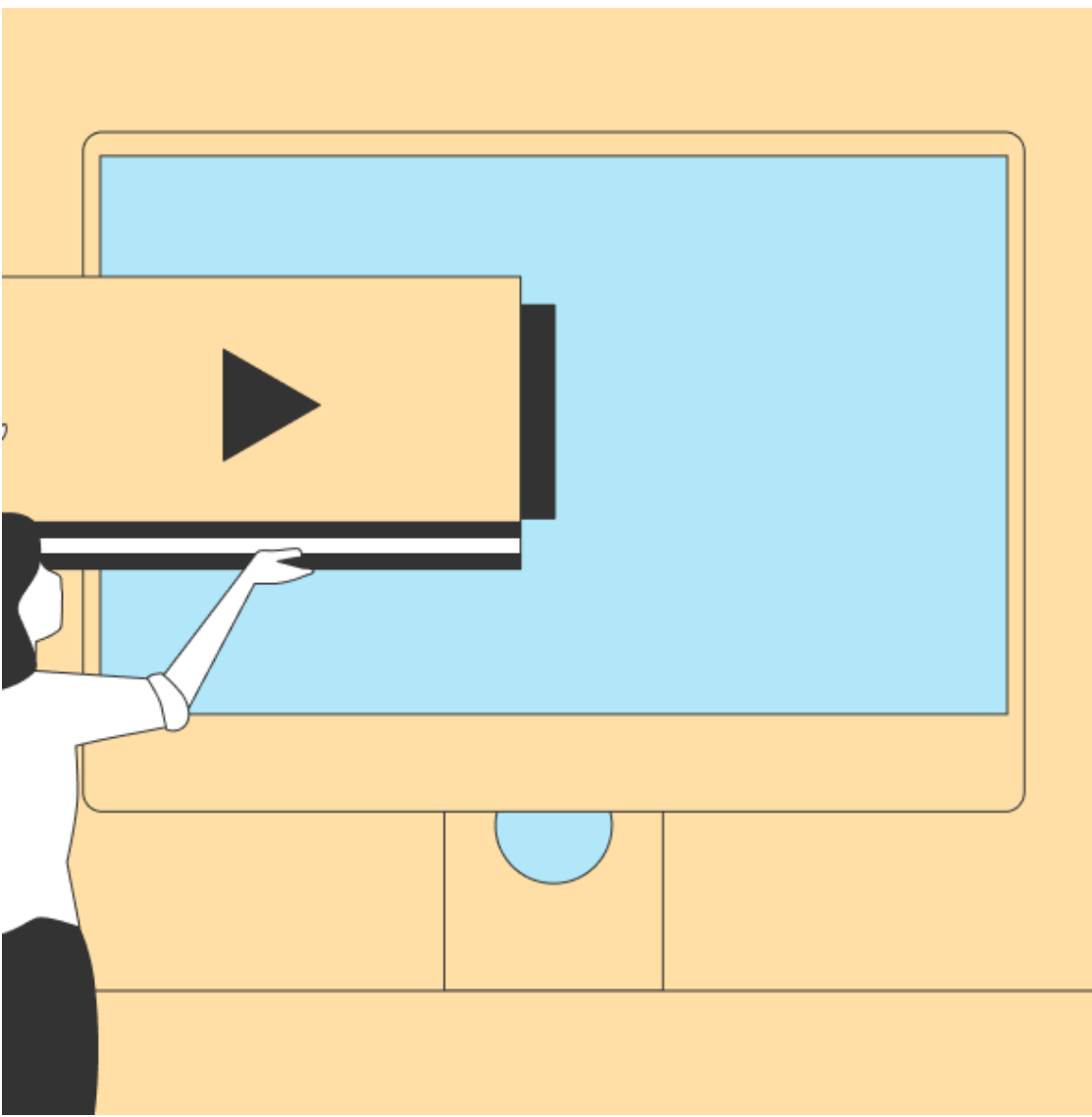


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Social Media Content Marketing for Millennials, Generation Z, and the Esports Target Market



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Abstract

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The different generations have been defined by many academic articles. This phenomenon plays nowadays an important role in marketing strategies. These marketing strategies could be implemented in social media, which includes an important factor called content marketing. To conduct a content marketing plan, an understanding of target markets is essential. Within these technological and marketing related developments, a new industry has developed: esports. This industry, which is more known within millennials and generation Z, is relatively new and is still vastly growing.

To understand content marketing, this thesis is purposed to focus on three target groups: millennials, generation Z and the esports target market. Due to the overlapping of the two generations and esports enthusiasts, this research focusses on revealing interesting data on their content marketing preferences. Academic theory was compared to self-conducted research to have a better understanding on what the necessities are in a content marketing plan for these target groups.

Table of Contents

1	Introduction.....	1
1.1	Purpose & Objectives of the Study	1
1.2	Research Questions and Limitations.....	2
2	Theoretical Framework	3
2.1	Social Media Content Marketing.....	3
2.1.1	Social Media	3
2.1.2	Social Media Marketing (SMM)	4
2.1.3	Social Media Marketing Strategy	4
2.1.4	Content Types	6
2.1.5	Content Marketing.....	8
2.1.6	Key Platforms	9
2.2	Generations.....	9
2.3	Millennials	11
2.3.1	Millennials on Social Media	12
2.4	Generation Z.....	12
2.4.1	Gen Z on Social Media.....	13
2.5	Esports.....	13
2.5.1	Esports Target Market.....	14
3	Methodology	15
3.1	Data Collection Methods.....	15
3.2	Data Analysis Methods.....	16
3.3	Reliability and Validity.....	16
4	Results	17
4.1	Respondents.....	17
4.2	Findings per Generations	19
4.3	Findings on Esports Target Market	28
5	Discussion and Conclusion.....	30
5.1	Comparison in Social Media Behavior for a Content Strategy.....	30
5.2	Age Group of the Esports Target Market.....	31
5.3	Content Preferences per Target Group.....	31

Figures

<i>Figure 1 - The Stages of Building a Marketing Plan. (Source: Hollensen, 2005)</i>	5
<i>Figure 2 - esports target market, money, and value flow (Source: Newzoo 2021).</i>	14
<i>Figure 3 - Survey Respondent Count and Age.</i>	17
<i>Figure 4 - Survey Generation Percentage.</i>	18
<i>Figure 5 - Survey Demographics.</i>	18
<i>Figure 6 - Platform by Active Usage.....</i>	19
<i>Figure 7 - Engagement per Generation on Facebook.</i>	20
<i>Figure 8 - Engagement per Generation on Instagram.</i>	21
<i>Figure 9 - Engagement per Generation on TikTok.</i>	22
<i>Figure 10 - Engagement per Generation on Linked-In.</i>	23
<i>Figure 11 - Engagement per Generation on YouTube.....</i>	24
<i>Figure 12 - Engagement per Generation on Twitter.</i>	25
<i>Figure 13 - Content Preferences per Generation.</i>	26
<i>Figure 14 - Content Preferences on per Platform.</i>	27
<i>Figure 15 - esports target market age range.....</i>	28
<i>Figure 16 - Involvement in esports per Generation.....</i>	28
<i>Figure 17 - Viewership of esports content.</i>	29
<i>Figure 18 - Content preferences in esports target market.....</i>	29

Tables

<i>Table 1 - Age Range by Generation (Source: Brunjes, 2022).</i>	9
<i>Table 2 - Generational labels and dates reported in different sources (Jonassen et al., 2007; Oh & Reeves, 2013)</i>	11

Foreword

Conducting this research has been informative and interesting in several ways. Not only to learn more about the chosen topic but also regarding ways of doing academic research. This process has been more valuable to me more than could be imagined, and this has been a great way to conclude the studies.

To be mentioned are the people who have helped and supported me throughout the process of this thesis. A thank you to my family, friends and anyone who was willing to participate in this research. Janus Pitkänen has not only been a great supervisor but also an unmissable support to accomplishing the thesis.

1 Introduction

Generations and age groups are key in collecting demographic data for social media marketing strategies. Younger generations such as millennials and generation Z are in the spotlight regarding these demographics. A relevant new aspect of a social media marketing strategy includes content marketing. Without content marketing a social media marketing strategy might not prevail. Another new-booming industry is the esports scene, in which the target group overlaps millennials and generation Z.

This thesis will continue and/or use research that has already been conducted in the past for referencing in combination with self-executed empirical research for additional results and findings. For example, research made on generation Z and their social media usage, where Prakash Yadav and Rai (2017) explain how generation Z is more interactive on social media than any of the other generations. They are more connected with each other over social media and prefer online socializing over other communicative ways. Gen Z is also more generous when it comes to giving feedback on brands or products. For millennials, on the other hand, there is research on the attitudes and digital behaviors of millennials (GWI., 2021). Here, data shows the perspective of millennials on social media. It shows that 38 percent of millennials believe that it has a positive impact on society, but they are also aware of the time they spend on social media realizing the risks of addiction. Research on the esports target market by Willems (2022) explains that evolution of the gaming target audience is different from the negative stereotype on gamers.

1.1 Purpose & Objectives of the Study

The main goals of this study are to present current generational theory and the importance of social media content marketing. To determine the content preferences of millennials and generation Z, the thesis connects the theory with findings from quantitative research. Additionally, the thesis interprets and discusses findings on the esports target market. Not only just to compare the data but also to define what the esports target market means.

The esports target market lies in the middle of generation Z and millennials, and it might be interesting to link these generations with each other through social media content marketing. This study examines the meaning behind social media content marketing and its relation to generation Z, millennials, and the esports target market.

1.2 Research Questions and Limitations

This research will answer the following research questions:

- ‘What do millennials and generation Z have in common in their social media behavior and how does that affect a content strategy?’
- ‘What age group does the esports target market consist of?’
- ‘What are the preferred types of content within the different target groups?’

2 Theoretical Framework

As the thesis has now established the research questions, the author will now investigate the theoretical framework to offer value and comparison to its methodology. Critical points that define the complexity of social media content marketing are highlighted in the theoretical framework. This section will address subjects including social media, social media marketing strategy, content marketing, and key platforms.

Additionally, the thesis examines the idea of generations, giving the required background information to study the idea of target groups and how they behave on social media with a specific focus on millennials and generation Z. Furthermore, for research purposes, the thesis analyzes the idea of esports and its target market, which will be employed in relation to the target groups of millennials and generation Z.

2.1 Social Media Content Marketing

Social media content marketing has become a crucial factor within the business of marketing. 58.4 percent of the world's population uses social media according to research from Chaffey (2022). There are statistics that show what impact social media can have on a brand. According to new research, 55 percent of consumers learn about brands through social media, in which, 78 percent is gen Z and 61 percent are millennials (Cover, 2022). Esports brands are no exception to these data, social media can be a crucial factor on growing an esports brand. According to data from Hitmarker (2022), in 2021 there were approximately 1780 jobs related to marketing in esports brands. In addition, according to Google Vacatures, there are 28 esports related social media marketing jobs available at the time of writing (17.08.2022) in Germany, France and The Netherlands combined ("Vacatures," n.d.).

2.1.1 Social Media

Social media is a world-wide popular phenomenon where people can connect with each other over the internet through different types of platforms that create a social network. It can be visualized as a local pub where people could meet, exchange information, make new friends and stay connected with them. Only to realize that the scale on social media is much larger than one

of a local pub. (Visser & Sikkenga, 2017). To put into theoretical words, social media consists of a collection of web-based platforms that support the production and distribution of user-generated content. Their platforms are programmed through the philosophical and technical principles of web 2.0 (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Web 2.0 may be defined as a set of values and practices that connect a whole system's worth of websites that are related in some way to those core values and practices (O'Reilly, 2007). Web 2.0 has made it possible to spread, share and edit ideas, information, and knowledge. Wikipedia is a good example of a social medium that emerged from the web 2.0 era. (Visser & Sikkenga, 2017). This web 2.0 revolution paved the way for the social platforms from nowadays such as Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

2.1.2 Social Media Marketing (SMM)

The way that individuals interact and do business has drastically changed during the last 40 years. Private computers, the Internet, and e-commerce have made an impact how firms work and advertise (Saravanakumar & SuganthaLakshmi, 2012). Social media marketing is one of these developments from the last 40 years made possible due to the internet. This method advertises a company's name and content on social media platforms to build brand recognition, attract customers, and enhance customer acquisition. One may use platforms such as, Facebook, Twitter, Linked-In, Instagram, Snapchat, Pinterest, and Google+ for social media marketing (Desai, 2019). According to Porteous (2021), in 2018, 97 percent of the 500 largest businesses located in the US use social media as a marketing medium. This significance in use of social media marketing in businesses is not only seen in large company's but also in smaller businesses, due to the affordability of this marketing practice.

2.1.3 Social Media Marketing Strategy

A social media strategy includes creating a marketing strategy. Creating a marketing strategy is a systematic process that includes identifying marketing objectives, evaluating marketing possibilities and resources, which finally, summarize all the findings into a written marketing plan (Hollensen, 2005). The creation of a marketing plan can be illustrated as shown in figure 1.

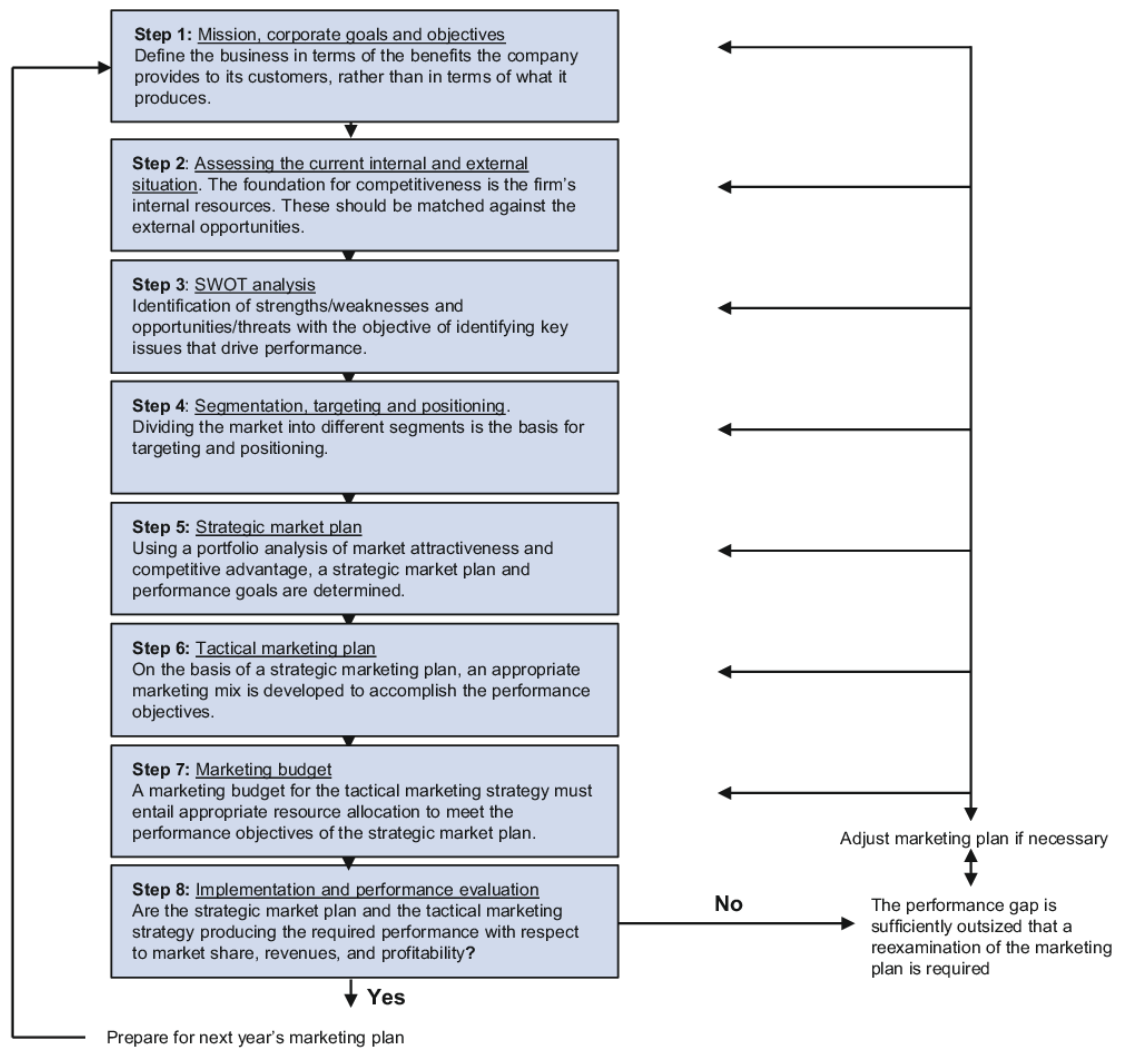


Figure 1 - The Stages of Building a Marketing Plan. (Source: Hollensen, 2005)

Companies use marketing strategies to conduct market research and analysis, establish and record marketing objectives, plans, and programs, and then implement, assess, and manage marketing activities to meet their marketing goals. The marketing plan, which records the outcomes of the marketing planning process, plays a crucial role in coordination by fostering internal consensus, providing internal guidance, fostering internal teamwork, coordinating resource allocation, and outlining the tasks, timeline, and responsibilities required to meet the marketing objectives (Hollensen 2005).

There is no distinction between "conventional" and "digital" or "social media" marketing. Except for that the practices are digital. Digital means a layer of all media that encourages participation, enables users to choose their own experiences, and gives advertisers the opportunity to connect media, gather feedback, refine their message, and build connections (Caddel, 2013).

The future of digital marketing and marketing in general is content marketing, both now and in the years to come. As a result, a successful digital marketing plan requires high-quality content marketing (Patruti Baltes, 2015).

2.1.4 Content Types

According to research from Vijayendrakumar (n.d.), the practice of creating, distributing, and publishing content with the goal of attracting and retaining consumers is known as content marketing. There are various content forms that may be used to provide this information, including news-articles, video-formats, white papers, e-books, infographics, case studies, how-to tutorials, question-and-answer articles, photographs, etc. These content structures can be utilized through different content types. In research from Koshy, there are seven types of content: educational, inspirational, interactive, connecting, promotional, newsworthy, and entertaining (2022).

2.1.4.1 Educational content

Short-structured content receives fewer social shares than longer-structured content. They discovered that how-to and list-style posts, as well as instructive content, particularly infographics, generate a large number of shares (Kagan, 2017). According to Koshy, you may employ several forms of social media content, such as free resources, video tutorials, infographics, frequently asked questions, market research, case studies, tips and tricks, and how-to pieces (2022).

2.1.4.2 Inspirational content

Earnest Dichter, a researcher, found that most of the time, the reasons people share information are personal to the sharer. The causes are often focused on four reasons why someone could talk about a brand, which include:

- The experience was so excellent, distinctive, or novel that it had to be shared.
- To attract attention by demonstrating your superiority to others.
- A desire to lend a hand or show support for someone.
- Because the information is so fantastic, hilarious, or amazing that it simply must be shared.

For inspirational content you might post quotations, astounding facts and trivia, your own triumphant experiences, and photographs on social media.

2.1.4.3 Interactive content

According to research from Markus & Nurius, people imagine potential concepts of who they are or could become in the future. People therefore spread information that corresponds with these ideas of who they are. It explains why some individuals post political comments, express their displeasure over specific topics, or highlight the achievements of people they aspire to emulate in the future (1986).

You may utilize a variety of social media content forms, such as polls, games, grading, films, infographics, calculators, contests, product finders, questions, ask me anything's, and captions for these pictures.

2.1.4.4 Connecting content

Koshy explains that the relationship between a primate's brain size and the typical size of its social group was identified by British anthropologist Robin Dunbar. Dunbar suggested that humans are only able to easily sustain 150 stable social interactions. Numerous publications use this number, sometimes referred to as the Dunbar Number. It also explains why sporting activities like basketball are so beloved (2022).

To utilize connecting content you may use images or videos including contexts such as, behind the scenes footage or footage from an event you are attending.

2.1.4.5 Promotional content

Vouchers, giveaways, and discounts are all effective ways to leverage promotional content to market your business. Koshy claims that when given a coupon, people experience an average 38% boost in oxytocin levels, 11% happiness increase, 32% decrease in respiration rate, and 20 times less perspiration. These effects support research by Bustos, according to which 57% of consumers are inspired to make a first-time purchase when they may use a coupon (Koshy, 2022).

You may utilize a variety of social media content forms to promote your business, including webinars, promotions, coupons, discounts, and freebies in exchange for sign-ups.

2.1.4.6 Newsworthy content

Not all sectors will benefit from newsworthy content. Sharing newsworthy content might be difficult for most businesses. There is a significant amount of rivalry, and a great number of resources are often needed to produce this kind of content (Koshy, 2022).

If a company is not in the news business, it may employ curation as a form of content.

2.1.4.7 Entertaining content

The kinds of social media information and thoughts we choose to share have a physiological basis. Three dissimilar categories of material are often shared, among which is entertaining content. People like laughing or finding humor, so when we share that enjoyable experience with others, we feel wonderful (Wolpert, 2019).

Business-wise, entertaining content may transform a brand into a community of individuals that resemble their audience (Koshy, 2022).

Puzzles, enjoyable holiday-related material, memes, viral videos, jokes, comics, contests or give-aways, and nostalgia-related content are some examples of the social media content that can be entertaining content.

2.1.5 Content Marketing

The context, constraints, and limits of the particular social platform influence the type of content used in social media marketing. Twitter, for instance, allows users to submit 140-character messages. (Augustini, n.d.). Creating and sharing useful, relevant, and consistent information is the core of the strategic marketing technique known as content marketing, which aims to draw in and keep the attention of a target audience while eventually motivating them to take lucrative action (Vijayendrakumar, n.d.). The Content Marketing Institute (2015) explains content marketing as, “The art of communicating with your customers and prospects without selling. Instead of pitching your products or services, you are delivering information that makes your buyer more intelligent. The essence of this content strategy is the belief that if we, as businesses, deliver consistent, ongoing valuable information to buyers, they reward us with their business and loyalty”.

The goal of content marketing is to draw in and keep consumers by regularly creating and distributing useful content with the aim of altering or improving consumer behavior. It is an ongoing process that functions best when incorporated into your complete marketing plan and emphasizes owning your own content rather than renting it (Vijayendrakumar, n.d.). The content marketing strategy is customized for each business, but it must consider the following factors: the strategy objectives, target audience analysis, type of content to be used, different channels to be

used for advertising, the frequency of the content marketing, and metrics to assess success of content.

2.1.6 Key Platforms

From Facebook to Linked-In, there are many different social media platforms nowadays, all competing over usage. To determine which social media platforms are the key players in the market, the study is firstly going to deter which platforms are the most popular among users and filter this data into a list of platforms in which social media content marketing can be conducted on. According to Statista (2022), Facebook is the most popular platform as of January 2022 with 2,910 million active monthly users. Facebook is followed by YouTube (2,562 million monthly users), Instagram (1,478 million monthly users), TikTok (1,000 million monthly users) and Sina Weibo (573 million monthly users). While 4,394 marketers world-wide are using mostly Facebook (93%), Instagram (78%), Linked-In (61%), YouTube (55%) and Twitter (48%) (Statista 2021).

2.2 Generations

We must define the precise interrelations of the individuals that make up a single generation-unit to have a comprehensive understanding of the fundamental structure of the phenomena of generations. The development of generations, which are often just cliques with the one distinct feature that group formation is based on the sense of belonging to one generation rather than on specific aims, is not what constitutes the unity of a generation in the first place (Mannheim, 1952). Birth years, age ranges, and critical developmental events in life at crucial developmental stages are used to identify generations (Kupperschmidt, 2000).

Table 1 gives an overview of the different generations and their age range according to Brunjes (2022)

Generation Name	Born Between	Age
WWII	1922 – 1927	95 – 100
Post War	1928 – 1945	77 – 94
Baby Boomers	1946 - 1964	58 – 76
Generation X	1965 – 1980	42 – 57
Millennials	1981 – 1996	26 – 41
Generation Z	1997 – 2012	10 – 25

Table 1 - Age Range by Generation (Source: Brunjes, 2022).

There has been many approaches and research done to determine the different generation ranges (Table 1 and 2). However, in contrast to data from Brunjes (2022), Oh and Reeves (2013) show the lack of uniformity in these authors' terminology, historical dates, and methods for defining these traits for each generation. Even if there could be variations within generations that are distinguished by chronological dates, these traits fluctuate among people within a generation. Therefore, a person's participation in a certain generation cannot be used to conclude anything about that person's personality. Perceived membership, shared values and behaviors, and shared historical context are three qualities that Howe and Strauss (2000) addressed as being crucial in shaping the traits and characteristics of distinct generations.

Source		Labels			
Howe and Strauss (2000)	Silent Generation (1925-1943)	Boom Generation (1943-1960)	Generation 13 (1961-1981)	Millennial Generation (1982-2000)	-
Lancaster and Stillman (2003)	Traditionalists (1900-1945)	Baby Boomers (1946-1964)	Generation Xers (1965-1980)	Millennial Generation, Echo Boomers, Generation Y, Baby Busters, Generation Next (1981-1999)	-
Martin and Tulgan (2002)	Silent Generation (1900-1942)	Baby Boomers (1946-1960)	Generation X (1965-1977)	Millennial (1978-2000)	-
Oblinger and Oblinger (2005)	The Mature (<1946)	Baby Boomers (1947-1964)	Gen-Xers (1965-1980)	Gen-Y, NetGen, Millennials (1981-1995)	Post-Millennials (1995-present)
Tapscott (1998)	-	Baby Boom Generation (1946-1964)	Generation X (1965-1975)	Digital Generation (1976-2000)	-
Zemke et al. (1999)	Veterans (1922-1943)	Baby Boomers (1943-1960)	Gen-Xers (1960-1980)	Nexters (1980-1999)	-

Reeves and Oh (2008)	Mature Generation (1924-1945)	Boom Generation (1946-1964)	Generation X (1965-1980)	Millennial Generation (1981-2000)	Generation Z (2001-present)
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Table 2 - Generational labels and dates reported in different sources (Jonassen et al., 2007; Oh & Reeves, 2013)

As shown in Table 2, Reeves and Oh (in the edited handbook of Research on Educational Communications and Technology: Third Edition (Jonassen et al., 2007)) have concluded the different ages according to their former findings. However, in contrast, this thesis will be focusing on the age groups given by Brunjes (2022) due to its relevancy in time and its height in search results in search engines. According to research by Pan et al. (2007) on college students decision making through search engines, the sequence in which the findings are presented on the Google search engine and, to a lesser extent, the actual relevancy of the abstracts, have a significant impact on college student interests. They frequently focus on, if not only, the top 10 results that appear on the Google page and click on results that are higher up even when the abstracts have been purposefully modified to make them less applicable to the project. In addition, due to the inconsistency in research on age groups according to Oh and Reeves (2013), the findings of Brunjes (2022) might give this consensus of acceptance of age ranges due to the reasons given above.

It must be noticed that there is another age group coming after generation Z named: generation Alpha. These members, born in and after 2010, are still in school but have already affected marketing, technology, and priorities of their millennial parents (Jha, 2020).

2.3 Millennials

Millennials (also called generation Y) are, according to Prensky (2001), to be described as “Digital Natives”. This generation is a “native speaker” in digital language related to all sorts of modern technology as computers, phones, and the internet. Generation Y is known for their drive for success and volunteerism, as well as their preference for flexible work schedules and informal dress codes. Multitasking a wide range of academic and extracurricular interests, travel, and volunteer work is the foundation of this generation's apparent preoccupation. The author compares the deep ties that generation Y has to their families to their maturation during a time of corporate scandals, terrorist attacks, international conflicts, catastrophic disasters, and school killings. The internal conflicts of millennials are also described, including their great benevolence while still being consumed by personal successes, their desire for job flexibility while yet needing direction,

and their ability to work well in teams while also longing for individual praise. Their tendency for multitasking reduces their attention span, their technology-driven lifestyles facilitate cheating on campuses, and despite their commitment to work-life balance, they aim to be CEOs (Konczak et al., 2011).

2.3.1 Millennials on Social Media

Millennials are using social media less now than they were in 2019. Usage was high during Q1 and Q2 of 2020, however since lockdowns are no longer in place, so are the associated behaviors. The number of millennials who say Facebook is their favorite service has decreased by 5% from Q4 2020, even though it is still the most popular service among this generation outside of China. Instagram and WhatsApp are contending to be the second-most utilized applications. Instagram may have reached a high in millennial sign-ups in the past, but the percentage of users who say it is their favorite has increased by 10%. But that bears no resemblance to what TikTok has done in such a brief period; although it is often regarded as "the young person's app" millennials also use it (GWI., 2021).

2.4 Generation Z

Generation Z is also known as IGeneration, GenTech, Online Generation, Post Millennials, Facebook Generation, Switchers and "always clicking" (Dolot, 2018). According to Singh and Dangmei (2016), generation Z has grown up with the social web, is heavily reliant on technology, and views it as an aspect of themselves. They are different from earlier generations in this way of being more reliant on technology and the digital world. Social networking is a crucial aspect of generation Z's lifestyle, and they have a casual, direct, and distinctive communication style. They are a generation that prefers to 'Do-It-Yourself' (DIY). This generation has problems on its plate; they are still recovering from the effects of COVID-19, and climate change will undoubtedly have a significant impact on their lifestyle decisions for years to come (GWI., 2022). Csobanka (2016) explains that the members of generation Z are frequent users of social media and conduct most of their daily interactions there. For this generation, face-to-face interactions are just as important as online interactions. They do not frequently consume sugary soft drinks and fast food in daily consumption. Smoking cigarettes and drinking alcohol are common practices among 'Gen Z'ers'. They are brand-focused when it comes to their preferences in daily goods. Listening to pop

music and watching movies are typical preference in content consumption among generation Z. When buying movies and music, they typically download (piracy). They prefer online material and spend leisure time on browsing the web and watching YouTube videos.

2.4.1 Gen Z on Social Media

Compared to other generations, generation Z tends to prefer social media platforms for communication and interaction with friends. They are also content and feel compelled to actively provide feedback and comments about the products, services, and issues in which they are either directly or indirectly involved, and they also value the opinions of others. They are active participants, avid consumers of online content and creative thinkers. They have a strong feeling for online communication and like to participate in it (Prakash Yadav & Rai, 2017).

2.5 Esports

One wide-used definition of esports is the definition created by Wagner (2006); ““eSports” is an area of sport activities in which people develop and train mental or physical abilities in the use of information and communication technologies.” While a study from Hamari and Sjöblom (2017) explains that the main game mechanics are supported by electronic systems, and both player and team input and the system's output are managed via human-computer interfaces. In simple terms this means that esports is used to describe competitive video game competitions. It is the only type of sport in which electronic technologies have taken the place of the fundamental elements of the game; the input from the players or teams is shown on a computer screen. This indicates that actions are conducted by players using a keyboard, mouse, or gamepad while the outcome of these actions are being displayed on a screen.

2.5.1 Esports Target Market

The esports target audience and market is complex due to the many different stakeholders that are present. A report from Newzoo (2021), gives a clear view on the money and value flow of the esports target audience.

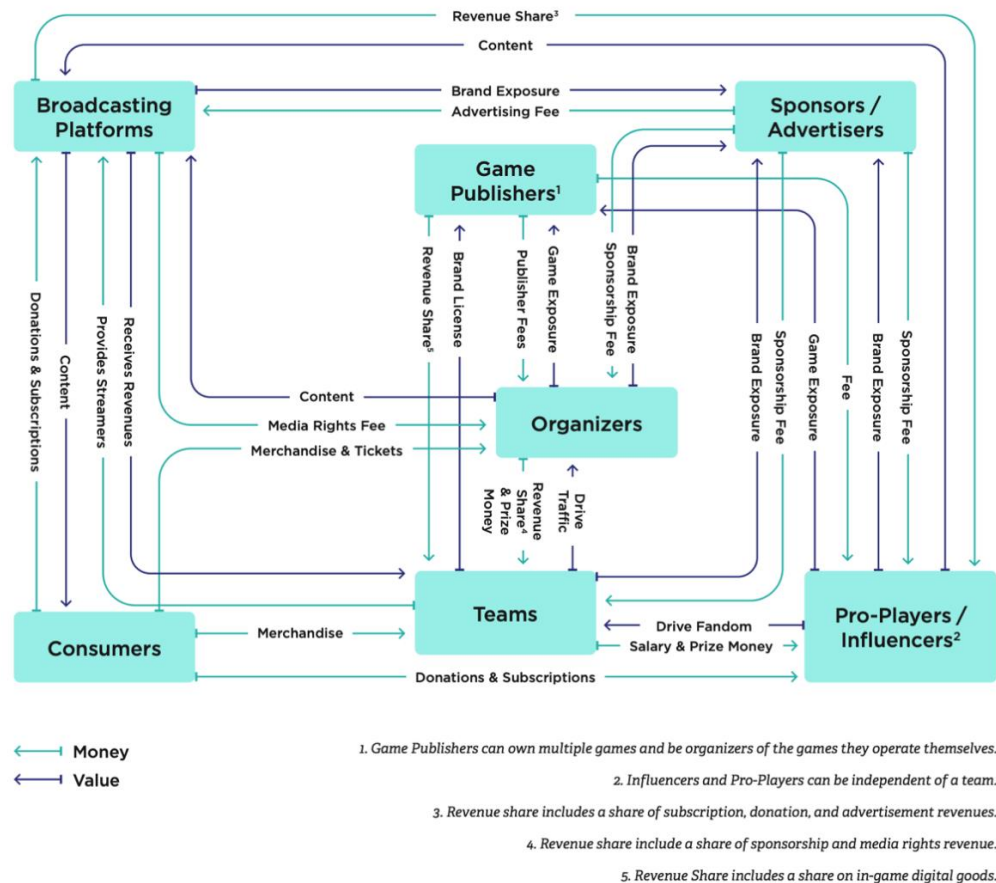


Figure 2 - esports target market, money, and value flow (Source: Newzoo 2021).

According to the report from Newzoo (2021), enthusiasts of watching esports will account for 234 million people of the world population, excluding another 240 million occasional watchers of esports. The esports audience is mostly male, according to Alivia (n.d.). While the esports target age lies between 18 and 34 (Hasan, 2021). Live events play a significant role regarding interaction for esports enthusiasts, even during COVID-19, they have demonstrated a great interest in attending live events. For instance, in 2017, 12 esports teams competed against one another in front of around 170,000 spectators over the course of two weekends at Poland's Spodek Arena. Esports enthusiasts are youthful and actively participate in digital ecosystems (Alivia ,n.d.).

3 Methodology

To further examine the chosen data collection methods, the thesis first explains the theoretical methodology. Quantitative methods place an emphasis on precise measurements and the statistical, mathematical, or numerical analysis. This data may be gathered through surveys, questionnaires, and polls, as well as the transformation of pre-existing statistical data by digital methods. Quantitative research focuses on accumulating numerical data and generalizing it across groups of individuals or to explain a specific occurrence ("Research Guides: Organizing Your Social Sciences Research Paper: Quantitative Methods," n.d.). In qualitative research, non-numerical data (such as text, video, or audio) are gathered and analyzed to better comprehend concepts, beliefs, or experiences. It may be applied to receive comprehensive understanding of a situation or to produce fresh research concepts (Bhandari, 2022).

3.1 Data Collection Methods

For the empirical part of thesis, quantitative research is utilized in the form of a survey to collect data. The goal is to have a minimum of 200 respondents for the online survey about social media interactions in the different target groups. According to research from van Bennekom (2018), for a research project an estimation of 200 respondents acts as average-good survey accuracy. For this, the number of respondents are collected by sending the online survey to roughly 1000 people. This estimation of a 1000 invited people for the online survey comes from the following formula: $100 \text{ respondents} \div .20 \text{ response rate} = 500 \text{ invitations}$ ("How many survey responses do I need to be statistically valid?" n.d.). In the case of this study, it leads to an estimation of 1000 invitations for this online survey ($200 \text{ respondents} \div .20 \text{ response rate} = 1000 \text{ invitations}$). This online survey is conducted through Webropol, which is not only a tool for conducting surveys but also a tool for reporting a survey.

The goal of 200 respondents is achieved by sending the survey to friends and family, but also by sharing it on social media platforms, such as Linked-In, Facebook and Instagram. Websites such as surveycircle.com and surveyswap.io also supported the gain of respondents.

3.2 Data Analysis Methods

The collected data was processed using the reporting tool from Webropol and the usage of Microsoft Excel. Firstly, the reporting tool from Webropol compared the data with the given age groups. Later this was also combined with the esports target market. This compared data is made simple by the reporting tool and could be exported to Excel. Here, the data is made into graphs which could be imported into the thesis. The author chose these methods due to the reliability and easy usage of the reporting software of Webropol.

The data shows remarkable and insightful information regarding the research questions. To further analyze the report, the data is compared to the theoretical background. By doing this the data may reveal similarities or differences that could conclude content marketing practices for the given target groups.

3.3 Reliability and Validity

Most respondents to this survey are labeled as generation Z with 19.4 percent being 23 years old and 15.8 percent being 24 years old. That means that approximately 35 percent of the respondents are from those two ages alone. This centered focus could result into the data being biased towards these ages solely instead reflecting on the whole generation group. The survey itself was quick and short which motivates people to stay focused. Especially the younger ages are used to more flashy content and might fill out wrong data to your survey if it may be timely long. When looking at the esports target group, it might be misleading to accurately show the esports age range out of own research due to limitations on accepting solely young adults (18+) to the survey. If not chosen this limitation, the research might have shown some wider results. Also, the theory might have been written in a global perspective. When comparing the data from the survey to the theory, this might give some inconsistency to conclude on. This is since many respondents in the survey are either Dutch, German, or Finnish.

Nevertheless, the comparison from the self-conducted data and the theory will show correlation if there are some. This also could show either the inconsistency of the theory or the reliability of the data.

4 Results

Now that the thesis has explored the theory and the academic survey has been conducted, the results are to be shown. The resulting is separated in to three topics: respondents, findings per generations and findings on esports target market. Firstly, under respondents, the thesis will unveil data and demographics on the respondents from the survey. This will give a better picture on the background of the data and whom it is collected from. Secondly, under findings per generations, the thesis will show the data collected from the respondents while comparing and separating it into the target groups of generation Z and millennials. Then, under findings on esports target market, the thesis reports data on the respondents who have an interest in esports. This data will also be compared to the target groups of generation Z and millennials.

4.1 Respondents

The academic survey reached a total of 203 respondents, in which 3 respondents are not actively using the discussed social media platforms. These respondents are not being counted for the results, thus the following results regard 200 respondents.

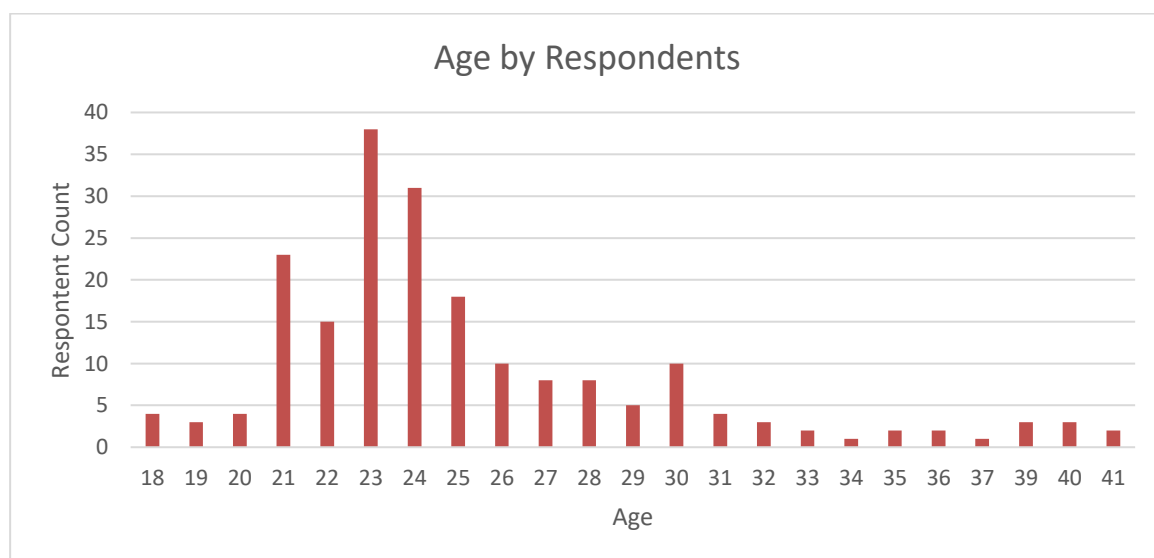


Figure 3 - Survey Respondent Count and Age.

As shown in Figure 3, most of the respondents are between the ages of 21 and 25. This explains Figure 4, which shows that the results are mostly from generation Z.

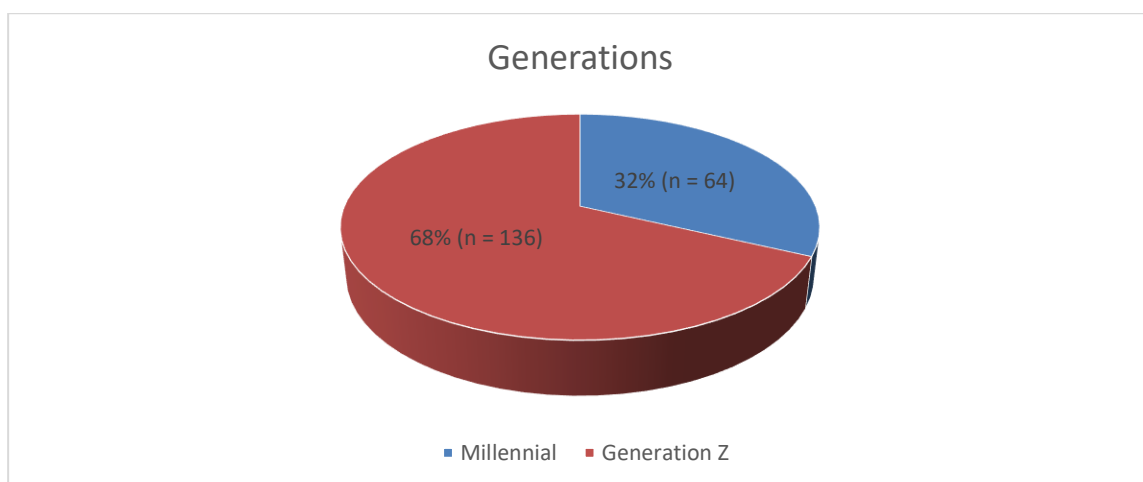


Figure 4 - Survey Generation Percentage.

The demographics in Figure 5 show that most respondents are Dutch, which is followed by German and Finnish. The other nationalities in this survey counted 8 or less respondents. These countries include Austria (8), Russia (7), Romania (6), United Kingdom (6), France (6), Belgium (5), Italy (2), Switzerland (1), United States (1), Japan (1), Czech Republic (1), Malaysia (1), Singapore (1), Portugal (1), Hungary (1), Serbia (1), Greece (1), Kosovo (1), Estonia (1) and 2 non-communicated countries.

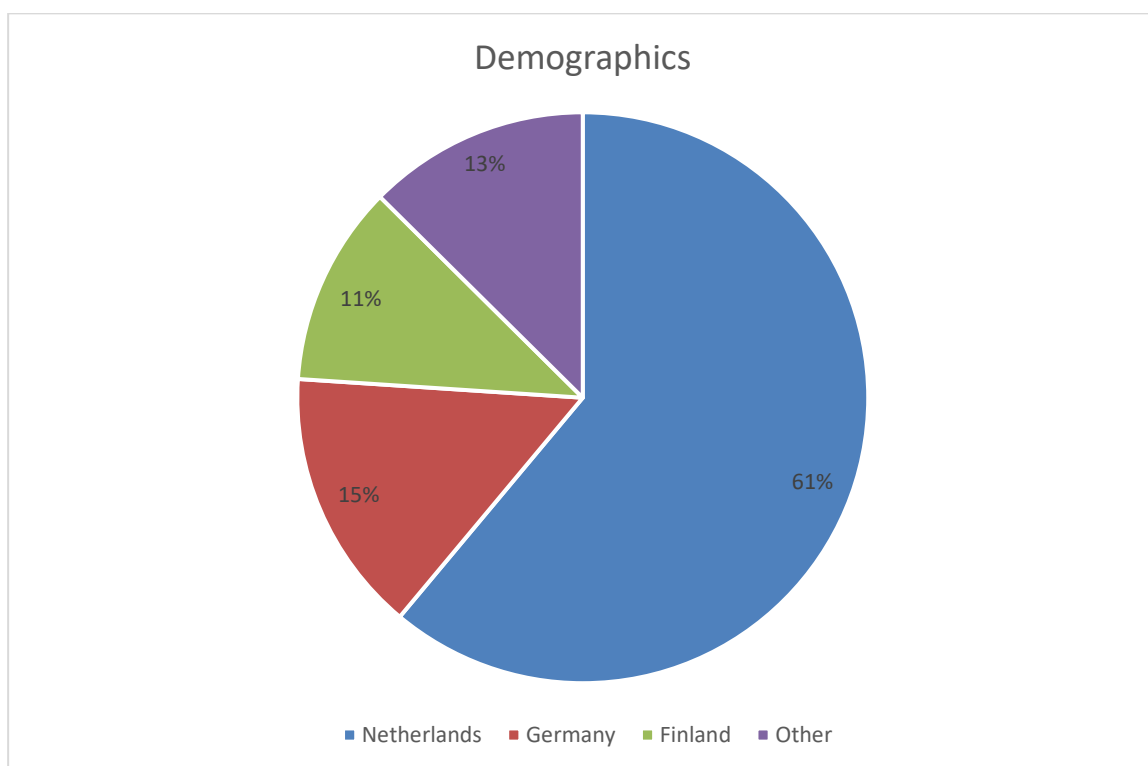


Figure 5 - Survey Demographics.

4.2 Findings per Generations

Figure 6 may reveal that generation Z is mostly active on Instagram and YouTube, while millennials are also quite active on Facebook. Significantly, both generations claim to be not so active on twitter just as millennials seem to be not using TikTok actively that much.

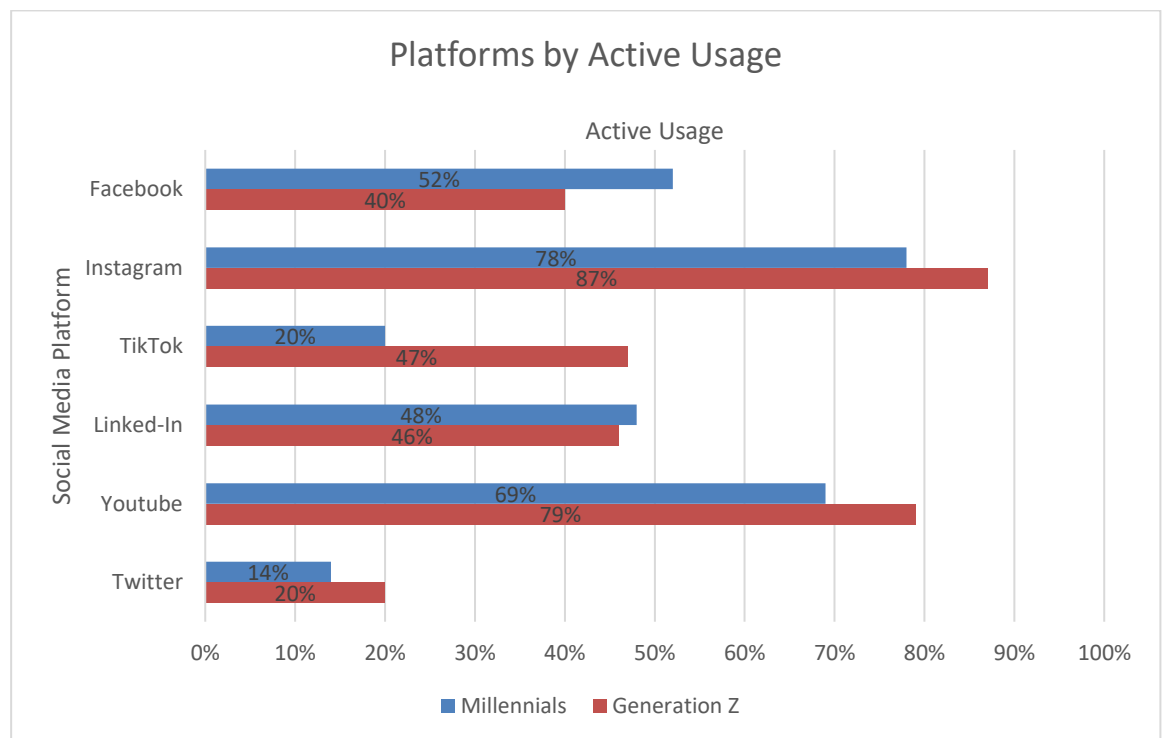


Figure 6 - Platform by Active Usage.

Regarding engagement per generation, the following figures show the engagement per generation group on the discussed platforms:

Figure 7 shows that generation Z may engage more with advertisement and businesses on Facebook, while engagement from both generations with businesses on Facebook is lower compared to engagement with advertisement. Millennials claim to barely be engaged with businesses on Facebook.

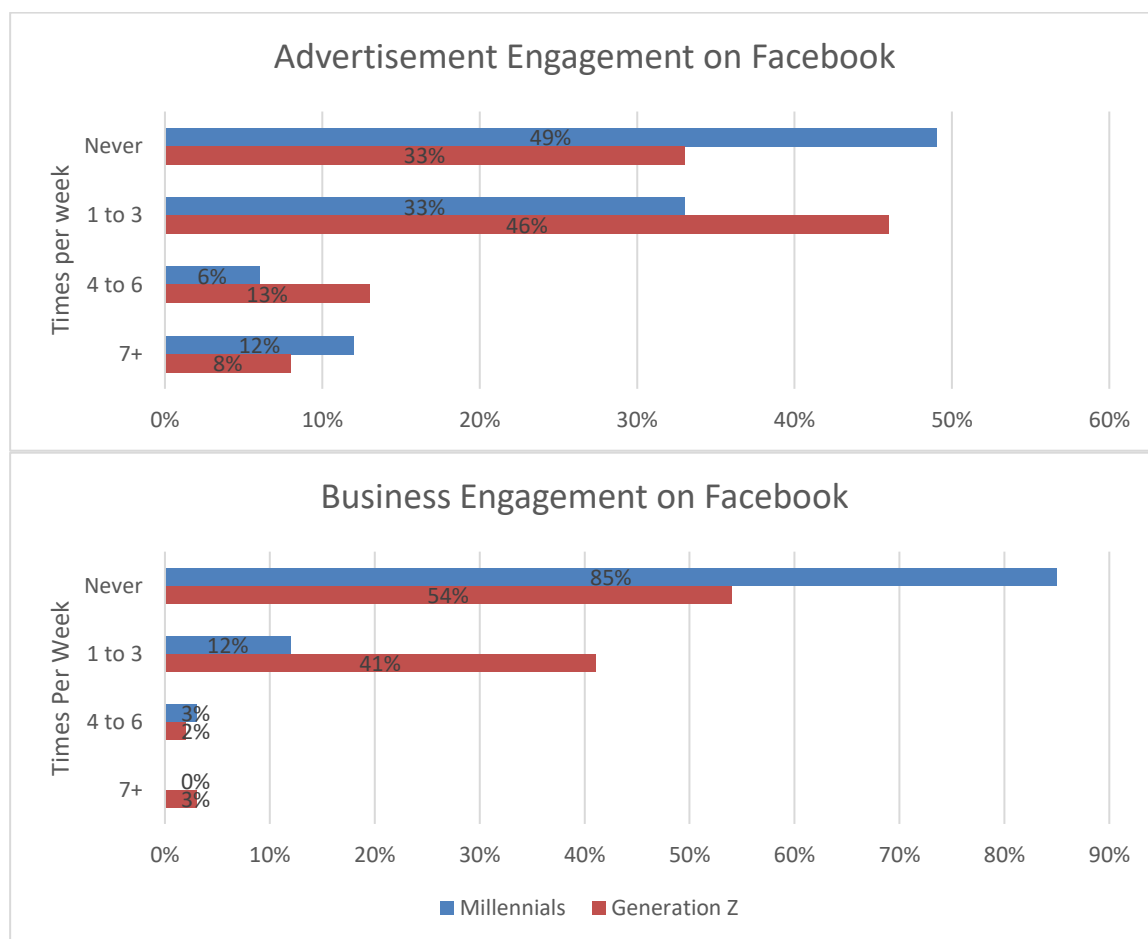


Figure 7 - Engagement per Generation on Facebook.

Both millennials as generation Z may be more likely to engage with advertisement than with businesses on Instagram as shown in Figure 8. With millennials being significantly less likely to engage with businesses than generation Z.

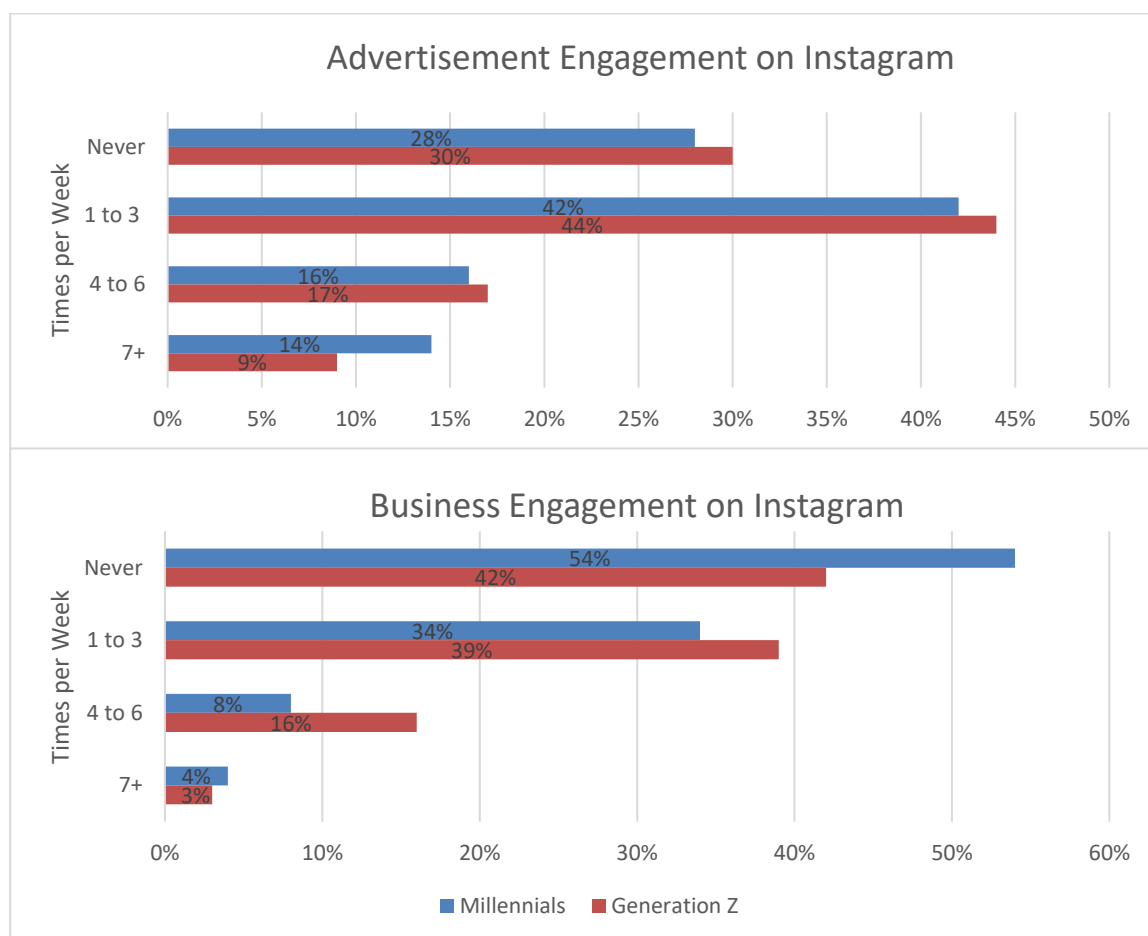


Figure 8 - Engagement per Generation on Instagram.

Figure 9 might suggest that generation Z, while the percentages are low, are more likely to engage with advertisement than millennials. While millennials may be more likely to engage with businesses 2 to 3 times per week over generation Z.

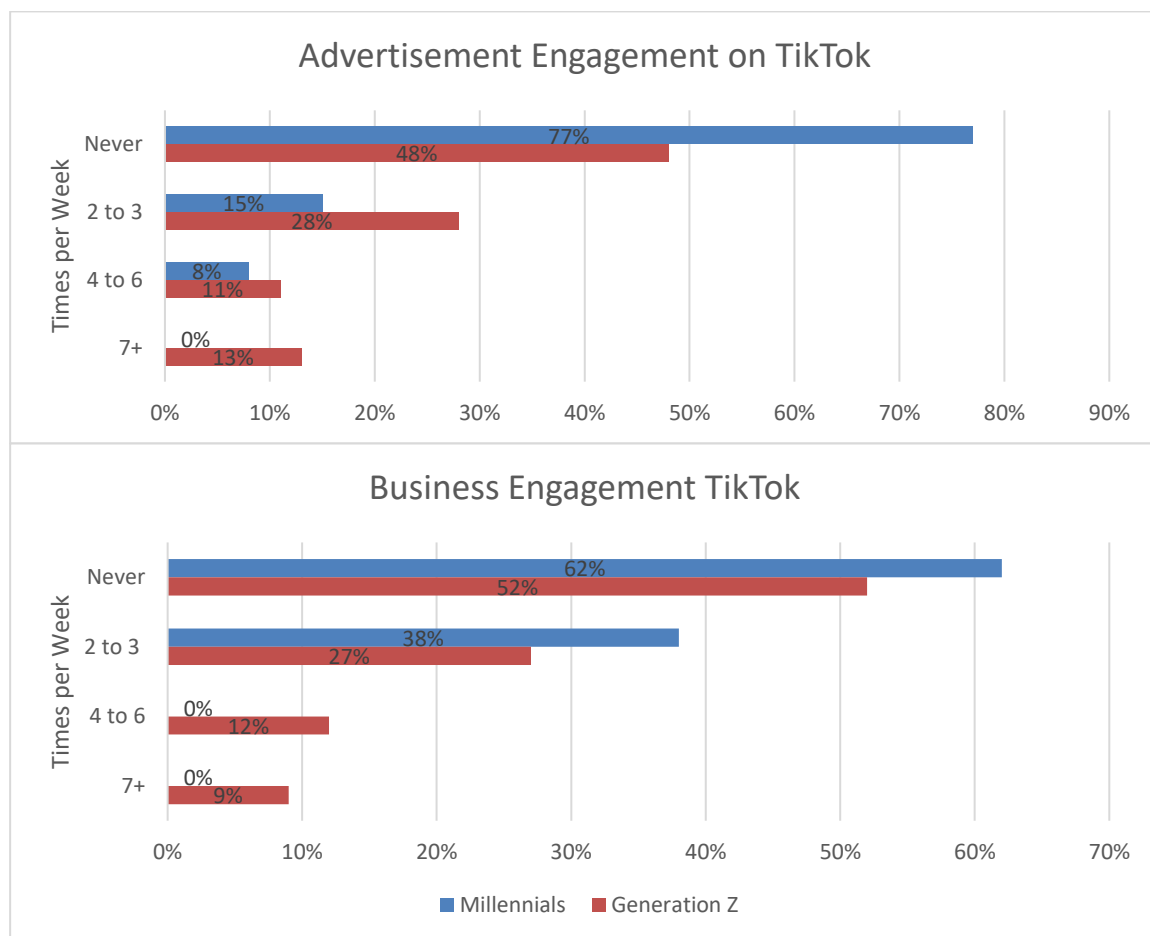


Figure 9 - Engagement per Generation on TikTok.

Millennials and generation Z are both about equally engaging with advertisement on Linked-In as shown in Figure 10. millennials are significantly more likely to engage 1 to 3 times per week with businesses with over 55 percent.

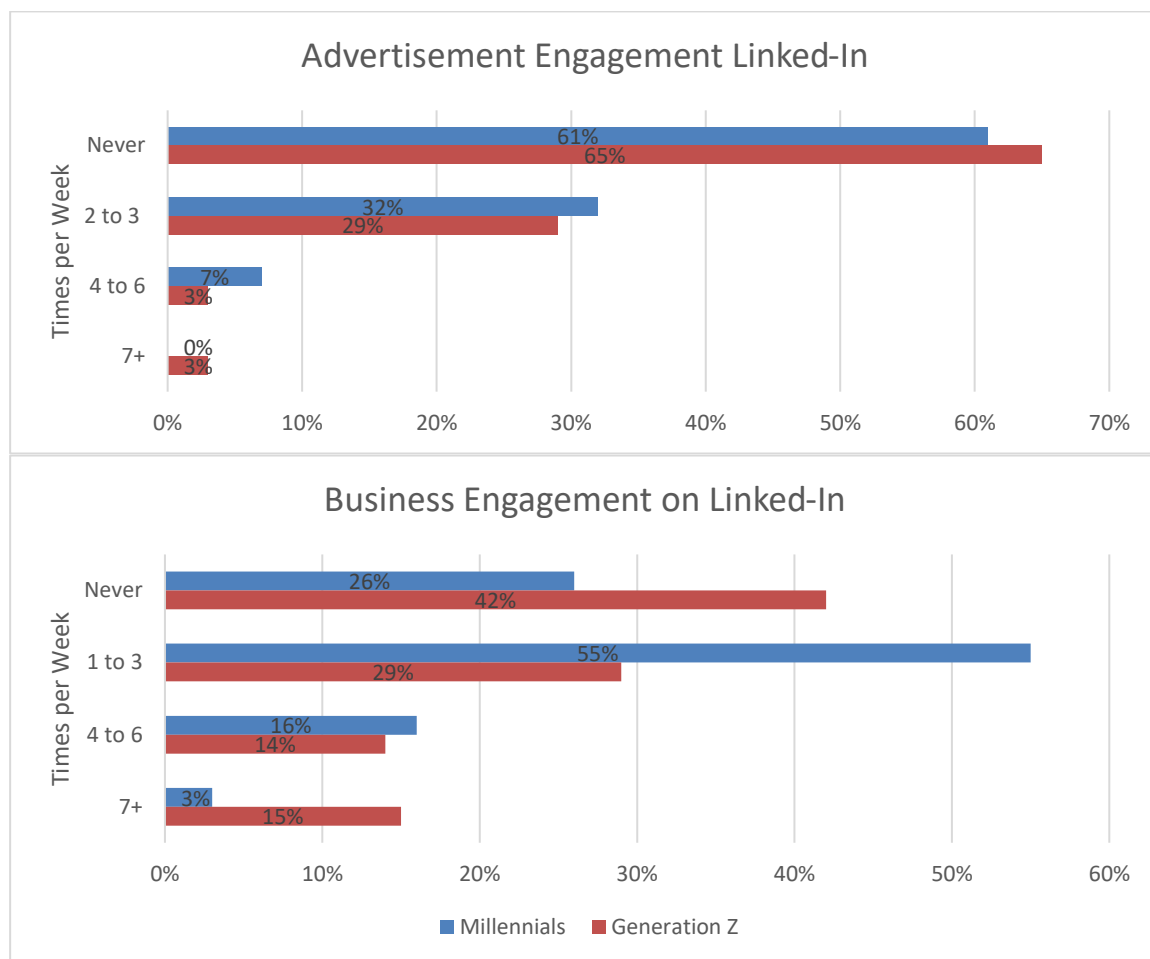


Figure 10 - Engagement per Generation on Linked-In.

As shown in Figure 11, over 60 percent of millennials and generation Z will not engage with advertisement on YouTube, while those who would engage either 1 to 3 or 7 and more times per week. Significantly, millennials may be more engaging with businesses than generation Z.

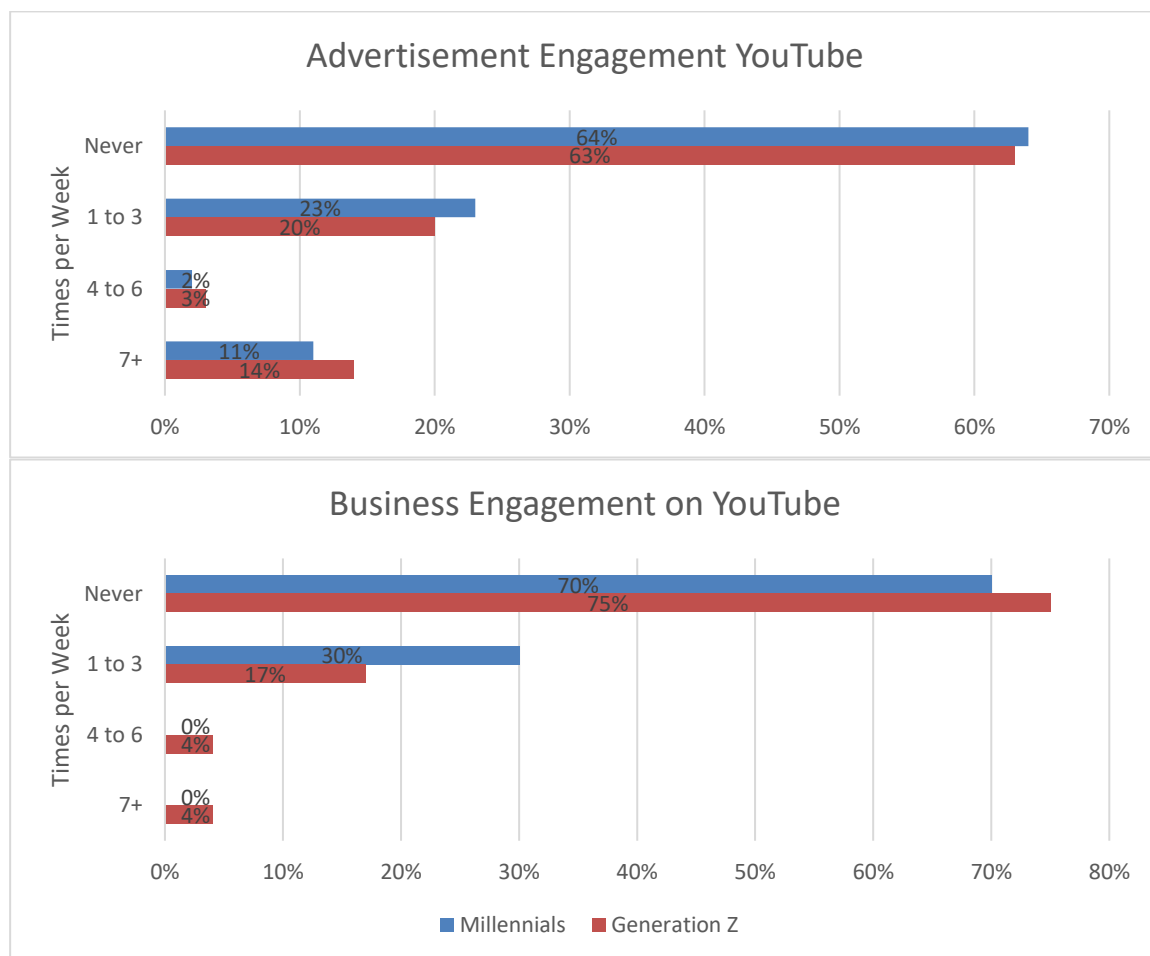


Figure 11 - Engagement per Generation on YouTube.

In Figure 12 is shown that both millennials and generation Z are least likely to engage with advertisement on Twitter, while millennials are more likely to engage with businesses. Over 55 percent of millennials are likely to engage with Businesses, mostly 1 to 3 times per week.

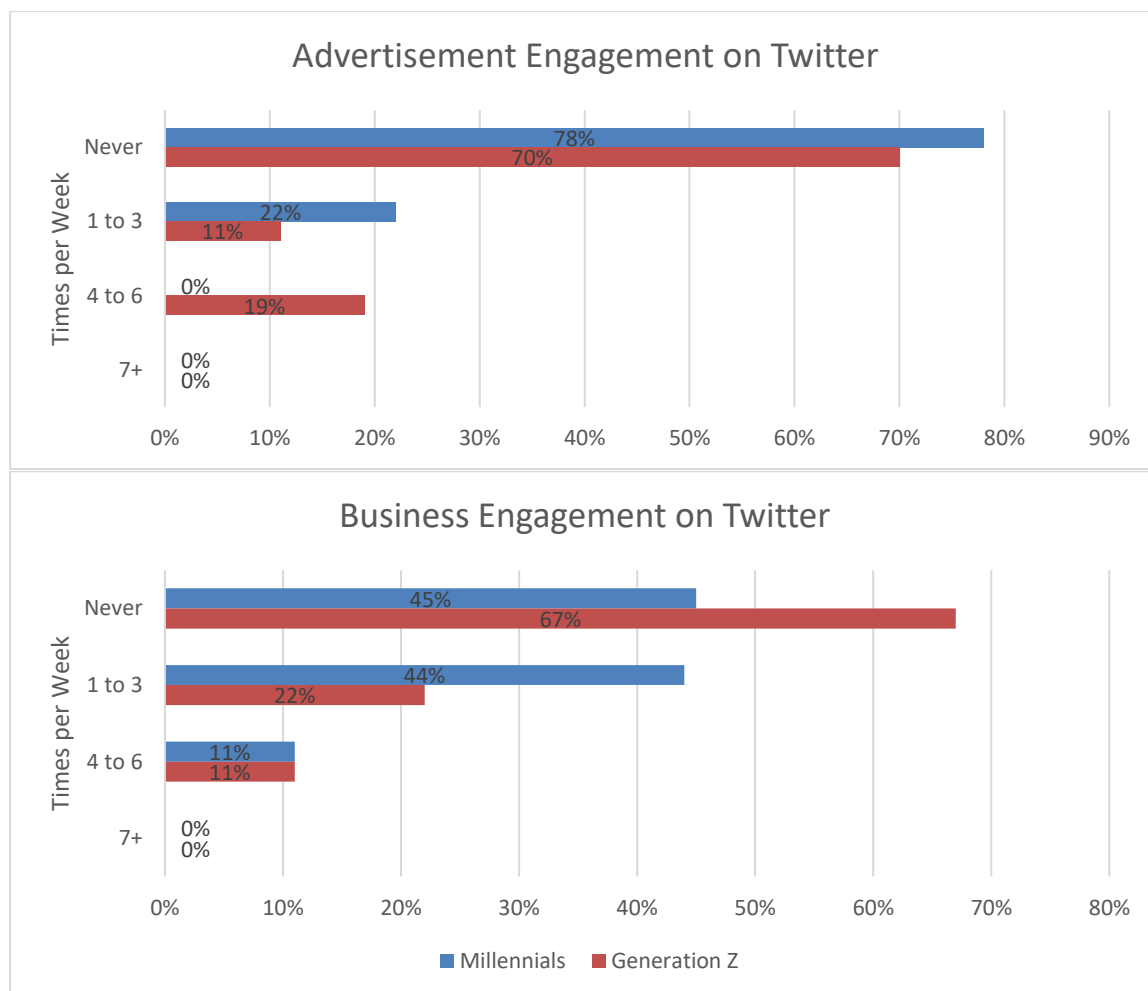


Figure 12 - Engagement per Generation on Twitter.

Millennials may prefer educational content slightly more than generation Z as shown in Figure 13, although generation Z may prefer a more variety of content. Generation Z scores at most content types the highest, while they might prefer entertaining content the most in general.

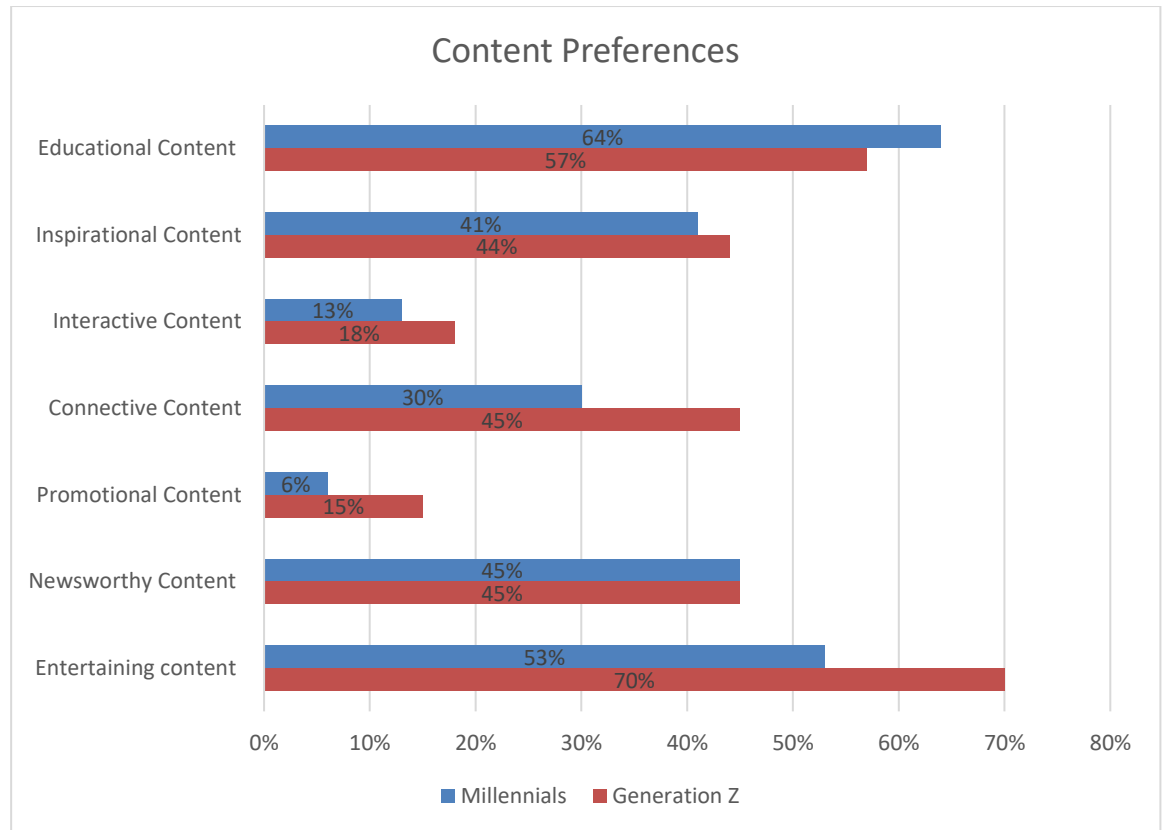


Figure 13 - Content Preferences per Generation.

On the next page, in Figure 14 is shown what content type the generation groups watch on what platform. In general, Instagram is used most for all content types, while generation Z uses more various platforms in total than millennials. There are exceptions, even though Instagram is the most actively used platform, educational content is watched more on YouTube than Instagram by both generations. For generation Z, entertaining content also has a big share on YouTube. Also, educational, and newsworthy content on Linked-In gets a big share in both generations, even though this platform is 4th in line on active usage.

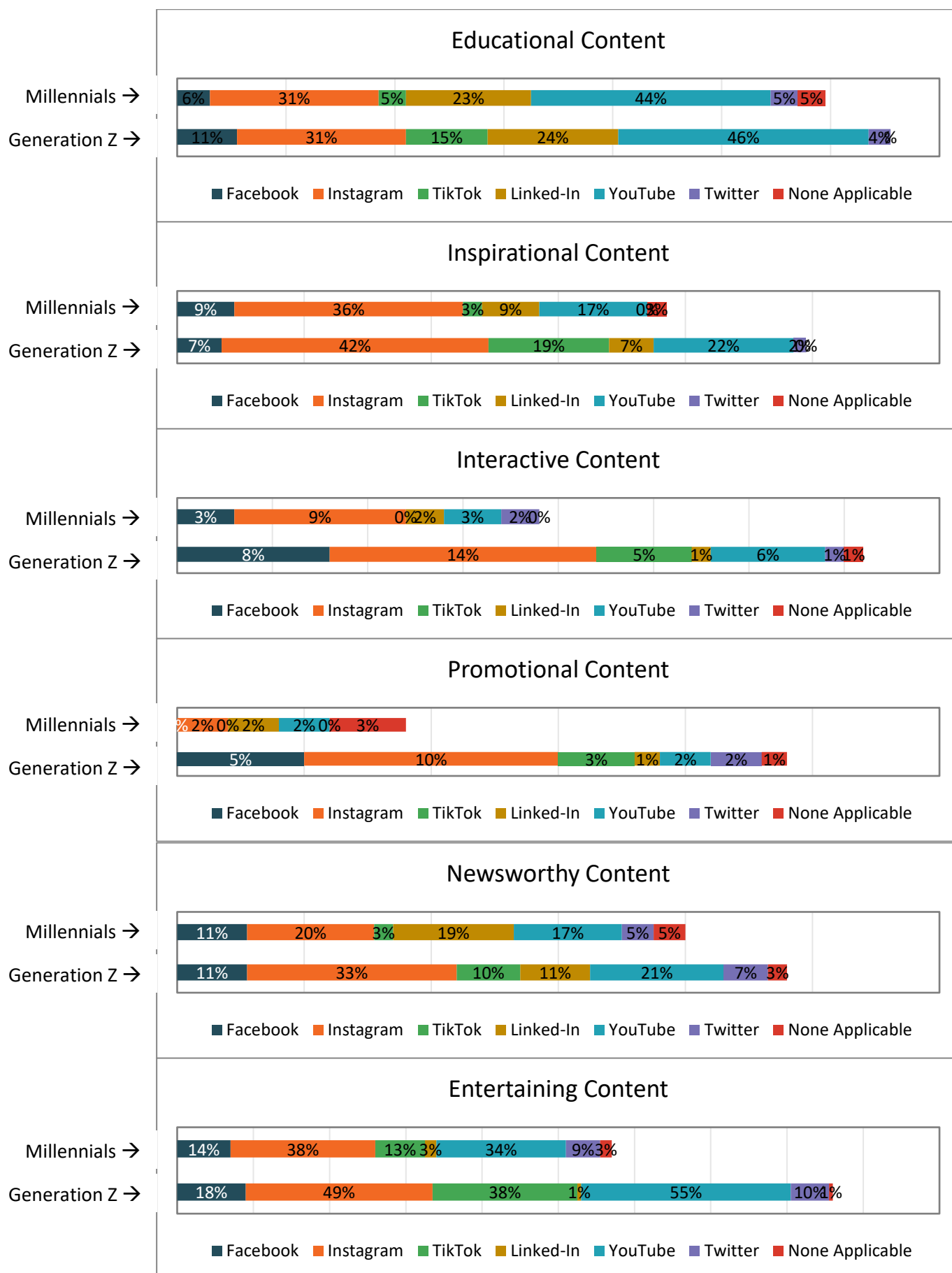


Figure 14 - Content Preferences on per Platform.

4.3 Findings on Esports Target Market

Figure 15 shows the age range of the respondents who are interested in esports.

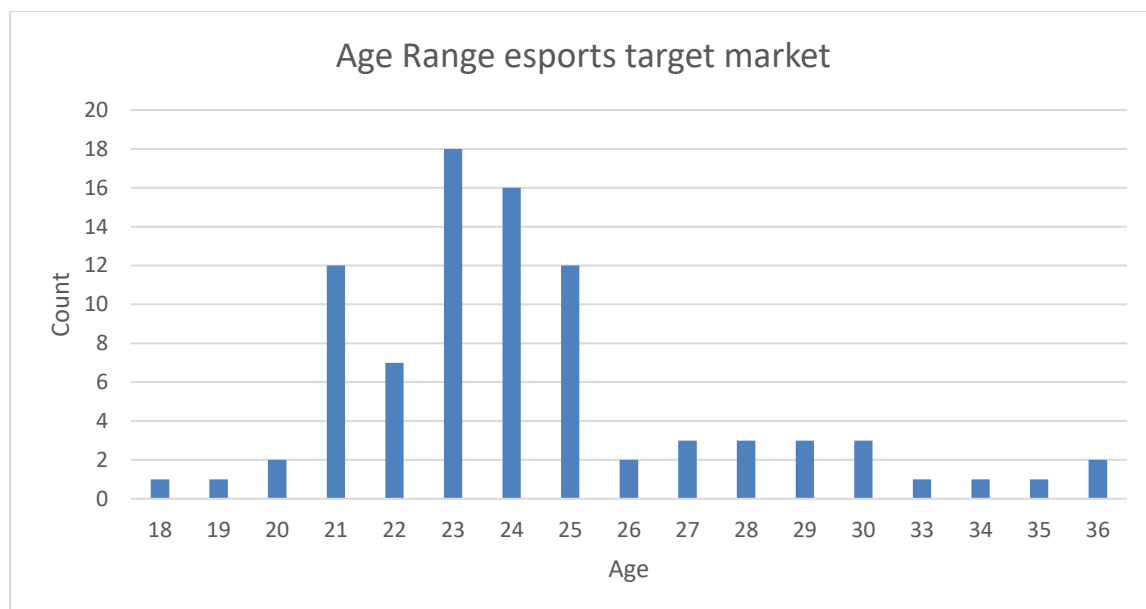


Figure 15 - esports target market age range.

In the following figure, Figure 16, one can see that 51 percent of generation Z are involved with esports while 30 percent of millennials are.

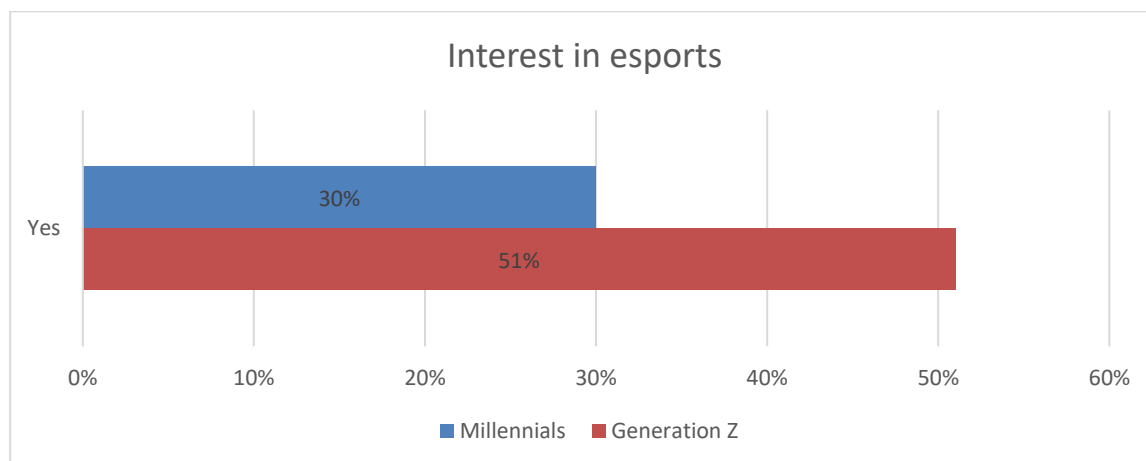


Figure 16 - Involvement in esports per Generation.

Figure 17, states that the people who are interested in esports may watch esports content mostly on YouTube, which is followed by Instagram. Percentages between platforms do not deviate significantly.

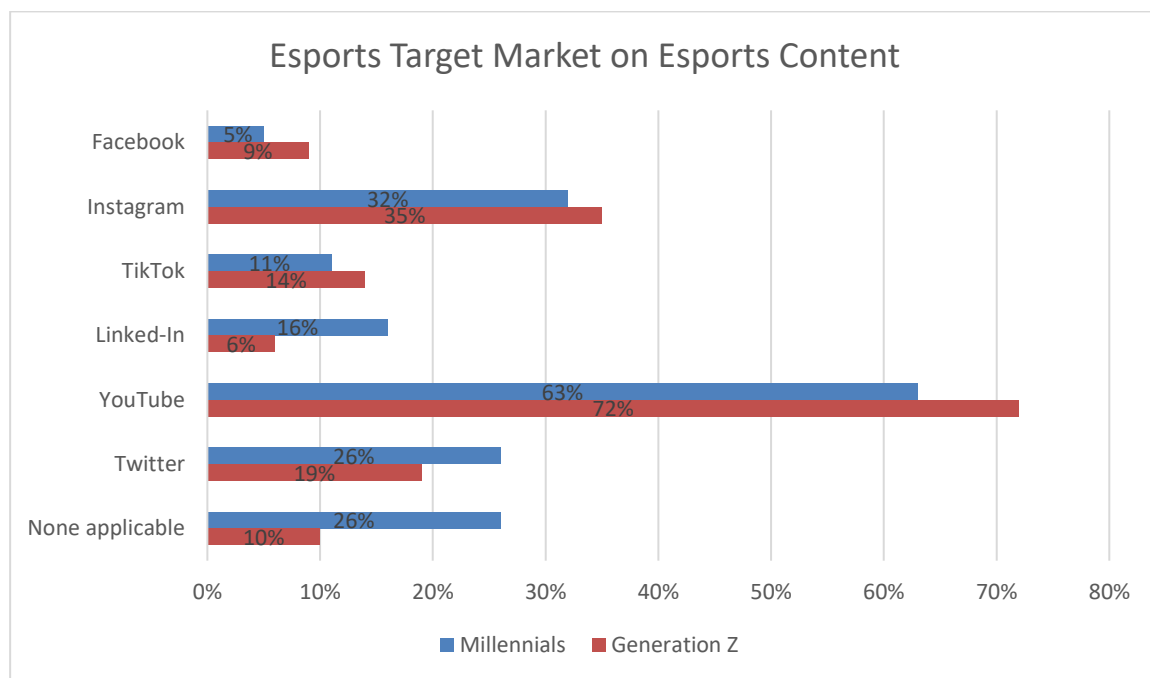


Figure 17 - Viewership of esports content.

Figure 18 shows the content preferences per generation who are interested in esports. This barely deviates with Figure 13.

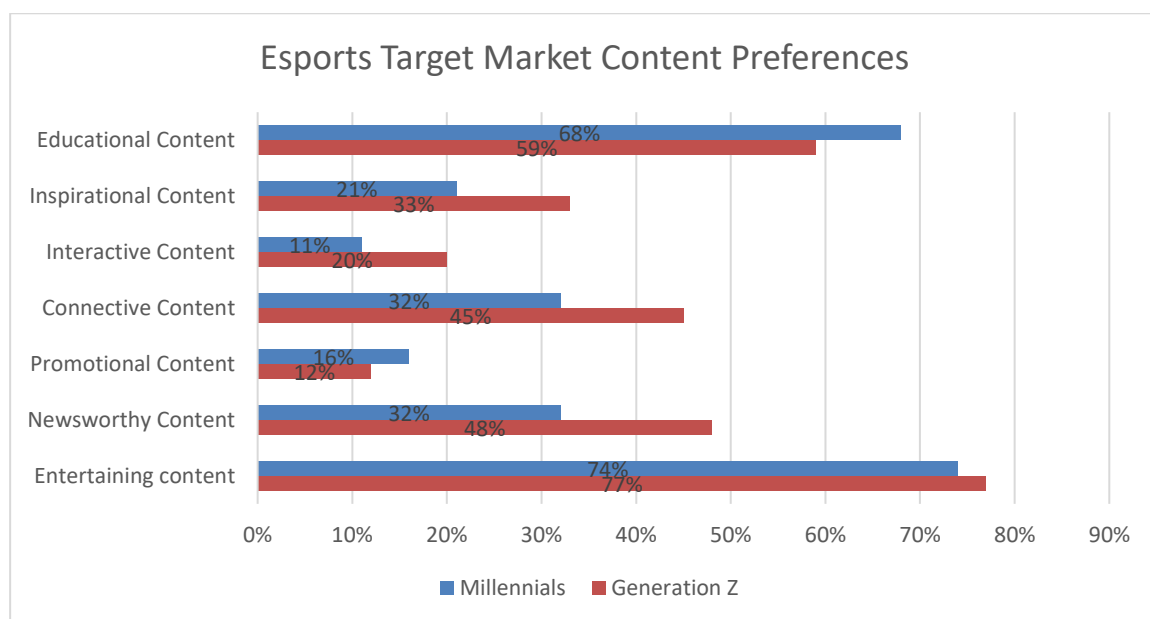


Figure 18 - Content preferences in esports target market.

5 Discussion and Conclusion

Now that the thesis has conducted its research, we can discuss the initial research questions and the findings that have been uncovered. Here we will compare the findings from both empirical and theoretical research to form answers to the research questions and conclude on it.

The research questions were the following: ‘What do millennials and generation Z have in common in their social media behavior and how does that affect a content strategy?’, ‘What age group does the esports target market consist of?’ and ‘What are the preferred types of content within the different target groups?’.

5.1 Comparison in Social Media Behavior for a Content Strategy

As the theory states, millennials’ most popular social media platform is Facebook. In contrast to the self-conducted research, it may indicate that Instagram and YouTube are more popular. The theory also uncovered that TikTok has grown in popularity, in the empirical research this might resemble how millennials are more active on TikTok than on Twitter. Twitter is a much older platform; this could indicate that millennials have shown a growing interest in TikTok recently.

Empirically, generation Z is most active on Instagram and YouTube, even more than millennials. It is notable that generation Z is significantly more active on TikTok than the millennials. This reflects to the theory which states that TikTok has been seen as a “young person’s app”. In addition, generation Z has been spoken of as a generation who enjoys browsing the web and watching YouTube videos. This may be shown again in the empirical survey which results in YouTube being exceedingly popular amount generation Z, almost exceeding Instagram. Generation Z is also known as the Facebook generation, which is significant due to the results stating a favor for Instagram as a platform. The results indicate that millennials are more active on Facebook instead.

Regarding engagement, the results show that, in general, generation Z is more active with advertisement and businesses with the only exception being Linked-In. Furthermore, engagement in businesses on Linked-In and Twitter, and engagement with advertisement on Instagram is lower with generation Z than millennials. Although these comparisons in engagement activity with Instagram and Facebook are barely indifferentiable.

5.2 Age Group of the Esports Target Market

According to the theory, research conducted by Hasan (2021) states that the age group of the esports target market lies between 18 to 34. The survey results data that may indicate the esports target marketing age range as 18 to 36, which again is a slight deviation from the theory.

Comparing both empirical research and theoretical research, the main age group may still lie between the ages of 18 to 34. The results from empirical research might have deviated more or less depending on the limitations of the research, such as age.

5.3 Content Preferences per Target Group

A goal of the empirical study was to identify content preferences within the esports target market as well as among millennials and generation Z. For millennials, the results show that their considerable interest lies in educational content, followed by entertaining content while they barely prefer promotional content. The results show that educational and entertaining content might best be used on YouTube and Instagram for millennials. Regarding inspirational and interactive content, this might better be in use on Instagram. Promotional content has barely any preferences per mentioned platforms while newsworthy content might be better used on Instagram, Linked-In and YouTube. What might be interesting here is that while Facebook is the third most used platform by millennials, they do barely prefer any of the mentioned content types on the platform.

Generation Z prefers mostly entertaining and educational content. Inspirational, connective, and newsworthy content also include a large share in the preferences. For generation Z the results show that entertaining content might be best consumed on YouTube, Instagram and TikTok. Educational content may be preferred on YouTube Instagram and Linked-In for this generation. Almost half of the generation Z respondents prefer inspirational content on Instagram. Interactive content is most preferred on Instagram and Facebook. Generation Z prefers the promotional content type on Instagram, while newsworthy content might be preferable on Instagram and YouTube.

Regarding the esports target market, this research discusses the findings that have been conducted solely through empirical research. The results show that esports enthusiast's single mostly watched esports content is published on YouTube. Second to YouTube is Instagram. This indicates

that YouTube is most important when bringing content to the esports target market. Esports enthusiasts prefer mostly entertaining content followed by educational content. It is noticeable that the generation Z age range of the esports target market has more various interest in different content types compared to the millennials who are interested in esports.

In conclusion, this thesis has covered topics such as marketing, generations and esports. Despite the decade old topic, generations have no clear consensus on age ranges nor on their specific behaviors. Esports is still creating a clear definition when it comes to academic writing due to its relatively recent booming scene. Marketing is a more thoroughly researched practice but is developing with the technological advancements of nowadays. To conduct content marketing targeting millennials, generation Z, and esports enthusiasts on social media, one must prepare their strategy and look at the target markets that fit their business. One can employ a range of channels and content types to achieve the goals of content marketing. Additionally, the findings and theory demonstrate what information can be applicable to a content marketing plan and provide a clear summary of the factors to consider when conducting this kind of marketing strategy.

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Appendices

Appendix A Invitation Letter to Questionnaire

(On Social Media)

This survey doesn't take long. In fact, I spend even longer brushing my teeth!

(Survey link at the bottom of the post)

For my Bachelor thesis, I am conducting research on social media content preferences among Millennials, Generation Z and the Esports market. The following survey is written in English and is made for people aged between 18 to 41 years old.

I am aiming to collect 200 answers, and I am almost there! Will you help me with the final answers?

Thanks in advance!

Link: <https://link.webpolsurveys.com/S/F36E1970010C4C03>

Appendix B Questionnaire Questions

(On the next pages)



The aim of this research is to measure preferences in social media content, to be interpreted into content marketing for Millennials, Generation Z, and the Esports Target Market.



Mandatory questions are marked with a star (*)

Important know-how:

- You are between 18-41 years old.
- It takes about a minute.
- The participation is anonymous.

Since the questionnaire is used for scientific analysis, it would be appreciated if all questions are answered honestly and completely. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me by e-mail at wesselsmeekes@kamk.fi.

Thanks in advance!

(P.S.: This survey contains credits to get free survey responses at SurveySwap.io & SurveyCicle.com)

2. Which of the following platforms are you actively using? *

You may choose multiple options.

- ☐ Facebook
- ☐ Instagram
- ☐ TikTok
- ☐ Linked-In
- ☐ YouTube
- ☐ Twitter
- ☐ None of the options above

15. Select the pictures of which content you like to consume. *

- ☐ - Educational Content
- ☐ - Inspirational Content
- ☐ - Interactive Content
- ☐ - Connective Content
- ☐ - Promotional Content
- ☐ - Newsworthy Content
- ☐ - Entertaining Content



Educational Content
(This type of content aims to educate consumers. Examples are: video tutorials, infographics, and market research).



Inspirational Content (The purpose of this content is to inspire its followers, which might include: quotations, astounding facts and trivia and triumphant experiences).



 disneychannel

**SOLVE THE EQUATION TO
FIND OUT HOW LONG DISNEY CHANNEL
HAS BEEN ON THE AIR FOR...**

 +  +  = 15

 -  = 3

 ×  = 24

( × ) -  = ?

♥ 💬 📧 📌

29,682 likes

disneychannel Can you solve this equation featuring some of your fave characters from #BigCityGreens,... more

View all 2,679 comments

Interactive Content
(This content invites the user to interact with the social media post, such as: polls, games and contests.)



Connective Content (This implies content which shows the human side of a brand, for example: behind the scenes footage or interviews).



therangeuk

WIN

A Tower Vortx Manual Air Fryer



Worth
£59.99



4,777 likes

therangeuk ✨ #GIVEAWAY TIME ✨ ... more

Promotional Content
(Content to promote
a business, for
example: webinars,
promotions, coupons
and discounts).



Newsworthy Content
(Imagine content
provided by
companies such as
BBC or CNN, who
have the recourses to
journalistically report
news).



Entertaining content
(Any form of content
to entertain you, for
example: puzzles,
memes, viral videos,
jokes and comics).

16. Which type of content do you watch on what platform? *

Please select 'None Applicable' if the platform in which you consume the content is not in the column.

None

1: Facebook 2: Instagram 3: TikTok 4: Linked-In 5: YouTube 6: Twitter 7: Applicable

The following page will include questions regarding esports. If you understand what esports is, you may continue to the next page.

If not, here is an explanation:

Esports (electronic sports) makes online gaming a spectator sport. It is similar to the experience of watching a professional sporting event, but viewers see video gamers compete against one another rather than a physical contest.

17. Do you have an interest in esports through either leisure or work? *

☐ Yes

☐ No

18. On which of the following platforms do you follow esports content?

☐ Facebook

☐ Instagram

☐ TikTok

☐ Linked-In

☐ YouTube

☐ Twitter

☐ None applicable

19. Please fill in the necessary fields which will provide crucial data to this research.

Age (Number only)

Gender (Male/Female/Other)

Country

The aim of this research is to measure preferences in content, to be interpreted into content marketing