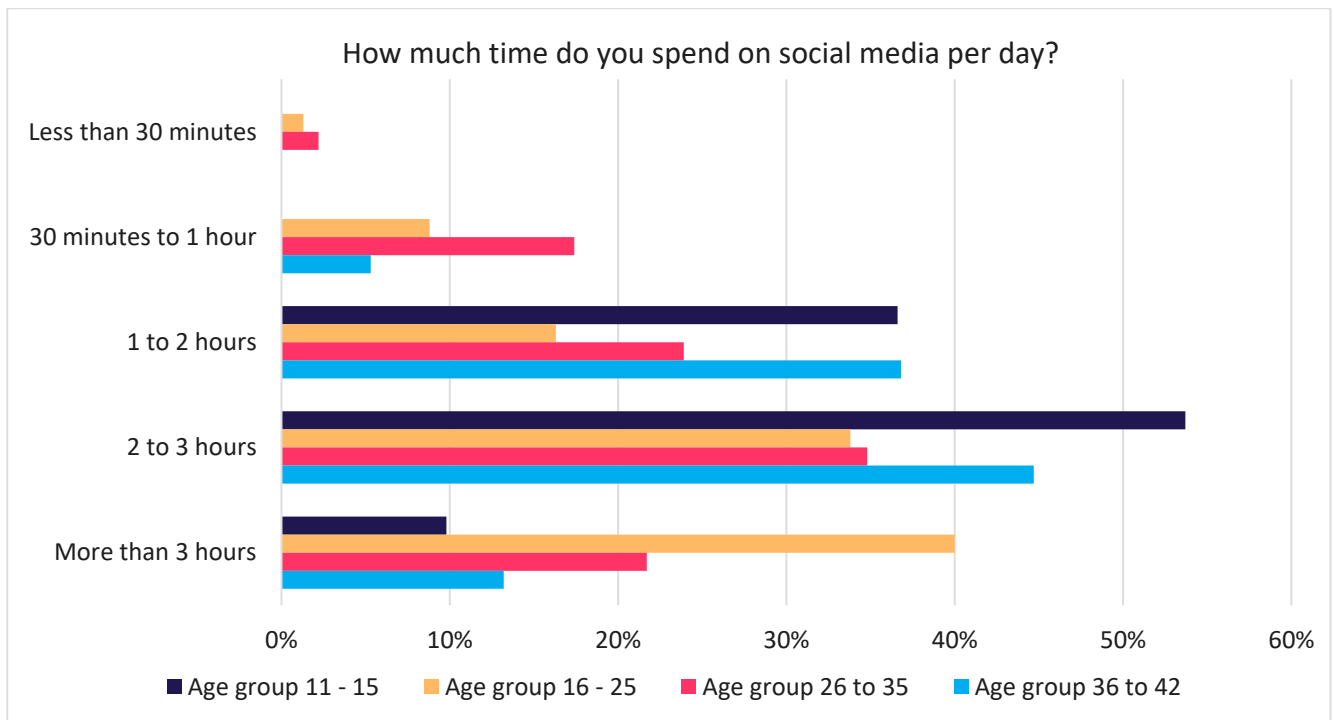


Figure 15. Comparison between age groups: How much time do you spend on social media per day? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=205).

The second question of the questionnaire was asked how much time they spend on social media per day. There are some notable differences in social media usage between the different age groups. Specifically, Figure 15 shows that the 11–15 age group spends the most time on social media overall, with over 63% of respondents indicating that they spend 2–3 hours or more per day on social media. The 16–25 age group also spends a significant amount of time on social media, with over 73% of respondents indicating that they spend 2–3 hours or more per day on social media. The 26–35 and 36–42 age groups both have a more even distribution of social media usage, with roughly a third of respondents in each group spending 1–2 hours per day, a third spending 2–3 hours per day, and the remaining third spending less than 1 hour or more than 3 hours per day on social media.

The percentage of respondents who spend more than 3 hours per day on social media is highest in the 16–25 age group, with 40% of respondents indicating that they spend this much time on social media. This percentage decreases steadily in the older age groups, with only 13% of respondents in the 36–42 age group indicating that they spend more than 3 hours per day on social media. Overall, the data reflects that social media usage varies

significantly between different age groups, with younger age groups tending to spend more time on social media than older age groups. However, it's worth noting that the majority of respondents in all age groups still spend at least 1–2 hours per day on social media, suggesting that social media is a ubiquitous presence in people's lives regardless of age.

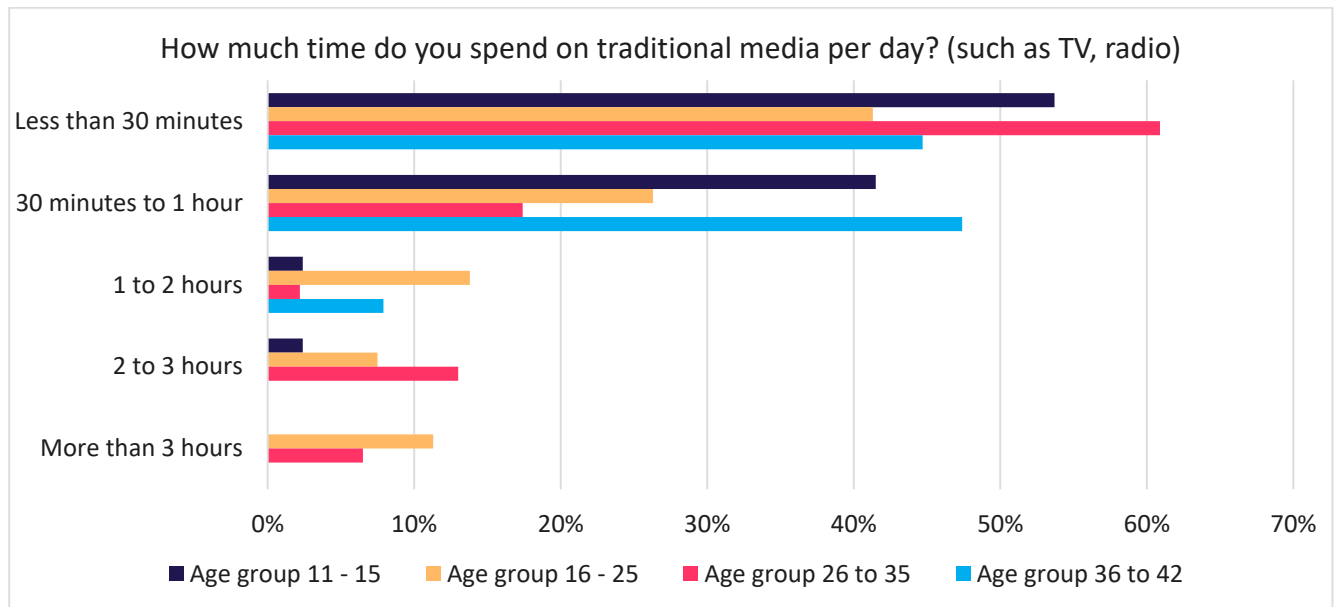


Figure 16. Comparison between age groups: How much time do you spend on traditional media per day? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=205).

The third question asked the respondents how much time they spend on traditional media per day. According to Figure 16, the percentage of respondents who spend less than 30 minutes to maximum 1 hour per day on traditional media is highest in the 11–15 age group, with 53.7% of respondents indicating that they spend this duration of time on traditional media. This percentage decreases in the older age groups, with only 17.4% of respondents in the 26–35 age group and 47.4% of respondents in the 36–42 age group indicating that they spend this amount of time on traditional media.

While the percentage of respondents who spend 1–2 hours per day on traditional media is relatively low across all age groups, with percentages ranging from 2.2% to 13.8%. The highest percentage of respondents in this category are in the 16–25 age group. Respondents who spend 2–3 hours per day on traditional media is highest in the 26–35 age group, with 13% of respondents indicating that they spend this much time on traditional media. This percentage is lower in the other age groups, with only 7.5% of respondents in the 16–25 age group indicating that they spend this much time on traditional media. For those who spend more than 3 hours per day on traditional media is highest in the 16–25 age group, with 11.3%

of respondents indicating that they spend this much time on traditional media, while only 6.5% in the 26–35 age group. This percentage is lower in the other age groups, with no respondents in the 11–15 and 36–42 age groups indicating that they spend more than 3 hours per day on traditional media.

To conclude, the analysis reveals a notable difference in the time spent on traditional media across different age groups. The 11–15 age group shows the highest percentage of respondents spending less than 30 minutes to maximum 1 hour per day on traditional media. As age increases, the percentage of respondents spending this duration of time decreases, indicating a shift in media consumption patterns. Similarly, the percentage of respondents spending 2–3 hours per day on traditional media is highest in the 26–35 age group, whereas the 16–25 age group shows the highest percentage of respondents spending more than 3 hours per day on traditional media. The results indicate that the younger age groups are more inclined towards digital media consumption, while the older age groups may still prefer traditional media.

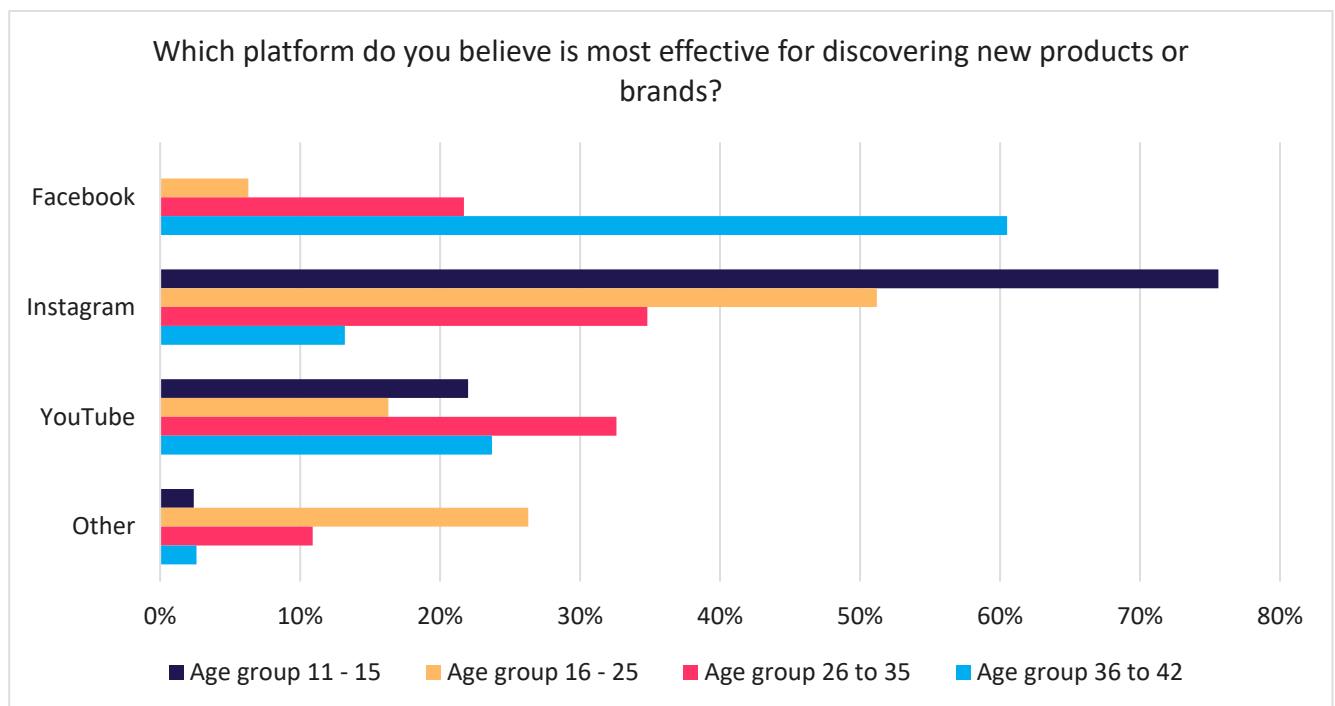


Figure 17. Comparison between age groups: Which platform do you believe is most effective for discovering new products or brands? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=205).

The fourth question examined the most effective for discovering new products or brands. As shown in Figure 17, in the 11–15 age group, the majority of respondents (75.6%) believe that Instagram is the most effective platform for discovering new products or brands. This is

followed by YouTube (22%), with a very small percentage indicating Facebook (0%) or other platforms (2.4%).

In the 16–25 age group, the responses are more evenly distributed. The majority of respondents (51.2%) indicate that Instagram is the most effective platform for discovering new products or brands, followed closely by YouTube (16.3%). A significant number of respondents (26.3%) believe that other platforms, specifically TikTok, are the most effective.

In the 26–35 age group, the majority of respondents (32.6%) believe that YouTube is the most effective platform for discovering new products or brands, followed by Facebook (21.7%). A smaller percentage of respondents (34.8%) believe that Instagram is the most effective, with a small number indicating other platforms (10.9%).

In the 36–42 age group, the overwhelming majority of respondents (60.5%) believe that Facebook is the most effective platform for discovering new products or brands. YouTube is the second most popular platform, with 23.7% of respondents indicating that it is the most effective. A very small percentage of respondents believe that Instagram (13.2%) or other platforms (2.6%) are the most effective.

To sum up, the data shows that there are clear differences in platform preferences for discovering new products or brands across different age groups. While Instagram is popular across all age groups, it is especially favored by younger respondents. Facebook is most popular among older respondents, while YouTube is preferred by respondents in the middle age groups. TikTok is also emerging as a popular platform for discovery, especially among younger respondents.

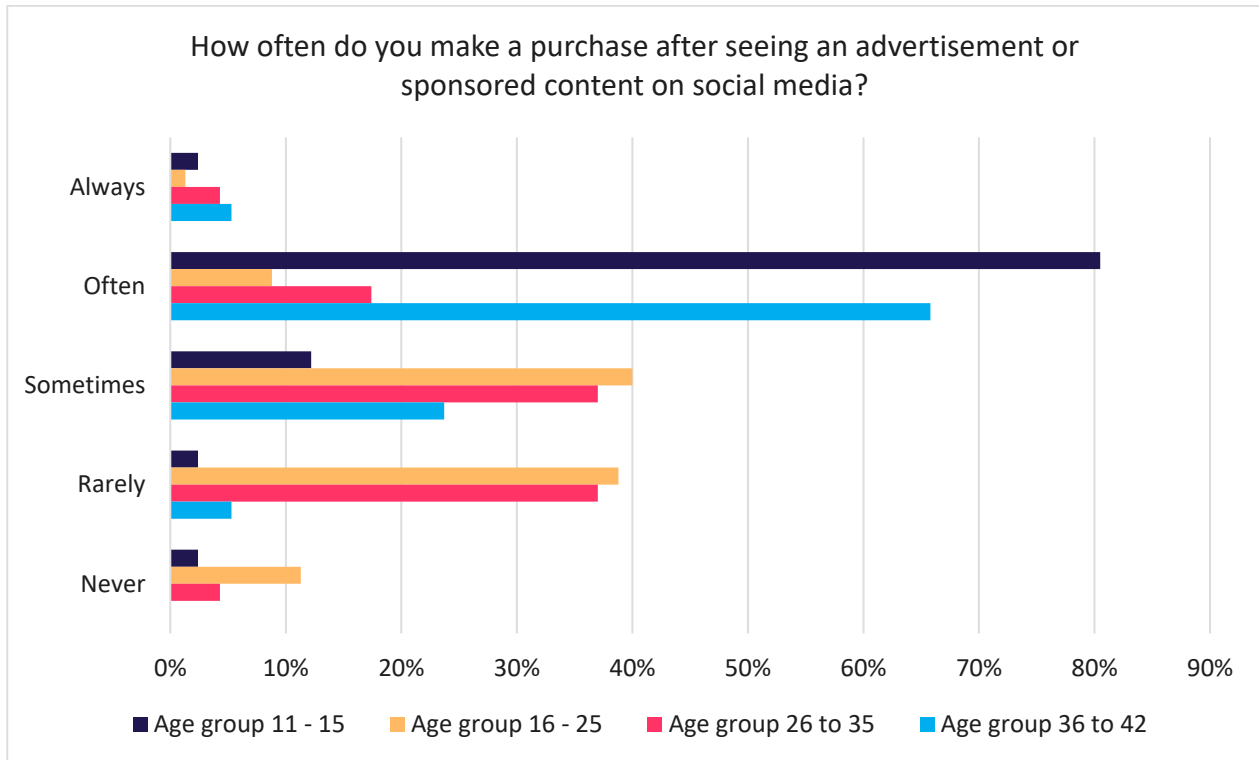


Figure 18. Comparison between age groups: How often do you make a purchase after seeing an advertisement or sponsored content? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=205).

The fifth question questioned the participants how often they make a purchase after seeing an advertisement or sponsored content. Figure 18 shows that in the 11–15 age group, a relatively low percentage (2.4%) of respondents always make a purchase after seeing an advertisement or sponsored content. The highest percentage (80.5%) of respondents in this age group indicated that they often make a purchase after seeing such content.

In the 16–25 age group, a relatively low percentage (1.3%) of respondents always make a purchase after seeing an advertisement or sponsored content. A high percentage (40%) of respondents in this age group indicated that they sometimes make a purchase after seeing such content, and a relatively high percentage (38.8%) indicated that they rarely make a purchase.

In the 26–35 age group, a relatively low percentage (4.3%) of respondents always make a purchase after seeing an advertisement or sponsored content. A high percentage (37%) of respondents in this age group indicated that they sometimes make a purchase after seeing such content, and a relatively high percentage (37%) indicated that they rarely make a purchase.



In the 36–42 age group, a relatively high percentage (65.8%) of respondents always make a purchase after seeing an advertisement or sponsored content. A relatively low percentage (5.3%) of respondents in this age group indicated that they rarely make a purchase.

Therefore, the result of this question specifies that younger respondents are more likely to make a purchase after seeing an advertisement or sponsored content, but this trend is not consistent across all age groups. Additionally, there is a wide range of responses within each age group, indicating that individual preferences and behaviours may play a significant role in how people respond to advertising and sponsored content.

On the other hand, the sixth question asked respondents to rate the importance of a brand or business engaging with their followers on social media on a scale from 1 to 5. Based on the data received, there is a clear difference between age groups when it comes to the importance of a brand or business engaging with their followers on social media. The younger age groups (11–15 and 16–25) seem to place a higher importance on engagement, with an average score of 3.3 and 4.2 respectively, while the older age groups (26–35 and 36–42) score lower with averages of 3.5 and 3.4 respectively.

Additionally, the range of values varies between age groups, with the youngest group having the smallest range (0 to 4) and the oldest group having the largest range (2 to 5). This could suggest that younger respondents generally have a more consistent view on the importance of engagement, while older respondents have a wider range of opinions.

It's also worth noting that the median scores for each group are generally lower than the average scores, which indicates that there are some respondents who rate engagement as relatively unimportant, pulling down the average score. Overall, it seems that engagement with followers is perceived as more important by younger age groups, but it is still considered a significant factor for all age groups.

While the seventh question asked the participants to rate how likely they trust social media advertisements or sponsored content compared to traditional forms of advertising, such as TV or print ads on a scale from 1 to 5. Based on the results of the questionnaire, there are some distinguished differences between the different age groups. Firstly, the youngest age group (11–15) has the lowest level of trust, with an average rating of 1.7 out of 5. This

suggests that younger people are generally more skeptical of social media advertising and may be less likely to engage with it.

In contrast, the 16–25 age group has the highest level of trust, with an average rating of 2.9 out of 5. This suggests that this age group is more likely to engage with social media advertising and may be more receptive to it than other age groups.

The 26–35 age group has an average rating of 2.2 out of 5, which is lower than the 16–25 age group but higher than the 11–15 and 36–42 age groups. This implies that this age group may be somewhat skeptical of social media advertising, but may still engage with it to some extent.

Finally, the 36–42 age group has the lowest median value of 2.0 out of 5, indicating that while some individuals in this age group may trust social media advertising, there are also many who are quite skeptical of it. This may be due to this age group's greater exposure to traditional forms of advertising, which they may trust more than social media advertising.

In summary, these findings suggest that there are significant differences in how different age groups view and engage with social media advertising, which could be important for businesses and marketers to consider when targeting different demographics. For example, the 16–25 age group may respond well to social media advertising campaigns, while the 11–15 age group and 36–42 age group may be less likely to trust such content. Thus, marketers should consider these findings when creating their advertising campaigns and adjust their strategies accordingly to effectively reach their target audience.

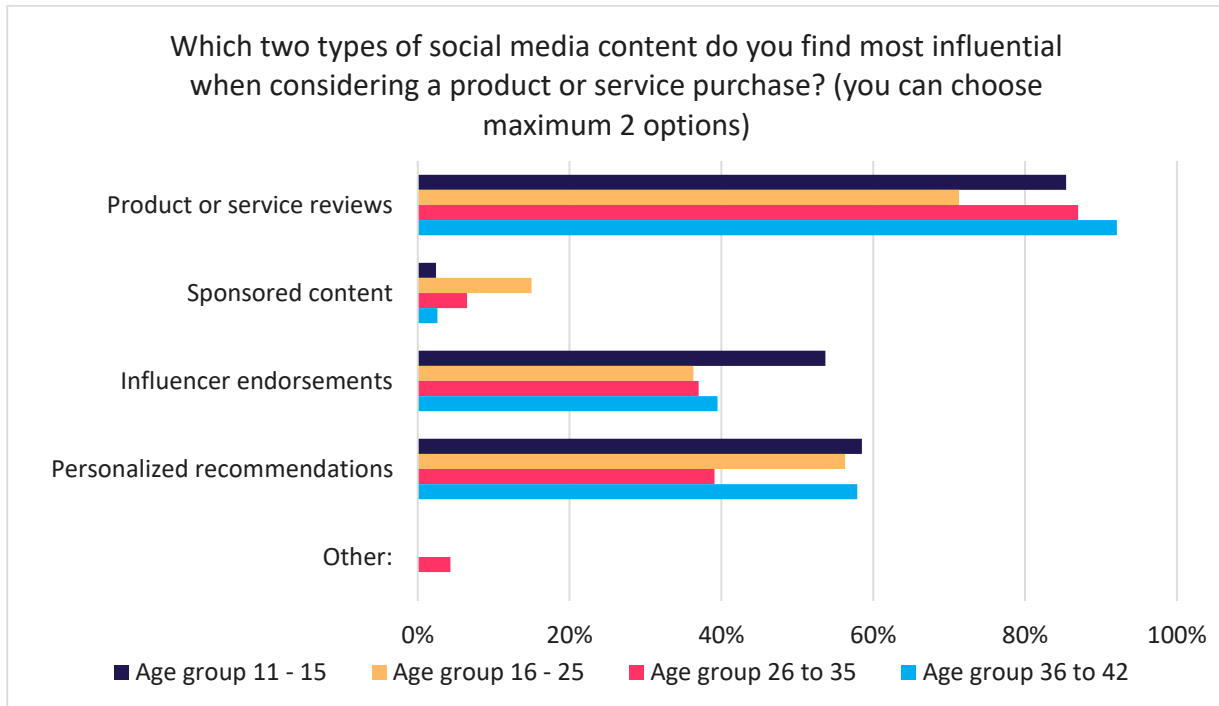


Figure 19. Comparison between age groups: Which two types of social media content do you find most influential when considering a product or service purchase? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=378).

The eighth question examined the respondents which two types of social media content they find most influential when considering a product or service purchase. According to Figure 19, across all age groups, product or service reviews are consistently ranked as the most influential type of social media content when considering a purchase. However, the percentage of respondents who selected this option varied between age groups, with the highest percentage coming from the 36–42 age group (92.1%), followed by the 26–35 age group (87%), then the 11–15 age group (85.4%), and finally the 16–25 age group (71.3%).

Also, there were notable differences between age groups in terms of their preferences for other types of social media content. For example, the 11–15 age group was much more likely to find influencer endorsements (53.7%) and personalized recommendations (58.5%) to be influential, while the 26–35 age group had the lowest percentage of respondents who found these types of content influential (37% and 39.1% respectively). The 16–25 age group was most likely to find sponsored content influential (15%), while the other age groups had much lower percentages (ranging from 2.4% to 6.5%).

As a result, these differences in preferences for different types of social media content can be important for marketers targeting different age groups. For example, a marketer targeting the 11–15 age group may want to focus on influencer endorsements and personalized

recommendations, while a marketer targeting the 36–42 age group may want to prioritize product or service reviews.

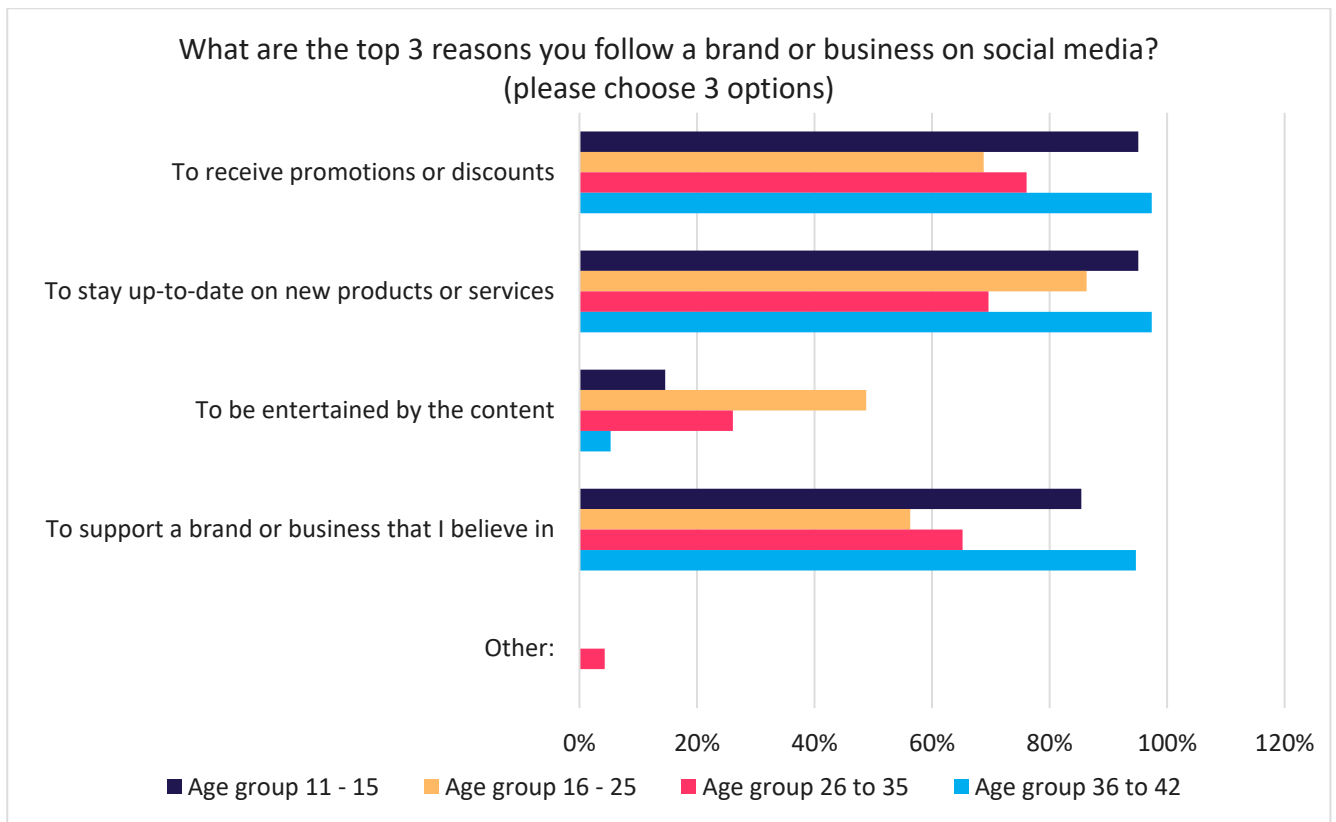


Figure 20. Comparison between age groups: What are the top 3 reasons you follow a brand or business on social media? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=550).

The ninth question explored the top 3 reasons why the respondents follow a brand or business on social media. As indicated by Figure 20, the top two reasons for following a brand or business on social media are to receive promotions or discounts and to stay up-to-date on new products or services, and this trend is consistent across all age groups. The percentage of respondents who follow a brand or business for these two reasons is very high, ranging from 68.8% to 97.4%.

In terms of entertainment, the percentage of respondents who follow a brand or business for this reason is highest in the 16–25 age group at 48.8%. The other age groups have a lower percentage of respondents who follow for entertainment purposes, with the lowest being the 36–42 age group at just 5.3%.

Furthermore, supporting a brand or business that they believe in is also a common reason for following on social media, with the percentage ranging from 56.3% to 94.7%. The highest

percentage of respondents who follow for this reason is in the 36–42 age group, which suggests that older consumers are more likely to be loyal to brands that they believe in.

To conclude, marketers can use this information to tailor their social media content and strategies to target specific age groups. For example, targeting promotions and discounts to younger age groups may be more effective, while developing engaging content and highlighting brand values may resonate more with older age groups. By understanding the motivations behind why people follow brands on social media, marketers can better engage with their audience and build more meaningful connections with their customers.

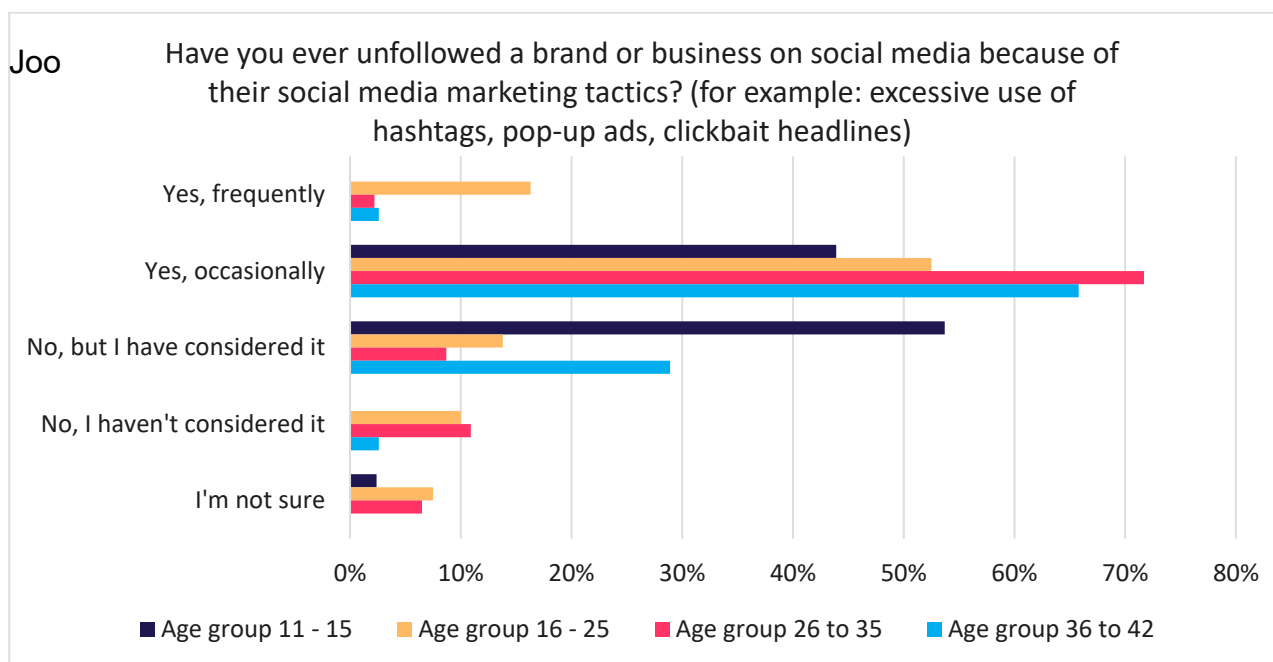


Figure 21. Comparison between age groups: Have you ever unfollowed a brand or business on social media because of their social media marketing tactics? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=205).

The tenth question asked the respondents if they have ever unfollowed a brand or business on social media because of their social media marketing tactics. Based on Figure 21, it indicates that the frequency of unfollowing brands or businesses due to their social media marketing tactics increases with age. The highest percentage of respondents who answered "Yes, frequently" was in the age group 16–25 (16.3%), while the highest percentage of respondents who answered "Yes, occasionally" was in the age group 26–35 (71.7%).

This shows that marketers should be more careful with their social media marketing tactics when targeting younger audiences, as they may be more sensitive to excessive or intrusive

marketing and easily turn off potential customers if their tactics come across as too aggressive or inauthentic.

The eleventh question asked the respondents to rate the extent of how their purchasing behaviour has been affected by social media content on social media on a scale from 1 to 5. The result shows that age group 11–15 had the highest average rating for how much their purchasing behaviour has been affected by social media content, with an average of 3.3 out of 5. Age group 16–25 had the second highest average rating with 3.2 out of 5, followed by age group 36–42 with an average rating of 3.1 out of 5, and age group 26–35 with an average rating of 2.8 out of 5. The median value for all age groups was 3 out of 5. This indicates that the majority of participants in each age group rated their purchasing behaviour as being moderately affected by social media content.

To sum up, the data of this question suggests that social media content does have an impact on purchasing behaviour, with younger age groups being more influenced by it than older age groups. This information can be valuable for companies who target younger audiences, as they may want to focus their social media marketing efforts towards this demographic.

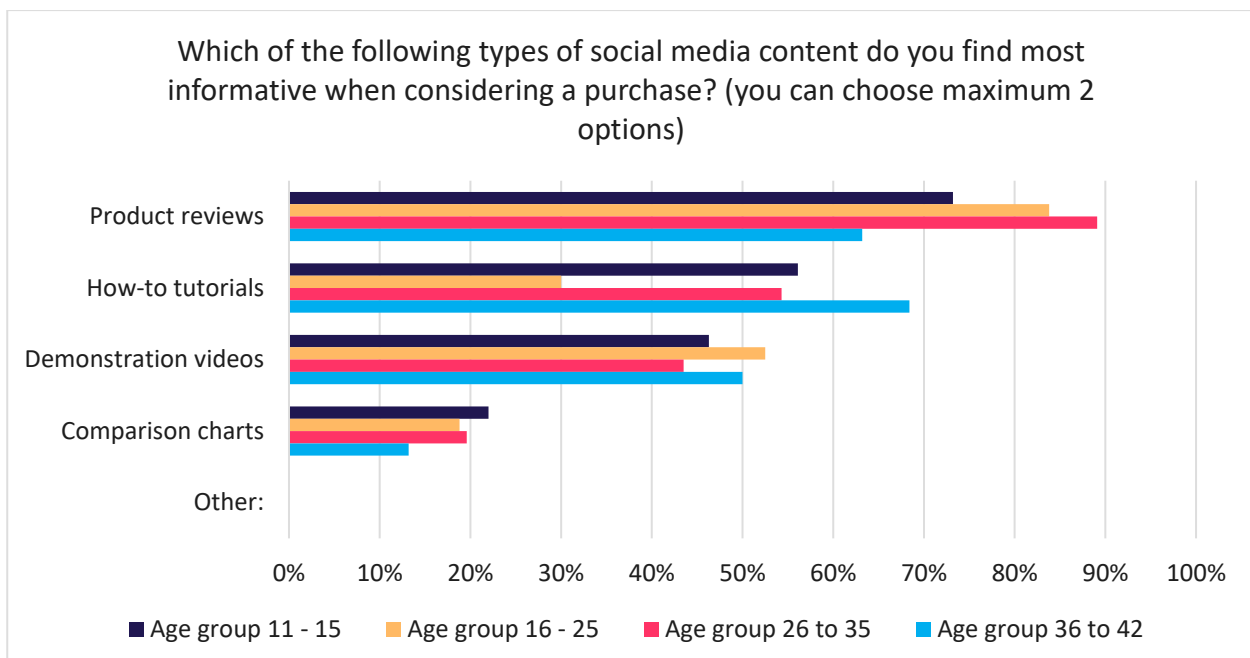


Figure 22. Comparison between age groups: Which of the following types of social media content do you find most informative when considering a purchase? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=398).

The twelve question asked the respondents which of the following types of social media content they find most informative when considering a purchase. According to Figure 22, among

the four age groups, the types of social media content that are most informative when considering a purchase vary. For the age group 11–15, 73.20% of respondents find product reviews most informative, followed by how-to tutorials with 56.10%. For the age group 16–25, product reviews are also the most informative for 83.80% of respondents, followed by demonstration videos with 52.50%. In the age group 26–35, the majority of respondents (89.10%) find product reviews most informative, followed by how-to tutorials with 54.30%. Lastly, for the age group 36–42, the most informative type of social media content is product reviews for 63.20% of respondents, followed by how-to tutorials with 68.40%.

In consequence of the data, it indicates that product reviews are the most informative type of social media content for all age groups, followed by how-to tutorials and demonstration videos. However, there are some notable differences in preferences between age groups, with younger respondents more likely to seek out instructional content and older respondents more likely to prioritize reviews and demonstrations.

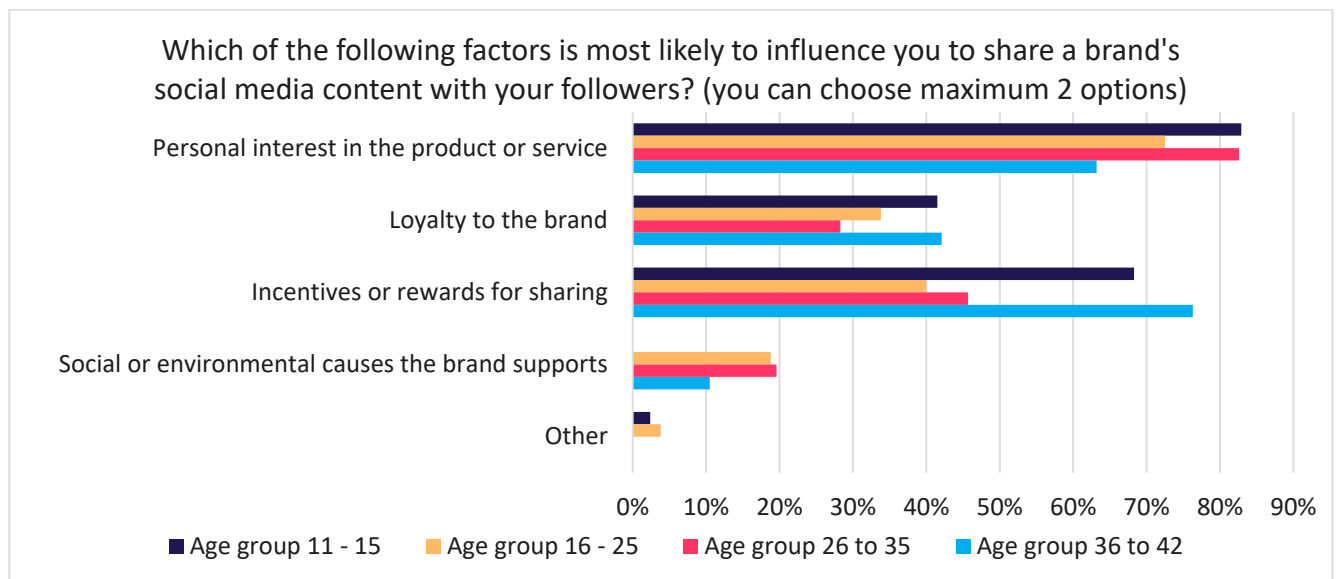


Figure 23. Which of the following factors is most likely to influence you to share a brand's social media content with your followers? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=369).

The thirteenth question aimed to identify the factors that would influence respondents to share a brand's social media content with their followers, and the results showed some interesting differences between age groups. As shown in Figure 23, across all age groups, personal interest in the product or service was the most common factor for sharing, with 82.9% of respondents in the 11–15 age group selecting this option compared to 63.2% in the 36–42 age group. This suggests that younger consumers are more likely to share content that aligns

with their personal interests, which could be a useful insight for marketers when developing social media content that resonates with younger audiences.

Incentives or rewards for sharing were also identified as a significant factor in all age groups, but the impact of this factor varied significantly between age groups. In the 11–15 age group, 68.3% of respondents identified incentives or rewards as a factor, compared to just 40% in the 16–25 age group. This suggests that incentives and rewards may be more effective in engaging younger audiences. In the 36–42 age group, 76.3% of respondents identified incentives or rewards as a factor, suggesting that older consumers may also be motivated by incentives.

While loyalty to the brand was a less common factor across all age groups, with just 41.5% of respondents in the 11–15 age group selecting this option compared to 42.1% in the 36–42 age group. This shows that loyalty to the brand may be less important than personal interest or incentives in motivating consumers to share content on social media.

Finally, social or environmental causes supported by the brand were selected by only a small proportion of respondents, with no respondents in the 11–15 age group identifying this factor. This suggests that social and environmental causes may not be a significant factor in motivating consumers to share content on social media, particularly among younger consumers.

After analyzing the data on the factors that influence individuals to share a brand's social media content, it is clear that personal interest in the product or service and incentives or rewards for sharing are the two most significant factors for all age groups. However, there are notable differences in the responses of different age groups that marketers can take into consideration. For instance, with younger consumers more likely to be motivated by personal interest and incentives, and older consumers also more likely to be motivated by incentives or rewards.

The fourteenth question asked the respondents to rate how much influence social media advertisements have on their overall perception of a brand on a scale from 1 to 5. The result of the questionnaire shows that social media advertisements have a relatively similar influence across all age groups. The average score for all age groups falls between 2.9 and 3.2, with the median score being 3.0 for each group. Remarkably, age group 11–15 and age group 16–25 have the same average score of 3.2, indicating that social media advertisements have



a slightly higher influence on their perception of a brand compared to age groups 26–35 and 36–42, which have an average score of 2.9.

Marketers can use this information to understand that social media advertisements are an effective way to influence the perception of a brand across all age groups. However, they may need to adjust their advertising strategies for older age groups, as their influence appears to be slightly lower. It is also important to note that while social media advertisements can influence the overall perception of a brand, other factors such as personal experience and word-of-mouth recommendations may have a stronger influence. Therefore, a comprehensive marketing strategy that includes a mix of tactics may be more effective in shaping brand perception.

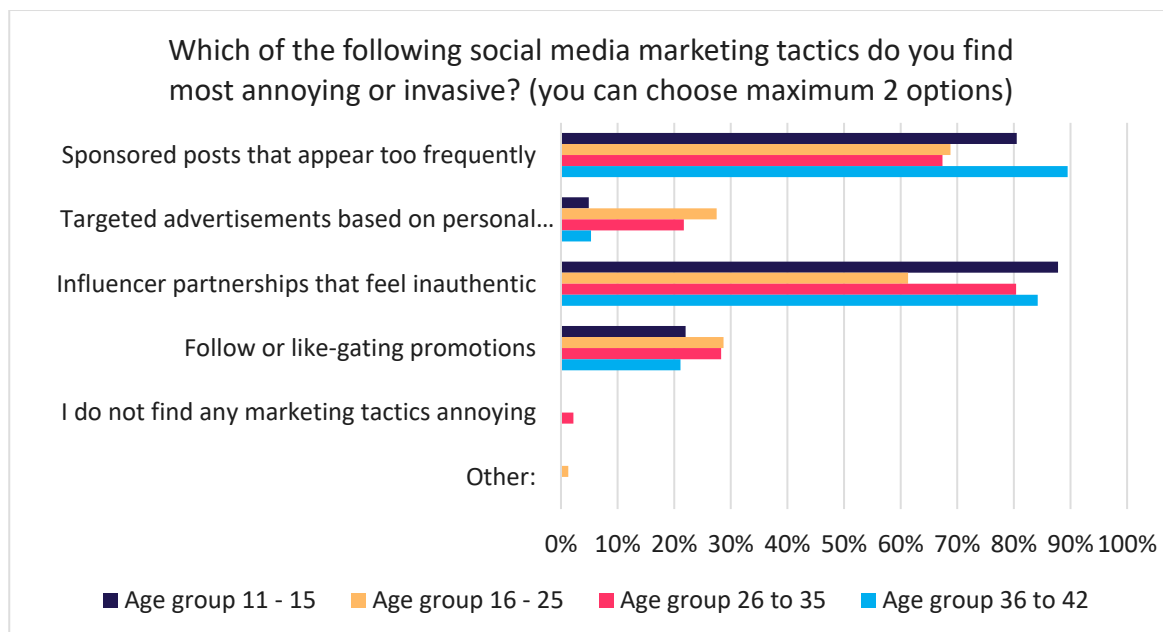


Figure 24. Comparison between age groups: Which of the following social media marketing tactics do you find most annoying or invasive? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=398).

The fifteenth question asked the respondents which social media marketing tactics that are considered most annoying or invasive. Figure 24 shows that the marketing tactic that was found to be the most annoying or invasive was influencer partnerships that feel inauthentic. In fact, this was selected by more than 80% of respondents in all age groups except for the age group of 16–25, where it was selected by 61.3%. This shows that regardless of age, consumers are increasingly wary of influencers and their perceived lack of authenticity. Marketers should take note of this and focus on building genuine relationships with influencers, rather than solely relying on paid partnerships.

In terms of sponsored posts that appear too frequently, this was the second most annoying marketing tactic for all age groups except for the age group of 36–42, where it was the most annoying. This reflects that while younger consumers may be more accepting of sponsored posts, older consumers may be more likely to perceive them as intrusive. Marketers should consider limiting the frequency of sponsored posts, especially when targeting older age groups.

Targeted advertisements based on personal information were found to be the second most annoying marketing tactic for the age groups of 16–25 and 26–35, while it was only selected by 4.9% of the age group of 11–15 and 5.3% of the age group of 36–42. This indicates that younger consumers may be more accepting of targeted ads, while older consumers may perceive them as intrusive. Companies should be transparent about their use of personal information for targeted ads and ensure that they are only using data that consumers have willingly provided.

Follow or like-gating promotions were found to be the least annoying marketing tactic across all age groups, with only a minority of respondents selecting it. This suggests that marketers may be able to use these tactics without significantly alienating consumers.

Lastly, a small percentage of respondents in the age groups of 26–35 and 36–42 indicated that they did not find any marketing tactics annoying. While this may suggest a certain level of acceptance of marketing on social media, it is important for marketers to continue monitoring consumer attitudes and preferences to avoid alienating consumers with their tactics.

Therefore, companies should consider these differences when developing social media marketing strategies. The results of this question indicated that building genuine relationships with influencers and limiting the frequency of sponsored posts may be particularly effective when targeting older age groups. On the other hand, targeted advertisements based on personal information may be more acceptable to younger consumers.

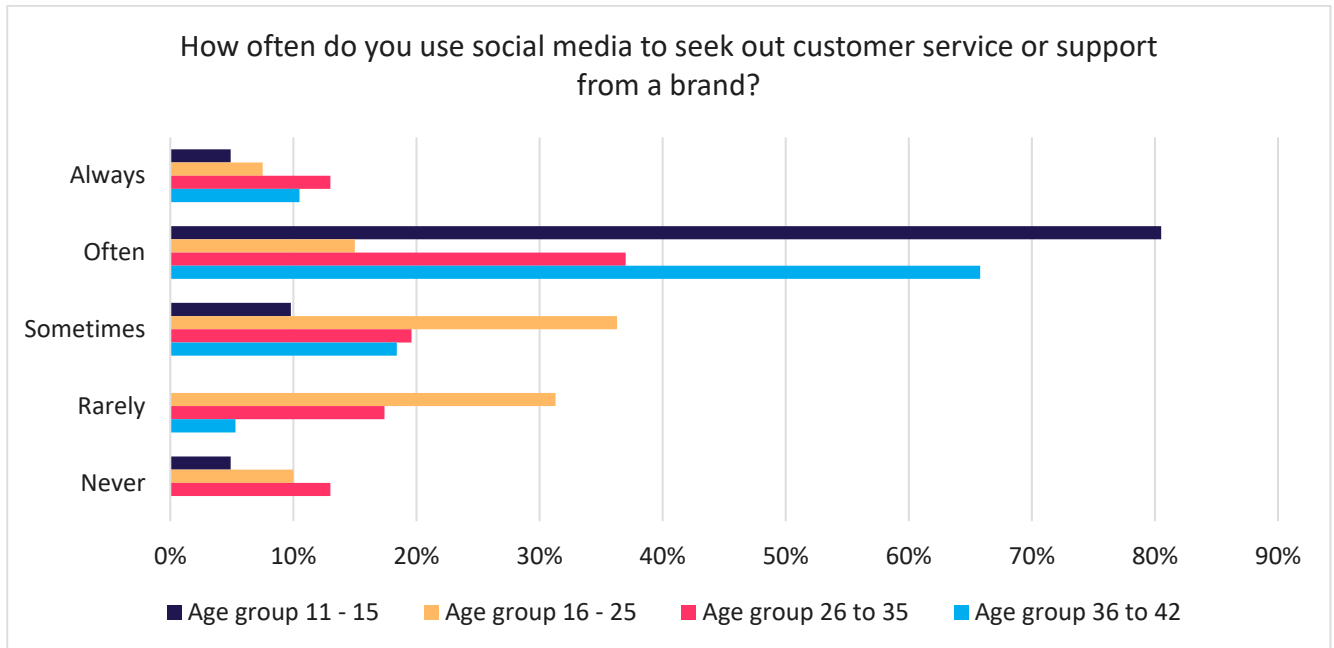


Figure 25. Comparison between age groups: How often do you use social media to seek out customer service or support from a brand? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=205).

According to Figure 25, it indicated the sixteenth question of how often they use social media to seek out customer service or support from a brand. Apparently, there are some clear differences between age groups. Firstly, the youngest age group (11–15) appears to use social media for customer service the least often, with only 4.9% saying they always seek out support this way. On the other hand, the vast majority (80.5%) say they often use social media for customer service.

The second youngest age group (16–25) also shows some interesting patterns. While they are the second most likely to always seek out customer service via social media, with 7.5%, they are also the most likely age group to rarely or never seek out support this way, with 31.3% and 10% respectively.

For the two older age groups (26–35 and 36–42), the trend is towards using social media more often for customer service. In fact, the two oldest age groups (26–35 and 36–42) are the most likely to always seek out support via social media, with 13% and 10.5% respectively.

The second oldest age group (26–35) is also the most likely to often seek out customer service this way, with 37%, followed closely by the oldest age group (36–42) with 65.8%. The two oldest age groups are the least likely to never seek out support via social media, with only 13% and 0% respectively.

As a result, it shows that the trend is towards using social media more often for customer service as respondents get older, with the exception of the youngest age group. This could be due to increased comfort with social media and technology in general as people age, or perhaps a greater need for customer service as people encounter more complex issues with products and services.

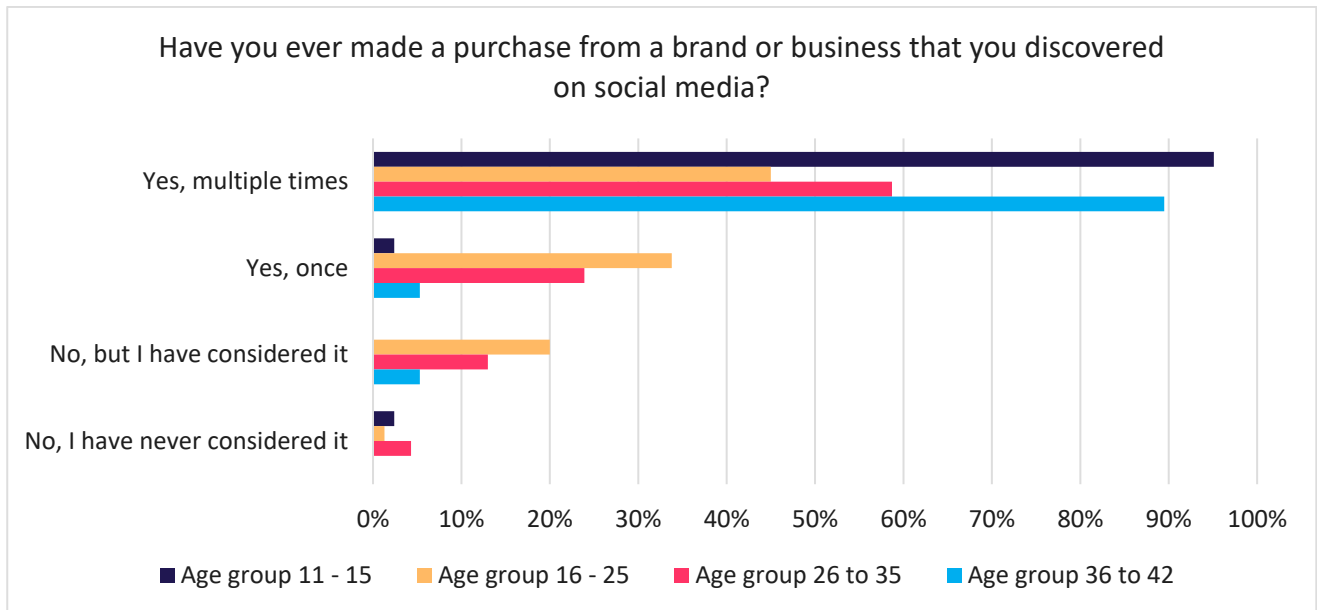


Figure 26. Comparison between age groups: Have you ever made a purchase from a brand or business that you discovered on social media? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=205).

The seventeenth question asked the respondents if they have ever made a purchase from a brand or business that they discovered on social media. Based on Figure 26, the majority of respondents across all age groups have made a purchase from a brand or business that they discovered on social media. The highest percentage of respondents who have made multiple purchases from social media-discovered brands is in the age group of 11–15 at 95.1%, followed by 89.5% in the age group of 36–42. While 45% in the age group of 16–25 and 58.7% in the 26 to 35 age group.

When it comes to making a purchase from a brand or business discovered on social media for the first time, the highest percentage of respondents who have done so once is in the age group of 16–25 at 33.8%, followed by 23.9% in the age group of 26–35. The lowest percentage is in the age group of 36–42 at 5.3%.

The data also shows that a significant proportion of respondents in all age groups have considered making a purchase from a brand or business discovered on social media, with the

highest percentage in the age group of 16–25 at 20% and the lowest in the age group of 36–42 at 5.3%.

To conclude, the data reflects that social media is an important platform for businesses to reach potential customers, especially younger age groups. The younger respondents are more likely to have made multiple purchases from brands discovered on social media and to have considered doing so. However, businesses should not neglect older age groups, as a significant proportion of respondents in these age groups have also made purchases from social media-discovered brands.

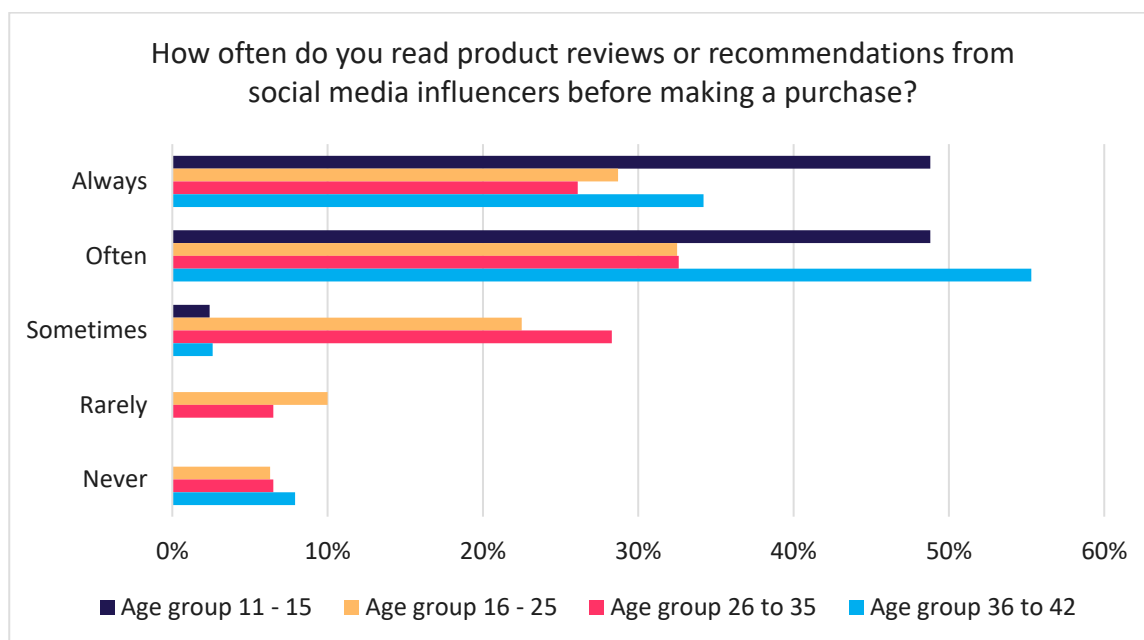


Figure 27. Comparison between age groups: How often do you read product reviews or recommendations from social media influencers before making a purchase? From 12 April to 28 April 2023 (n=205).

The last question of the questionnaire asked the respondents how often they read product reviews or recommendations from social media influencers before making a purchase. Figure 27 shows that the highest percentage of respondents who always read product reviews or recommendations from social media influencers before making a purchase were in the age group of 11–15 (48.80%), followed by the age group of 16–25 (28.70%), 26–35 (26.10%), and 36–42 (34.20%). The age group of 11–15 had the highest percentage of respondents who often read product reviews or recommendations (48.80%), while the age group of 36–42 had the highest percentage of respondents who never (7.90%) read them.

Therefore, it illustrates that younger age groups are more likely to rely on product reviews and recommendations from social media influencers before making a purchase. The age group of 11–15 had the highest percentage of respondents who always and often read them, while the age group of 16–25 had the second-highest percentage of respondents who always and often read them. In contrast, the older age groups (26–35 and 36–42) had lower percentages of respondents who always and often read them and higher percentages of respondents who rarely or never read them. It's worth noting that while a majority of respondents across all age groups read product reviews or recommendations from social media influencers at least sometimes, there are still significant percentages who rarely or never do. This suggests that while social media influencers can be effective in influencing purchasing decisions, they may not be the sole deciding factor for all consumers.

### **4.3 Limitations**

Despite the valuable insights obtained from the questionnaire, the study is not without its limitations. There are few main limitations of this research. Firstly, because of the time limit, 205 respondents participated in the quantitative research, which is relatively small and may not be completely illustrative of the entire population of millennials and Generation Z consumers. Although the sample size meets the minimum requirement for conducting statistical analysis, it is important to acknowledge that caution should be exercised when drawing generalizable conclusions due to the potential limitations associated with sample size. Also, social media platforms and user behaviour are constantly evolving, with new platforms and trends emerging frequently and the data collected may only reflect a snapshot in time.

Also, while the questionnaire covered a focused set of questions related to social media marketing and brand engagement, it is important to note that due to time and budget constraints, it was not possible to cover a comprehensive range of factors that could influence consumer behaviour. While the questions asked provided valuable insights, there may be other factors that influence consumer behaviour that were not included in the questionnaire. For example, it did not explore factors such as income or education level, which could have an impact on respondents' attitudes and behaviours.

Therefore, it's important to keep these limitations in mind when interpreting the results of this study. While the findings provide valuable insights into the social media usage and brand

engagement of millennial and Generation Z consumers in a specific context. Further research should be conducted to explore these topics in greater depth combined with qualitative data, such as interviews and focus groups. And with larger, more diverse samples, to gain a more in-depth understanding of participants' motivations and decision-making processes.

#### **4.4 Recommendations for companies**

As a result of the findings from the previous sections, this chapter will provide recommendations for companies to effectively engage with millennial and Generation Z consumers on social media platforms. With the continued growth of social media usage among these generations, it is important for companies to understand how to leverage these platforms to connect with their target audience. The recommendations presented here are based on current research and best practices in social media marketing and engagement.

Firstly, the companies must utilize the right social media platforms. This research found that different social media platforms have different levels of effectiveness in terms of brand discovery and engagement. For instance, Instagram and YouTube were found to be the most effective platform for discovering new brands or products for millennials and Generation Z. Therefore, companies should carefully consider which social media platforms are best suited to their target audience and marketing objectives. By utilizing the right social media platforms, companies can improve their reach and engagement with their target audience, ultimately leading to increased sales and brand loyalty.

Secondly, it is advisable for the companies to prioritize engagement with followers. The result of the quantitative research found that engagement with followers is crucial for building brand loyalty and increasing sales. Also, according to Kaplan & Haenlein (2011), companies should prioritize engaging with their followers on social media by responding to comments, reposting UGC, and sharing updates about the brand. This not only helps build a loyal customer base but also creates a sense of community around the brand. By prioritizing engagement with followers, companies can improve brand perception and ultimately increase sales.

Moreover, it is recommended that the companies need to monitor social media marketing tactics frequently. Based on the analysis, certain social media marketing tactics, such as excessive use of hashtags and pop-up ads, can be viewed as annoying or invasive by consumers. Therefore, companies should monitor their social media marketing tactics to ensure they

are not having a negative impact on their target audience. For example, companies should open to feedback from their followers and make necessary adjustments to their marketing tactics.

In addition, the companies should provide valuable and informative content. The study found that consumers are more likely to trust and engage with social media content that is informative and valuable, which would lead them to purchase a product or service after watching these contents. Therefore, companies should prioritize providing valuable and informative content to their followers. For instance, this can include how-to guides, product reviews, and demonstration videos.

Lastly, another effective approach for the companies would be to embrace new social media trends. The data collected from the research indicated that Instagram, YouTube and Facebook are the top 3 popular social media platforms among millennial and Generation Z. There are always new trends and features on these platforms, such as Instagram Reels, YouTube shorts and Facebook Live, can be effective tools for increasing engagement and brand awareness. Therefore, companies should embrace new social media trends and features to stay relevant and reach a wider audience. Companies should also regularly review their social media strategies to ensure they are taking advantage of new trends and features.

In conclusion, this study provides several key recommendations for companies to improve their social media marketing strategies. Companies should carefully consider their target audience and marketing objectives when selecting social media platforms and should prioritize engaging with followers through responding to comments and sharing UGC. By regularly monitoring and adjusting their social media strategies, companies can ensure that their marketing tactics are not having a negative impact on their target audience. Additionally, by providing valuable and informative content and embracing new social media trends, companies can stay relevant and reach a wider audience. These recommendations are based on current research and best practices in social media marketing and engagement.



## 5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this thesis has explored the impact of social media marketing on the buying behaviour of millennial and Generation Z consumers. Through a quantitative research approach that involved a questionnaire of these two generations, this study provided valuable insights into their social media usage, perceptions of social media marketing, and buying behaviours.

The findings suggest that social media marketing does indeed influence the purchasing decisions of millennials and Gen Z consumers, with popular platforms such as Instagram and Facebook playing a significant role in this process. Authenticity was found to be crucial in social media marketing campaigns targeted at these two generations, as they are highly attuned to inauthentic or insincere messaging. Personalization was also found to be key to engaging with millennial and Gen Z consumers on social media.

Looking towards future trends in social media marketing, this research indicates that businesses must continue to adapt their strategies to meet the changing needs and preferences of millennial and Gen Z consumers. As these two generations continue to age and gain more purchasing power, they will become an increasingly important demographic for businesses to target.

One key trend that is likely to shape the future of social media marketing is the rise of video content. This research found that both millennials and Gen Z consumers are highly engaged with video content on social media platforms such as YouTube shorts and Instagram reels. As such, businesses must develop creative and engaging video content that speaks directly to the interests and behaviours of these two groups. Another trend that is likely to shape the future of social media marketing is the increasing importance of social responsibility. This research also found that both millennials and Gen Z consumers are highly attuned to issues such as sustainability, diversity, and inclusion. As such, businesses must develop social responsibility initiatives that align with the values and beliefs of these two groups in order to effectively engage with them on social media.

In conclusion, this thesis contributes to the understanding of how businesses and marketers can effectively target millennial and Gen Z consumers through social media. By taking into account their unique preferences and behaviours on these platforms, companies can

optimize their marketing strategies to better engage with these two generations. As we look towards the future trends for social media marketing, it is clear that businesses must continue to adapt to the changing landscape of digital communication in order to remain competitive in today's market.

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## **APPENDICES**

Appendix 1. Questionnaire about social media usage of millennials and Gen Z.

**Appendix 1. Questionnaire about social media usage of millennials and Gen Z.**

## Section 1: Demographics and media consumption

1. Which age group do you belong to?

- ☐ 11 to 15
- ☐ 16 to 25
- ☐ 26 to 35
- ☐ 36 to 42

2. How much time do you spend on social media per day?

- ☐ Less than 30 minutes
- ☐ 30 minutes to 1 hour
- ☐ 1 hour to 2 hours
- ☐ 2 hours to 3 hours
- ☐ More than 3 hours

3. How much time do you spend on traditional media per day? (such as TV, radio)

- ☐ Less than 30 minutes
- ☐ 30 minutes to 1 hour
- ☐ 1 hour to 2 hours
- ☐ 2 hours to 3 hours



- More than 3 hours

## Section 2: Social media usage habits

4. Which platform do you believe is most effective for discovering new products or brands?

- Facebook
- Instagram
- YouTube
- Other (please specify)

5. How often do you make a purchase after seeing an advertisement or sponsored content on social media?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

6. How important is it for a brand or business to engage with their followers on social media?

- Scale from 1 (not at all important) to 5 (extremely important)

7. How likely are you to trust social media advertisements or sponsored content compared to traditional forms of advertising (such as TV or print ads)?

- Scale from 1 (much less likely) to 5 (much less likely)

### Section 3: Brand engagement and influence

8. Which types of social media content do you find most influential when considering a product or service purchase? (you can choose maximum 2 options)

- Product or service reviews
- Sponsored content
- Influencer endorsements
- Personalized recommendations based on your interests or browsing history
- Other (please specify)

9. What are the top 3 reasons you follow a brand or business on social media? (please choose 3 options)

- To receive promotions or discounts
- To stay up-to-date on new products or services
- To be entertained by the content
- To support a brand or business that I believe in
- Other (please specify)

10. Have you ever unfollowed a brand or business on social media because of their social media marketing tactics? (for example: excessive use of hashtags, pop-up ads, click-bait headlines)

- Yes, frequently

- Yes, occasionally
- No, but I have considered it
- No, I haven't considered it
- I'm not sure

11. To what extent do you think your purchasing behaviour have affected by social media contents?

- Scale from 1 (slightly affected) to 5 (highly affected)

12. Which of the following types of social media content do you find most informative when considering a purchase? (you can choose maximum 2 options)

- Product reviews
- How-to tutorials
- Demonstration videos
- Comparison charts
- Other (please specify)

13. Which of the following factors is most likely to influence you to share a brand's social media content with your followers? (you can choose maximum 2 options)

- Personal interest in the product or service
- Loyalty to the brand
- Incentives or rewards for sharing

- Social or environmental causes the brand supports
- Other (please specify)

14. How much influence do social media advertisements have on your overall perception of a brand?

- Scale from 1 (no influence) to 5 (a lot of influence)

15. Which of the following social media marketing tactics do you find most annoying or invasive? (you can choose maximum 2 options)

- Sponsored posts that appear too frequently
- Targeted advertisements based on personal information
- Influencer partnerships that feel inauthentic
- Follow or like-gating promotions
- I do not find any social media marketing tactics annoying or invasive
- Other (please specify)

16. How often do you use social media to seek out customer service or support from a brand?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely

- Never

17. Have you ever made a purchase from a brand or business that you discovered on social media?

- Yes, multiple times
- Yes, once
- No, but I have considered it
- No, I have never considered it

18. How often do you read product reviews or recommendations from social media influencers before making a purchase?

- Always
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never