Millennial’s, Brands and Social Media

To investigate Generation Y’s engagement with brands through social media and the influence this engagement has on their buying behaviour.

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Project submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements of the Bachelor of Business Ordinary Degree in Marketing.

DUBLIN BUSINESS SCHOOL

March 2014
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Author’s Declaration

I, Ashling Turley, declare that I am the sole author of this dissertation, that during this period of registered study I have not been registered for any other academic award or qualification, nor has any of the material been submitted wholly or partly for any other award. I have personally carried out all the work of which this a record. The programme of study of which this a part has been delivered by Dublin Business School.

Signed:

Date: 28th March 2014
Acknowledgements

I would like to thank the following people who supported through this project.

First, I would like to thank Jacklyn Tully, my supervisor and lecturer project, for her advice and her guidance during all the process.

Second, I would like to thank all the participants to took part in this study.

Finally, I would like to thank my parent, my brother and my boyfriend for their continuous support and belief in me during this process.
Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate Generation Y’s interaction with brands on social media and to examine how this interaction influences their buying behaviour.

A quantitative method of research was chosen for this study. The method chosen was a questionnaire. A total of 50 questionnaires were distributed with only 42 being deemed valid for analysis. Of the 42 returned, 40% were male and 60% were female.

The findings of this study supported the hypothesis and revealed that Generation Y are actively engaging with brands through social media. This engagement includes participating in discussions about brands, recommending brands to peers, expressing their opinions of brands through social media and using social media as a source of information on brands.

It was also found that this engagement is influencing Generation Y to purchase the brands. The main influential factor was peer recommendations and positive feedback from other consumers.
Chapter 1: Introduction
1.0 Introduction

Tsai and Men (2013) report that social media has changed how brand-related content is created, distributed and consumed. Advertising brands through social media is rapidly becoming the new way of marketing. According to Rohm, Kaltcheva and Milne (2013) Generation Y prefer to interact with brands through social media than in a physical setting.

The purpose of this study is to examine how Generation Y interact with brands on social media and also how this interaction affects their purchase decisions.

1.1 Research Question

To investigate Generation Y’s engagement with brands through social media and the influence this engagement has on their buying behaviour.

1.2 Hypothesis

Generation Y are actively engaging with brands through social media. Their purchasing decisions are mainly influenced by peer recommendations and experiences.

1.3 Research Objectives

➢ To investigate Generation Y’s engagement with brands through social media.
➢ To examine how engagement with brands through social media has had an influence on Generation Y’s buying behaviour.

1.4 Organisation of the research

The first main section of this study is the literature review. This section will examine previous studies and research carried out on this particular area.

The next section is the methodology section which will detail the primary research that was carried out. The primary research tool used was a questionnaire.

After the methodology, the findings of the research will be discussed. These findings will be divided into findings of objective 1 and findings of objective 2.

Finally, at the end the researcher will give recommendations for future research on this area.
1.5 Limitations

The main limitation of this study was the time frame. It is felt that had there been a larger time frame, more research could have been carried out to further understand this area.

It is also felt that the sample size for the study was relatively small. In order to get an accurate understanding of the behaviour of a certain group of consumers, the sample size should have been significantly greater than 50. This, however, relates back to the first limitation.

Another limitation was a lack of secondary source relating to online brand engagement and purchase intentions. It was difficult to attain information directly relating to this area.
Chapter 2: Literature Review
2.0 The Evolution of Online Advertising

Online advertising date’s way back to 1978 when the first ever spam email was sent to over 400 recipients (Oberoi, 2013). By the 1990s, banner ads, pop-up ads, pop-under ads, hover ads and takeover ads were the many forms of advertising being adopted by companies all over the world (Arandilla, 2010). At the start of the millennium, Google transformed online advertising with the launch of Google AdWords (Oberoi, 2013). Instead of using the banner-ad format, which was the leading format at that time, they decided to sell through text ads (Arandilla, 2010). These ads, however, were kept separate from the main search results and were found at the top and side of the web page (Arandilla, 2010). As a way of measuring the relevance of an ad, Google introduced the “Click through rate” feature. This meant that the more clicks an ad got, the higher it would climb up the ranking ladder (Oberoi, 2013).

Google did not invent pay-per-click advertising, but instead they worked on perfecting it (Arandilla, 2010). Today, 96% of Google’s revenue comes from advertising (Oberoi, 2013). In more recent years, online advertising has been revolutionised by social media and has since become a lot more powerful (Oberoi, 2013).

2.1 Advertising Through Social Media

The introduction of social media can be linked with the transformation of the internet from Web 1.0 to Web 2.0 (Coleman, Chandler and Gu, 2013). This transformation allowed for two-way communication between internet users which led the way for the development of social media and user-generated content (Coleman, Chandler and Gu, 2013). According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media can be defined as “a group of internet based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of User Generated Content. User Generated Content (USG) can be defined as “any material created and uploaded to the internet by non-media professionals”, (Christodoulides, Jevons and Bonhomme, 2012). USG is described as having three main characteristics: 1) content that is made publicly available over the internet, 2) content that reflects a certain amount of creative effort and, 3) content created outside professional routines and practices (Christodoulides, Jevons and Bonhomme, 2012).

Social media includes an array of applications such as, social networking (Facebook), business networking (LinkedIn), microblogging (Twitter), video sharing (YouTube), and music sharing (Natarajan Balasubramanian, Balakrishnan and Manickavasagam, 2013). Advertisers publish (brand) pages to network with their brand followers (Muk, 2103). But
how is it that traditional advertising through television, radio, newspapers, direct mail, billboards and posters etc. has taken a back seat to advertising through social media? One main advantage of advertising brands through social media is that one billion active users could see the advert without a company having to spend an excessive amount of revenue on traditional media channels (Martinez and Sanchez, 2013). The extensive functions of social media platforms allow advertisers to position their advertisement so that it reaches the appropriate target market (Natarajan at al. 2013). Social media is unlike traditional media in the sense that it is linked with various indicators which are embedded within the advertisements that help evaluate their effectiveness (Natarajan at al. 2013). Such indicators are likes, comments, clicks and followers. These indicators have allowed advertisers to evaluate how well their product or brand is being accepted or rated by internet users. Since the rapid development of social media in recent years, companies have transformed the ways in which they develop and market their products, communicate with their customers and even how they obtain new customers and potential employees (Coleman, Chandler and Gu, 2013).

Social media has changed how brand-related content is created, distributed and consumed (Tsai and Men, 2013). Social media has meant that advertisers no longer have the power to shape their brands image. This power now lies within the consumer and online word of mouth (Tsai and Men, 2013). Social media has allowed companies to build more personal relationships with their customers. It gives the customers the opportunity to voice their opinions about products and services. It also allows advertisers to closely monitor and take part in the conversations within the brand communities (Tsai and Men, 2013).

Social media is becoming increasingly difficult to escape in daily life. Think about the amount of times you have logged onto Facebook, checked your Twitter account or used Google to search for information on a topic. The internet is rapidly becoming a medium which society cannot function without. According to recent reports there are approximately 1.15 billion Facebook users, 500 million Twitter users, 500 million Google+ users and 238 million LinkedIn users to name but a few (Bernstein, 2013). Another recent report indicates that 83% of social media users are aged 18-29, 77% are 30-49, 52% are 50-64 and 30% are 85+ (Riman, 2013). Advertisers are therefore under increased pressure to utilise social media to keep up with the ever changing market (Powers, Advincula, Austin and Snyder, 2012).
2.2 Who Are Generation Y?

Generation Y, also referred to as Millennials, comprise of individuals who were born between 1980 and 2000 (Viswanathan and Jain, 2013). They are also called the ‘net generation’ as they are the first generation to have spent their entire lives in the digital world (Viswanathan and Jain, 2013). Generation Y rely heavily on technology for entertainment and to interact with others (Bolton, Parasuraman, Hoefnagels, Migchels, Kabadayi, Gruber, Loureiro and Solnet, 2013).

2.3 Brand Engagement and Social Media

According to Bolton et al. (2013), Generation Y are actively contributing, sharing, searching for, and consuming content on social media platforms. Although some studies suggest that Generation Y are actively contributing to content on social media, there has also been some findings about college students indicating that they spend a considerable amount of time consuming the information rather than contributing (Pempek, Yermolayeva and Calvert, 2009, as cited in Bolton et al., 2013). When it comes to brands Lazarevic (2012) states that Generation Y consumers “have a very unique attitude” towards them. Generation Y have grown up in a materialistic world where almost everything is branded so therefore, they are a lot more comfortable with brands than previous generations (Lazarevic, 2012). Generation Y are very concerned about what others think of them (Markow, 2005) as cited in Lazarevic (2012), so they utilise brands as “an extension of themselves” (Lazarevic, 2012).

An article by Greenberg (2011) as cited in Gurau (2013) describe Generation Y as “self-centred, techno-savvy, environmentally conscious individuals, who spend more than previous generations and display low levels of brand loyalty”. This may be true but other authors (Beirne and Howe, 2008 as cited in Gurau, 2013) have contradicted these findings stating Generation Y’s dedication to brands which are closely linked to their interests and personalities. Another study carried out by Edelman/StrategyOne (2010) also indicates that Generation Y have a strong sense of brand loyalty and awareness which they are keen to share with others on social media. Rohm, Kaltcheva and Milne (2013) also reported that this younger generation actually prefer to interact with brands through social media than in a physical setting.

But how can marketers know whether these consumers are really influenced by their advertisements or even take notice of such advertisements? There must be some level of
interaction or engagement in order to monitor consumers’ acceptance of advertising brands online. Communicating with Generation Y through social media via wall posts, tweets, pictures, videos, etc. enables users to engage with the brand and post comments expressing their likes or dislikes (Tsai and Men, 2013). According to Shao (2009), as cited in Heinonen (2011), users perform a number of different activities online: 1) Consumption of information and entertainment, 2) participation in social interaction, and 3) production of self-expression and self-actualisation. Morrison, Cheong and McMillan (2013) state that in relation to interacting with others regarding brands or products, some users have generated content and some have only read the content.

A study by the Edelman Group found that 86% of Generation Y who have found a brand that they like, keep coming back (Johnson, 2012). Littman (2008), as cited in Gurau (2013), observed that Generation Y’s choice of new brands is often determined by brands recommended by their peers through social media. This finding is interesting as it reveals that when it comes to brand engagement, Generation Y rely on their friends’ recommendations.

However statistics published by Bennett (2013) via Media Bistro, contradict Littman’s findings and state that 51% of Millenials say that they trust a strangers opinion more than they trust their friends’. Although these authors have different views, Bennett (2013) agrees that Millennials are extremely brand loyal. He found that 77% participate in loyalty reward programs and 63% stay updated on brands through social media. He also states that 43% have liked more than 20 brands on Facebook and that 70% say they always come back to brands they love.

3.5 Online brand engagement and buyer behaviour

According to a recent study done in the United States, the amount of money spent by Generation Y is approximately $600 billion per year (Bennett, 2013). This figure is expected to increase to $1.4 trillion by 2020. The same report also stated that Millennials spend 8% more on clothes than those aged 35-44, even though they earn less. We know that Generation Y’s engagement with brands on social media is significantly high but does this engagement influence their buying behaviour?

A recent study by Social Media Today indicated that around 46% of internet users turn to social media when making purchases (Bernstein, 2013). A study by Bennett (2013)
also found that 46% of Millennials count on social media when buying online and that 48% say that word-of-mouth influences their product purchases vs. 17% for TV ads. Tseng, Kuo and Chen (2013) also conducted a study which found that when it comes to making purchasing decisions, consumers are influenced by electronic word-of-mouth. Viswanathan and Jain (2013) report that Generation Y are heavily influenced by their friends when it comes to making purchasing decisions. *If our friends have it then we must have it.*

3.6 Conclusion

It is clear from the information that Generation Y are actively engaging with brands through social media. Social media platforms have made it easy for brands to communicate with consumers and also for consumers to interact with brands. Millennials have grown up in a digital world and are therefore very accepting of brands advertising through social media. Past studies used in this project have indicated how Generation Y are comfortable engaging with brands through social media. There was, however, a limited amount of information relating to engagement and purchase intentions. It was found that Generation Y are heavily influenced by their peers when it comes to making purchase decisions. This study aims to discover if these findings are still relevant and to also investigate other aspects of social media which may be influencing Generation Y’s purchase decisions.
Chapter 3: Methodology
3.0 Introduction

According to Malhotra and Peterson (2007, p.5) marketing research is the identification, collection, analysis, dissemination and use of information that is undertaken to improve decision making related to identifying and solving problems in marketing. Information was gathered from a number of different sources, both primary and secondary. This part of the project will explain the steps of marketing research undertaken in this particular research project.

This chapter is divided into nine sections detailing the problem definition, the research design strategy, data collection method, research approach, primary research tool selected, fieldwork, profile of respondents, sampling method and sampling type.

3.1 Problem Definition

3.1.1 Research Question

To investigate Generation Y’s engagement with brands through social media and the influence this engagement has on their buying behaviour.

3.1.2 Hypothesis

Generation Y are actively engaging with brands through social media. Their purchasing decisions are mainly influenced by peer recommendations and experiences.

3.1.3 Research Objectives

- To investigate Generation Y’s engagement with brands through social media.
- To examine how engagement with brands through social media has had an influence on Generation Y’s buying behaviour.

3.2 Research Design Strategy

According to Domegan and Fleming (2007, p66) a research design is “an overall plan for the remaining steps of the research project and can only be chosen after all the objectives of the project have been decided on”. The research design is the link between the research objectives and the method(s) used to achieve these objectives. Research design can be
classified into exploratory, descriptive or causal (Hair, Bush and Ortinau, 2003, p.41). The main information for each type of research design can be seen in Table 1 (Appendix A).

Descriptive research was chosen. The purpose of the study is to examine Generation Y and their engagement with brands through social media and if this engagement influences them to purchase. It has been identified in the literature review that the majority of Generation Y are not influenced to purchase by social media advertising. The primary research conducted in this project will identify if these findings are still relevant.

Exploratory research was not chosen for this project because there is already knowledge about Generation Y, social media and brand engagement. These are areas which are constantly being researched. Exploratory research is conducted only when there is little or no knowledge on the topic in question.

Causal research was rejected because it is not the objective to establish a cause and effect relationship between two or more variables. This project will not involve changing any variables and observing how Generation Y reacts to these changes.

3.3 Data Collection Method

3.3.1 Secondary Research

Secondary research is conducted to gather secondary data. Secondary data is information that is “collected by another person for reasons other than the problem at hand” (Domegan and Fleming, 2007, p.81). This data is used to gain an understanding of the area under investigation. The secondary data used was books, newspapers, academic journals, databases, web pages, etc. Secondary data should always be consulted before conducting primary research.

3.3.2 Primary Research

Primary research is “data originated by the researcher specifically to address the research problem” (Malhotra and Birks, 2008, p.94). It is new data which is unpublished and undocumented anywhere else (Domegan and Fleming, 2007, p.81).
3.3.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of Data Collection

Secondary data is relatively cheaper than primary data. It is less time consuming and can be gathered quickly. Due to the large quantity of information readily available, secondary data is easy to obtain. It can also help in designing the primary research (Domegan and Fleming, 2007, p.81). There may be issues relating to the relevance of the information as there can be a serious time lag between the publication of the data and the project at hand. There may also be difficulties with the origin of the data (Domegan and Fleming, 2007, p.81).

Primary research relates directly to the problem at hand (Domegan and Fleming, 2007, p.82). The information from primary data is recent and reliable. The disadvantages with primary research however, are that it can be very expensive to carry out (Domegan and Fleming, 2007, p.82). It can also be very time consuming and the researcher may also find it difficult to gather the information.

3.4 Research Approach

3.4.1 Qualitative Research

Malhotra and Peterson (2006, p.150) describe qualitative research as an unstructured, exploratory research method which provides insights and understanding of the problem setting. Qualitative research assesses the minds of consumers to discover their attitudes, feelings or prejudices on certain ideas or issues (Domegan and Fleming, 2007, p.158).

Focus groups: *a process which involves bringing a small group of people together for an interactive discussion on one particular topic or concept* (Hair, Bush and Ortinau, 2003, p.220). The objective is to generate ideas and understand customer needs, attitudes, perception and motives about a certain product or service (Domegan and Fleming, 2007, p.160).

In-depth interviews: *a process in which a well-trained interviewer asks a number of semi-structured or probing questions which are usually in a face-to-face setting* (Hair, Bush and Ortinau, 2003, p.218). They are used to uncover underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes and feelings on a topic (Malhotra and Birks, 2007, p207).
Projective Techniques: an indirect method of questioning where a subject is asked to project themselves into specified situations and then asked questions about the situations (Hair, Bush and Ortinau, 2003, p.216). The objective is to encourage respondents to project their underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes or feelings Malhotra and Peterson (2006, p.164).

3.4.2 Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is a method that seeks to quantify the data by the use of mathematics, statistics and probability theories (Malhotra and Peterson, 2006, p.150). It assumes there is prior knowledge and background information available (Domegan and Flemming, 2007, p.67). Quantitative data collection methods can be used for either descriptive or causal research designs.

Survey method: a structured questionnaire given to a sample of a population which is designed to gather specific information from respondents (Malhotra and Peterson, 2006, p.181).

Observation method: the recording of behavioural patterns of people, objects and events in a systematic manner (Malhotra and Peterson, 2006, p.195). Observation methods are used to obtain information about the phenomenon of interest. The researcher does not question or communicate with the participant(s) but instead observes.

Panel method: a sample survey from which comparative data from the sampling units are taken on more than one occasion (Domegan and Fleming, 2007, p.221).

3.5 Primary Research Tool Selected

A survey method was chosen for this project. The survey method relies on the use of a questionnaire. According to Kinnear and Taylor (1996, p.353) a questionnaire is a formalized schedule for collecting data from respondents. It consists of a set of questions, written or verbal, that a respondent answers (Malhotra and Peterson, 2006, p. 288).
The objectives of a questionnaire are as follows:

✓ Should translate the information needed into questions that the respondent can answer
✓ Questionnaire must motivate and encourage the respondent to co-operate & complete the interview
✓ Questionnaire should minimise response error
✓ Should answer your objectives

There are four methods of conducting a questionnaire:

**Personal Interview** – This is a face-to-face method. The interviewer directly asks the respondent questions
**Telephone interview** – The interviewer phones respondents and asks them questions over the phone
**Postal Interview** – Respondents send their answers to questions through the post
**Electronic Questionnaires** – The researcher sends out a questionnaire via e-mail or it is administered on the internet. Electronic surveys are becoming increasingly popular due to new technologies

(Malhotra and Birks, 2007, p.256)

The questionnaire used in this study can be seen in Appendix B.

**3.6 Fieldwork**

The method chosen was *Electronic Questionnaires*. Given the nature of the research question, it was felt that the questionnaires should be administered to respondents via a social media platform. This allowed for easy access to respondents. The social media platform chosen was Facebook. The research took place in March 2014. The questionnaires were sent through personal messages. The questionnaire was created using Quick Surveys. This software allowed for unlimited questions. The questionnaire was made up of a total of twenty-two questions, all which had to be completed. The fieldwork lasted approximately one week.
3.7 Profile of Respondents

- **Element:** Generation Y (18 to 30 year olds)
- **Unit:** Online through Facebook
- **Extent:** County Dublin
- **Time:** 2014

3.7.1 Sampling Frame

According to Malhotra (2014, p.373) a sampling frame is *a representation of the elements of the target population*. In other words, it is a list of all the people in your population of interest. There was no sampling frame used for this project as the researcher had no access to one.

3.7.2 Sample Size determination

Malhotra (2014, p.375) describes the sample size as *the number of elements to be included in the study*. A sample size of 50 was used for this study.

3.8 Sampling Method

The sampling method determines the type of sampling used in the study.

3.8.1 Probability and Non-Probability Sampling

Probability sampling: When members of the population have a known chance of being selected into the sample (Burns and Bush, 2006, p. 332). This type of sampling requires a sampling list, i.e. a list of everybody in the researcher’s population of interest.

Non-probability sampling: When the chances of selecting members from the population into the sample are unknown (Burns and Bush, 2006, p. 332).

The method chosen was non-probability sampling because a sampling list was not accessible. Non-probability sampling is suitable because of the time constraints of this project.
3.8.2 Sampling Type

There are four types of non-probability sampling methods; convenience sampling, judgement sampling, quota sampling and snowball sampling.

3.8.2.1 Convenience Sampling

Convenience sampling is when the samples are chosen at the convenience of the researcher (Hair, Bush and Ortinau, 2003, p.351). This is often done as the study is being conducted and is mostly used for studies involving students, members of local organisations, people on the street or department stores etc.

3.8.2.2 Judgement Sampling

Judgement sampling is when participants are chosen because the researcher feels that they will meet the requirements of the study (Hair, Bush and Ortinau, 2003, p.351).

3.8.2.3 Quota Sampling

Quota sampling can be described as a two-stage judgemental process. Stage one involves developing a control category, or a quota, of the population elements. In the second stage, judgemental or convenience sampling is then used for the selection of the sample elements (Malhotra, 2014, p.379).

3.8.2.3 Snowball Sampling

Snowball sampling involves identifying prospective respondents who can then help the researcher to identify additional people who are part of the population of interest to take part in the study (Hair, Bush and Ortinau, 2003, p.351).

A combination of convenience and judgemental sampling were chosen for this study. The participants of this study were chosen at the convenience of the researcher. They were chosen because the researcher had access to them via Facebook. Furthermore, judgemental sampling was used because each participant was carefully selected by the researcher on account of their age.
Chapter 4:
Data Analysis
4.0 Introduction

Domegan and Fleming (2007, p.430) describe data analysis as *a set of methods and techniques that can be used to obtain information and insights from the data*. Although data analysis is unique to each research project, there are certain tasks that must be performed:

- Editing
- Coding
- Tabulation
- Summarisation

4.1 Editing

According to Malhotra (2014, p.456) editing is *a review of the questionnaires with the objective of increasing accuracy and precision*. Editing is done to check for any inconsistent, incomplete, illegible or ambiguous responses. It helps to eliminate all unusable questionnaires. A questionnaire may be unusable if there are pages missing, if questions are left unanswered or if a respondent is demographically incorrect (Domegan and Fleming, 2007, p.431).

4.2 Coding

Coding is a process in which a code, usually a number, is assigned to each possible response to each answer (Malhotra, 2014, p.457). There are two types of coding; pre-coding and post-coding. Pre-coding is when codes are assigned to the alternative answers and are included in the questionnaire format (Domegan and Fleming, 2007, p.432). This is appropriate with dichotomous and multiple-choice questions. Post-coding is done after the questionnaire has been completed. It is used for more open-ended or semi-structured questions. The coding for this project can be seen in Appendix C.

4.3 Tabulation

Tabulation involves counting the responses for each question (Domegan and Fleming, 2007, p.437). It consists of three activities; sorting, counting and summarising. There are two types of tabulation; simple tabulation and cross tabulation. This study uses cross tabulation.
4.4 Summarisation

There are two types of statistical summarisation:

1. Measures of central tendency
   - Mean
   - Median
   - Mode
2. Measures of dispersion
   - Range

Following the completion of the four tasks previously discussed, it was found that of the 50 questionnaires distributed to respondents, 42 were deemed valid for analysis.

Of the valid responses, 40% were male and 60% were female. All of the respondents regularly engage with social media several times a day. The most common device used for this engagement was a smartphone (100%), followed by a laptop (83%). The least common device was an iPad/Tablet (40%). The top five social media platforms that the respondents engage in are Facebook, You Tube, Instagram, Twitter and Linked In.

4.5 Research Hypothesis

Generation Y are actively engaging with brands through social media. Their purchasing decisions are mainly influenced by peer recommendations and experiences.

4.6 Objective 1 – Findings

This part of the study will involve analysing the data and answering objective 1 which is as follows: To investigate Generation Y’s engagement with brands through social media.
Q8. Have you ever interacted with a brand on social media?

When the respondents were asked if they had ever interacted with a brand on social media, 19% (8) said that they had not interacted and 81% (34) said that they had. This information supports the secondary research where it was found that Generation Y are actively interacting with brands through social media on a regular basis. The findings from the primary research show that this is still relevant.

Q9. Please explain your answer.
When the respondents were asked to explain their answers, the results were as follows:

✔ 19% said that they had never interacted with a brand on social media
✔ 10% said that they had liked or followed a brand on social media but don’t interact with the brands
✔ 5% said that they interact with brands in order to purchase a product or avail of a service
✔ 30% said that they interact with brands on social media to get information on products, services or special offers
✔ 36% said that they interact with brands on social media to enter competitions in the hope of winning free products or services

Q10. For the following statements, please select your level of agreement or disagreement.

I interact with brands…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For discounts, special offers or to enter competitions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="chart1.png" alt="Bar chart showing responses to Q10" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To feel valued as a customer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="chart2.png" alt="Bar chart showing responses to Q10" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
My friends are fans

- Strongly Agree: 2
- Agree: 13
- Neither agree nor disagree: 11
- Disagree: 11
- Strongly Disagree: 5

My friends recommended it

- Strongly Disagree: 12%
- Disagree: 19%
- Neither agree nor disagree: 48%
- Agree: 14%
- Strongly Agree: 7%

For new product announcements

- Strongly Disagree: 5
- Disagree: 4
- Neither agree nor disagree: 5
- Agree: 18
- Strongly Agree: 10
The above question details the reasons why respondents interact with brands on social media. The main findings for this question were:

- 64% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they interact with brands for discounts, special offers or to enter competitions
- 33% of respondents either disagreed or strongly disagreed that they interact with brands on social media to feel valued as a customer, while 30% express some level of agreement
35% of respondents expressed some level of agreement while 38% expressed some level of disagreement that they interact with brands because their friends are fans

55% of respondents either agreed or strongly agreed that they interact with a brand because their friends recommended it

65% of respondents interact with brands for product announcements and 67% interact with brands for sale announcements.

50% of respondents agree that they interact with brands on social media because they are a loyal customer offline

These findings both compliment and expand on the findings in the secondary research. It is clear in the literature review that Generation Y engages with brands on social media but the reasons for this interaction, although identified in the literature review, still remain vague. The findings from this study have expanded on these reasons for interaction.

Q11. Please rate the following statements regarding your interaction with brands on social media.
I express my opinions of brands through social media

- 33% Always
- 15% Sometimes
- 52% Never

I use social media to recommend brands to friends/family

- Always, 7
- Sometimes, 19
- Never, 16

I use social media to get information about brands

- Always, 11
- Sometimes, 27
- Never, 4
The findings for Q11 indicate that:

✓ 50% of respondents contribute to discussions about a brand on social media
✓ 67% of respondents use social media to express their opinions of brands
✓ 61% of respondents use social media to recommend brands to friends or family
✓ 90% said they go to social media when looking for information about brands
✓ 54% said they use social media to complain about brands

4.7 Objective 2 – Findings

This part of the study will involve analysing the data and answering objective 1 which is as follows: To examine how engagement with brands through social media has had an influence on Generation Y’s buying behaviour.

Q12. Please rate how each of the following statement affects your intention to purchase the brands you follow on social media.
**Recommendations from friends or family**

- Definitely would buy: 7
- Probably would buy: 21
- Might or might not buy: 7
- Probably would not buy: 5
- Definitely would not buy: 2

**The availability to purchase on the social media page**

- Definitely would not buy: 4
- Probably would not buy: 14
- Might or might not buy: 11
- Probably would buy: 6
- Definitely would buy: 7

**Easy access from the social media page to brand’s own website**

- Definitely would not buy: 4
- Probably would not buy: 3
- Might or might not buy: 7
- Probably would buy: 23
- Definitely would buy: 5
These statistics highlight that Generation Y are significantly influenced by each of the factors discussed. It is clear that recommendations from friends and family members encourage buying behaviour as well as easy access to platforms from which the products can be purchased. Positive feedback, personalized messages and regular updates are also factors.

**Q13. Have you ever used social media to search for information on a brand before considering buying that brand? (Please explain your answer)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looked at other consumers’ comments/reviews</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checked for deals/special offers</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checked for information e.g. prices, availability etc.</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When the respondents were asked if they had ever used social media to search for information on brands before buying a brand, the results were as follows:

- ✔️ 29% said they have never used social media to search for information
- ✔️ 31% said that they have looked at other consumers’ comments or reviews for information
- ✔️ 23% said they have checked social media for deals and special offers on brands
- ✔️ 17% said that they have used social media to check for information on brands such as prices and availability etc.

**Q14. Do you read other consumers’ online comments about brands that you follow or interact with on social media?**

When asked if they read other consumers’ online comments about brands that they interact with, 76% said that they do and 24% said that they do not.
Q15. Please explain the above answer. If answered Yes, please go to Q16 and if answered No please go to Q17.

- 24% of respondents do not read other consumers’ comments
- 21% of respondents said that they read other comments to see if a consumer had a positive or negative experience with a brand
- 31% of respondents said that they read other comments to see if the brand lives up to its expectations
- 24% of respondents said that they read other comments to see if a brand is worth the money

Q16. If ‘Yes’, would a negative comment affect your decision to...

Interact with this brand in the future?

- Strongly Agree: 1
- Agree: 3
- Neither agree nor disagree: 10
- Disagree: 14
- Strongly Disagree: 0
When asked if a negative comment would affect their decision to interact with a brand in the future, 56% of respondents said that it would, 13% said that it would not and the remaining said that it neither would nor wouldn’t affect their decision.

Furthermore, when asked if a negative comment would affect their decision to purchase a brand, 60% of respondents said that it would and 31% said that it neither would nor would not. The remaining 9% said that it would not.

These findings show that Generation Y are heavily impacted by the experiences of others regarding brands. This supports the information discussed in the literature review that Generation Y are impacted by their peers.

Q17. If you seen that a friend had posted or tweeted about a positive experience they had with a brand, would that encourage you to also go and purchase the brand?

66% of respondents said that a positive post or tweet by a friend about a brand would encourage them to go and purchase that brand. 17% said that they would not and the remaining 17% said that they did not know
Q19. Are there any other elements of social media which may encourage you to purchase a brand?

When the respondents were asked if there were any other elements of social media which may encourage them to purchase, the main findings were:

- More competitions and special offers
- Celebrity endorsements through social media pages
- More You Tube videos about brands
- More engagement with customers
Chapter 5: Conclusions and Recommendations
5.1 Conclusions

To conclude this study, it is clear from the primary research that the hypothesis has been proven to be correct. The data shows that Generation Y are actively engaging with brands on a regular basis. Such engagement includes like/following brands, contributing to discussions, recommending brands to friends or family and actively searching for information before purchasing the brand.

The data also shows that factors such as peer recommendations, discounts, special offers and positive reviews all influence Generation Y’s purchasing behaviour.

5.2 Recommendations

I would make the following recommendations for future researchers taking on a project in this particular area:

☑ Ensure that you have a sufficient sample size as I felt that 50 was too small
☑ Be sure to exhaust all possible secondary resources before conducting your primary research
☑ Allow a sufficient amount of time to conduct the study
References


Appendix A: Research Designs
# Table 1: Choosing a research design

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Exploratory</th>
<th>Descriptive</th>
<th>Causal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data type:</strong></td>
<td>Qualitative</td>
<td>Qualitative or</td>
<td>Quantitative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>quantitative</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Aims:</strong></td>
<td>To explore, chart,</td>
<td>To describe, quantify</td>
<td>To establish cause</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>identify, define</td>
<td></td>
<td>and effect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Nature of</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Known associations</td>
<td>Known exactly,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>variables:**</td>
<td></td>
<td>and documented</td>
<td>clearly supported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>**Degree of</td>
<td>Relatively little</td>
<td>Some to extensive</td>
<td>High mathematical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>formality:**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Data:</strong></td>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
<td>Literature review</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expert survey</td>
<td>Surveys</td>
<td>Expert survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Focus groups</td>
<td>Observations</td>
<td>Experiments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>In-depth interviews</td>
<td>Panels</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Projective techniques</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sample size:</strong></td>
<td>Small</td>
<td>Small to large</td>
<td>Large</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Question types:</strong></td>
<td>Probing</td>
<td>Some probing</td>
<td>No probing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Response driven</td>
<td>Interviewer driven</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Hypothesis:</strong></td>
<td>Generates, develops</td>
<td>Tests and/or</td>
<td>Tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>generates, develops</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: Domegan and Fleming (2007, p.69)*
Appendix B: Questionnaire
Brand Engagement on Social Media

Are you Male or Female?

- Male
- Female

Please confirm that you are between the ages of 18-30.

- Yes
- No

Are you a regular user of social media? (If no, please do not complete)

- Yes
- No

Please select the devices that you use. (Tick all that apply)

- Smartphone
- iPad/Tablet
- Laptop
- Computer

How often would you use social media? (Tick one option only)

- Several times a day
- Once a day
- A few times a week
- Once a week
- Once a month
- Once every few months
Please select the social media that you engage in with 1 being the one you engage in the most to 10 being the least. (Drag and drop each one to their place)
Please select the reasons why you engage in social media. (Tick all that apply)

- [ ] To meet new people
- [ ] To connect with friends and family
- [ ] To join/follow groups of interest
- [ ] Entertainment
- [ ] Seeking information
- [ ] Sharing information
- [ ] To express your opinions
- [ ] To keep up with what other people are doing (friends, family, celebrities, athletes, etc.)

Have you ever interacted with a brand on social media?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] No
Please explain the above answer.

For the following statements, please select your level of agreement or disagreement. I interact with brands on social media.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>For discounts, special offers or to enter competitions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To feel valued as a customer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends are fans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My friends recommended it</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For new product announcements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For sale announcements</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a loyal customer offline</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please rate the following statements regarding your interaction with brands on social media.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Always</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Never</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I actively contribute to conversations or discussions about a brand on social media</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I express my opinions of brands through social media</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use social media to recommend brands to friends/family</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use social media to get information about brands</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use social media to complain about brands</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
<td>○</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please rate how each of the following statements affects your intention to purchase the brands you follow on social media.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Definitely would not buy</th>
<th>Probably would not buy</th>
<th>Might or might not buy</th>
<th>Probably would buy</th>
<th>Definitely would buy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regular updates about upcoming products or special offers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personalized messages about upcoming products or special offers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative comments/feedback from other consumers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive comments/feedback from other consumers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations from friends or family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The availability to purchase on the social media page</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy access from the social media page to brand’s own website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other, please specify


Have you ever used social media to search for information on a brand before considering buying that brand? (Please explain your answer)

Do you read other consumers' online comments about brands that you follow or interact with on social media?

- Yes
- No

Please explain the above answer.
If answered Yes, please go to Q16 and if answered No please go to Q17.

If 'Yes', would a negative comment affect your decision to...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Neither Agree or Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interact with this brand in the future?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase this brand in the future?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
If you seen that a friend had posted or tweeted about a positive experience they had with a brand, would that encourage you to also go and purchase the brand?

Select answer...

Are you happy to continue engaging with brands through social media? (Please explain why)

Are there any other elements of social media which may encourage you to purchase a brand?

In your opinion, do you think that nowadays it is important for brands to have a presence on social media and why?

Character Count 1000
Appendix C: Coding
Q1. Are you male or female?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Male (1)</th>
<th>Female (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q2. Please confirm that you are between the ages of 18-30

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes (1)</th>
<th>No (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q3. Are you a regular user of social media? (If no, please do not complete)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes (1)</th>
<th>No (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q4. Please select the devices that you use. (Tick all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Smartphone (1)</th>
<th>iPad/Tablet (2)</th>
<th>Laptop (3)</th>
<th>Computer (4)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q5. How often would you use social media? (Tick one option only)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Several times a day (1)</th>
<th>42</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Once a day (2)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few times a week (3)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a week (4)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once a month (5)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Once every few months (6)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q6. Please select the social media that you engage in with 1 being the one you engage in the most to 10 being the least. (Drag and drop each one to their place)

**Top 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social Media</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Facebook</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YouTube</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instagram</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LinkedIn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q7. Please select the reasons why you engage in social media. (Tick all that apply)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To meet new people</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To connect with friends and family</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To join/follow groups of interest</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Entertainment</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seeking information</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing information</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To express your opinions</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To keep up with what other people are doing (friends, family, celebrities, athletes etc.)</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q8. Have you ever interacted with a brand on social media?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interaction</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q9. Please explain the above answer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To enter competitions</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get information on products, services or special offers</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To purchase a product or avail of a service</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liked or followed a brand but don’t interact</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never interacted with a brand on social media</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q10. For the following statements, please select your level of agreement or disagreement.

I interact with brands...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For discounts, special offers or to enter competitions</th>
<th>Strongly disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>To feel valued as a customer</th>
<th>Strongly disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My friends are fans</th>
<th>Strongly disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My friends recommended it</th>
<th>Strongly disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For new product announcements</th>
<th>Strongly disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For sale announcements</th>
<th>Strongly disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I am a loyal customer offline</th>
<th>Strongly disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q11. Please rate the following statements regarding your interaction with brands on social media.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I actively contribute to conversations or discussions about a brand on social media</th>
<th>Always (1)</th>
<th>Sometimes (2)</th>
<th>Never (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I express my opinions of brands through social media</th>
<th>Always (1)</th>
<th>Sometimes (2)</th>
<th>Never (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I use social media to recommend brands to friends/family</th>
<th>Always (1)</th>
<th>Sometimes (2)</th>
<th>Never (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I use social media to get information about brands</th>
<th>Always (1)</th>
<th>Sometimes (2)</th>
<th>Never (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I use social media to complain about brands</th>
<th>Always (1)</th>
<th>Sometimes (2)</th>
<th>Never (3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q12. Please rate how each of the following statement affects your intention to purchase the brands you follow on social media.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Regular updates about upcoming products or special offers</th>
<th>Definitely would not buy (1)</th>
<th>Probably would not buy (2)</th>
<th>Might or might not buy (3)</th>
<th>Probably would buy (4)</th>
<th>Definitely would buy (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personalized messages about upcoming products or special offers</th>
<th>Definitely would not buy (1)</th>
<th>Probably would not buy (2)</th>
<th>Might or might not buy (3)</th>
<th>Probably would buy (4)</th>
<th>Definitely would buy (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Definitely would not buy (1)</td>
<td>Probably would not buy (2)</td>
<td>Might or might not buy (3)</td>
<td>Probably would buy (4)</td>
<td>Definitely would buy (5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative comments/feedback from other consumers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive comments/feedback from other consumers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations from friends or family</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The availability to purchase on the social media page</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easy access from the social media page to brand’s own website</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q13. Have you ever used social media to search for information on a brand before considering buying that brand? (Please explain your answer)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No (1)</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Looked at other consumers’ comments/reviews (2)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checked for deals/special offers (3)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Checked for information e.g. prices, availability etc. (4)</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q14. Do you read other consumers’ online comments about brands that you follow or interact with on social media?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes (1)</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No (2)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q15. Please explain the above answer. If answered Yes, please go to Q16 and if answered No please go to Q17.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do not read other consumers’ comments (1)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To see if a consumer had a positive or negative experience (2)</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To see if the brand lives up to its expectations (3)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To see if the brand is worth the money (4)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q16. If ‘Yes’, would a negative comment affect your decision to...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision</th>
<th>Strongly disagree (1)</th>
<th>Disagree (2)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (3)</th>
<th>Agree (4)</th>
<th>Strongly Agree (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interact with this brand in the future?</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchase this brand in the future?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q17. If you seen that a friend had posted or tweeted about a positive experience they had with a brand, would that encourage you to also go and purchase the brand?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Definitely would purchase (1)</th>
<th>Probably would purchase (2)</th>
<th>Don’t know (3)</th>
<th>Probably would not purchase (4)</th>
<th>Definitely would not purchase (5)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q18. Are you happy to continue engaging with brands through social media? (Please explain why)

- No. I don’t usually engage with brands through social media (1) | 5
- I would consider it (2) | 3
- Yes. It is quick and easy to keep up to date (3) | 18
- Yes. Can access all types of information in one place (4) | 16

Q19. Are there any other elements of social media which may encourage you to purchase a brand?

- No (1) | 22
- More weekly competitions/special offers (2) | 9
- Celebrities endorsing the brand through their social media pages (3) | 2
- More You Tube videos about brands (4) | 4
- More engagement with consumers (5) | 5

Q20. In your opinion, do you think that nowadays it is important for brands to have a presence on social media and why?

- Yes | 42
- Easier way of interacting with customers (1) | 27
- Keeps brands in the public eye (2) | 5
- It’s a more effective way of advertising | 7
- Allows consumers to easily express their opinions | 3
Q21. Currently, not all brands are engaging with consumers through social media, do you think that this will soon change?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes (1)</th>
<th>No (2)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>34</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q22. Do you have any advice for brands which may be planning to interact with consumers through social media in the future?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advice</th>
<th>Votes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ensure the information is up-to-date and relates to in-store offers</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Try not to over sell</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make it easy for consumers to interact</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lots of competitions, special offers and discounts</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>