

Czech University of Life Sciences Prague

Faculty of Economics and Management

Department of Languages



Bachelor Thesis

**The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Behavior:
A Study of Young Adults**

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BACHELOR THESIS ASSIGNMENT

Salih Demirkiran

Business Administration

Thesis title

The impact of social media on consumer behavior: A study of young adults

Objectives of thesis

The objective of the bachelor thesis is to evaluate the impact of social media on consumer behavior among young adults and identify innovative strategies to enhance online marketing effectiveness.

Methodology

The work consists of two parts – theoretical and practical. The theoretical part will be based on the study of secondary sources. The empirical part will be compiled on the basis of outputs from quantitative/qualitative research.

The proposed extent of the thesis

30 – 40 pages

Keywords

Social media, Consumer behavior, Online marketing, Digital advertising, Social media influencers, Social media platforms, Social media addiction, Social media marketing strategies, Social media advertising effectiveness, Online reviews

Recommended information sources

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Declaration

I declare that I have worked on my bachelor thesis titled "The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Behavior: A Study on Young Adults" by myself and I have used only the sources mentioned at the end of the thesis. As the author of the bachelor thesis, I declare that the thesis does not break any copyrights.

In Prague on the 15.03.2024

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The Impact of Social Media on Consumer Behavior: A study of Young Adults

Abstract

Social media has become a powerful tool for marketers and organizations to reach out to their target audience and influence their purchasing decisions. However, the impact of social media on consumer behavior, particularly among young adults, remains largely unknown. This study aims to dive deeper into the effects of the social media platforms, the relationship between social media usage and consumer behavior, and the implications of these findings for businesses and marketers. The research will focus on identifying the factors that influence consumer behavior on social media platforms and the relationships between these factors and consumers. The findings of this study will provide valuable insights into the types of content that resonate most with this demographic, allowing businesses to create compelling and engaging marketing campaigns. The results of this research will provide businesses with valuable insights and recommendations to achieve their marketing goals and gain a competitive edge in the digital marketplace.

Keywords: Social Media, Consumer Behavior, Online Marketing, Digital Advertising, Social Media Influencers, Social Media Platforms, Social Media Addiction, Social Media Marketing Strategies, Social Media Advertising Effectiveness, Online Reviews

Vliv sociálních médií na chování spotřebitelů: Studie mladých dospělých

Abstrakt

Sociální média se stala mocným nástrojem, který marketérům a organizacím umožňuje oslovit cílovou skupinu a ovlivnit její nákupní rozhodnutí. Vliv sociálních médií na chování spotřebitelů, zejména mladých dospělých, však zůstává z velké části neznámý. Cílem této studie je hlouběji proniknout do vlivu platformy sociálních médií, vztahu mezi jejich používáním a chováním spotřebitelů a důsledků těchto zjištění pro podniky a marketéry. Výzkum se zaměří na identifikaci faktorů, které ovlivňují chování spotřebitelů na platformách sociálních médií, a na vztahy mezi těmito faktory a spotřebiteli. Výsledky této studie poskytnou cenné poznatky o typech obsahu, které u této demografické skupiny nejvíce rezonují, což podnikům umožní vytvářet přesvědčivé a poutavé marketingové kampaně. Výsledky tohoto výzkumu poskytnou podnikům cenné poznatky a doporučení k dosažení jejich marketingových cílů a získání konkurenční výhody na digitálním trhu.

Klíčová slova: Sociální média, Chování spotřebitelů, Online marketing, Digitální reklama, Vlivné osoby na sociálních médiích, Platformy sociálních médií, Závislost na sociálních médiích, Marketingové strategie sociálních médií, Účinnost reklamy na sociálních médiích, Online recenze

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1 Introduction

In today's world, social media has completely changed how people engage with one another and with businesses. Social media platforms have become the main source of information and communication for individuals of all ages, particularly young adults, due to the widespread availability of the internet and smartphones.

Over the years, social media has become a powerful tool for marketers and organizations to reach out to their target audience and influence their purchasing decisions. However, the impact of social media on consumer behavior, particularly among young adults, remains largely unknown.

Therefore, this study aims to dive deeper into the effects of social media on consumer behavior among young adults in greater detail. The research will focus on identifying the factors that influence consumer behavior on social media platforms, the relationship between social media usage and consumer behavior, and the implications of these findings for businesses and marketers. By focusing on young adults, businesses can gain valuable insights from this study, which can help them develop effective social media marketing strategies, leading to increased sales and revenue.

Furthermore, understanding how social media influences consumer behavior can also help businesses in targeting their advertisements more effectively. By understanding the factors that drive consumer decision-making. Using social media, companies can tailor their ads to appeal to the specific preferences and interests of young adults. This study will provide valuable insights into the types of content that resonate most with this demographic, allowing businesses to create compelling and engaging marketing campaigns. Ultimately, by leveraging the findings of this research, businesses can maximize their return on investment in social media marketing and gain a competitive edge in the digital marketplace.

2 Objectives and Methodology

2.1 Objectives

The objective of the bachelor thesis is to evaluate the impact of social media on consumer behavior among young adults and identify innovative strategies to enhance online marketing effectiveness.

Even though social media has become a common tool for businesses to reach their customers and influence their purchasing decisions, there has been only a little research on the impact of social media on consumer behavior particularly in young adults. This lack of information is problematic for businesses and marketers who are trying to reach the right audience in the right way to improve their sales and revenues.

The research specifically focuses on young adults, who represent a significant portion of social media users. By going deeper into the behavior of this demographic, businesses can gain valuable insights that can help them develop customized and effective social media marketing strategies. These strategies can enable businesses to increase their sales and revenue and build lasting relationships with their customers.

The goal of this research is to determine the most effective social media marketing strategies that businesses can use to increase sales and revenue. The study answers the stated questions and explores different related topics to identify the best approaches for maximizing marketing efforts on social media platforms. The results of the study provide businesses with valuable insights and recommendations to achieve their marketing goals and gain a competitive edge.

2.2 Methodology

The work consists of two parts – theoretical and practical. The theoretical part is based on the study of secondary sources. The empirical part is compiled on the basis of outputs from quantitative and qualitative research. In the practical part, the focus is paid to understanding and creating strategies for leveraging social media to influence consumer behavior and reach out to customers.

In addition to that, the bachelor thesis methodology also consists of a series of interpersonal interviews with the customers and surveys, which eventually helps to identify if the suggested strategy brought any significant benefit to businesses and marketers to optimize their efforts.

Furthermore, the methodology of the bachelor thesis incorporates a comprehensive approach to gathering insights from both primary and secondary sources. Alongside the quantitative and qualitative research outputs, the empirical part involves conducting interpersonal interviews with customers and administering surveys. These interviews and surveys serve as invaluable tools for understanding consumer perspectives, preferences, and behaviors in relation to social media engagement and its influence on purchasing decisions. By gathering firsthand feedback from customers, the thesis aims to assess the effectiveness of the suggested strategies in real-world contexts and identify potential areas for optimization. This holistic methodology ensures a well-rounded analysis and provides actionable insights for businesses and marketers seeking to enhance their social media strategies and drive meaningful engagement with their target audience.

3 Literature Review

3.1 Definition of Social Media

Social media refers to a group of networked ICT tools or platforms that allow users to engage, interact, and share content in real-time. It includes several online communication channels such as social networks, blogs, forums, and content platforms (Norman, 2012). Social media enables simultaneous one-to-one and many-to-many communication, which is a shift from traditional one-to-many approaches in health communication. It provides a means to reach people all around the world and is facilitated by the widespread availability of mobile Internet-enabled devices (Nicodim, et al. 2012).

Social media has revolutionized content creation, enabling users to be active participants rather than passive consumers. It facilitates communication, interaction, and free access to information. Social media serves as a platform for sharing information, clarifying opinions, and collecting feedback to promote ideas, products, or services. Additionally, it plays a significant role in communication, socialization, and social development. However, it is essential to minimize the negative impacts and maximize the positive impacts of social media use (Sinha, 2022).

3.2 Types of Social Media Platforms

There are 7 different types of social media platforms:

- **Traditional social networking sites**

While many people think of Facebook as the first social media platform, it is not actually the first. However, it certainly revolutionized the way we interact on social media. The platform was started by a few friends, including Mark Zuckerberg, in a dorm room at Harvard (Fincher, 2010) It quickly became the biggest social media platform for a while, and Facebook has since acquired other popular platforms such as Instagram and WhatsApp.

LinkedIn is a social media platform that is still popular in 2023. It was created in 2002 as a networking site for career-minded professionals. With over 900 million users

worldwide, it remains the social media site of choice for job seekers and human resources managers searching for qualified candidates (Reynolds, 2023)

- **Image-based social media**

Image-based social media has emerged as a crucial aspect of modern lives, presenting numerous opportunities for individuals. Photography, as a result, has undergone a significant transformation, with models achieving celebrity status and securing lucrative brand deals for promoting products on their social media accounts. Payment is facilitated through the simple act of posting a few pictures, revolutionizing advertising as we know it.

Instagram has become a major platform for social media influencers. However, it's not just the influencers who post content on Instagram. People share various types of content on different platforms such as TikTok, Pinterest, and Snapchat. They also share content privately with friends on Snapchat.

- **Short-form video social media**

Short-form video content type is arguably the most popular type of content there is at the moment it increased its popularity during the Covid-19 Pandemic. With TikTok and shortly after Instagram created Instagram Reels and integrated it into their already successful and popular social media app Instagram, and YouTube did the same with YouTube shorts. However, it didn't start with TikTok in 2013 Vine was launched and it made it easy for content creators to upload short-form videos and engage with their audiences (Shore, 2023). People like Logan Paul, Jake Paul, Amanda Cerny, Shawn Mendes, etc. got their fame from Vine (Moreau, 2020).

- **Livestream social media**

Live streaming is a popular type of content creation where content creators stream live while playing games, mostly on Twitch. People watch live streams because of the interactive experience it offers. Viewers can interact with the creator by asking questions in the chat, and the creator can answer them live. Additionally, viewers can donate money to their favorite creators through a feature called donations. Instagram influencers also

occasionally go live to do "Get Ready With Me" segments or explain a situation live, instead of recording and posting a video. Many Twitch streamers also get sponsorships from brands and promote their products to their fans. Additionally, News channels are now using YouTube Live as an alternative to traditional satellite TV for broadcasting live events.

- **Discussion forums**

Discussion forums are frequently used in online learning and social media platforms. They serve as effective tools to encourage critical thinking, analytical reasoning, and active participation in discussions. These forums are particularly valuable in the context of online teaching, where offline class discussions are not possible (Shaikh, & Koppikar, 2023). They provide a platform for people to engage in lively discussions, debate, evaluate, and criticize each other's ideas. Furthermore, discussion forums on social media platforms, such as Facebook groups, are used by communities with common interests, like alumni groups, to share information and engage in discussions. These forums can be analyzed using sentiment analysis and topic modeling techniques to understand the polarity of discussions and the topics frequently discussed. Overall, discussion forums play a significant role in facilitating communication, learning, and community engagement on social media platforms (Adityani, et al. 2022)

Platforms such as Quora or Reddit are popular destinations for people who are looking for answers to their questions or seeking opinions from others. These platforms are often used by individuals who are considering buying a product or service and want to read reviews from those who have already purchased it.

- **Private community platforms**

Private community social media platforms, such as Facebook groups, are being used for various purposes. These platforms provide the ability to engage members or citizens in deeper conversations and develop relationships with other peer countries, turning them into closer friends and advocates. Additionally, Facebook groups are being used as a source of health information and support for specific conditions, such as melanoma (Kresnye et al. 2019). These groups allow patients to connect, exchange information, and receive support from others who are going through similar experiences. Overall, private community social

media platforms like Facebook groups offer opportunities for meaningful conversations, support, and identity exploration (Maganty et al. 2018).

There are various groups and forums available for people to join based on their interests, such as motorcycle or bicycle groups, or even electric unicycle groups. In these groups, people can share their thoughts on specific bikes or unicycles and discuss them. This helps them to gain a better understanding of what they are planning to buy by reading reviews and opinions of real people whom they can trust.

- **Decentralized Social Networks**

Decentralized social networks do not rely on a single authority but instead store content on users' devices. Privacy is a major concern, and different models have been evaluated to enforce content privacy for user groups. Join and leave operations vary in performance, and differential privacy techniques are used to protect sensitive social interactions (De Salve et al. 2023).

Here is some information about the most popular social media platforms available:

3.2.1 Facebook

Facebook is the largest social network worldwide, with 3.05 billion monthly users (Shewale, 2023). It has become an important part of the digital age, challenging companies like Google and Amazon with their unique vision of personal relationships and recommendations instead of search algorithms. Facebook is available in over 70 languages and users share their thoughts, comments, and photos daily. Even though it is primarily a social media, Facebook has evolved into an important business tool. It provides organizations with a low-cost platform for marketing and promoting their brand (Gershon, 2013).

Facebook Marketing

Businesses can use Facebook marketing to effectively promote their products and services. They can start by making use of Facebook's features like building information

strategies, designing promotions, and creating communities through groups and fan pages. Factors that can influence consumer behavior on Facebook include the quality and frequency of advertisements (Al Kurdi, & Alshurideh 2022). Facebook can be used as a digital marketing tool in online marketplaces, with strategies that include advertising, sales promotion, individual sales publication, and visually attractive product promotion (Carter, & Levy 2011).

Understanding the target market and setting up a Facebook page are important steps in using Facebook for marketing. Additionally, businesses can use Facebook to personalize their presence, engage visitors through images and media, and monitor real-time customer feedback. By following these strategies and best practices, businesses can effectively leverage Facebook for marketing purposes (Campbell, 2015)

3.2.2 Instagram

Instagram which is usually abbreviated as IG is a popular social media platform that allows users to share photos and videos with others (Silalahi, 2022). It was first released in 2010 and has since become widely used, particularly among young people and students (Sihombing, & Lestari 2022). Instagram offers various features such as photo editing, applying filters, and sharing content on other social networks. It also allows users to explore different destinations through the content posted by friends, influencers, and travel companies.

The platform has been used for marketing purposes, with businesses using it as a means of communication and advertising. Recent studies have shown that engaging with Instagram can have varying impacts on users' behavior and well-being, as the platform supports a wide range of experiences and users have agency in shaping their own Instagram experience (Ryan, & Linehan 2022).

3.2.3 TikTok

TikTok which was launched in 2016 is a social media platform that allows users to share short videos accompanied by music. It has gained popularity among young adults and

teenagers, with over 1 billion monthly active users in 2023 (Woodward 2023). TikTok has become a digital marketing communication medium, with content creators utilizing it to promote products and build connections with their followers. It is also used as a personal branding tool, helping individuals establish their brand identity and fulfill the main concepts of personal branding (Ramadhani, et al. 2023).

TikTok influences consumer impulse purchase behavior, with factors like visual appeal and product feasibility positively affecting perceived enjoyment and usefulness, leading to impulsive buying behavior. Overall, TikTok has emerged as a popular social media platform with various applications in digital marketing, personal branding, lifestyle expression, and consumer behavior (*Д. Е. Капанова, 2023).

3.2.4 YouTube

YouTube is a highly popular social media application that serves as a platform for sharing and viewing a diverse range of videos. This website allows users to upload and access videos created by content creators. With its extensive collection of content, YouTube stands as the largest and most widely used video platform on the internet. Additionally, YouTube has been acknowledged as a valuable online learning resource (Adelhardt, 2022).

3.3 Evolution of social media

Social media has evolved over time, starting from basic means of exchanging information to becoming more sophisticated in terms of technology and capability to influence customers. Initially, social media platforms competed with each other directly and marketed to the general population, supporting the functional equivalence theory of media evolution (McIntyre 2014). However, around the turn of the century, social networks shifted their focus to competing for audience time and attention, targeting niche populations (Dhingra, Mudgal 2019). The rise of social media has enabled billions of users to connect with each other, not just on platforms like Facebook and Twitter, but also on media-sharing platforms like Instagram and Pinterest (Penni 2015).

This has led to the creation of new words and changes in language, with different demographic groups often "speaking different languages" and assigning different meanings to the same words (Zanzotto, & Pennacchiotti 2012). The evolution of social media has also

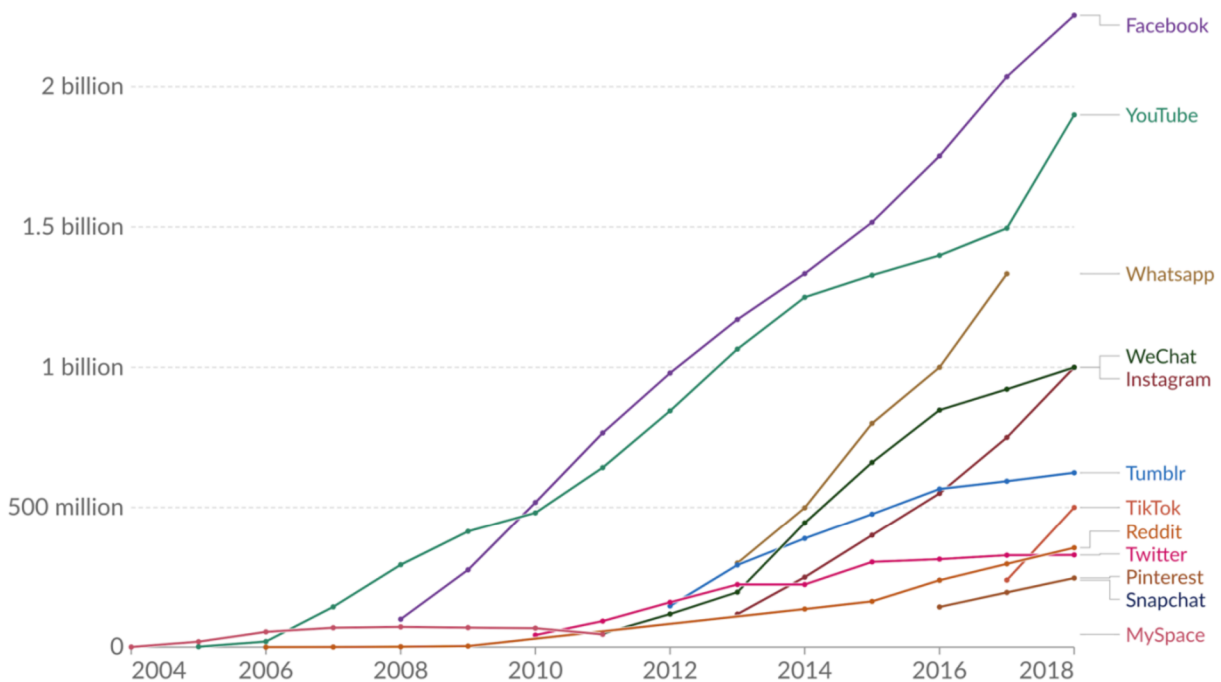
had a significant impact on consumer behavior, with users now able to create and share their own content, leading to a more interactive source of information for industries like tourism.

We can observe the change in the number of users on popular social media platforms over time. Despite not being the first to be released, Facebook became the most widely used social media platform in 2010 and still holds that position. YouTube, on the other hand, is the most popular video-sharing platform and has given rise to many influencers who earn their income from ad revenues. These social media apps are free to use because of the ads that are displayed on the platform. Businesses that want to increase their brand awareness and connect with their customers advertise on these platforms. Some platforms, like YouTube, also pay their influencers so that they can create better content and attract more users to their platforms.

WhatsApp is a widely used messaging platform that is owned by Facebook. Unlike other social media apps, WhatsApp does not display ads within the app. You may wonder how they generate revenue. The company earns money by allowing businesses to use their platform to reach out to customers and send them messages. They charge a fee to businesses for using their API and based on the number of messages sent (Willis, 2022).

Number of people using social media platforms, 2004 to 2018

Estimates correspond to monthly active users (MAUs). Facebook, for example, measures MAUs as users that have logged in during the past 30 days. See source for more details.



Source: Statista and TNW (2019)

OurWorldInData.org/internet • CC BY

Figure 1 Number of People Using Different Social Media Platforms Over Time

Source: Statista and TNW, from OurWorldInData.org (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019)

3.4 Impact of social media on consumer behavior

- **Consumer Decision-Making Process:**

Social media plays a significant role in consumers' decision-making process. It has exerted an impact on the shopping experiences of consumers, their emotional connections, as well as their interaction with brands. Marketers have increasingly embraced social media as a means of connecting with consumers and gaining insights into their behavior and preferences (Nungari, & Obuba 2023). Moreover, it has afforded customers greater exposure to products and services, thereby influencing their decision-making through social proof and personalization.

Research indicates that the utilization of social media has a positive impact on consumers' shopping decisions and overall satisfaction during the entire purchasing cycle (I

A, & G M 2023). Marketers must thoroughly understand the extent and influence of social media in shaping customer behavior and preferences to devise effective social media marketing strategies. In summary, social media has emerged as a crucial tool for businesses to engage with customers, increase visibility, and shape consumer behavior and preferences (Dhingra, 2023).

- **Influence of Social Media Content:**

Social media content has a significant influence on consumer behavior. It gives them access to information, reviews, and content that helps them make informed purchase decisions. When people share things on social media, it helps others feel better about buying those things too (Navaneeth, 2023). Social media platforms have become an important part of people's daily lives and highly influence the way consumers interact with brands and make purchasing decisions (Li, 2023).

Social media exposure to products and services influences consumer decision-making through social proof and personalization based on their interests and preferences (Dhingra, 2023). Social media marketing strategies can boost visibility, engage with customers, and shape consumer behavior and preferences (Chauhan, 2023). Effective online advertising strategies on social media are essential for increasing consumer engagement and capitalizing on the changing landscape of marketing. Social media marketing has revolutionized modern marketing practices and heavily influences consumer buying behavior, especially for small and medium-sized businesses (Disha N. A. et al. 2023)

- **Social Media Advertising Effectiveness:**

Social media advertising has a significant impact on consumer behavior. It is transforming the conventional approaches to marketing and promoting goods and services. Social media platforms have become an essential component of individuals' everyday lives and profoundly impact how consumers engage with brands and make purchasing choices (Chauhan, 2023). Social media utilization contributes to greater exposure to products and services, influencing consumer decision-making through social proof and personalization (Dhingra, 2023b).

Furthermore, the practice of influencer marketing via social media has gained popularity as a means of endorsing products (Sharma, & Ashfaq 2023). Social media facilitates more personalized and targeted advertising by considering user behavior and preferences. Advertising, encompassing digital and social media advertising, has a considerable effect on consumer attitudes and intentions to purchase. Nevertheless, there exist challenges such as measuring the effectiveness of campaigns and ensuring transparency in disclosing sponsored content. Overall, social media advertising proves to be effective in shaping consumer behavior and necessitates strategies that prioritize consumer engagement and transparency (Rupam, 2022).

- **Social Media Engagement and Brand Loyalty:**

Social media engagement plays a significant role in boosting customer engagement and brand loyalty. Luxury fashion brands use social media to connect with customers and create a strong bond with them (Nair, 2023). The perceived marketing activities of luxury fashion brands on social media have a positive and significant impact on brand loyalty. In the higher education marketing context, social media engagement dimensions such as social interaction, sharing of information, surveillance, and information quantity positively influence relationship quality, brand image, and brand loyalty (Gholamveisy et al. 2023). Online brand communities (OBCs) also play a significant role in driving online customer engagement (OCE) and brand loyalty, with website satisfaction being a key factor. Overall, social media engagement has a positive impact on brand loyalty, with various factors such as brand love, brand trust, product quality, customer service, content aesthetic quality, entertainment, and website satisfaction influencing the relationship. (Gupta et al. 2023)

4 Practical Part

This part of the bachelor thesis consists of a search that deals with the practical use of Social media And its effect on consumers. To provide readers with clear information, this part is divided into three parts which are: the aim of the survey, the used method, and the results of the survey.

4.1 Aim of the Survey

This chapter aims to explore the practical implications of social media's effect on consumer behavior. This section seeks to provide transparent insights into how social media influences consumer actions and decisions in various contexts. My personal view in this survey before knowing the results is that most of young adults are influenced and controlled by what they see online and it influences them into making some purchasing decisions. The aim of this survey is to understand how consumers themselves think they are affected by social media.

To be able to conduct research, it was necessary to formulate questions to answer. Here are the research questions:

- How do visual media (such as images and videos) compare to written content in terms of influencing consumer behavior?
- Are there certain types of social media content that are more trusted than others?
- Are certain types of social media content more effective at persuading young adults to make a purchase?
- To what extent do young adults trust the information they receive on social media when making purchasing decisions?
- What social media platforms are most popular among young adults, and how can businesses effectively reach them on those platforms?

4.2 Methodology of the Survey

As the method to get results for this hypothesis, I used a survey to gather information from people to see what they think. I decided to use Google Forms for the survey and the survey started in January 2024 and lasted till February 2024. The questions were mostly yes/no or Always – Never multiple-choice questions. The sample was 45 people.

4.3 Results of the Survey

Results are shown in the form of graphs and charts and every question of the questionnaire is described and commented on, in total **50** People answered.

4.3.1 Questions 1, 2, and 3

Questions

- 1) Age
- 2) Gender
- 3) Occupation

These questions were asked to group the people into categories so that we can compare different groups of people and how they think social media is affecting them on their purchasing decisions.

Age:

The thesis is mainly focused on young adults so 64% of the participants in the survey were aged between 18-21, 18% were aged between 22-28 and the rest 18% were 28+ years old.

Gender:

Out of 50 people, there were more men than women participants. There were 31 male participants which equates to 62% and there were 19 female participants which is 38%.

Occupation:

This thesis aims to focus on young adults and most participants were aged between 18-21 and because of that majority were students with 78% of the participants. Following that were employees at 14% and Freelancers at 6% the rest 2% were neither employed nor studying.

4.3.2 Questions 4 and 5:

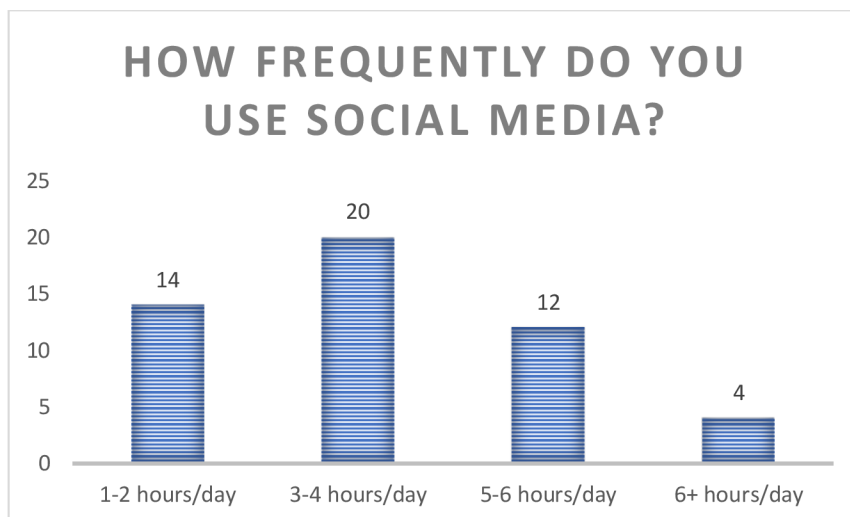
Questions

- 4) How frequently do you use social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat)?
- 5) What is the primary purpose of your social media usage?

These questions help us understand our participants and how they use and view social media. Helping us understand the way they act so that marketers can use it to implement new techniques in their business.

How frequently do you use social media platforms?

Graph 1 how frequently do you use social media?



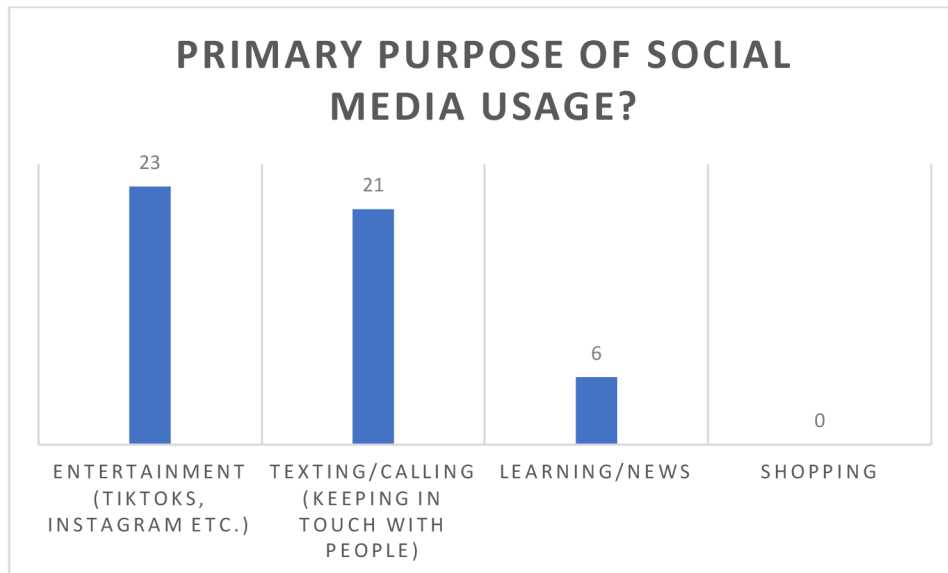
Source: own processing (2024)

It can be seen from the graph that most people use social media platforms 3-4 hours a day which is very close to the average time adults spend on social media which is on

average 2,5 hours a day (Marium, AJLabs 2023). followed by 1-2 hours a day, and 5-6 hours a day and the least were 6+ hours a day.

What is the primary purpose of your social media usage?

Graph 2 Primary purpose of social media usage.



Source: own processing (2024)

Here it can be observed that people don't use social media solely for shopping purposes out of 50 participants none of them answered that their primary purpose of using social media is shopping.

However, it can be seen that most people are either using it for entertainment and many of them for testing and calling. This opens a good way for marketers to advertise their products on social media platforms.

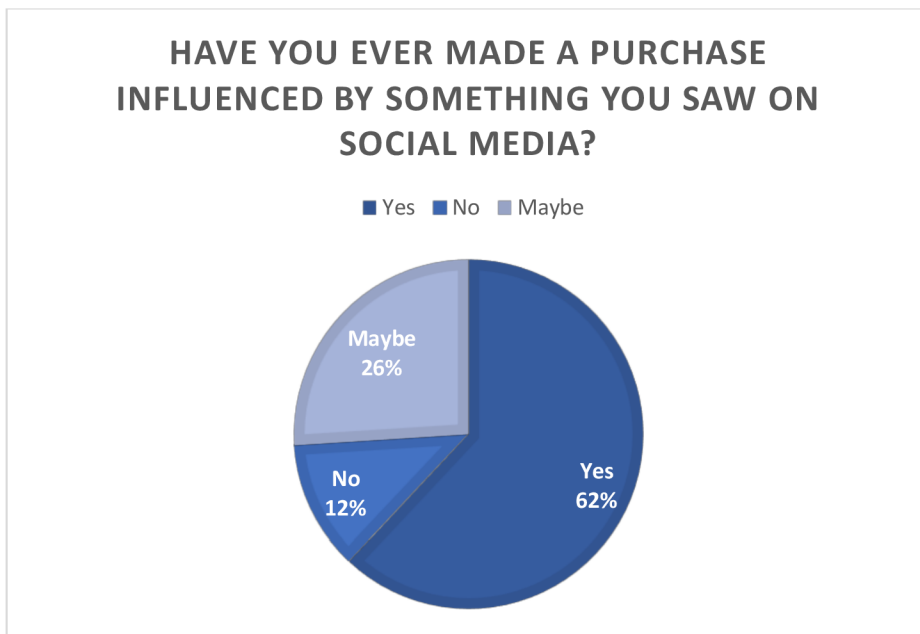
4.3.3 Questions 6 and 7

Questions

- 6) Have you ever made a purchase influenced by something you saw on social media?
- 7) Do you follow any brands or companies on social media?

These 2 questions delve deeper into what people have done and do on a daily basis on social media, because of social media and social media marketers.

Have you ever made a purchase influenced by something you saw on social media?



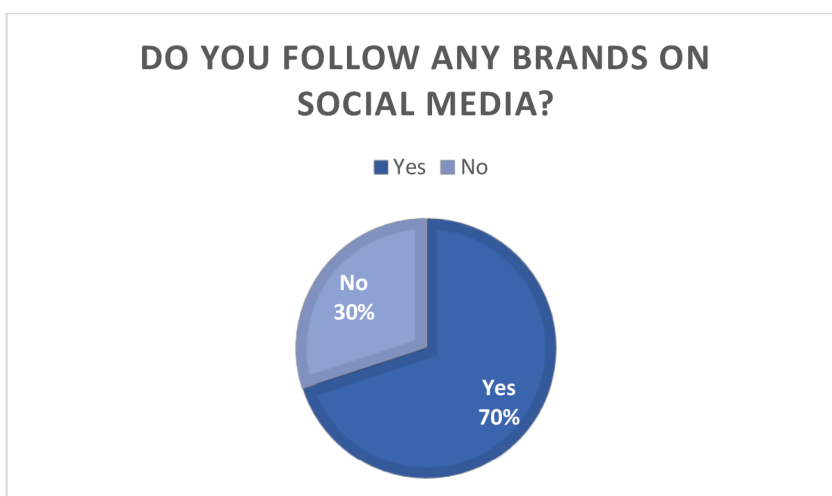
Source: own processing (2024)

Graph 3 Have you ever made a purchase influenced by something you saw on social media?

The pie chart shows that the majority of people who attended the survey have been influenced to buy a product after they saw it on social media.

62% said that they have bought and 26 said maybe and only 12% said no which shows that young adults are mostly buying products influenced by social media

Do you follow any brands or companies on social media?



Source: own processing (2024)

Graph 4 Do you follow any brands on social media

this pie chart supports the idea that marketing through social media can be very effective for marketing their product. 70% of people follow brands or companies online, therefore if content is persuasive people are more likely to follow and see more of companies products when going to social media (mostly 3-4 hours a day).

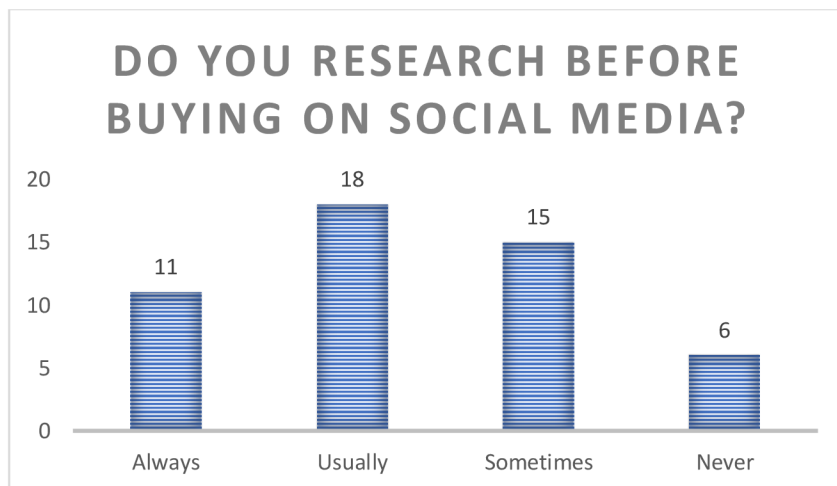
4.3.4 Questions 8 and 9

Question

How likely are you to research a product or service on social media before making a purchase decision?

Do you feel that social media has influenced your purchasing decisions more positively or negatively?

How likely are you to research a product or service on social media before making a purchase decision?

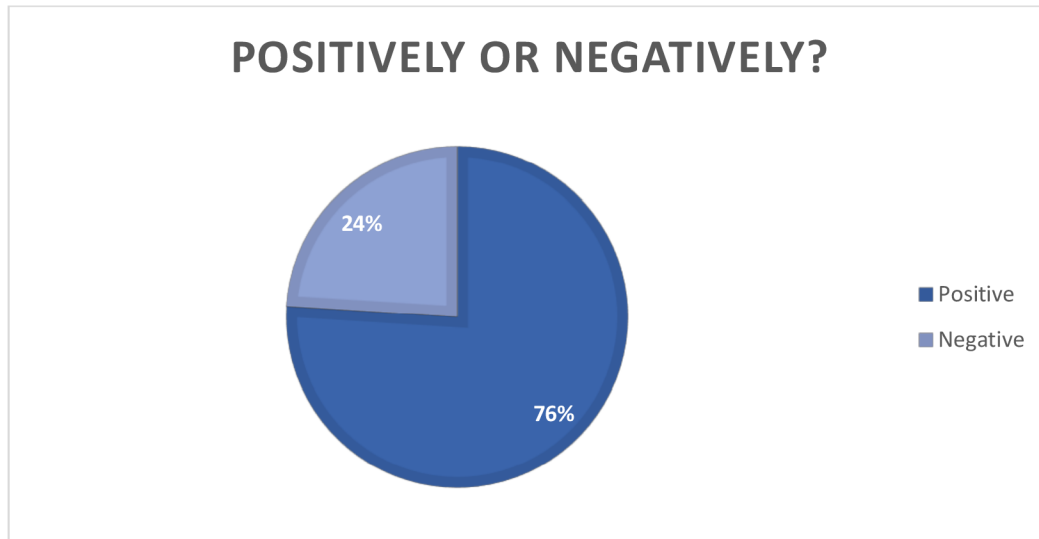


Source: own processing (2024)

Graph 5 Do you Research Before buying on social media?

Most people usually check the product they want to buy, however, there are 6 people who never check and 15 only sometimes. The chart depicts that before buying a product the customer would want to check for example the quality of the product, and if the company has a prominent presence on social media, it can positively benefit the company.

Do you feel that social media has influenced your purchasing decisions more positively or negatively?



Source: own processing (2024)

Graph 6 Do you feel that social media has influenced your purchasing decisions more positively or negatively?

The Pie Chart shows that more people say they have been influenced positively by social media, therefore they support the idea that social media benefited them in making the purchase. People have more access to reviews and other ways of analyzing the product, therefore getting the products that they really want. On the other hand, people are negatively influenced when they see too many appealing products and purchase them, which causes long-term unnecessary spending of money.

4.3.5 Questions 10 and 11

Questions

- 8) How often do you compare products or services on social media before making a purchase?
- 9) Do you believe that social media platforms accurately represent the products or services they advertise?

How often do you compare products or services on social media before making a purchase?

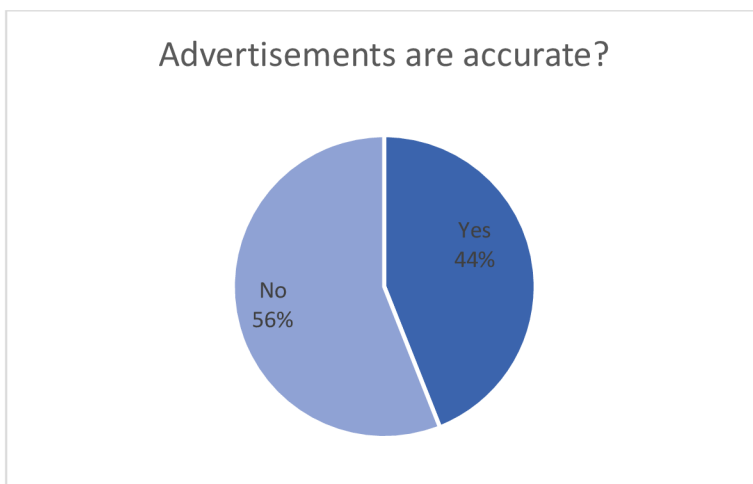


Source: own processing (2024)

Graph 7 How often do you compare products or services on social media before making a purchase?

In this graph, we can see that most people answered sometimes which is middle however if we compare rarely and never versus always and often we can clearly see that always and often are chosen more which means people are likely to compare the products before buying so having clear specs online and more information could help advertisers and businesses to win over their competitors.

Do you believe that social media platforms accurately represent the products or services they advertise?



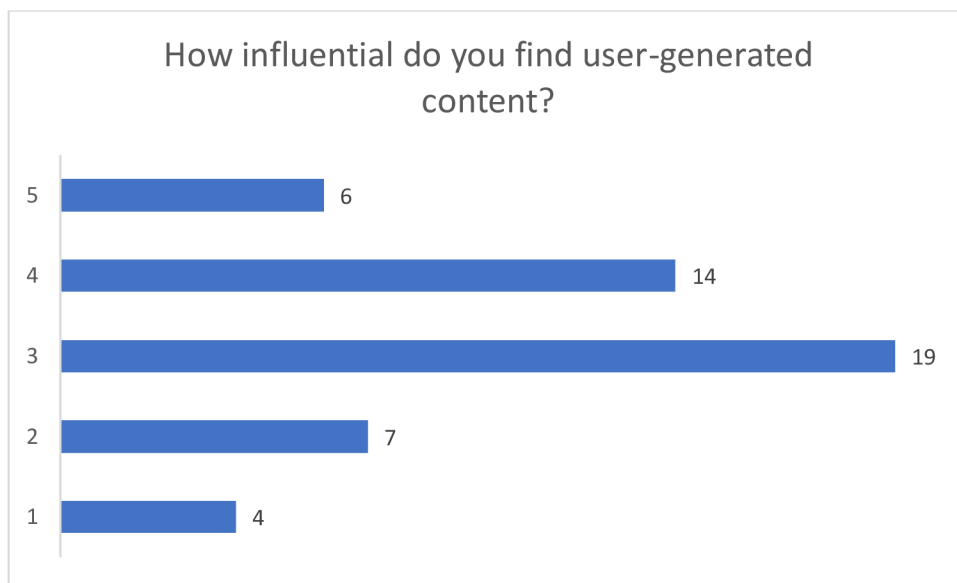
Source: own processing (2024)

Graph 8 Do you believe that social media platforms accurately represent the products or services they advertise?

56% of responders believe Social media platforms inaccurately represent advertised products, according to the survey. And 44% think it does. That means most people think it's not accurate which means it might be hard for people to believe what they see online.

4.3.6 Question 12

How influential do you find user-generated content (e.g., reviews, testimonials) on social media when making purchasing decisions?



Source: own processing (2024)

Graph 9 How influential do you find user-generated content?

We can see from the graph that more people say that it is influential than not when people follow someone and that person uses that product and promotes it it is a very influential way to get people to make a purchase through social media.

4.4 Findings of the Survey

This chapter of the thesis aims to explore the findings of the survey and understand the relationship between how people act and their purchasing behaviors,

4.4.1 Relationship between Social Media Usage and Purchase decision

Table 1 Relationship between social media usage and purchase decision

	Yes	No	Maybe		Yes	No	Maybe
1-2 hours/day	6	3	6		40,0 %	20,0 %	40,0 %
3-4 hours/day	14	2	4		70,0 %	10,0 %	20,0 %
5-6 hours/day	7	2	3		58,3 %	16,7 %	25,0 %
6+ hours/day	4	0	0		100,0 %	0,0 %	0,0 %

Source: own processing (2024)

The data on the left side of the table shows the survey results and their frequency. The percentages on the right side show the proportion of each purchase decision within each level of social media usage.

As social media usage increases the percentage of Yes responses generally increases. This trend can be observed from the table where only 40% of the people who use social media 1-2 hours a day have said Yes that number becomes 70% for 3-4 Hours, 58% for 5-6 Hours, and 100% for 6+ hours.

There's a rising trend in the number of Yes responses with increased social media usage, but the distribution of No and Maybe responses varies. Individuals who use social media for 3-4 hours a day said No only 10% of the time. However, those who spend 5-6 hours a day on social media said No 16% of the time. Although the difference is not significant, it raises the question of whether higher social media usage guarantees a purchase through social media.

Overall, while there is a relationship between social media usage and purchase decision the relationship is not straightforward and may be influenced by different factors other than just the amount of time spent on social media. Further analysis, such as statistical testing or exploring additional variables, could provide more insights into the nature of this relationship.

4.4.2 Relationship between Following brands and Purchase Decision

Table 2 Relationship between Following brands on social media and Purchase Decision

Follow Brands? / Made Purchase?	No	Yes	Maybe		No	Yes	Maybe
No	3	6	6		20,0%	40,0%	40,0%
Yes	3	25	7		8,6%	71,4%	20,0%

Source: own processing (2024)

The data on the left side of the table shows the survey results and their frequency. The percentages on the right side show the proportion of each purchase decision depending on whether individuals follow brand accounts on social media.

It can be observed from these results that whether individuals follow brands on social media or not is an important factor in their decision when making a purchase. We can observe this in the graph, Individuals who follow brands on social media said they have made a purchase through social media 71,4% of the time compared to individuals who don't follow 40% of the time. When we look at the answers for not purchasing anything from social media we can see another big difference, people who don't follow any brands on social media said they haven't purchased anything online 20% of the time. People who follow brands only said 8,6% of the time.

We can clearly see the relationship between the two factors, and we can use this knowledge and find ways to use it to our advantage by being more active and present on social media.

5 Results and Discussion

5.1 Analyzing Social Media's Impact on Consumer Behavior

5.1.1 How do visual media (such as images and videos) compare to written content in terms of influencing consumer behaviour?

The survey results suggest that social media content, particularly visual media like images and videos, plays a significant role in influencing consumer behaviour. While the survey primarily used written questions, the responses indicate a strong reliance on social media for purchasing decisions. Visual media, such as images showcasing products or videos demonstrating their use, likely contribute to this influence by providing engaging and persuasive content that resonates with consumers.

5.1.2 Are there certain types of social media content that are more trusted than others?

According to the survey findings, user-generated content, such as reviews and testimonials, appears to be highly influential and trusted by respondents when making purchasing decisions. This indicates that content created by peers or influencers on social media carries significant weight in shaping consumer perceptions and preferences. Additionally, content that focuses on entertainment and personal connections seems to be more trusted, as evidenced by the primary purposes of social media usage reported by participants.

5.1.3 Are certain types of social media content more effective at persuading young adults to make a purchase?

The survey results suggest that social media content showcasing user-generated content, such as reviews and testimonials, is particularly effective at persuading young adults to make a purchase. Additionally, content that focuses on entertainment and personal connections, rather than direct advertising or sales pitches, appears to resonate more with this demographic. This aligns with the preferences and behaviors observed among the survey participants, who primarily use social media for entertainment and communication purposes.

5.1.4 To what extent do young adults trust the information they receive on social media when making purchasing decisions?

The survey findings suggest that young adults generally exhibit a degree of skepticism regarding the reliability of information received on social media when making purchasing decisions. A majority of respondents believe that social media platforms inaccurately represent advertised products or services, indicating a lack of trust in the information presented. Despite the prevalence of user-generated content such as reviews and testimonials, which are typically influential, there remains a notable level of distrust among young adults regarding the accuracy and authenticity of information encountered on social media platforms. This skepticism underscores the importance for businesses to prioritize transparency and credibility in their social media marketing efforts to effectively engage and build trust with this demographic.

5.1.5 What social media platforms are most popular among young adults, and how can businesses effectively reach them on those platforms?

The most popular social media platforms among young adults in the United States include Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter. The study surveyed a nationally representative sample of young adults aged 19 to 32 years old and found that these platforms were widely used for social interaction, content sharing, and information consumption. (Primack et al. 2017)

5.2 Strategies for Engaging Young Adults on Social Media Platforms

In order to effectively reach young adults on popular social media platforms, businesses can deploy a multifaceted approach tailored to the preferences and behaviours of this demographic.

To effectively reach young adults, it is crucial for businesses to take advantage of the targeted advertising features offered by social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram. These tools allow companies to tailor their ads to specific demographic groups based on

factors such as age, interests, and behaviours. By focusing on the characteristics that are most relevant to young adults, businesses can ensure that their marketing efforts resonate with their intended audience, resulting in a more impactful campaign.

Beside that, it is important to create visually appealing content as it will draw attention from the young adults who are more likely to engage with visually rich materials. Therefore, including videos, images and interactive posts in marketing campaigns can differentiate businesses from other social media feeds and leave a mark on the minds of young adults.

Also, influencer marketing can be used by companies to target this group. For instance, businesses may collaborate with famous influencers or micro-influencers who have many young adult followers. This will enable their advertising campaigns to become more trustworthy and can help them form meaningful relationships with their desired customers.

Finally, every business should implement social media listening tools if they want to keep up with the changing preferences and attitudes of young people. Such insights on customer trends can be found through checking out conversations, trends and feedback across different platforms online. These strategies will ensure that a company's market plans are relevant and its messages are not forgotten over time

In essence, by combining targeted advertising, visually appealing content creation, influencer partnerships, and social media listening, businesses can effectively navigate the dynamic landscape of social media and forge meaningful connections with young adult consumers.

6 Conclusion

The survey results have shown that for consumer behavior and purchase decisions to be influenced social media is critical. For businesses, this indicates the significance of engaging consumers strategically on social media platforms. Taking advantage of social media advertising, it can start by investing in personalization and transparency in its marketing initiatives.

Furthermore, organizations who are able to understand the preferences and behaviors of their target audience on social media will be better placed to align their marketing efforts accordingly thus triggering brand interaction while increasing sales volume in return. In today's digital age, companies that prioritize having a presence and engaging through various social media channels have an added advantage over others as far as creating long-term relationships with clients is concerned.

Social media engagement in business is as fundamental as it gets in the dynamic world of marketing. The survey findings indicate that social media is a major influence on consumer behavior and purchasing options. It's not just about being present on these platforms, but it also involves interacting with prospective customers in a way that encourages brand loyalty and drives sales figures higher. Brands can start these relationships by customizing their marketing campaigns and establishing open dialogues with consumers to create trust and repeat purchase behavior.

In essence, the power of social media goes far beyond brand awareness given that it allows direct contact with the customers thereby creating real-time feedback as well as giving priceless market insights. This comprehensive data enables companies to perfect their range, adapt to marketing strategies, and be perpetually ahead of their rivals. Furthermore, social media is an affordable advertising medium facilitating focused advertising aimed at optimizing campaign performance through detailed analytics thus enhancing return on investment (ROI). In short, in today's digital age, businesses that prioritize social media engagement not only increase their brand's visibility and reach but also strengthen their competitive advantage.

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8 List of pictures, tables, graphs, and abbreviations

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8.2 List of tables

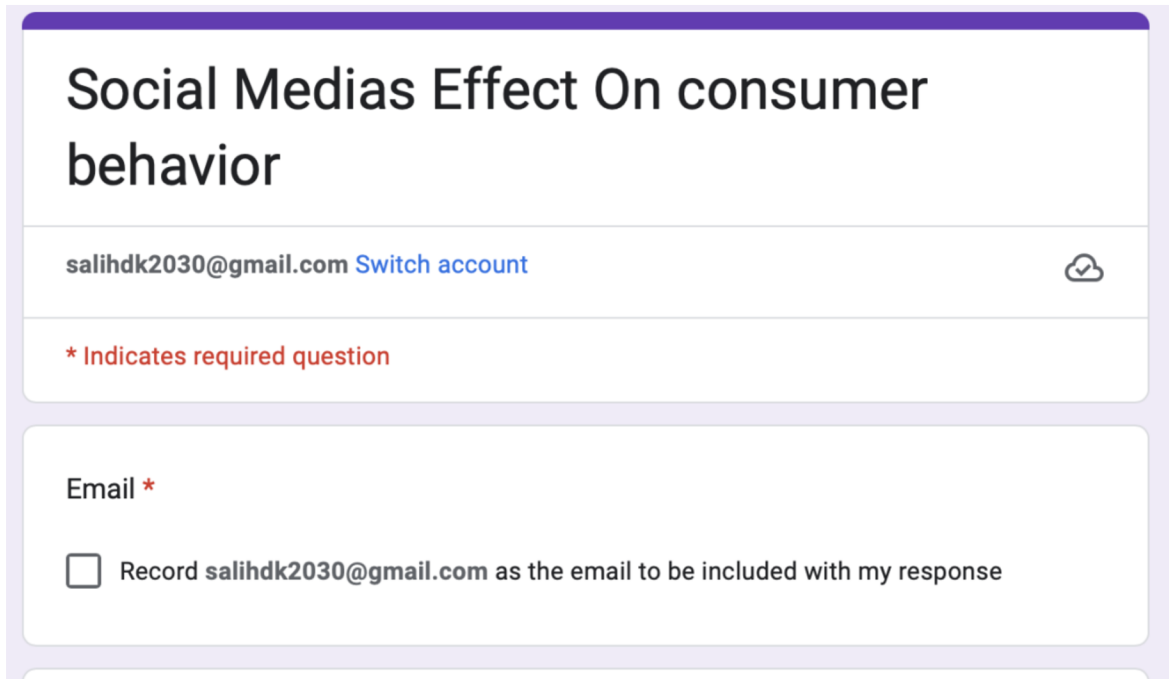
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9 Appendix

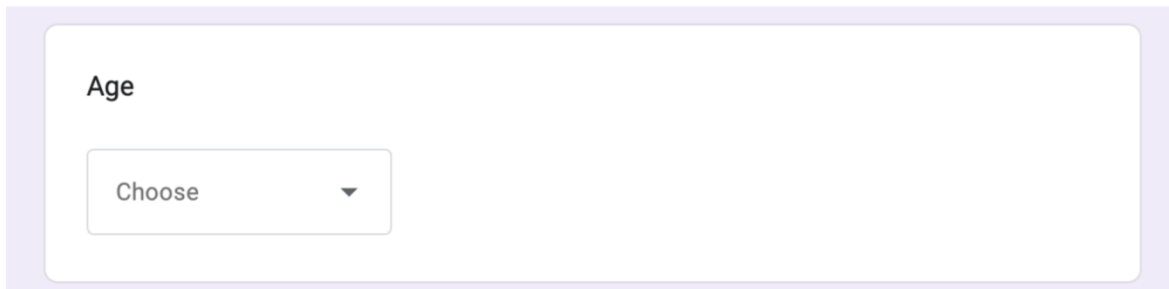
Collecting information and opening of the survey.



The screenshot shows a survey form with a purple header. The title is "Social Medias Effect On consumer behavior". Below the title, the email "salihdk2030@gmail.com" is displayed with a "Switch account" link and a cloud icon. A red asterisk indicates a required question. The question is "Email *". Below the question, there is a checkbox labeled "Record salihdk2030@gmail.com as the email to be included with my response".

Source: Own processing 2024

Question 1: Age



The screenshot shows a survey question titled "Age". Below the title, there is a dropdown menu with the text "Choose" and a downward arrow.

Source: Own processing 2024

Question 2: Gender

Gender

Male

Female

Source: Own processing 2024

Question 3: Occupation

Occupation

Student

Employee

Freelancing

Other: _____

Source: Own processing 2024

Question 4: How frequently do you use social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat)?

How frequently do you use social media platforms (e.g., Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat)?

1-2 hours/day

3-4 hours/day

5-6 hours/day

6+ hours/day

Source: Own processing 2024

Question 5: What is the primary purpose of your social media usage?

What is the primary purpose of your social media usage?

- Texting/Calling (keeping in touch with people)
- Entertainment (Tiktoks, Instagram etc.)
- Shopping
- Learning/News

Source: Own processing 2024

Question 6: Have you ever made a purchase influenced by something you saw on social media?

Have you ever made a purchase influenced by something you saw on social media?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe

Source: Own processing 2024

Question 7: Do you follow any brands or companies on social media?

Do you follow any brands or companies on social media?

- Yes
- No

Source: Own processing 2024

Question 8: How likely are you to research a product or service on social media before making a purchase decision?

How likely are you to research a product or service on social media before making a purchase decision?

- Sometimes
- Never
- Usually
- Always

Source: Own processing 2024

Question 9: Do you feel that social media has influenced your purchasing decisions more positively or negatively?

Do you feel that social media has influenced your purchasing decisions more positively or negatively?

- Positive
- Negative

Source: Own processing 2024

Question 10: How often do you compare products or services on social media before making a purchase?

How often do you compare products or services on social media before making a purchase?

- Sometimes
- Always
- Often
- Rarely
- Never

Source: Own processing 2024

Question 11: Do you believe that social media platforms accurately represent the products or services they advertise?

Do you believe that social media platforms accurately represent the products or services they advertise?

- Yes
- No

Source: Own processing 2024

Question 12: How influential do you find user-generated content (e.g., reviews, testimonials) on social media when making purchasing decisions?

How influential do you find user-generated content (e.g., reviews, testimonials) on social media when making purchasing decisions?

1 2 3 4 5

Source: Own processing 2024

Question 13: Do you think social media has changed the way you perceive brands and products compared to traditional advertising channels?

Do you think social media has changed the way you perceive brands and products compared to traditional advertising channels?

Yes

No

Send me a copy of my responses.

[Clear form](#)

Source: Own processing 2024