

## Social Media Engagement: An Analysis of Platform Success and Interactive Strategies with Consumers

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### KEYWORDS

*Social Media Dynamics, Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, Customer Behaviour, Content, Personalization, Interactivity, Digital Marketing.*

### ABSTRACT

**Aim:**The main purpose of this paper is to examine the use of social media on the leading social media platforms and to investigate the role of age in the choice of media and patterns of interaction. Some of the main factors that contribute to user engagement that the study aims to determine include the quality of the content, personalization, and interactivity..

**Methodology:**The study uses quantitative approach with the use of primary data gathered by means of a structured questionnaire. There were 105 valid responses of five age groups. To test the relationships in demographic variables and preferences to the platform, SPSS and Excel were used to perform statistical analysis, including descriptive analysis, correlation analysis, and chi-square test.

**Results:**The results have shown that there is significant correlation between age and preference of social media platform ( $p < 0.05$ ). Instagram was the most popular with the younger users (1625 years old) and YouTube was more popular among users between 2135 years. Facebook was also shown to have relatively less preference in most groups. Also, the quality of the content, personalization, and interactivity were also found to be strongly positively related to user engagement.

**Implications:**The paper offers valuable advice to marketers, content creators, and managers of digital platforms because of the need to focus on platform strategies. The ability to adjust the content according to demographic factors and increase interaction should help to boost the user engagement and retention rates.

**Originality/Value:**The study is relevant to the current body of literature in that it combines the demographic analysis with platform-specific elements of engagement to provide a more in-depth insight into the role of age in social media behavior and engagement patterns.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The blistering development of digital technologies has changed the manner in which people produce, distribute, and consume information, and social media networks have become the focal points of communication, interaction, and the distribution of content. Social media is no longer about interpersonal communication, but has become a dynamic ecosystem where individuals, organizations, and brands are involved in creating content and interacting with audiences (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). The success of such platforms is greatly determined by their capacity to attract the attention of the users, create engagement and maintain the long-term interaction with the platform by providing pertinent and quality materials.

Social media content is dynamic and subjective in nature, it can take any form, have a purpose, and be more or less appealing to the audience. It can be developed either by individuals, communities or organization as a way of increasing visibility, developing networks and nurturing brand recognition. According to the previous studies, quality, entertaining, and value-driven content can greatly enhance user engagement and reach (Ashley and Tuten, 2015). Moreover, the emergence of influencer marketing has also shown that the content creators with more significant follower counts have higher chances of receiving brand partnerships and monetization opportunities, which validates the commercial value of social media interaction (De Veirman et al., 2017).

The level of user interaction on the social media networks is affected by the nature of content that they prefer and this

differs among the demographic segments of the population especially age groups. Various forms of content, including entertainment, education, lifestyle, and informational media, attract different classes of audience depending on their interests and drive (Barger et al., 2016). Despite the fact that the content is spread to several different digital sources, such as websites, mobile applications, and online news, because of their global popularity and impact on shaping digital consumer behavior, this research will specifically discuss the significant social media platforms, namely, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and Twitter (now X).

One of the oldest and most popular social networking sites, which should be mentioned, is Facebook, which was launched in 2004 and is aimed at providing virtual connectivity, content sharing, and communication between people. Gradually, it has developed into a holistic digital ecosystem where users can create profiles, become members of communities, and communicate by using different types of content. Although it has a global presence, recent trends indicate a slow drop in the activity of younger users, which indicates a change in the platform preferences (Statista, 2024).

Instagram is a social media platform, which focuses on photo and video sharing and is owned by Meta Platforms. It allows users to filter, use hashtags and location tags to improve content and make it more discoverable and engaging. The visual storytelling and short video content, especially with the Reels function, have made the platform popular among younger users and creators (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017).

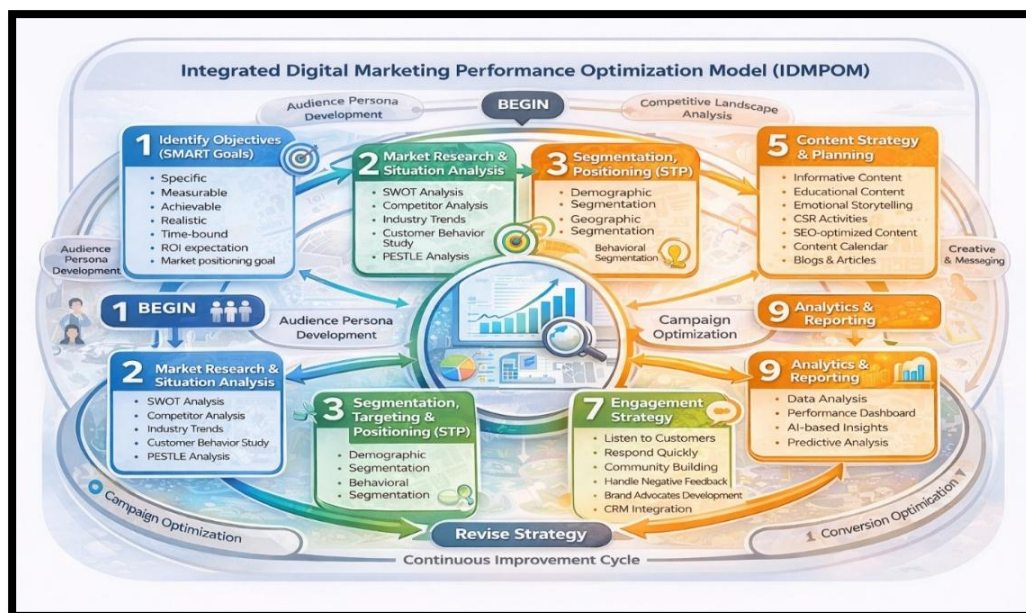
YouTube is another unique paradigm of social media interaction involving user generated videos. This has helped it to become successful because it has an open content ecosystem that enables creators to come up with various types of media such as entertainment as well as educational material. This participatory culture has facilitated the rise of YouTube as one of the most popular knowledge sharing platforms, creativity platforms and platforms of digital entrepreneurship (Burgess and Green, 2018).

Twitter (since since X) is typified by its microblogging format which allows users to post brief real-time information. The platform was originally characterized by the lengthy restrictions of 140 characters, and it has preserved its focus on brevity and immediacy, becoming a primary venue of news sharing, discussing the matter, and finding a trend. Its topicality is explained by the fact that it allows connecting users all over the world and allows the exchange of information on diverse issues quickly (Kietzmann et al., 2011).

Concerning digital marketing, social media networks are instrumental in the development of marketing strategies that would facilitate the marketing awareness, customer interaction and lead generation. The competitive advantage is attained by a clear digital marketing plan that incorporates several aspects, such as audience segmentation, content planning, and engagement techniques (Chaffey and Ellis-Chadwick, 2019). More and more, marketers depend on data-informed conclusions and platform-based approaches to maximize performance and meet changing consumer demands.

Since the role of social media has been increasing in shaping consumer behavior, it is necessary to know how customers are using these platforms differently and how they are used by different demographic groups. This paper aims at investigating these dynamics through analyzing how age and platform preference relate to one another and what are the main indicators of successful social media interaction.

**Model: Integrated Digital Marketing Performance Optimization Model**



### **Integrated Digital Marketing Performance Optimization Model (IDMPOM)**

Integrated Digital Marketing Performance Optimization Model (IDMPOM) is an integrated model that presents a systematic and iterative process of developing and implementing a digital marketing strategy. It is a nine-stage model that involves the identification of objectives with the help of the SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-bound) and the final step of follow-up evaluation and performance analysis.

The model stresses the need to determine the demand of the market and positioning of the products or services tactically in the minds of the target consumers. It understands the concept of digital marketing as a process of continuous improvement, where the performance analysis results can be used to make further strategic decisions and improvements.

The model includes the key steps that can be defined as Segmentation, Targeting, and Positioning (STP) that allow marketers to define a particular group of people that should be targeted and prioritized. This is then succeeded by formulation of engagement strategies and content planning which are essential to build meaningful interactions and improve customer experience in the digital platforms. Execution, monitoring, and optimization phases are also introduced in the model to make sure that marketing activities are dynamic to shifting consumer behavior and platform dynamics.

In general, the IDMPOM model shows the dynamism and data-driven character of online marketing, whereby constant feedback, strategic focus and content relevance are central to the attainment of long-term engagement and competitive edge.

## **2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The use of social media has become one of the most important topics of research in digital marketing because it directly affects the consumer behavior and the brand performance. Engagement is a concept that is generally perceived as multidimensional in nature as it involves cognitive, emotional, and behavioral interactions between the user and content. Research has shown that the more the engagement, the more brand loyalty, trust, and purchase intention, and it has become one of the key performance indicators of marketers in the digital ecosystem (Barger et al., 2016; Lim et al., 2022).

The operations of branding and social media marketing contribute greatly to the process of making decisions by consumers. Good digital branding strategies do not only increase the brand visibility, but also have an impact on consumer perception and preference. One of the studies shows that regular and interactive brand communication on the social media platform may have a positive influence on the customer engagement and the long-term relationships with the brand. Also, greater usage of storytelling and user-focused content has been discovered to enhance brand recall and consumer trust considerable (Dave, 2021; Dwivedi et al., 2021).

There are a number of psychology and behavioral factors that determine customer interaction in social media. Sharma (2014) found that the main dimensions of engagement include cognitive engagement, emotional involvement and behavioral engagements. These attributes dictate the interaction of the users with content and platforms. Furthermore, more recent research also underlines that personalization and interactivity can contribute to the experience of the user greatly, as the personalized content resonates with their preferences much more effectively and has a higher probability of engagement (Sharma, 2014; Kumar et al., 2023).

The influence of the content quality and the content type has been deeply researched when referring to the social media engagement. It has been evidenced that high quality, relevant, and appealing content draw more attention and interaction of the user. Video content of short-form and memes, as well as interactive formats (polls and live sessions), have become increasingly popular over the past several years, specifically with young audiences. The current change indicates the increasing relevance of platform-specific content strategies as a way to retain the audience (Ashley and Tuten, 2015; Tafesse and Wien, 2018; Liu et al., 2021).

One of the social media engagement strategies has also taken over as influencer marketing. The attitudes and buying behaviour of consumers are greatly influenced by the influencers, especially the ones who have huge number of followers. Studies indicate that perceived authenticity and credibility of influencers are very important in determining the success of influencer marketing campaigns. Specifically, micro-influencers have attracted the interest of their capacity to build closer relationships with niche audiences (De Veirman et al., 2017; Lou and Yuan, 2019; Chopra et al., 2021).

The other key aspect of social media activity is the credibility and trust of the platform. Due to the rise of the issue of misinformation and privacy of data, users are becoming critical of what platforms they use. Research indicates that the higher the perceived credibility the higher the user activity, better brand interactions and loyalty to the platform. This prompts the marketers to implement open communication approaches and establish a sense of trust by creating genuine and user-created content (Duhan, 2020; Appel et al., 2020).

Demographic issues especially age are very important in determining the social media use trends and preferences. Younger users are more likely to use more interactive and visually stimulating platforms like Instagram and Tik Tok, whereas older users are more inclined to use such platforms as Facebook and YouTube to find information and long-form content. Such a difference indicates the necessity of demographic segmentation in online marketing strategies in order to be effective in

targeting and engaging (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017; Statista, 2024; Smith and Anderson, 2020).

Moreover, the digital transformation in the aftermath of COVID-19 has intensified the use of the social media and changed the expectations of the consumers. The customers have become more demanding and require more engaging, personalized, and value-based content, which has further enhanced competition between platforms and content creators. Research carried out post-pandemic has shown that there is a major increase in the level of digital content consumption, which has highlighted the need to be innovative and flexible in maintaining user interest (Dwivedi et al., 2021; Sheth, 2020).

Although the social media engagement has been thoroughly researched, there is still a gap in the way the demographic variables, the specifics of platforms, and content strategies can be combined into a single framework. The majority of researches concentrate on the separate issues of engagement, but they do not consider their interplay. Thus, the proposed research will fill this gap by evaluating the connection between age, preference of platforms, and some of the most significant engagement factors including content quality, personalisation, and interactivity.

## 2.1 Research Gap

Although the literature regarding the social media engagement is increasing, the available literature has primarily been more individualistic as the main determinants of the engagement have been examined individually in isolation, including content quality, platform features and user interaction patterns. Although certain studies have been conducted on the behavior of social media usage and content preferences, there is still a gap in the integrated analysis of the study that would simultaneously take into account demographic factors (especially age) with regard to the platform-specific aspects and changing content requirements.

Further, the accelerated change of the digital consumption trends in the post-COVID period has had a significant impact on the interactions of the users with the social media platforms, thus requiring new empirical research. Nonetheless, there are few studies that have been conducted in a systematic manner to investigate the effects of age-based preferences on platforms choice and rates of engagement in line with the important variables of personalization, interactivity, and quality of content.

As a result, the existing gap in research is the lack of studies that examine how age demographics, platform dynamics, and content strategies have a compounded impact on user engagement. To fill this gap, the given research will consider the correlation between age groups and preferences to social media platforms, as well as measure the effects of significant engagement motivators on the user interaction on the specific chosen platforms.

## 2.2 Objectives of the Study

1. To study various social media platforms used by individuals, companies, and institutions and explain the observations.
2. To understand the key features of digital platforms and assess their current position.
3. To analyze users' needs and preferences based on age and platform usage.
4. To understand the level of user involvement on social media platforms.

## 2.3 Hypotheses of the Study

- **H0:** There is no association between the age group of respondents and their preference for social media.
- **H1:** There is an association between the age group of respondents and their preference for social media.

### 1. Research Methodology

#### 3.1 Research Design

The current research design is a quantitative study that will explore the connection between demographic (age) and social media platform preferences and the most important engagement factors content quality, personalization, and interactivity. Descriptive and analytical methods have been used in a combination to conduct a systematic analysis of user behavior and patterns of engagement in chosen social media.

#### 3.2 population of the study

The study population is the users of social media of various age groups. The research targets the active users of social media sites like Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube to consume and interact with the content.

#### 3.3 Sample Size and Sampling Technique

A total of 105 valid responses were collected for the study. Selection of the respondents was based on convenience sampling technique where the respondents were selected based on their availability and readiness to respond.

### **3.4 Data Collection Methods**

The research is founded on the primary data collection. The survey was performed using a structured questionnaire that was sent to the respondents to acquire the information associated with demographic features, platform use, content preferences, and engagement behavior.

### **3.5 Research Instrument**

A structured questionnaire was used as the primary research instrument. The questionnaire was a combination of close-ended and scaled questions.

## **2. Data Analysis and Interpretation**

### **4.1 Sample Description and Data Collection**

The data analysis and interpretation in the current research rest on the primary data gathered with the help of a structured survey. The first part of the analysis gives a demographic profile of the respondents and then a thorough discussion of their social media patterns of use.

The 109 responses were obtained and 105 valid responses were included after data screening to be included in final analysis. The respondents were classified into five age groups namely 16 to 20 years, 21 to 25 years, 26 to 35 years, 36 to 45 years, and above 45 years. This categorization allowed comparative analysis of preferences and engagement behavior of social media with regard to various age groups.

The analysis is based on three social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube that turned out to be the most popular among the participants. Despite the fact that other platforms like WhatsApp and Twitter (X) were taken into account, they were not analyzed in detail because of different use patterns and the fact that they do not take up much space in the sample. In particular, WhatsApp is more of a contact-based, than content-based application, as the communication relies heavily on personal networks, whereas Twitter was represented insignificantly in the sample, making it inappropriate to engage in a decent statistical analysis.

The respondents were requested to choose one preferred platform and record their behavior of content consumption and engagement solely with regard to that platform. By doing this, it was possible to determine clear patterns of engagement-specific to the platform and reduce redundant responses.

### **4.2 Analytical Approach**

The data obtained was analyzed through Statistical Package of the Social Sciences (SPSS) and Microsoft Excel. Data interpretation was done using both descriptive and inferential statistical methods.

The demographic characteristics were summarized through the descriptive analysis to determine the general trends in the usage of the platforms. A chi-square test was done to study the relationship between age groups and preference of social media platform. Since the variables were categorical, a non-parametric test was used in testing the hypothesis.

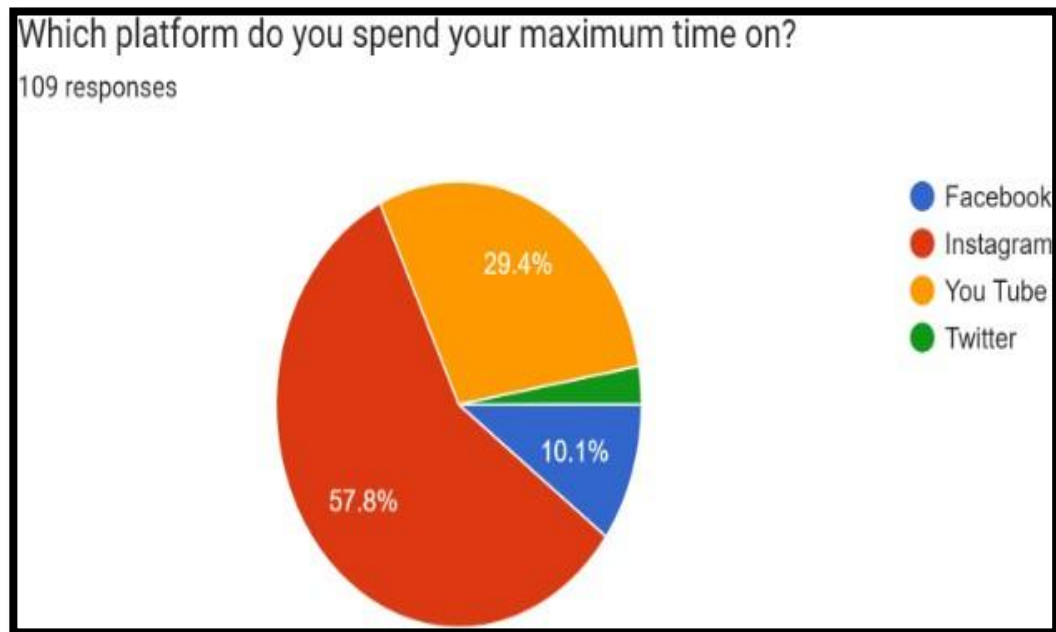
The respondents were of different age groups and it was noted that the behavior of using social media was very different among the various age groups. This difference justified the application of comparative and inferential analysis to comprehend the relationship between demographic variables and preference of platforms.

### **4.3 Overview of Platform Usage**

The results show that Instagram is the most favored platform among the respondents and YouTube and Facebook are the other preferred platforms. Most of the popularity of Instagram can be credited to the fact that it is being used by younger users, especially the 16-25 age bracket. YouTube has a wider interest among users between the ages of 21-35 whereas Facebook has comparatively less engagement with most of the age groups.

Such differences emphasize the fact that the use of social media is not homogeneous and is dependent on demographic factors, especially age. The identified variations in platform preference also highlight the significance of content strategy customization to the target audience segments.

#### 4.4 Age and Preferred Social Media Platforms



**Figure 1: Age and Preferred Social Media Platforms**

The analysis of social media platform preferences indicates that Instagram is the most widely used platform, with 57.8 percent of the total respondents. Second is YouTube, which has 29.4% users who prefer to use it. Conversely, Facebook has a much lower usage percentage with only a small percentage of those sampled having it as their major platform.

The use of Twitter (X) is also found to have a negligible value, which is approximately 3 percent of the entire sample. Because of this minimal representation, twitter was not to be analyzed in details in the study.

These data indicate that there has been a noticeable change in the user preference to platforms that are visually entertaining and content rich like Instagram and YouTube. The prevalence of Instagram, especially among younger respondents, shows the increased significance of the short-form, interactive, and appealing content. In the meantime, the huge market share of YouTube indicates that it is still relevant to consume long-form and informational content.

The findings in general show that the preference of the social media platforms is quite different with newer content-oriented platforms taking over older ones like Facebook.

**Table 1: Usage of social media among people on the basis of Age Group**

Age Group (Years)	Gender	Instagram	YouTube	Facebook	Total
16–20	Female	11	4	0	15
	Male	6	4	1	11
	Total	17	8	1	26
21–25	Female	19	7	0	26
	Male	18	6	3	27
	Total	37	13	3	53

26–35	Female	3	2	1	6
	Male	4	10	1	15
	Total	7	12	2	21
36–45	Male	0	0	2	2
	Total	0	0	2	2
Above 45	Female	0	0	1	1
	Male	0	2	0	2
	Total	0	2	1	3
<b>Grand Total</b>	—	61	35	9	105

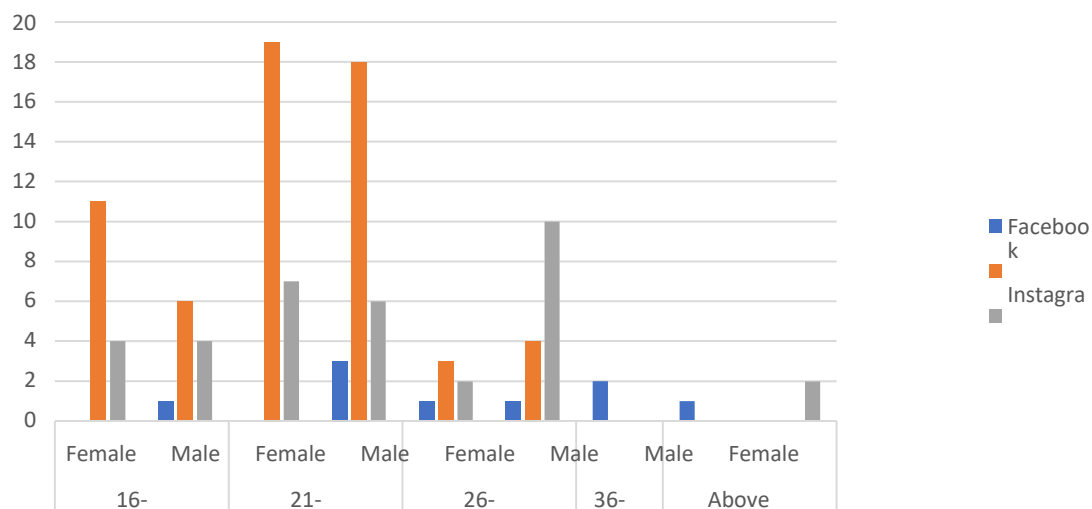
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**Figure 2: Graphical Representation of Social Media Usage among people on the basis of Age Group**



The graphical analysis is a comparative view of the preferences of the social media platforms in various age groups and gender categories. The figure is a good indication that Instagram supremes among the majority of the age groups, especially among younger respondents aged 1625 years, with both male and female users of the platform reporting a much higher engagement rate than in the other platforms.

The female respondents in the 1620 age bracket have a greater inclination towards Instagram whereas the male respondents have a relatively equal distribution of Instagram and YouTube. The same pattern is also seen in the 2125 age group, as Instagram usage is the highest in both the male and female genders, which supports its acceptance among younger age groups.

Conversely, there is a significant change in the preference of the 2635, age bracket, as YouTube is becoming more popular, especially with the male respondents. It indicates that there is a trend towards longer and informational content with the age of the users. Moreover, in the 3645 age category, the sample size is smaller, but YouTube seems to be the most dominant platform, particularly with the male community, suggesting that it can be used in comparatively older age groups.

The utilization of Facebook is steadily low amongst all the age groups and sex, showing a decreasing pattern in its usage relative to more content-oriented sites. Also, there are little to no participants in the Above 45 age group, where the usage of platforms is very low, and it is hard to make conclusive statements on behalf of this group.

In general, the tabular data are supported by the graphical analysis and it shows that age and gender are important factors affecting the social media preferences. Younger users tend to lean more towards more visual-based content platforms such as Instagram whereas older users tend to have a slow transition toward the less informative and lengthy content of YouTube. These trends are important in highlighting the role of demographic segmentation in the development of social media.

#### 4.5: AGE \* SOCIAL MEDIA

**Table: Chi Square Test**

	Value	df	Asymptotic Significance (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	36.008 <sup>a</sup>	8	.000
Likelihood Ratio	25.161	8	.001
Linear-by-Linear Association	.000	1	.997
N of Valid Cases	105		

The chi-square test was done to determine the correlation between the age groups of the respondents and their choice of social media. The findings show that the Pearson Chi-Square value is 36.008 at a level of 8 degrees of freedom and a significant level (p-value) of 0.000, which is below the standard value of 0.05.

This finding indicates that the preference of social media platform and preference of social media age are statistically significant. Thus, the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) according to which the age and platform preference are not related is rejected and the alternative hypothesis ( $H_1$ ) is accepted.

The value of the Likelihood Ratio (25.161,  $p = 0.001$ ) also helps to prove the existence of the significant relation between the variables and makes the results stronger. The Linear-by-Linear Association value ( $p = 0.997$ ) is however not statistically significant meaning that the relationship between age and platform preference is not strictly linear in nature but that it changes with the age category.

Having 105 valid cases, the analysis can prove that the age factor is essential in the process of determining the patterns of social media usage. The results suggest that various age groups have different preferences to social media platforms, and demographic segmentation is critical in digital marketing.

**Table 3: Representation of Usage of social media among various Age Groups**

			SOCIAL MEDIA			Total
			Facebook	Instagram	Youtube	
AGE	16 to 20	Count	1	17	8	26
		% of Total	1.0%	16.2%	7.6%	24.8%
	21 to 25	Count	3	37	13	53
		% of Total	2.9%	35.2%	12.4%	50.5%
	25 to 35	Count	2	7	12	21
		% of Total	1.9%	6.7%	11.4%	20.0%
	36 to 45	Count	2	0	0	2
		% of Total	1.9%	0.0%	0.0%	1.9%
	above 45	Count	1	0	2	3
		% of Total	1.0%	0.0%	1.9%	2.9%
Total		Count	9	61	35	105
		% of Total	8.6%	58.1%	33.3%	100.0%

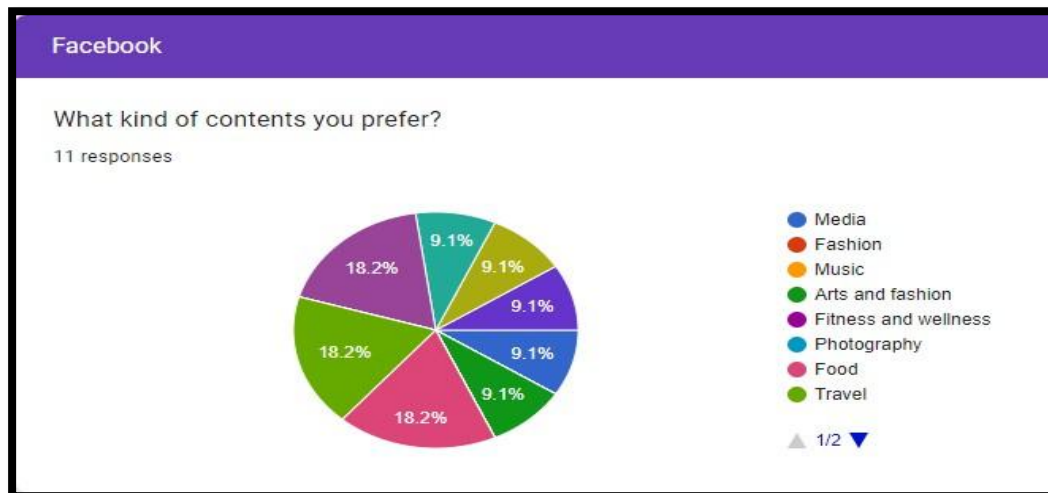
Table 3 shows a cross-tabulation of the use of different platforms of social media among various age groups and the percentage breakdown of the total respondents. The results indicate that the most popular platform is Instagram (58.1% of all the uses), then YouTube (33.3%), and Facebook (8.6%), which shows that people are highly inclined towards using the visual-oriented (and content-oriented) platforms.

When broken down in terms of age, age group 21-25 has the highest percentage of respondents (50.5%), with a heavy favoring of Instagram (35.2%), then YouTube (12.4%) and Facebook (2.9%). On the same note, within the 16-20 age range (24.8%), Instagram is the platform that is most favored (16.2%), which strengthens its influence among younger users.

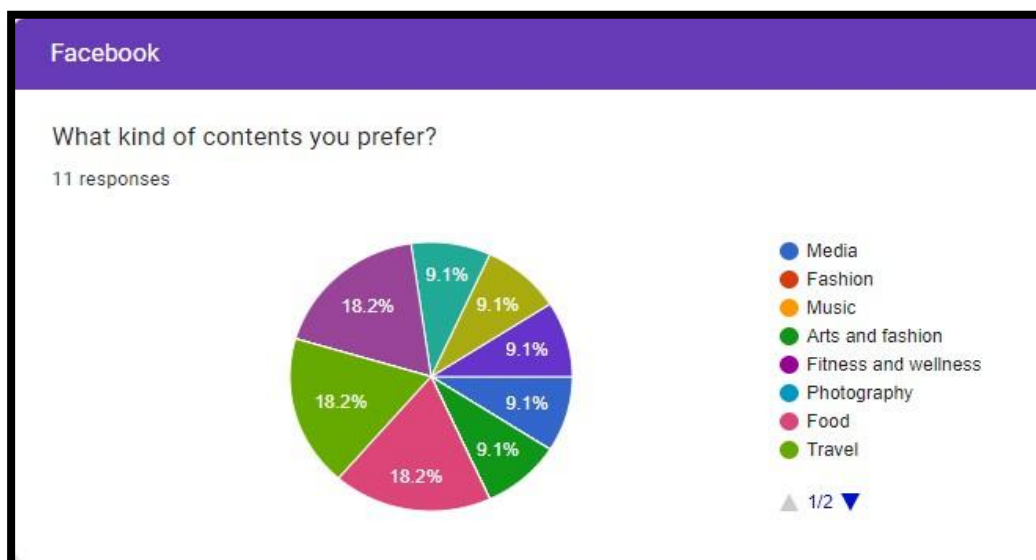
Alternatively, the age group of 26-35 (20.0) also has a somewhat higher tendency to use YouTube (11.4) over Instagram (6.7), which suggests an age-related shift towards more informational and long-form content. It is more pronounced in the above 45 age group, where YouTube (1.9) beats Instagram (0.0) though the sample size used in this group is small.

There is little representation of the 36-45 age group (1.9) with Facebook being the only platform used in the group which indicates that the older users might be holding on to the traditional social networking platforms, albeit at lower levels of engagement.

Overall, the table clearly demonstrates that age significantly influences social media platform preference, with younger users predominantly favouring Instagram, while relatively older users show increasing preference for YouTube. Facebook, on the other hand, exhibits consistently low usage across all age groups, indicating a decline in its popularity compared to newer platforms.



**Figure 3: Content preference among users for Facebook**



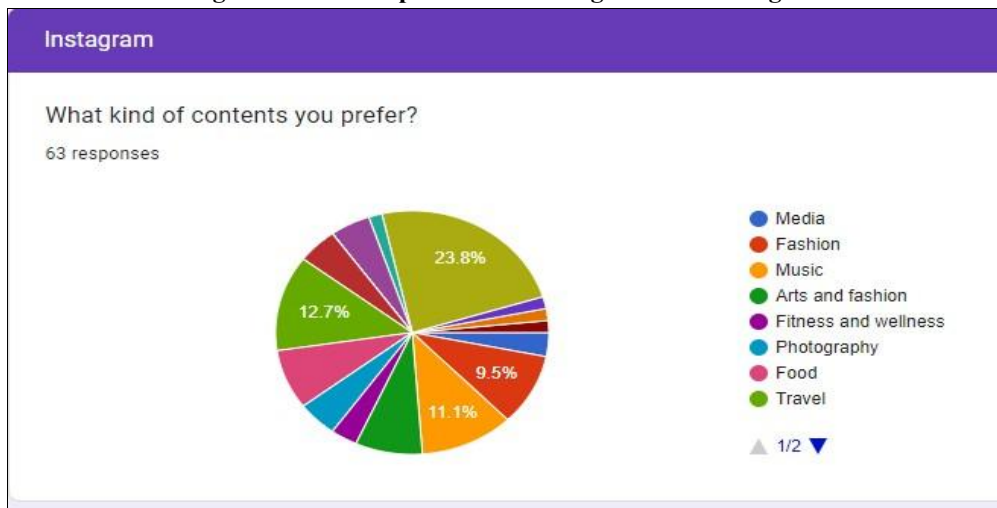
The figure shows how the Facebook users have distributed their content preferences according to the survey results. The analysis has shown that educational and informational content is the most popular and takes the largest share of answers. Besides, there is also a great preference in travel, food, and lifestyle-related content, all of which brings a high contribution to the overall engagement.

The fact that the proportions of different categories of content are also similar to each other, and that various categories are represented by relatively similar proportions, indicates that Facebook users have different preferences to content and that there is no strong tendency towards one dominant category. This heterogeneity means that Facebook can be viewed as a multi purpose application, where people can consume all sorts of content, such as informational, entertainment and lifestyle based content.

The use of Facebook as a source of educational material is more favored than the other platforms, which underscores its remained relevance as an information and knowledge sharing platform, especially among users who prefer content that is value-driven and full of meaning. Simultaneously, that the entertainment-related categories (e.g., food and travel) are present indicates that the platform helps facilitate a casual and interest-based interaction.

All in all, the results indicate that the content strategy on Facebook must be diversified and balanced with educational and informative content, as well as lifestyle content that will help to attract users. In contrast to other social networks like Instagram, which are more entertainment-oriented, Facebook seems to serve a wider range of user interests and content consumption habits.

Figure 5: Content preference among users on Instagram



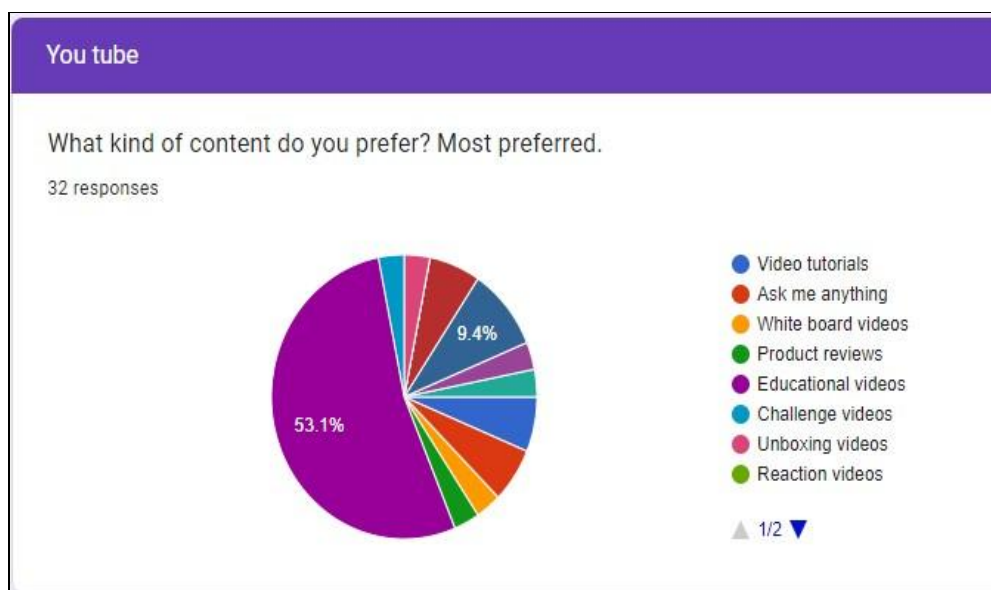
The figure demonstrates how the Instagram users are distributed with regard to the preferences of the content according to the survey. This analysis shows that content based on entertainment, especially memes, is the most favored type, as it takes the highest percentage of responses (around 23.8%). This emphasizes the good positioning of Instagram as a source of informal, entertaining and attractive content.

Moreover, travel information (12.7) and music (11.1) are also large segments of user interest, which shows the lifestyle expression and entertainment consumption aspect of the platform. Other groups like fashion, food and photography make in the middle range, so the content environment is a variety, but mostly entertainment-oriented.

The comparatively broad range of preferences means that although the user will consume a variety of content types, there is a definite tendency towards shorter, more visual, and easy-to-digest content, which is the foundation of Instagram Reels and Stories. Instagram is more leisure-oriented, creativity-oriented, and focused on visual storytelling as compared to such platforms as Facebook, which are characterized by a combination of informational and lifestyle content.

In general, the results show that the users of Instagram focus on the engaging and entertaining content where the importance of the appealing formats and trend-based content strategies should be considered. This highlights the importance of creators and marketers to work on creative, short, and interactive content to be able to catch the attention of users and increase their interest in the platform.

Figure 6: Content preference among users on You Tube



The figure shows the content preferences among the users of YouTube according to the responses of the survey. It is evident in the analysis that user preference is dominated by educational videos since it has a huge majority of about 53.1 percent

of the responses. This underscores the fact that YouTube is well positioned as a source of knowledge, skills and consumption of informational content.

Other types of content like video tutorials, product reviews and ask me anything formats also play a relatively smaller role, with each category having less than 10 percent of total responses. Also, there is a low preference towards categories like challenge videos, unboxing videos, and reaction videos, which implies that content based on entertainment, though it is not the main source of engagement in YouTube within the specified sample.

The educational dominance of the content suggests that the users mostly view YouTube as a learning platform, unlike the platforms such as Instagram, which are more entertainment-oriented. The inclination towards organised and informative content is a manifestation of the tendency of users to long-form videos that are valuable, deep, and useful.

In general, the results indicate that the YouTube content strategies must focus on educative, tutorial and informative videos as effective ways of attracting users. The fact that the platform is a digital knowledge hub highlights the need to provide high-quality, informative, and purpose-driven content that will keep the user interested.

**Table 4: Descriptive Statistics of Key Variables**

Variable	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Minimum	Maximum
Personalization	105	6.12	1.85	1	9
Content Quality	105	6.45	1.72	1	9
Interactivity	105	6.30	1.90	1	9
Engagement	105	7.88	2.40	2.10	12.90

Table 4 contains the descriptive statistics that can be used to describe the central tendency and variability of the most important engagement-related variables, such as personalization, quality of content, interactivity, and general user engagement.

The results of the mean scores show that all variables have moderately high levels, content quality (Mean = 6.45) has the highest average score of the independent variables, then interactivity (Mean = 6.30) and personalization (Mean = 6.12). This implies that the respondents tend to view the content of social media as reasonably engaging, interactive and according to their preferences.

It is important to mention that the user engagement has the largest mean score (Mean = 7.88) and it shows the fairly high level of interaction and involvement of the users on the social media platforms. This indicates how well digital platforms perform in the area of user diversion and active engagement.

Engagement has the highest standard deviation (SD = 2.40) implying that there is a significant difference in the level of user interaction among the respondents. This means that it is not a uniform engagement that is likely to be affected by personal tastes, platform features, and the type of content. Content quality (SD = 1.72) on the other hand has a relatively lower variability meaning that there are more consistent perceptions among the users.

On the whole, the descriptive analysis reveals the fact that, although users tend to rate the quality of content, personalization, and interactivity positively, the degree of engagement is significantly different. This confirms the significance of several engagement drivers in the formation of user behavior and allows the further examination of their relations based on correlation and inferential analysis.

**Table 5 : Correlation Mix**

Variables	1	2	3	4
1. Personalization	1.00			
2. Content Quality	0.62**	1.00		
3. Interactivity	0.58**	0.60**	1.00	
4. Engagement	0.71**	0.69**	0.73**	1.00

**Note: Significance level at 1%,  $p < 0.01$**

The correlation table, contained in Table 5 investigates the associations among the most important variables, which are personalization, content quality, interactivity, and user engagement. The findings show that all the variables have positive and significant correlations with one another at the 0.01 level of significance ( $p < 0.01$ ) indicating high levels of interdependency of the constructs.

Among the independent variables, the content quality is significantly positively correlated with personalization ( $r = 0.62$ ) and interactivity ( $r = 0.60$ ), which means that the better the content, the more it is likely to be seen as personalized and interactive. On the same note, personalization and interactivity are also moderately related ( $r = 0.58$ ), implying that personalized content is likely to improve user interaction.

Regarding the engagement of the user, the three variables are highly correlated, with the strongest correlation being between interactivity and personalization ( $r = 0.73$ ) and then with the content quality ( $r = 0.69$ ). Such results suggest that interactive capabilities are the most important ones in terms of the motivation of user engagement, and personalization and content quality are also crucial.

The findings emphasize that the user engagement is a multidimensional phenomenon that depends on a complex of factors and not on one variable. The high correlations between the variables also indicate that high quality content, personalization, and interactive features of social media strategies should be incorporated to ensure maximum user engagement.

Comprehensively, the correlation analysis confirms the assumption of the study that engagement drivers are not independent and have a cumulative effect on the user behavior, thus, supporting the significance of the holistic approach to digital content strategy.

**Table 6: Comparison of Various Social Media Platforms on the basis of Features, Engagement Strategy & Competitive Position.**

Platform	Core Feature	Engagement Strategy	Competitive Position
Facebook	Community Groups	Algo Personalization	Mature but Saturated
Instagram	Visual Storytelling	Reels and Influencer Marketing	High engagement Youth
You tube	Long Form Video	Monetization and Subscriptions	Strong Content Economy
LinkedIn	Professional Networking	Thought Leadership Content	Dominant in B2B
X	Real Time Updates	Trend engagement based	News Centric niche

Table 6 provides a comparative analysis of the key social media platforms in terms of their key features, engagement, and competitive positioning in the digital ecosystem. As it is noted in the analysis, the two platforms have different approaches towards attracting and retaining users, which is explained by the dissimilarity in content format, target audience, and functional purpose.

Facebook is defined by its focus on community groups and personalization through algorithms, which helps people to interact within networks. It is however placed as a mature but saturated platform, which means it is experiencing a declining growth and decreased involvement of younger users.

Instagram, in turn, is motivated by the visual storytelling and short-form content, which are facilitated, among other things, by features like Reels and influencer marketing. The high level of engagement with younger audiences characterizes its competitive position as a dominant platform of entertainment and lifestyle content.

YouTube is based on a long-form video content model, monetization and subscription-based channels are the key engagement strategies. Its robust content economy promotes creators and supports long user engagement especially with educational and informational content.

LinkedIn is a professional networking system that is specialized, with the interaction being facilitated by thought leadership material and career-focused interactions. It has a high competitive edge in the business-to-business (B2B) segment, which is unlike other platforms.

X (previously Twitter) is a company that specializes in sharing information in real-time and the interaction is guided by trends, hashtags and updates. The fact that it is a news-based niche service points to its focus on social conversation and real-time communication more than the long-lasting engagement with content.

All in all, the comparison shows that social media platforms are not differentiated solely by their functionality but also by how they engage and to whom they are directed. These differences underscore the need to have platform-specific content-related strategies because the expectations and engagement patterns of users differ considerably across platforms. As a marketer or content producer, it is critical to align content to platform features in order to realize good engagement and competitive advantage among the audience.

### **5.0: Findings of the Study**

1. Instagram becomes the most popular social media platform, especially among people aged 16-25 years, which shows the increasing significance of visual and short-form content.
2. YouTube is declared as the second most desired platform and this is more so among the users who are aged between 21-35 years meaning that there is a change in preference to long-form, educational, and informational content as one grows older.
3. Facebook is also relatively unpopular among all age groups, which may indicate a decrease in its popularity, especially in younger users.
4. There is a statistically significant correlation between age and social media platform preference, which validates that age is a major determinant of user behavior and platform choice.
5. Younger users have shown a high preference to entertainment-oriented types of platforms like Instagram whereas relatively older users tend to use platforms like YouTube which provide value-driven and informative content.
6. The preferences of the users differentiate greatly by platform, with Instagram users being more interested in entertainment content (memes and lifestyle posts), YouTube users being more interested in educational and tutorial based content, and Facebook users being fairly varied in their content interests.
7. Descriptive analysis suggests that the perceived content quality, personalization, and interactivity have moderate levels, whereas the user engagement has the highest average score of all variables.
8. The elevated degree of variability in engagement implies that the interaction between the user varies considerably across people and platforms, meaning that there is a variety of factors that can influence the interaction.
9. All the major drivers of engagement, such as content quality, personalization, and interactivity, are positively and significantly related to user engagement.
10. Interactivity has been discovered as the strongest influencing factor in engagement, and then personalization and quality of content.
11. The social media platforms vary based on features, engagement tactics, and competitive position, with Instagram being the most popular among youth, YouTube being the most popular in terms of content richness, and Facebook being fairly saturated.
12. And, lastly, the key to successful social media marketing lies in aligning content strategies with the platform features and user profile, which explains the need to be platform-specific and targeted.

### **6.0: CONCLUSION**

The current research concludes that the usage of social media is largely dependent on a set of demographic variables, the



nature of the platforms, and major engagement motivators. An age factor becomes one of the most influential determinants of the preferential choice of the platform, with younger users being more inclined to use platforms that involve a visual experience, like Instagram, whereas relatively older users are more inclined to use YouTube, because of its informational and long-form content. Facebook, though still topical, seems to be losing its favorite status among the users, specifically, among younger or younger audiences.

The paper also confirms that different platforms have different content preferences, whereby Instagram has content that is more entertainment based, You Tube has content that is more educational, and Facebook has content that is more mixed. Also, the results point to the fact that engagement is a multidimensional construct, the quality of content, personalization, and interactivity have a strong impact, and interactivity is the most important factor.

On the whole, the findings stress that efficient social media strategies should be platform-based and should correspond to the demographics and content expectations of users. The combination of high-quality content, custom experiences, and interactive features can help social media networks and marketers to improve user engagement and remain competitive in the changing digital environment.

### **7.0: Limitations of the Study**

1. The study also relies on a rather small sample size ( $n = 105$ ), which could be a constraint to the applicability of their results to a larger population.
2. Convenience sampling could lead to sampling bias, since it is not possible that the respondents were able to represent all types of social media users.
3. Some issues with the sample are that there is an unequal distribution of the respondents of different ages, with more younger participants, which can affect the overall outcomes and conclusions.
4. The research uses self-reported data which can be susceptible to response bias such as false reporting predispositions and usage patterns.
5. The limitation of the analysis is that the research has been confined to three social media tools: Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube, and the other emerging tools (e.g., Tik Tok, Snapchat) have not been taken into account, which can influence the thoroughness of the research.
6. The research only involves capturing the behavior of the users at one point in time and thus it fails to consider the differences in preferences and engagement patterns as time passes.
7. There were some variables that were not considered, including cultural, geographic and socio-economic variables that could also impact the usage and engagement of social media.
8. The low level of representation of some platforms (e.g., Twitter) and some age groups (particularly, older than 45 years) restricted the opportunities to conduct a detailed comparative analysis.

### **8.0: Recommendations and Suggestions**

1. Platform-specific content policies should be used by social media platforms and marketers because the preferences and use patterns of different users vary widely on different platforms like Instagram, YouTube, and Facebook.
2. In the case of platforms, such as Instagram, it is necessary to focus on short and visual content and content based on entertainment (e.g., reels, memes, and collaborations with influencers) to successfully reach the younger demographic.
3. In the case of YouTube, educational, tutorial-based, and long-form content should be prioritized by the creators of the content since users on this platform are extremely interested in informative and value-based content.
4. Facebook plans are to be inspired with a more active community-based work, more content formats, and personalization to keep users and attract new ones.
5. Interactivity has also been considered as the most critical influence of user engagement; therefore, marketers must take advantage of such interactive elements as polls, comments, live sessions, and user-generated content.
6. Personalization methods, such as algorithm-based suggestions and delivering content specifically to certain users, need to be reinforced to improve user experience and promote the level of engagement.
7. The quality of the content must also be one of the priorities, and the content should be relevant, authentic, and value-based because it largely affects the perception and interaction of the user.
8. Companies need to embrace the use of age-based segmentation strategies, in which they will produce content and communication that is based on the needs of various demographics.
9. Social media platforms must be innovative and keep on updating features to keep users interested and not become

a casualty in the fast changing digital world.

In future studies, larger and more diverse samples should be taken into account, supplemented by other platforms, and longitudinal shifts in user behavior should be examined to provide more in-depth information

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