



Impact of Social Media on Purchase Intentions among Young Adults in France

Case Study on Instagram

Gabrielle Heslouin

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ABSTRACT

Tampereen ammattikorkeakoulu
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Today, technology is becoming increasingly important. With the rise of technology, businesses are constantly evolving. Technology platforms such as social media have become a powerful new sales channel that is impacting consumer society and in particular the new generations that have grown up with it. Therefore, it is important for businesses to understand how these new platforms work and what users expect from them to perform at their best.

The purpose of this thesis was to understand the impact of social media, particularly the Instagram's platform, on the purchasing intentions of young adults aged 15 to 29 in France. The data were gathered by conducting a quantitative survey distributed to French young adults. The objective of this study was to gather information about the factors influencing trust on social media and their impact on purchase intentions. The data of the survey were collected by 97 French young adults.

The quantitative data were then analysed and interpreted using qualitative content analysis. The findings indicate that Instagram influences users' trust through factors such as realistic visuals, recommendations, and advertising. The majority of participants believed that these factors improve user's trust. In addition, the author found a strong and positive link between trust on Instagram and purchase intentions on the platform.

Key words: purchase intention, digital marketing, trust

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ABBREVIATIONS

TAMK Tampere University of Applied Sciences

PU Perceived usefulness

PEOU Perceived ease of use

1 INTRODUCTION

Today, technology plays an important role in the way people communicate, access information, and buy. With constant innovations such as mobile phones and social media, the way we interact and consume has evolved considerably. Social media have grown a lot and have strongly influenced the habits of many French people (Ricard, 2024). Social media have become a powerful new sales channel that is impacting consumer society. Social media offer many benefits, such as the ability to communicate and learn, but these platforms also present risks such as privacy, mental health, and misinformation (Dollarhide, 2024). The large amount of information and social validation can significantly influence consumer preferences and purchasing behaviour (Felix et al., 2016). As a result, social media have become a powerful influencing factor in consumers' decision-making processes. Users often turn to their online networks for product recommendations, opinions, or inspiration for a future purchase (Felix et al., 2016).

According to Kessler (2022), today's young people are often referred to as 'digital natives' as they have been exposed to technology from an early age. Technology and especially social media have a particular impact on the younger generations, as they use them daily and have grown up with them. Young adults spend an average of a few hours a day on social media such as Instagram, Snapchat or TikTok. The most active users on social media are young adults. (Wicknertz, 2023). The consumption habits and behaviour of young people are strongly influenced by the content of these platforms (PWC, 2018).

In this context, the thesis seeks to analyse the impact of the social media platforms, focusing on Instagram, on the purchase intentions of young adults in France. The objective is to understand how social media influence consumer behaviour, focusing on user trust and their impact on purchase intentions. This study will help companies to better understand and adapt their digital marketing strategy to the new generations. Companies will then optimise their marketing efforts.

2 THESIS PLAN

The following thesis plan is introducing shortly the topic and defining the objectives, purpose, theories, and concepts as well as the general terms of the thesis. The plan will also deliver the methods later used.

2.1 Thesis topic

The topic of the thesis is the impact of social media on the purchase intentions of young adults in France. The thesis will focus on Instagram. This social media platform has been created by Kevin Systrom et Mike Krieger in October 2010 (Ricard, 2024). Instagram is one of the largest global markets in the world. Instagram has a user based of 2 billion individuals in the world (Shepherd, 2024). In France, there are 27 million users which represents 48% of the French population (Ricard, 2024).

The thesis analyses the influence of trust on social media interactions and its impact on purchase intentions. The thesis will provide insights into consumer behaviour in the digital age. Also, the thesis will offer support to companies seeking to adapt their marketing strategies to the behaviours of young adults in the French context as social media marketing plays a key role in companies' communications strategies. With the growth of digitalization and the omnipresence of social media, it is key for companies to understand these effects to engage effectively with the younger generations. For these strategies to work, it is imperative to understand these effects and analyse them to best influence the purchasing intentions and decisions of their consumers. (Felix & all, 2016).

Furthermore, the author has a background in general and e-commerce marketing, as well as practical experience of 6-month in marketing roles. Therefore, the author can contribute knowledge and experience to the thesis. Additionally, the author is curious to investigate the effects of social media on the purchase intentions of young adults as a young social media's consumer.

Moreover, Instagram implemented few years ago easy manageable stores on the platform that push people to buy more. Instagram is no longer only influencing

customers purchasing intentions with visuals but also a real online store (Che, Cheung, & Thadani, 2017). In order to make Instagram's customers buy products on this platform, it is necessary to obtain the customers' trust like e-commerce platforms (Yasa & Cop, 2022). This thesis will focus on how the characteristics of social media are impacting the customers' trust and the purchasing intentions.

While consumer behaviours have been previously studied, the impact of French young adults Instagram users' usage on their purchase intentions had not been thoroughly investigated.

2.2 Thesis objective and research questions

This thesis focuses on the relationship between trust, social media and purchasing intentions of young adults aged 15 to 29. The objective of the study is to understand the impact of social media on the purchasing intentions of young adults in France and the factors that affect them.

The main research question is:

How young adults are impacted by Instagram on their purchase intentions in France?

The two sub-questions that will help to frame this question are:

Which factors affect consumers' purchasing intentions on Instagram?

Does trust play a key role in affecting consumers' purchasing intentions on Instagram?

The objectives of this research were to ascertain the extent to which trust was playing a key role in the purchasing intentions on Instagram, which factors attract Instagram's users to look/to buy a service or a product from this social media platform.

2.3 Concepts and Theory

This part of the thesis will present the various pertinent concepts and theories to the study. Also, this part is designed to facilitate a more comprehensive understanding of the material covered in the following.

2.3.1 Marketing

As stated by Alexandra Twin in her article on "Marketing in Business: Strategies Types Explained" (2024), marketing is all the activities involved in promoting the purchase or sale of a product or service. The aim of marketing is to create value for customers. One of the main goals of marketing is to attract new potential customers and to maintain a relationship with them that will last over the long term by satisfying them. Marketing has a direct impact on sales by cultivating long-term relationship and encouraging customers to return.

Marketing can be divided in 4 main words: Product, Price, Place and Promotion.

- Product is what you offer and why the customer should choose this product and not another. A company is proving value to customer by products or services. They are focused on customer needs rather than the product.
- Price is what the buyer is giving to the seller. The price is a balance between the right selling price for the customer and a profitable price for the company.
- Place is where the exchange of product or service takes place. It could be online, on an e-commerce platform or in physic stores. The place should be easy to reach to bring the most potential customers.
- Promotion is what marketers use to inform the buyer about their product or service. It is the result of marketing strategies. (Snyder, 2023) The customer's voice should be heard and the channels should be selected after customer's analysis to better target the audience.

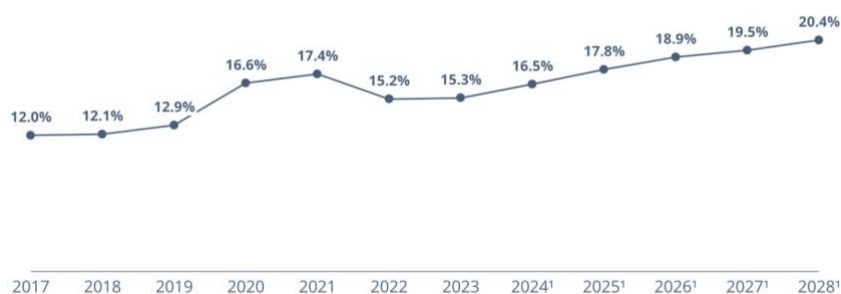
2.3.2 Digital Marketing

According to Lucy Alexander in her post "The Who, What, Why, & How of Digital Marketing" (2022) digital marketing is everything that refers to marketing efforts in the online environment. It could be on search engine, social media or via email. Digital marketing is directly linked to general marketing as the digital marketing strategies rely on general marketing strategies to have the same message and vision.

The 5S's of digital marketing (Chaffey & Smith, 2008) is a framework for reviewing and defining the development of the top-level digital marketing objectives in business. It is helping to get better outcome for business.

- Sell represents the grow sales through wider distribution, promotion, and sales.
- Serve is the add value as extra benefits that the company is giving to customers online.
- Speak for getting closer to customers by tracking them, asking them questions, creating a dialogue, and learning about them through forum or live chat or also surveys. Marketers are conducting online market research to get to know the customers better and his needs.
- Save is for saving costs such as service, promotions sales transactions, print and post and increasing profits.
- Sizzle is for extending the brand online by reinforcing brand values through new propositions, offers, experiences.

■ ONLINE SHARE OF RETAIL SALES CHANNELS IN EUROPE, 2017-2028



Notes: (1) Forecast. As of May 2024.
Sources: ECDB.

ECDB

FIGURE 1. Online Retail vs. Offline Retail: Europe Analysis (ECDB, 2024)

As seen on the Figure 1, online shopping in Europe has increased over the years, from 12% in 2017 to 16.5% in 2024 (Uzunoglu, 2024). Nowadays, every brand has an online presence either with a website or a social media account. Thanks to Internet, consumers can easily access websites or social media to get more information on the product and this can facilitate their purchasing decision making processes.

Customers expect to find a platform where they can search for more than just the product or service, but also the brand's identity and values (Suprpto et al., 2020). The demands of new generations have evolved. Young adults are more critical and prefer quality products or services that are more eco-responsible. (Wicknertz, 2023)

2.3.3 Social media

Social media are digital platforms that allow individuals to create, communicate, share, and exchange information in groups. These platforms have 5 billion users (Dollarhide, 2024). Social media have local and personal dimension as well as a global reach.

With the digital revolution, social media are no longer just used for personal purposes, but are also useful for businesses. These platforms help to raise brand awareness and create links with customers. Social media is a very useful and powerful tool for promoting products and services. They are also highly effective for reaching potential customers. Social media play a key role in many digital marketing strategies and campaigns as a sales and marketing tool.

2.3.4 Social media marketing

Social media marketing involves the use of social media channels to create, communicate, deliver, and exchange products. (Sharma & Kumar, 2018). Social media marketing is all the techniques that target social media and apps to build brand awareness or promote products.

Companies use social media to maintain relationships with their customers, increase sales to existing customers, attract potential customers and promote their business. With Social Media Optimisation (SMO), companies can sort and leverage the information available to develop their brand. Thanks to the social media platforms, companies can easily talk directly to their customers and get feedback which help to optimise on their products or services.

In addition, companies can also use social media platforms to identify trends, find creativity, provide customer service, and collect data. It's a very useful tool for getting in touch with your target audience and increasing brand awareness.

Marketers face the challenge of gaining consumer trust in social media marketing environments due to the lack of face-to-face communication and the importance of user-generated content (PWC, 2018). Therefore, social media should generate interest and encourage more customers to buy.

2.3.5 Trust

According to Astuti, Budi, Putri, Azhalia Pramesthi (2018), trust is fundamental to any business. Trust is a fundamental aspect of e-commerce development and plays a pivotal role in the field. In order to build customer loyalty, it is important to maintain trust with your customer. Also, it is important to respond to customer needs and expectations to improve trust and therefore customer satisfaction. This trust enables brands to play on several channels to sell their products or services. According to an article of PWC on "Who do consumers really trust?" (2018), social media is ranked first among the online media that people regularly use to find inspiration for their future purchases. On social media platforms, trust refers to a consumer's willingness to rely on the brand (the seller). If customers trust a seller, they are more likely to repurchase it and recommend it to others.

According to Head and Hassanein (2002), consumer confidence levels vary according to the amount of information collected and shared when using a digital platform. In addition, the level of consumer confidence in e-commerce can increase by a sincere attitude with complete and accurate information.

2.3.6 Trust Theory

Trust Theory originates from the fields of marketing and psychology and helps to explain the factors that influence trust between consumers and brands. In the context of social media, "Trust Theory" is associated with digital trust, which refers to interactions and recommendations of shared knowledge and information. (Doney & Cannon, 1997) The perceived transparency, integrity, and competence of brands are key elements in shaping this trust.

The theory of trust is also based on the notion of calculating trust. (Doney & Cannon, 1997) On social media, users can verify the reliability of information and the credibility of sources. This has a direct impact on consumer confidence.

Jack Gibb's theory (1972) explained that at the centre of personal, collective, and organisational development is trust, trust in oneself, in others and in the social systems created by individuals. Gibb defined the benefits of trust in a framework called TORI: Trust, Openness, Achievement, and Interdependence. (Highbrow, 2020) The framework emphasizes the positive outcome and growth within social system if these four elements are combining.

When people are confident and trust their environment, they can be more themselves. Trust makes it easier for people to open and feel comfortable expressing their thoughts, feelings and needs. Trust and openness allow individuals to express themselves more frankly and usefully. If we take the example of a group, then the more trust and openness there is, the more the group will reach a high level of realisation and evolve towards interdependence and community. This is when boundaries are lowered, and synergy and effectiveness are enhanced.

Consumers' trust is a mediating role in the relationship between motivation for empowerment and consumers' intentions to make online purchase (Yasa, Yesevi Alperen ; Cop, Ruziye, 2022)

2.3.7 Purchase intentions

The concept of intention originates from the field of psychology, which refers to the link between attitude and behaviour. (Hernández et al., 2005) A purchase intention is a consumer's potential for making a future purchase based on the desire, experience of use, and desire for the product of a product (Hasim et al., 2020). This intention to buy is a motivation that is registered in the mind and becomes a strong desire, interest. It may be transformed into action if consumers want to satisfy their needs but not necessary every time. Purchase intention is strongly related to attitude, environment, situation, and preference towards a brand or a product (Kim & Ko, 2010; Kim & Lee, 2009)

According to Astuti, Budi, Putri, Azhalia Pramesthi (2018) purchase intention can be defined through different indicators. First there is the transactional intention, which is the tendency of a person to buy a product. Then, you have the reference intention which is one's tendency to make a reference of the product to others. In addition, the concept of preference intention is employed to describe the behaviours of an individual who has a primary preference for a product. This preference may only be altered if the consumer experiences a change in their preferred product. Finally, the explorative intention describes the behaviour of an individual who is consistently seeking information regarding a product of interest in order to reinforce the positive features of that product.

Darley and Chen (2017) establish the foundation for research on the role of social media platforms, such as Instagram, in consumers' purchase intentions. They demonstrate the role that these platforms play in other stages of the decision-making process.

Technology Acceptance Model

The technology acceptance model (TAM, Davis, 1989) is a theoretical framework on how users come to accept and use a technology. At the centre of the model is the concept of behavioural intention that is directly linked with the use of technology. Moreover, behaviour intention is influenced by users' attitudes toward the technology.

Several factors are impacting the use of technology such as perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU). Perceived usefulness is characterised by “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance their job performance” (Davis, 1989). David defined the perceived ease of use as “the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free from effort”. External factors are also impacting attitudes.

TAM proposes that PEOU and PU greatly influence an individual’s intention to use a technology. Intention is in turn influenced by actual usage behaviour. The model suggests that if users perceive a technology as easy to use and see it as beneficial to their tasks or goals, they are more likely to accept and adopt it.

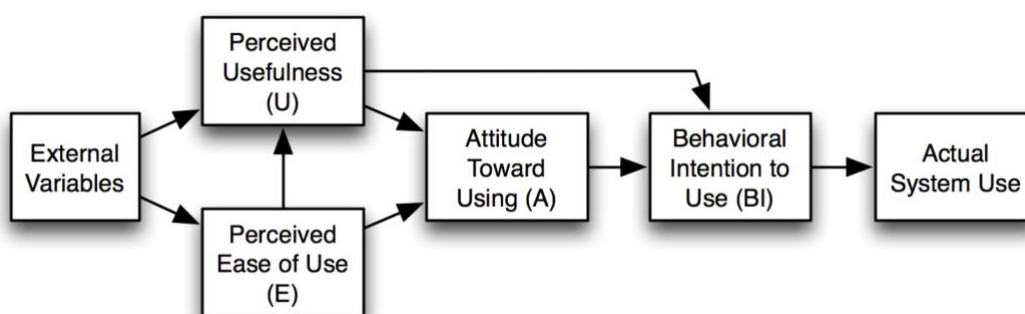


FIGURE 2 Technology Acceptance Model (Wikipedia contributors, 2024)

2.3.8 Purchase decisions

The purchase decision is the thought process that takes a consumer from identifying a need, through generating options, to choosing a specific product and brand. This decision is one of the last steps of the buying decision as it is the final decision on which product or service to purchase. (Dincer, 2020)

There are five steps in the purchasing decision. The first one is the need recognition based on need or desire. Then you have the information search. Customers will look for information from friends, companies’ website or store, social media, or reviews. The following step is evaluation of alternatives. Customers will compare the options. In these two last steps, businesses can influence customer behaviour by using advertising, social media campaigns or search engine optimisation (SEO) to make their product the best over the

competitors. Then there is the purchase decision which is the final decision about which product or service to buy. The last step is the post-purchase behaviour which is when customers use and assess their purchase and decide if there are satisfied or not. (Hub, 2024)

Purchase decisions are increasingly influenced by social media interactions. Nowadays, people usually rely on their social media contents before making a purchase decision. (Hinz et al., 2011)

Purchase intention is important for the purchase decision, as it acts as a belief, an interest or a desire which is a mediator in the final purchase decision. It is influenced by many factors such as brand image, advertising, perceived benefit, trust, and multichannel marketing. Purchase intentions are impacting positively the purchase decision. (Dapas, Sitorus, Purwanto, Ihalauw, 2019)

2.4 Research Framework

The author's two hypotheses for this thesis are:

1. Instagram has a positive effect on users' trust.
2. Trust on social media has a positive effect on purchasing intentions.

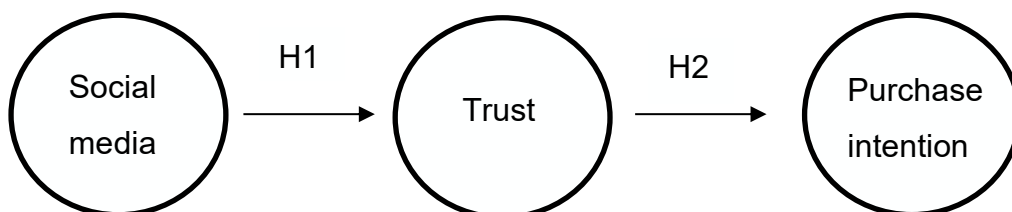


FIGURE 3 Research Framework

2.5 Working methods and data

The author chose the quantitative method of data collection for the thesis. It has been selected as it is a precise and accurate method and helps to test hypothesis. This method is objective and is minimising bias and subjectivity in the results' interpretation. Moreover, quantitative methods are enabling researchers to compare data with different populations. This method is particularly relevant in

term of time as it is a very efficient method, and the author only has few months. This method allows the author to generalise the deductions to the overall target population. As the author have had successfully analysed data in past professional experiences, the author is confident in its suitability to use this method.

Consequently, a statistical analysis will be conducted using the survey data to elucidate the results and draw conclusions.

The topic of the thesis is the impact of social media on the purchase intentions among young adults in France.

The survey aims to understand the impact of social media on the purchase intentions among young adults in France. The survey will have multiple choice questions and Likert Scale questions with five levels, ranging from (1) as strongly disagree to (5) as strongly agree. The survey will be sent to Instagram's users from 15 to 29 years old as this group of people have a purchasing power and could have been influenced by social media as 94% of the 13 to 34 years old users are using Instagram in France. (Ricard, 2024). According to Sarah Kessler, "in the field of health, medicine, and human development, young adulthood is the time when a person is traditionally the healthiest. It's the stage between adolescence and adulthood, which roughly falls between the ages of 15 and 29". (Kessler, 2022)

The author has chosen Office 365 forms to create the survey and collect data. The university of the author has a partnership with this platform, and it is a secure platform. This platform allows users to answer on mobile devices which is time efficient as they can answer from anywhere with their phone. Additionally, the platform is user-friendly for the participants and the creator.

In the survey, participants will have the option of being anonymous. All participants will be asked their consent before their data is processed. The author will specify that the data will only be used for the purposes of the study. These measures are respecting the ethical standards and respect individuals' rights.

Theory is the first source of knowledge, research proceeds from theory, through hypothesis, to empirical analysis by analysing data.

2.6 Thesis process

This part is presenting the thesis process and what you can expect in the next chapters.

The first chapter introduces the topic of the thesis briefly.

The chapter two presents the thesis plan, providing insights into the objectives, purpose, theories, and data collection method.

Chapter three includes the results and the analysis of the quantitative data.

The data will be used also in the chapter five, where the author will link the theory and the results of the data to conclude on the main thesis research questions. In this chapter, the author looks deeper in the relation between trust and purchase intention via Instagram and understand their relation.

The last chapter, number six, concludes the thesis and gives recommendations.

3 DATA ANALYSIS

3.1 Research objectives

The objective of this research was to ascertain the factors that attract Instagram users to look for or purchase a service or product on this social media platform. Additionally, the study aimed to determine the extent to which trust influences purchasing intentions on Instagram. These objectives were meant to answer to the research questions which were formulated based on the theory and concepts of the research.

In this section, each research question will be explained and analysed in detail.

3.2 Quantitative data

This section presents the results and a quantitative analysis of the data. The quantitative data is essential to provide a rigorous and accurate analysis of the results. All the questions were written in a clear and relevant way to ensure good results through the survey. Therefore, 20 questions were asked to the sample (see Appendix 1). The aim was to collect data that would enable us to understand the questions. At the same time, the author wanted to protect the anonymity of participants. Thanks to the information collected the author could identify behaviours and opinions on the use of Instagram to view and sometimes purchase a product or service. All these questions provided measurable and reliable data.

Demographics of participants

It is crucial to collect demographic information, as it enables designers to gain insight into the range of participants and to ensure that participants represent the targeted users. The demographic data give the chance to identify potential limitations (Rogers et al. 2002). In keeping with the subject of the thesis which focuses on young adults, the target group is made up of young French people aged between 15 and 29 years old. In the survey, participants were asked to indicate the following age groups they belonged to. The age groups were defined as follows: 15 to 18, 19 to 22, 23 to 29. 3 distinct groups have been identified as

seen in the thesis of Nguyen (2022). These groups represent: students in high school (15-17), students in higher education (18-22) and young working professionals (23-29).

In France, the typical pathway for 18-year-old adults is to enter higher education (universities and colleges) immediately after leaving high school to have another degree such as a bachelor or a master. Education usually lasts between three to five years. Most French after their graduation enter in their professional working life.

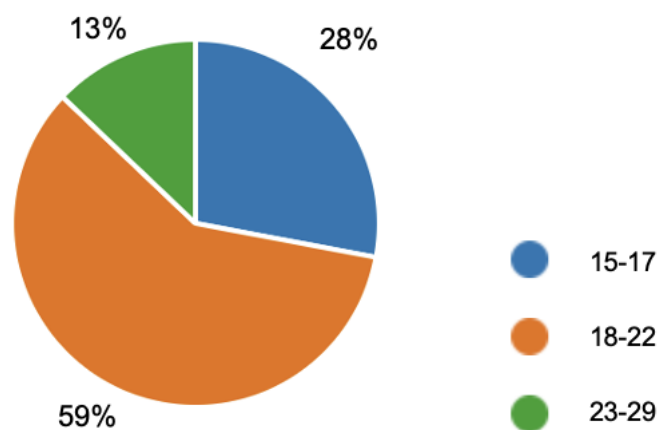


FIGURE 4. Age of the participants

59% of the participants are in the 18-22 age group. The age group of 15-17 represents 28%. As noticed, all participants are aged 15 to 29 years old and are indeed relevant to the target audience. Therefore, the results of the study are generalised to the group of young adults identified in the aim of the thesis.

The next question that follows the age of the participants is the gender of them.

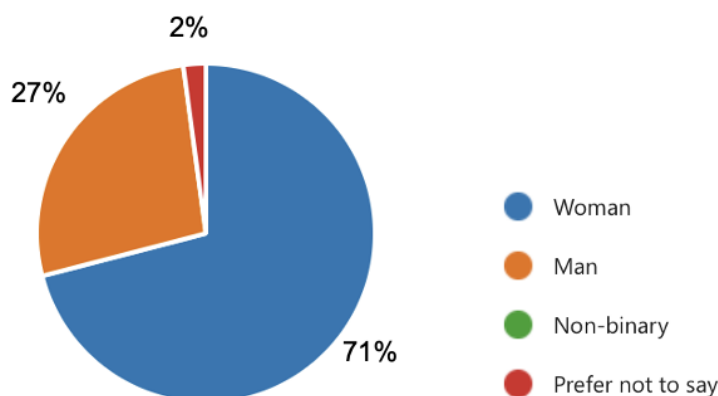


FIGURE 5. Question 3

When categorized by gender, women are the gender that participated the most (71%). Therefore, the risk of biasing the results in favour of one gender over the other is a little bit significant (see section 3.4). Only 2% of the participants preferred not specifying their gender.

Do you use Instagram? Question 4

After the demographic questions, the author asked if the participants were using the social media Instagram as the case study is on this platform. If the person would have said “No” the person would have been redirected at the end of the survey as this survey was targeted for people using Instagram. 100% of the participants answered “Yes” at this question.

How often do you use Instagram?

Then, to understand the participants' usage patterns, the next question was “How often do you use Instagram?”

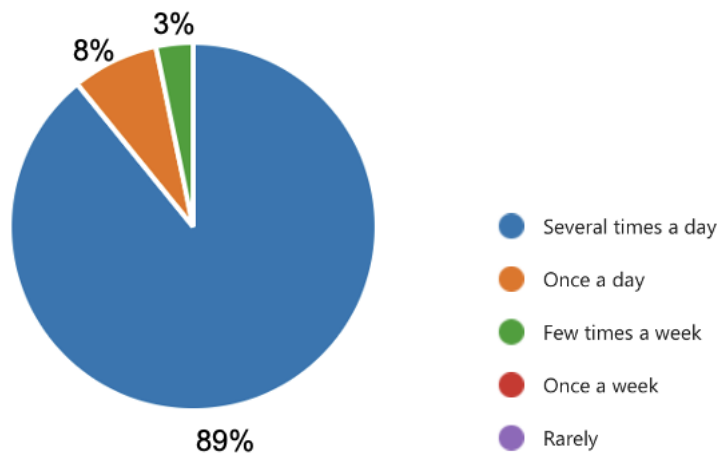


FIGURE 6. Question 5

It has been seen that 89% of the participants are using Instagram several times a day and only 8% are using this platform once a day. It is highlighting that this social media platform is highly utilised by this targeted group with more than the majority using it frequently during the day. While only 3 persons answered few times a week. It represents a minority within the sample.

How likely are you to discover new products or services through Instagram?

To begin to introduce purchasing intentions the author asked this question to see if people were curious about discovering new products and services.

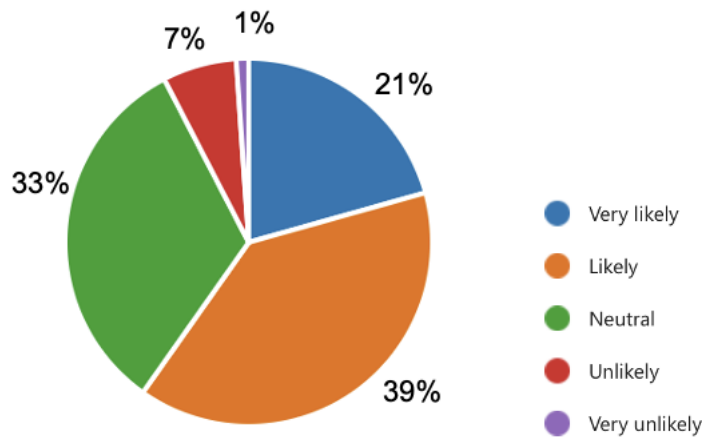


FIGURE 7. Question 6

21% of participants are 'very likely' to discover new products or services via Instagram, with 39% indicating that they are 'likely'. These results suggest that a significant proportion are open to exploring and discovering products or services through social media platforms such as Instagram.

Do you follow brands or businesses on Instagram? (Question 7)

What factors influence your decision to follow a brand or a business on Instagram?

61% of the participants answered "Yes" to this question. The people who follows brands or businesses chose that they were following them mostly because they publish interesting content and they deliver good quality of products/services.

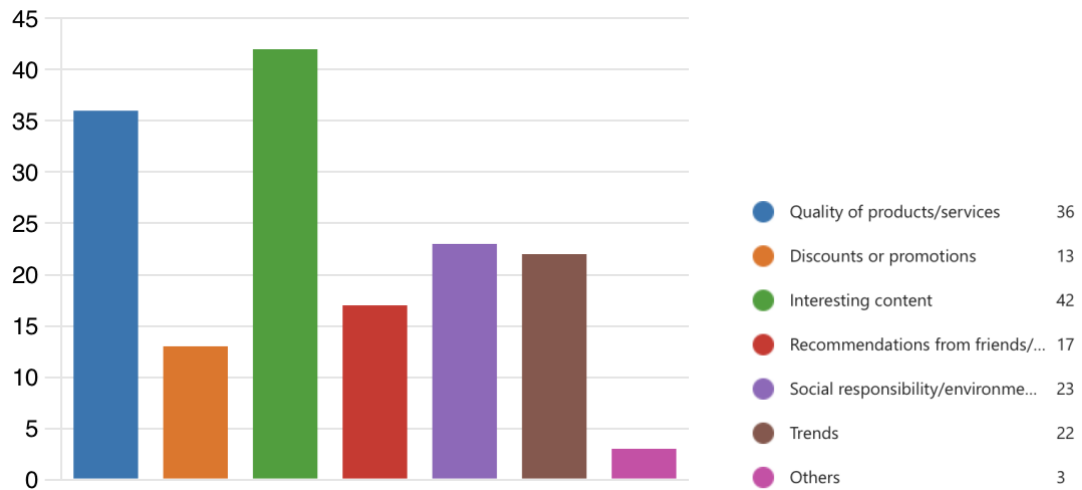


FIGURE 8 Question 8

The factor that influence the most the decision to follow a brand or a business on Instagram is the fact that the content is interesting and then the quality of a product/service. Then participants said that they are following brands or businesses because of the social responsability/enviromemntal values and because of trends. The last factors are recommendations, discounts and promotions and others.

**Do you trust more a brand or a business if they have an Instagram account?
(Question 9)**

More than the majority (57%) answered “No” to this question. This reveal that following a brand or a business is not a determinant factor in building trust towards a brand or business.

The author can do the link with this Likert Scale question. It provides insights into participants' perceptions of reliability and trustworthiness regarding company Instagram pages and user-generated content on the platform.

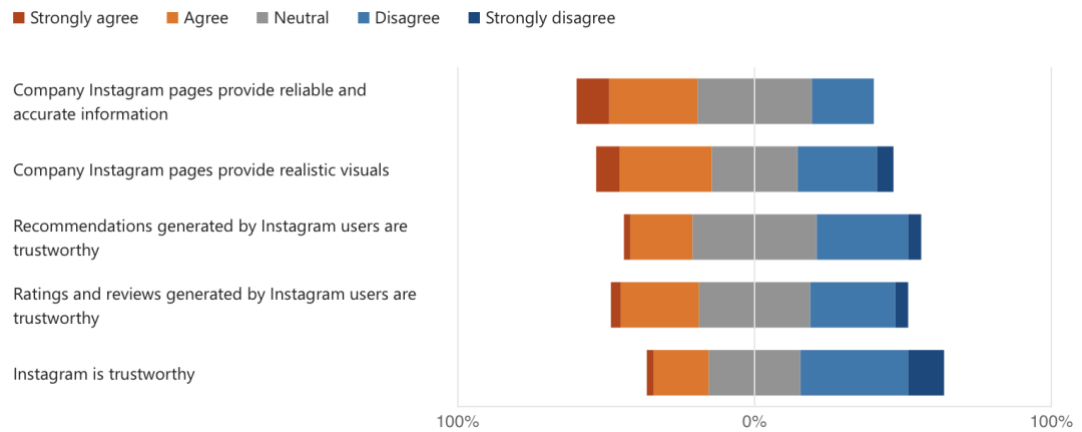


FIGURE 9. Question 11

Almost half of participants (41%) agree or strongly agree that companies' Instagram pages provide reliable and accurate information. However, a significant proportion (39%) express neutrality and 20% disagree. This suggests a degree of scepticism or uncertainty about the reliability of information shared by companies on Instagram.

39% agree or strongly agree that companies' Instagram pages provide realistic visuals. Almost 32% disagree and 29% are neutral. This indicates that there is some ambiguity or scepticism among respondents about the realism of the visuals presented on corporate Instagram pages.

A minority of respondents (23%) agree or strongly agree that Instagram user-generated recommendations are trustworthy. However, a larger proportion (35%) disagreed with this statement and 42% were neutral. These results show the lack of trust in the reliability of user-generated recommendations on Instagram.

Similarly, only 29% agree or strongly agree that Instagram user ratings and reviews are trustworthy. 32% disagree with this statement. 37% were neutral. It indicates general scepticism or uncertainty about the reliability of user-generated reviews and ratings on Instagram.

A minority of respondents (21%) either agree or strongly agree that Instagram itself is trustworthy. A substantial portion (48%) express neutrality, while a notable proportion (48%) disagree or strongly disagree with this statement. These responses show that respondents have mixed perceptions about the reliability of the Instagram platform.

Is Instagram a trustworthy source of information for making a future purchase?

This question estimates the perceived credibility and reliability of Instagram as a platform to inform purchasing decisions. It is important to understand consumer perceptions about the reliability of Instagram in order to inform businesses and marketers about the effectiveness of using the platform to promote and sell products. This question highlights the role that social media platforms play in influencing consumer behaviour. It also shows the degree of trust individuals place in the information obtained by these channels when considering future purchases.

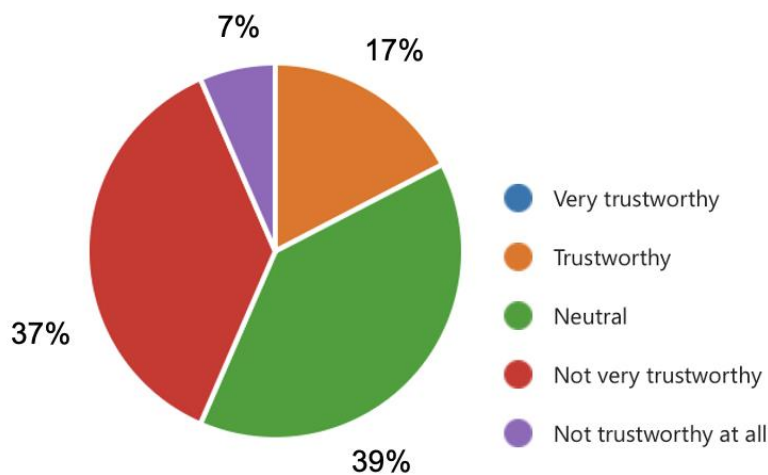


FIGURE 10. Question 12

None of the respondents said they considered Instagram "very trustworthy". A minority (17%) trust the platform as a source of information for a future purchase. The majority of respondents felt "neutral" (39%) or considered Instagram as a source of information "unreliable" (37%) or not trustworthy at all (7%). These results indicate that Instagram users do not have much confidence in this platform as a source of information for purchasing decisions.

In order to understand why the participants said that Instagram is or isn't a trustworthy platform to find information for a future purchase, the author asked an open question to collect their arguments.

8	anonymous	What people says isn't regulated so we don't know if they're paid and we also know that everything can be edited on social media so at the end of the day I think it's not very trustworthy
14	anonymous	Instagram is an extension of the website of a brand
18	anonymous	Depends on the brand
21	anonymous	I think the debate relies more in the brand promoting their products than in instagram itself. Instagram only serves as a platform for little brands to try and be seen, get through. So Instagram in itself is, to me, trustworthy
22	anonymous	Because sometimes, you can be dumped by false ad
23	anonymous	Because you can easily lie on social media and make something more beautiful than it is on real life for example
25	anonymous	The business chooses what they want to show potential customers, it's in their best interest to show us what we want to see. For example they'll show how a certain price of clothing fits, it's not always true, it depends on the brands, I personally do research to make sur I am not spending money on something that won't fit like the photos. That's why I trust reviews and comments a lot, then again it depends on the brand.
37	anonymous	You can get various point of view and view brands are verified and certified by Instagram. The number of followers is also a good indicator
47	anonymous	Because the visual of a product can be set up, and not fully realist. The other users' comment can however help reading more honest opinions but I still feel like it is not fully transparent.
4	anonymous	Instagram peut être une source fiable dans la mesure où on a les commentaires de personnes qui ont potentiellement achetés le produit mais après il y a quand même une partie qui fait que c'est « moins fiable » c'est que finalement tout va se jouer sur le design, les mises en avant par des influenceurs sont parfois fausses (car rémunérées)
7	anonymous	Ça dépend du nombre d'abonnés du compte et si il est certifié
16	anonymous	Ça permet de voir l'objet (même si c'est seulement en vidéo) et son utilisation dans la vraie vie
19	anonymous	Disons que pour des vêtements par exemple, c'est quasi obligatoire d'avoir un instagram avec les produits vendus. Cela permet de se projeter avec ces derniers et pouvoir le cliquer plus rapidement et plus facilement
27	anonymous	C'est à la fois une bonne manière de voir les produits sous différentes formes (pas forcément toutes les photos sur le site d'achat) et d'avoir les avis des internautes MAIS il ne faut pas oublier que le compte Instagram est tenu par la marque elle même donc évidemment toujours en sa faveur + les marques peuvent payer des bots, commenter elles mêmes ou encore supprimer des commentaires

30	anonymous	J'utilise d'autres sources de renseignement pour acheter quelque chose.
31	anonymous	Even if I heard about a product on Instagram, I will then search Avis and comment on their website or online to make my own point of view on the product
43	anonymous	Instagram est une des principales sources d'information ajd cependant on y trouve aussi tout un tas de fake news, etc. Il faut savoir tirer le vrai du faux.

FIGURE 11. Question 13

This open-ended question provided a wealth of information on the perception of the reliability of the Instagram platform as a source of information for making purchasing decisions. On the one hand, there are people who trust this platform. They express that the platform can provide valuable information, thanks to the authenticity of the content and visuals of the products (reels, stories, posts). On the other hand, others express their scepticism about the regulation, authenticity and transparency of this platform. These people advise to take into account the reputation of the brand (number of subscribers, account certification) in order to determine the reliability on Instagram. Moreover, more and more on Instagram nowadays, many contents are sponsored which can cause a problem of authenticity (biased reviews). Participants say they look at user reviews on the official website to make their own review before making a purchase instead of relying on instagram reviews for fear of reviews biased by sponsored content. In addition, photos and videos on Instagram are often retouched and rather want to show perfection and are therefore sometimes not similar to the actual product. It is important to distinguish between credible and unreliable information.

How often do you research products or services on Instagram before making a purchase? (Question 10)

This question makes the link with the previous one. This question evaluates how often participants refer to Instagram for information on products or services.

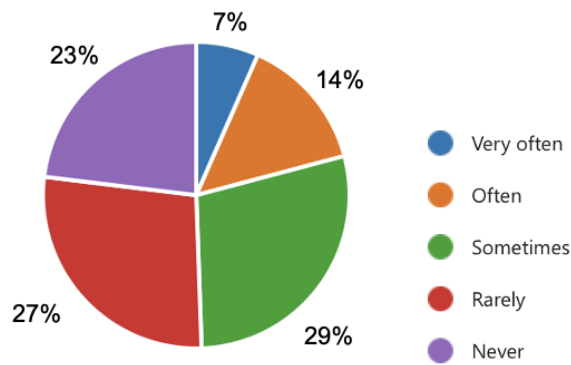


FIGURE 12. How often participants research products or services on Instagram before making a purchase in quantitative research.

A small percentage (7%) indicated that they research products or services on Instagram "very often," and a slightly larger proportion (14%) do so "often," many of respondents fall into the categories of "sometimes" (29%) or "rarely" (27%). While Instagram plays a role in finding products for a significant portion of respondents, it is not the primary or frequent channel for all participants. In addition, a notable proportion (21%) indicated that they "never" search for products or services on Instagram before making a purchase, indicating that some respondents do not trust the platform for this.

We can see that the answers make sense with the previous answers.

What make you want to buy on Instagram (purchasing intention)?

The author asked this questions to understand which factors/motivations of digital marketing are the most impactful on purchasing intentions.

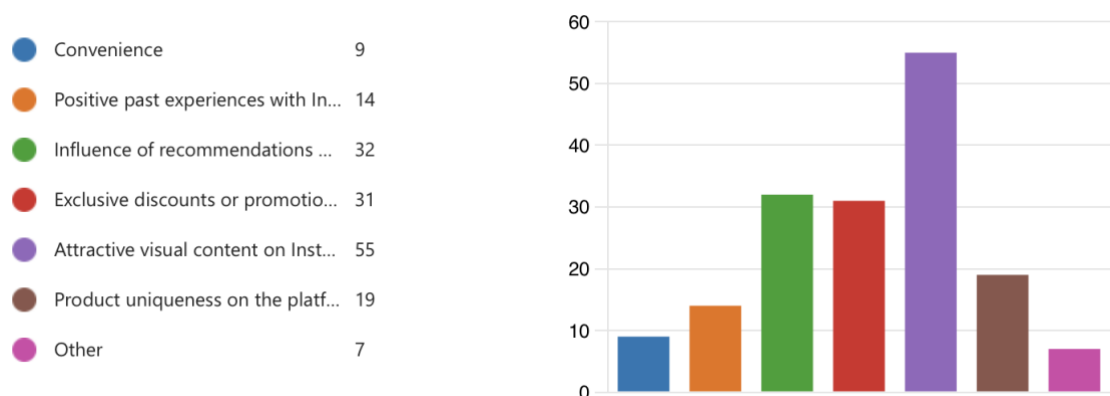


FIGURE 13. Question 14

The most picked motivation is attractive visuals contents on Instagram. Then it has been seen that influence of recommendations/advertisements and exclusive discounts/promotions are also good motivations to make people want to make a future purchase. The less picked motivations were product uniqueness, convenience and positive pas experiences.

How influential are advertisements or sponsored posts on Instagram in shaping your purchase intentions?

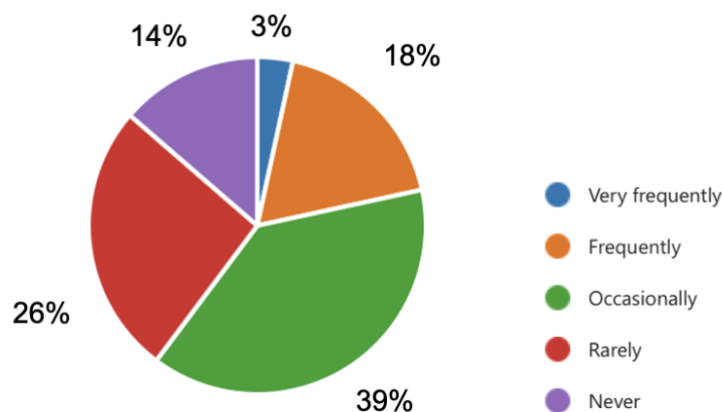


FIGURE 14. Question 15

While a small percentage (3%) indicated that advertisements or sponsored posts on Instagram influence their purchase intentions "very frequently," and a slightly larger proportion (18%) stated they do so "frequently," most respondents fall into the categories of either "occasionally" (39%) or "rarely" (26%). Additionally, a notable proportion (14%) indicated that advertisements or sponsored posts on Instagram never influence their purchase intentions. These results show that the advertisement or sponsored post can have influence on some respondents but many of them are less frequently affected by these marketing efforts.

Have you ever made a purchase through Instagram (e.g. links, Instagram stores)?

This question looks at whether Instagram facilitates direct sales transactions on its platform or via link redirects. This information helps to assess the platform's

ability to convert user engagement into tangible sales and to identify opportunities for businesses to capitalise on Instagram as a sales and marketing channel.

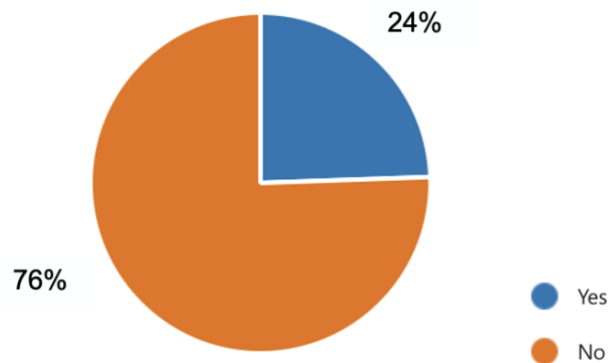


FIGURE 15. Question 16

The answers show that most respondents (76%) have not made a purchase directly through Instagram, while 24% have. The negative responses tie in with the previous answers to the question about the reliability of the platform and the question about whether people look for products on Instagram (Questions 10,11,12,13). Despite this small proportion, Instagram is still a sales platform with a potential.

How satisfied are you with your previous purchases made through Instagram?

As 24% of participants to the previous question had already made a purchase through or on Instagram stores, it was important for the author to measure consumer satisfaction and evaluate the overall shopping experience on the platform.

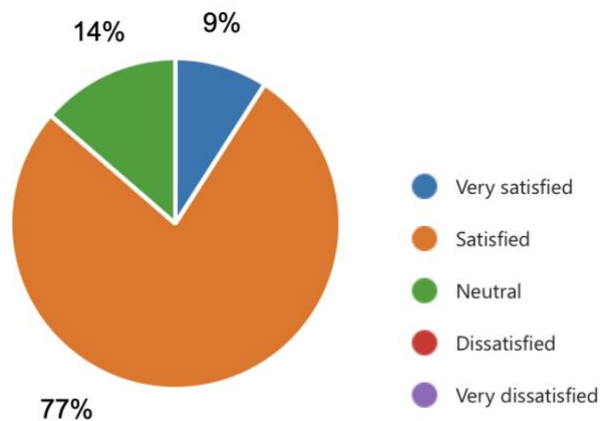


FIGURE 16. Question 17

The results of this satisfaction question are very positive. with a large majority of participants (77%) satisfied with their previous purchases. This indicated a positive shopping experience on or via the platform. A smaller percentage (9%) said they had felt 'very satisfied' with their purchases, suggesting a high level of satisfaction. Finally, 14% of participants said they were neutral about their past shopping experiences, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied. Overall, these results highlight a positive experience of Instagram as a sales platform or channel for redirecting users to websites.

How often do you make purchases on Instagram?

This question on the frequency of consumer buying behaviour on Instagram provides insight into users' buying habits and their level of engagement with Instagram as a sales channel.

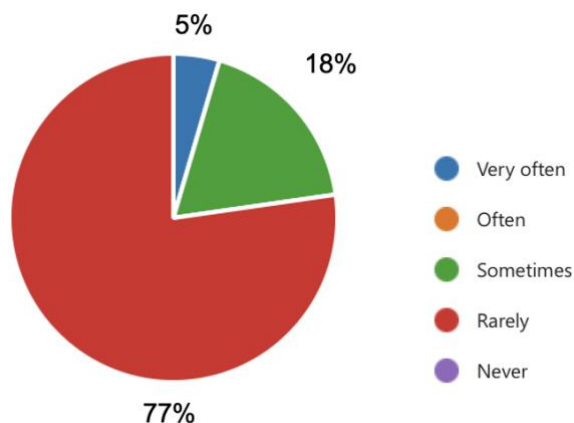


FIGURE 17. Question 18

A small percentage of 5% said they shop "very often". These participants therefore use Instagram regularly and frequently. 18% said they shop "sometimes", meaning their engagement is occasional. Finally, the majority of respondents (77%) said that they shop "rarely". Most of respondents shows that most users use Instagram infrequently for shopping purposes.

Why have you never done a purchase on Instagram?

The author asked this question in order to understand the answers “No” at the question 16. This question helps to understand the barriers and obstacles on engagement in purchasing activities on Instagram.

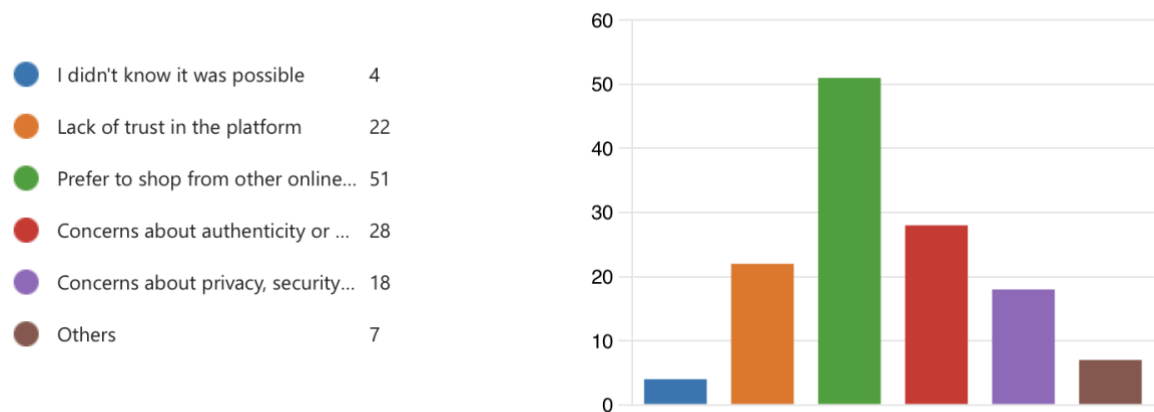


FIGURE 18. Question 19

The largest group, composed of 51 participants, expressed a preference to purchase on other online platforms. This indicates that individuals may have established buying habits or preferences for other ecommerce platforms over Instagram. In addition, 28 respondents expressed concerns about the authenticity and quality of products or services offered on Instagram. It suggests that trust and reliability are important considerations for potential buyers. 22 people indicated a lack of trust in the platform itself. In addition, 18 respondents expressed concerns about data privacy and security, indicating that apprehensions about personal information may deter them from conducting transactions on the platform. A small proportion of 4 participants indicated that they did not know that it was possible to buy on Instagram. Overall, these results highlight the importance of addressing trust, authenticity, privacy concerns in order to strengthen consumer confidence and encourage e-commerce activities on and through Instagram.

3.3 Validity and reliability

This section addresses the credibility and dependability of the research. As all subsequent analysis, recommendations, and solutions are contingent on this analysis, the author must ensure its validity and reliability. The credibility of quantitative research indicates the accuracy of the results and determines whether the research measures what it was designed to measure (Joppe, 2000).

Reliability of quantitative research means that the results are accurate, consistent over time, and whether the results can be reproduced using a similar methodology (Joppe, 2000).

To ensure the reliability of the answers, the survey was created in a way that would resonate with the participants receiving it. The target audience was previously defined and confirmed to guarantee the reliability of the results. Individuals who were not part of this target audience were not given access to the questions and were directed to the end of the questionnaire to avoid any potential bias in the results. Furthermore, the theoretical concepts and framework were based on reliable sources, including articles, books, and survey results.

3.4 Limitations

To overcome limitations and ensure correct analysis and conclusion of results, it is important to limit some factors. The first one is language barriers and translation. For the purposes of this thesis report, which is in English, the survey questions and responses were translated from French to English for some open-ended questions. The translation created a risk of misinterpretation when analysing the results and drawing interpretations. The author addresses this issue by translating the survey questions as soon as they were submitted.

The use of a quantitative questionnaire enables the collection of data from many young adults aged between 15 and 29 years old. However, this method has certain limitations. All questions in the survey have been designed to be relevant and clear to the greatest extent possible. Compared to the qualitative methods, quantitative method cannot explore each question in depth at 100%. This can result in superficial responses, which may be influenced by the wording of subsequent questions and potentially bias the results of this research. A total of 99 French Instagram users participated in this research. Despite the number of responses, it is important to assess the quality of these responses. Furthermore, regarding gender, 71% of responses were from women and 27% from men. Furthermore, the majority of respondents (59%) are in the 18-22 age group. It is crucial for researchers to acknowledge the limitations of these results and to consider them throughout the analysis and recommendations section.

3.5 Research ethics

The ethical aspects were given significant consideration during the research process, with the objective of ensuring the rights, dignity, and welfare of the research participants. This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical values set out in TAMK's regulations. All the potential consequences of the study should be fully written in the survey. Their consent should be collected and agreed in order to participate in the research. The anonymity and confidentiality of every participant should be respected.

In this research these ethical aspects were reassured as the first question of the survey was to accept or not that "your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary and you consent to the use of your data for research purposes". It was mandatory to answer and if the participant refuses, he/she was redirected to the end of the survey to don't impact it. Also in the information of the survey it was specify that every answer will be anonymous. All the names of the participants were not collected, and every answer had a number.

In addition to the considerations, the research also addressed ethical aspects pertaining to the minimisation of risk and the avoidance of deceptive practices. To prevent any misleading practices, the participants were informed of their role and anonymity in the research, as well as the purpose of the research.

Furthermore, the interviewees were informed of the language used in this thesis and that their responses would be translated from French to English for those who wished to answer in French to express themselves more clearly, given that this is their native language.

3.6 Sampling

The quantitative questionnaire was designed to be comprehensive, with the aim of collecting responses from more than 100 acquaintances of the author. The objective was to have a representative sample of the young adults in France to analyse the results accurately.

The questionnaire was sent through a variety of communication channels, WhatsApp, Instagram and in private messages. The first one was the publication of a story on the author's Instagram page. The author also sent individually via

WhatsApp groups the link of the survey. The intention was to invite as many young people as possible to complete the survey.

The decision to present the survey in French was made to facilitate comprehension of the questions, as the target audience is French. Consequently, English was the predominant language utilised during instruction, indeed all questions were asked in English.

The survey was sent during seven days, from Thursday, April 11th, 2024, to Thursday, April 18th, 2024. During this period, 97 responses were collected. The number of answers obtained was nearly equivalent to the objective of the study.

4 DISCUSSION

The main research question is “*How young adults are impacted by Instagram on their purchasing intentions in France?*”. The two sub-questions are: “*Which factors affect consumers’ purchasing intentions on Instagram?*” and “*Does trust play a key role in affecting consumers’ purchasing intentions on Instagram?*”.

Moreover, the author determined 2 hypotheses for the thesis: “Instagram has a positive effect on users’ trust” and “Trust on social media has a positive effect on purchasing intentions”.

The present study aimed to identify the factors that form trust in Instagram, and to analyse the influence of trust over purchasing intention on Instagram.

4.1 Trust on Instagram

The results of the survey showed that a large part of participants (61%) is open to explore and discover products or services through Instagram. It means that there is a level of trust in the Instagram’s platform as a source of information. Likert Scale’s questions showed that participants find Instagram and its content to be more reliable. While a considerable part of respondents (41%) agrees or strongly agree that companies’ Instagram pages provide reliable and accurate information, there is also a notable degree of scepticism or uncertainty, with 39% expressing neutrality and 20% disagreeing with this statement. Similarly, participants said that they had ambiguity or scepticism on the realism of visuals on companies’ Instagram pages. They were also suspicious on the trustworthiness of recommendations generated by Instagram users and user ratings and reviews on the platform.

These answers show the duality of trust and scepticism. This highlights the multitude of consumer perceptions on social media platforms. Although Instagram is a powerful tool for brand engagement and discovery, users approach it with an informed eye, aware of the potential pitfalls of misinformation and biased content. The results suggest that building trust on Instagram requires transparency, authenticity, and accountability from companies.

It becomes clear that Instagram’s influence on user trust depends on creating

authentic links and trust in the credibility of the platform. As businesses and marketers navigate an ever-changing digital world on social media, it's vital to address user concerns and cultivate trust. If brands focus on being as transparent as possible with their customers, using authentic practices, then customers will give more positive feedback and have more trust in the brand.

Overall, the author can conclude that Instagram is influencing the users' trust towards the platform. Despite concerns about authenticity and reliability, a considerable proportion of participants acknowledge the impact of the platform on their level of trust. The impact is mainly due to engaging content and visual storytelling.

4.2 Trust and purchasing intentions

The role of trust in the survey was an important and central factor that influences consumer behaviours and perceptions on Instagram. The more consumers trust the information shared by businesses and other users, the more consumers can make considered decisions and engage with content. These findings are in line with Jack Gibb's (1972) theory that trust, openness, success and interdependence foster growth and synergy within groups. In addition, as trust in the platform increases, it fosters interdependence and community among users. This is coherent with the conclusions of Yasa and Cop (2022) and Jack Gibb (1972) that say that trust, openness, success, and interdependence promote growth and synergy within groups. It also validated the fact that consumer confidence is a mediating factor in the relationship between motivation for empowerment and intentions to shop online.

Participants were asked about the reliability of Instagram as a source of information for future purchases. Most of those questioned (86%) expressed neutrality or considered Instagram to be an unreliable or unreliable source of information. These results show that Instagram users do not trust the reliability of the platform. An open-ended question clarified participants' opinions on the reliability of the platform. While some participants trust Instagram for its authentic content and visuals, others express concerns about the platform's regulation, authenticity, and transparency, advocating caution and care when relying on

Instagram.

Respondents' concerns about product authenticity and quality (28%) and trust in the platform itself (22%) reflect their perception of caring, the integrity and ability of Instagram users to offer reliable products and services. Concerns about authenticity, product quality, platform reliability, privacy and data security contribute to consumers' hesitation to make purchases through Instagram, reflecting the impact of trust on perceived utility and purchase intent. This aligns with the statement that consumer trust varies depending on how much information has been collected and shared from the use of an e-commerce system from Head and Hassanein (2002). In addition, survey results indicate that factors such as user preferences and number of followers, customer approval and propensity to trust positively impact trust in Instagram. The survey results showed that several factors, such as perceived benevolence, integrity, and ability, significantly impact the trust on Instagram. This aligns with the theoretical framework of Yasa, Yesevi Alperen and Cop, Ruziye (2022), which suggests that these factors contribute positively to shaping consumer confidence on Instagram. For example, the fact that respondents rely on likes and user approvals (as indicated by their responses) suggests that these factors contribute positively to their trust on Instagram.

The interactions between users who are connected on social media platforms enhance trust, which in turn determines the significance of consumer intention to purchase. Increased trust acquired by consumers increases intention and allows them to purchase and conduct transactions. This is in link with the studies of Astuti, Budi, Putri, Azhalia Pramesthi (2018).

The data reveals that participants who express higher levels of trust in Instagram stores are more likely to have positive purchasing intentions on the platform. This aligns with the theory that trust positively influences purchasing intention. For example, participants who indicated concerns about authenticity and product quality (28%) may be less likely to make purchases on Instagram due to lower levels of trust in the platform. It is negatively impacting the users. For the participants who trust the platform (22%), they are more inclined to make purchases on Instagram. They have higher levels of purchasing intention influenced by trust.

Overall, the survey results support the theory proposed by Yasa, Yesevi Alperen, and Cop, Ruziye (2022) on the significant relationship between trust and various factors and its impact on purchasing intention. Indeed, it is fundamental to a business to understand individual consumers and consistently meeting their expectations to build brand trust.

The motivations identified by respondents for making purchases on Instagram such as attractive visual content, recommendations/advertisements, and exclusive discounts/promotions are highlighted. They represent key motivations for purchasing on the platform and correspond to the PU of Instagram as a platform for product discovery and purchasing, as outlined in the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM, Davis, 1989). Additionally, the survey findings on the influence of advertisements or sponsored posts on purchase intentions reflect consumers' perceptions of the platform's usefulness and reliability, which are central to the TAM theory. Moreover, other results suggest concerns such as authenticity, product quality, platform reliability and privacy and data security. They are contributing to consumers' hesitancy to make purchases on Instagram, affecting their PEOU and the platform's usefulness for purchase purposes. Indeed, the survey results are consistent with the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM, Davis, 1989), which indicates that PEOU and PU significantly influence purchase intention in online shopping. (SciSpace, n. d.)

The results indicate that trust has a positive relationship with PU, which in turn influences consumers' perception of the PU for making purchases. Thus, the higher the trust of consumers in Instagram, the better the consumer perception on the media usefulness, and vice versa. This is in line with the assertion that trust influences purchase intention and has a positive impact on PU (Astuti, Budi, Putri, Azhalia Pramesthi, 2018).

4.3 Reflexion

After these discussions the author can conclude that few factors influence trust on Instagram such as attractive visuals or user-generated content such as recommendations and give authenticity and credibility to the platform's trust.

These factors have a positive impact on the trust of users in the products and brands. This validates the author's hypothesis 1 and answer to one of the sub-questions of the thesis.

In addition, the author analysed how trust impacted the purchasing intentions of young people in France. Trust is a mediator between Instagram's platform and consumers' purchasing intentions. Participants who express higher levels of trust in Instagram are more likely to have positive purchase intentions on the platform. This demonstrates the central role of trust in consumer behaviour. Indeed, trust on Instagram has a positive effect on purchasing intentions. With the popularity of social media among the population targeted (15–29-year-olds) and its ability to shape trends and preferences, trust is a powerful tool for marketers looking to target this audience to want to buy their products/services.

The author learnt a lot about purchase intentions and social media characteristics. As e-commerce platforms continue to evolve, it is important to understand the impact of social media on consumer behaviour. It is essential to success in this digital marketplace. Thanks to the theories and linked with the answers of the survey, the research questions have been answered. This thesis followed the thesis process well.

5 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMANDATIONS

This study has examined the relationship between social media, with a focus on the Instagram's platform, customer trust and purchase intentions. The main research question «How are young adults impacted by Instagram on their purchase intentions in France?» was answered through the combination of theories and the analysis of the survey guided by two hypotheses “Instagram has a positive effect on user trust” (1) and “Trust on social media has a positive effect on purchase intentions” (2).

First, the survey showed that Instagram influences user trust in brands and businesses. Despite some scepticism about the reliability and authenticity of the information about products or services, a considerable number of participants recognize the impact of the platform on their level of trust, especially through visual storytelling, recommendations, and advertisements. This validates the hypothesis that Instagram has a positive effect on user trust and answer the sub-question “What factors influence consumers’ purchase intentions on Instagram?”.

Moreover, the survey results answer to the second sub-question “Does trust play a key role in consumers’ Instagram buying intentions?” by highlighting the link between trust on Instagram and purchase intentions. Participants who have more confidence in the platform are more likely to have positive purchase intentions on the platform. The author's findings are consistent with existing literature on the subject. Companies and marketers can take advantage of this study to develop more effective digital marketing strategies on social media. They should focus on building trust with the target audience.

To answer to the purpose of this thesis it can be stated that French young adults are indeed impacted by Instagram on their purchase intentions. The impact depends on the level of trust of the user.

The author focused on the literature on the factors that are supposed to influence trust in online shopping and purchases via Instagram. However, the author believes that other factors can influence trust on Instagram. Therefore, the model could be expanded, and the theory could be further developed.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1. Survey questions

1. You understand that your participation in this survey is entirely voluntary and you consent to the use of your data for research purposes. *

Yes

No

2. Your age *

15-18

18-22

22-29

3. Your gender *

Woman

Man

Non-binary

Prefer not to say

4. Do you use Instagram *

Yes

No

5. How often do you use Instagram?

Several times a day

Once a day

Few times a week

Once a week

Rarely

6. How likely are you to discover new products or services through social media? *

Very likely

Likely

Neutral

Unlikely

Very unlikely

7. Do you follow brands or businesses on Instagram?

*

Yes

No

7. Do you follow brands or businesses on Instagram?

*

Yes

No

8. What factors influence your decision to follow a brand or business on Instagram?

Quality of products/services

Discounts or promotions

Interesting content

Recommendations from friends/family

Social responsibility/environmental values

Trends

Others

9. Do you trust more a brand or a business because they have an Instagram account?

Yes

No

10. How often do you research products or services on Instagram before making a purchase?



Very often

Often

Sometimes

Rarely

Never

11. Consumers' Trust of Instagram

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
Company Instagram pages provide reliable and accurate information	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Company Instagram pages provide realistic visuals	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recommendations generated by Instagram users are trustworthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Ratings and reviews generated by Instagram users are trustworthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Instagram is trustworthy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

12. Is Instagram a trustworthy source of information for making a future purchase?

- Very trustworthy
- Trustworthy
- Neutral
- Not very trustworthy
- Not trustworthy at all

13. Why? (you can write in English or in French)

Entrez votre réponse

14. What make you want to buy on Instagram (purchasing intention)?

- Convenience
- Positive past experiences with Instagram purchases
- Influence of recommendations or advertisements on Instagram
- Exclusive discounts or promotions offered on Instagram
- Attractive visual content on Instagram
- Product uniqueness on the platform
- Other

15. How influential are advertisements or sponsored posts on Instagram in shaping your purchase intentions?


- Very frequently
- Frequently
- Occasionally
- Rarely
- Never

16. Have you ever made a purchase through Instagram (e.g. links, Instagram stores)



Yes

No

17. Why have you never done a purchase on Instagram? 

I didn't know it was possible

Lack of trust in the platform

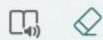
Prefer to shop from other online platforms/ prefer to purchase on the website or in stores

Concerns about authenticity or quality of products/services on Instagram

Concerns about privacy, security or data security

Others

16. Have you ever made a purchase through Instagram (e.g. links, Instagram stores)



Yes

No

17. How satisfied are you with your previous purchases made through Instagram?



- Very satisfied
- Satisfied
- Neutral
- Dissatisfied
- Very dissatisfied

18. How often do you make purchases on Instagram?

- Very often
- Often
- Sometimes
- Rarely
- Never

19. Do you have any comments that you want to share on the subject of purchasing intentions on Instagram?

Entrez votre réponse