

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTION AND CONTENT FORMAT IN ENHANCING BRAND ENGAGEMENT

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Abstract

This study explores the effectiveness of content formats on Instagram and TikTok platforms that affect target audience insight, reach, and the followers of Magical Stories, a newly established art brand specializing in cute coloring fashion books. The objective is to enhance brand awareness and create content that resonates with the target audience's insight. Using a quantitative approach, the research analyzes 36 pieces of content (72 artworks) categorized into tutorials, collaborations, product showcases, freebies, promotions, and storytelling. These were posted on Instagram and TikTok from November 2023 to April 2024. The findings indicate that TikTok outperforms Instagram in both reach and follower growth, especially among females aged 18-24. Younger audiences aged 18-34 respond mostly to creative, interactive content such as collaborations and storytelling, while those aged 35-54 prefer promotional content highlighting product benefits. Notably, TikTok also attracts a significant male audience, likely due to family-related engagement. The study suggests that Gen Z and Baby Boomers respond best to tutorial content types by Gen Z responds to authentic, engaging content, while Baby Boomers prefer family-oriented and accessible features. TikTok's broad reach across 18-34 and growing interest among users 55+, highlight the potential of TikTok and its increasing popularity among older audiences. The study recommends creating personalized content for each demographic based on their preference interest content type data, exploration of other social media platforms, and staying updated with content trends.

Keywords: Instagram, Tiktok, Content Format, Target Audience, Brand Awareness

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Introduction

Social media significantly influences daily life, becoming nearly as essential as basic necessities. By 2022, 4.59 billion people actively use social media, averaging 2.5 hours per day (Mohsin, 2023). Social media usage is expected to grow annually, with nearly half of the users engaging to stay connected, 37% to pass time, and 34.5% to follow the news; about 25.5% use it to find activities, while 25.3% use it for product discovery (Gaubys, 2023).

Many believe that selling on major platforms alone suffices. The projected global e-commerce sales reaching \$7.96 trillion by 2027 highlight the value of these marketplaces (Global Ecommerce Sales Growth Report, 2024). Despite the convenience and large user base of e-commerce giants, niche brands may struggle. Relying solely on these platforms can increase competition and trigger price wars, negatively impacting profits for specialized products (Tian et al., 2018). For instance, Amazon, a leading e-commerce platform, offers limited customer demographic data, challenging niche brands in personalizing their marketing efforts.

Magical Stories, a Thai independent publisher specializing in anime-style craft books, was selected as a case study to analyze how niche brands might use social media to overcome the issues faced by similar small brands. Since 2022, they have relied on Amazon, but the lack of customer data on the platform complicates audience targeting. Despite Amazon's massive reach, with

independent sellers in the U.S. collectively selling over 4.5 billion items in 2023, averaging 8,600 sales per minute (Dharmesh et al., 2024) emphasizes the need for alternative engagement channels for niche brands like Magical Stories that the brands should leverage social media for consumer data collection and targeted engagement (Page, 2003). As Voorveld (2019) states, social media allows brands to communicate directly with audiences and gain insights. Moreover, its analytics and metrics is an aspect to evaluate as it can help determine whether the content is perceived effectively, which can guide future strategies (Castillo et al., 2021). Kemp (2024) notes that Instagram and TikTok are among the most popular platforms, with Instagram engaging users aged 16-34, and TikTok drawing younger users.

This study focuses on two metrics of social media, including reach, unique users who view content, and engagement, likes, comments, and shares, to evaluate Magical Stories' digital performance and content effectiveness. The study hypothesizes that Magical Stories' primary audience, ages 6-12, is reached via parents in Generations X and Y. Instagram may effectively reach these parents, while TikTok could engage younger users. Additionally, video storytelling may maximize reach and engagement, aligning with Lind (2020) on video content's ability to foster analysis and expression. These hypotheses aim to guide niche publishers toward a more robust digital strategy beyond e-commerce reliance.

Objectives

1. To study the target audience's insights from content formats on Instagram and TikTok platforms.
2. To study the effectiveness of content formats on Instagram and TikTok platforms that affect the reach and engagement of Magical Stories.
3. To study the effectiveness of content formats on Instagram and TikTok platforms that affect the followers of Magical Stories.

Literature Review

Strategic Planning in Digital Marketing

Strategic marketing requires understanding customer demand, creating products or services to meet it, and persuading customers to buy. SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) assesses a brand's position and improvement areas. Porter's Competitive Strategy, developed by Michael Porter, provides a framework for sustainable competition through cost leadership or differentiation of products (Porter, 1985). Identifying a brand's Unique Selling Point (USP) helps it stand out, while clear marketing goals and actionable KPIs drive measurable success.

Content Marketing

“Content marketing” was coined in 1996 by journalist John Oppedahl (Emilio, n.d.), while “digital content marketing” emerged in 2004 by Koiso-Kanttila (Rowley, 2008). Though digital media shifted the audience, both strategies focus on building brand personality, loyalty, engagement, and awareness (Huang,

2023). According to Du Plessis (2017), content strategies have six components. It involves selecting the right media channels, matching content to brand goals, creating a brand identity through engaging storytelling, triggering organic conversion, developing educational and entertaining messaging, and finally, motivating audiences to share, co-create, and support the brand. There are several content formats nowadays, especially in the digital era, interestingly, according to Semrush's State of Content Marketing 2023 report, it mentions that video-type content gains the best performance (Paruch et al., 2024).

Content Types

Creating content that resonates with audiences along with content that shows the brand value is essential for effective content marketing (Ho et al., 2020). High-quality content formats are interactive, engaging, and educational rather than directly promoting products (Kittaka et al., 2022). However, the content creator must also look through feedback and social media monitoring. Casais (2022) analyzes social media content type practices into 5 categories.

1. Providing updates about the new product to foster engagement and interest.
2. Content based on customers' feedback. This allows consumers to vote and leave comments and suggestions.
3. Providing company offerings about promotions and loyalty rewards.
4. Discuss their products or services like how-to, tutorials, and issues.
5. Following up strategies and analyzing followers and trends.

Product Life Cycle

The product life cycle, introduced in 1950 (Business Bliss FZE, 2023), was explained by Reymond Verner as four stages: introduction, growth, maturity, and decline.

Introduction: The focus is on building awareness through promotion and advertising to establish the brand (Kopp, 2024).

Growth: Demand rises, requiring increased production as competition intensifies (Kopp, 2024).

Maturity: Sales slow and competition heightens. Businesses should sustain market share by adapting to trends and targeting similar audiences.

Decline: Sales drop and market share decreases. Promotional tactics, like competitive pricing, can help clear remaining inventory.

Target Audience

A target audience is crucial for business success, as it identifies those likely interested in products or services. Understanding this group aids in content creation, with each generation having unique preferences (Kotler et al., 2021).

Baby Boomers (1946-1964): Favor clear,

informative content with family-oriented aspects (Slootweg & Rowson, 2018).

Generation X (1965-1980): Values independence and digital content like emails and infographics, focusing on promotions and loyalty (Robinson, 2022).

Generation Y (1981-1996): Prefers personalized products and is highly influenced by social media, friends, and influencers (Dabija & Băbuț, 2019).

Generation Z (1997-2009): Seeks authenticity, appreciates data-sharing for customization, and values direct interaction.

Generation Alpha: This screen-heavy generation is growing up with AI, consuming substantial digital content from a young age.

Magical Stories

Magical Stories, an independent publisher founded in 2022, specializes in anime-style coloring books, sold exclusively on Amazon. As it is in the introduction stage of the product life cycle, the brand faces low awareness and limited marketing content. Additionally, being a single-artist brand, it has yet to prioritize communication, which is crucial for an artist's success, as noted by Carradini (2019).

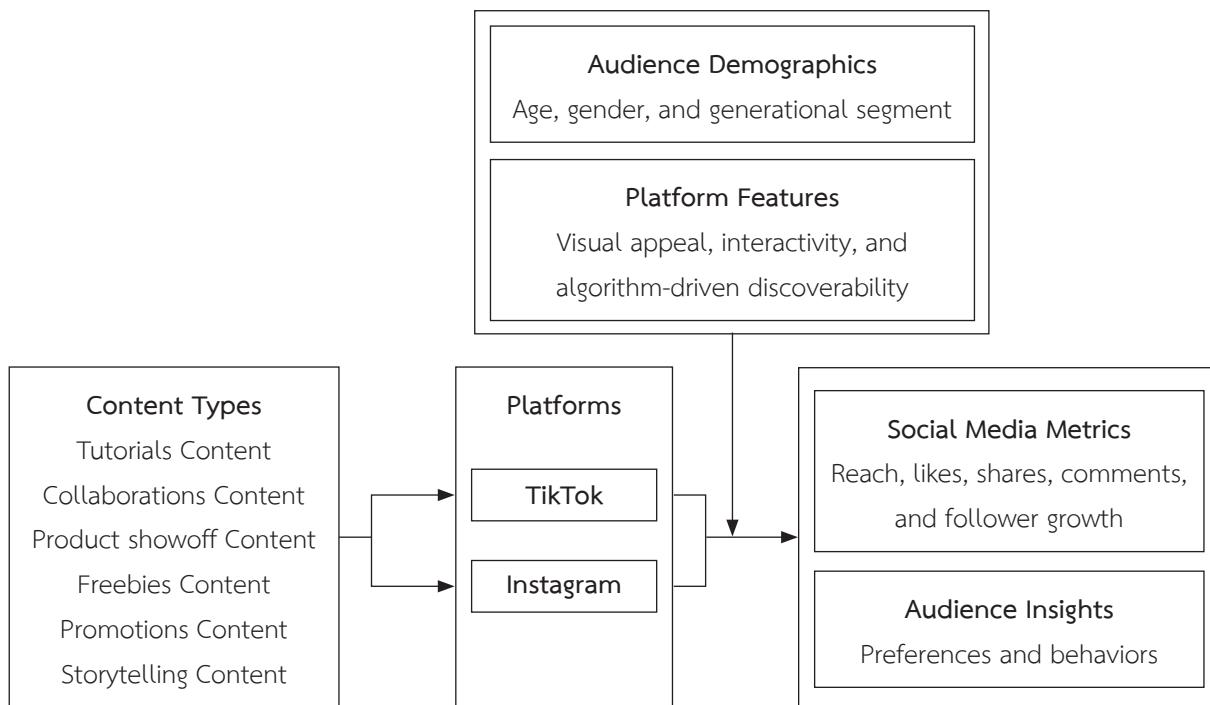


Figure 1 Research Framework

The above research framework shows the relationship between variables. Input variables include six content types that are developed by using practice from Casais (2022) and Du Plessis (2017) and focus on Instagram and TikTok. Moderating variables include audience demographics and platform features like visual interface and algorithms. Output variables assess impact through social media metrics and audience preferences, highlighting key drivers of engagement and content strategy.

Methodology

This quantitative study aims to develop content strategies to engage Magical Stories' target audience. Independent variables include Instagram still posts (1:1), Reel videos (9:16), TikTok videos (9:16), and six content types. Dependent variables are audience

insights (followers) reach and engagement over a six-month period. Each platform will feature 36 content, totaling 72 artworks. The content types include tutorials that provide step-by-step art and craft guides, collaborations featuring mix-and-match ideas with other collections, and product showcases highlighting various designs. Additionally, there are freebies announcing free products, promotions for new arrivals and seasonal themes, and storytelling that creates narrative scenarios using doll designs.

Data Collection Method

This experiment will analyze Instagram posts, Reels, and TikTok content from November 2023 to April 2024. Content will be published at times based on prime-time analytics reports from Klug et al. (2021). Each platform's ad campaign will share identical budgets and timelines. Data will be collected

7 days after each post at the same time, aiming for a KPI of 100 reaches, the minimum required by Instagram to analyze audience age. The experiment will use the same posting strategy across all 72 artworks, with consistent formats, sizes, and timing on each platform, ensuring validity through verified analytics tools like Meta Business Suite and TikTok Analytics. Data collection includes reach (unique accounts viewing a post) and engagement metrics such as likes, shares, comments, followers, saves (Instagram), and favorites (TikTok). The data will be analyzed by summarizing performance, comparing formats and types to identify trends, calculating engagement rates and gender percentages, and visualizing results with bar and pie charts.

Limitations

The study focusing on a single niche publisher may limit broader applicability across industries. Unmet platform KPIs could also affect result clarity, as a new publisher, Magical Stories faces challenges in meeting this KPI due to a small fan base. Additionally, both platforms restrict data collection for users under 13. Furthermore, the algorithmic differences between TikTok and Instagram may significantly influence the outcomes.

Results

To collect demographic data (gender and age) on Instagram, content must achieve a minimum reach of 100 impressions; otherwise, it is marked as N.A. (not available).

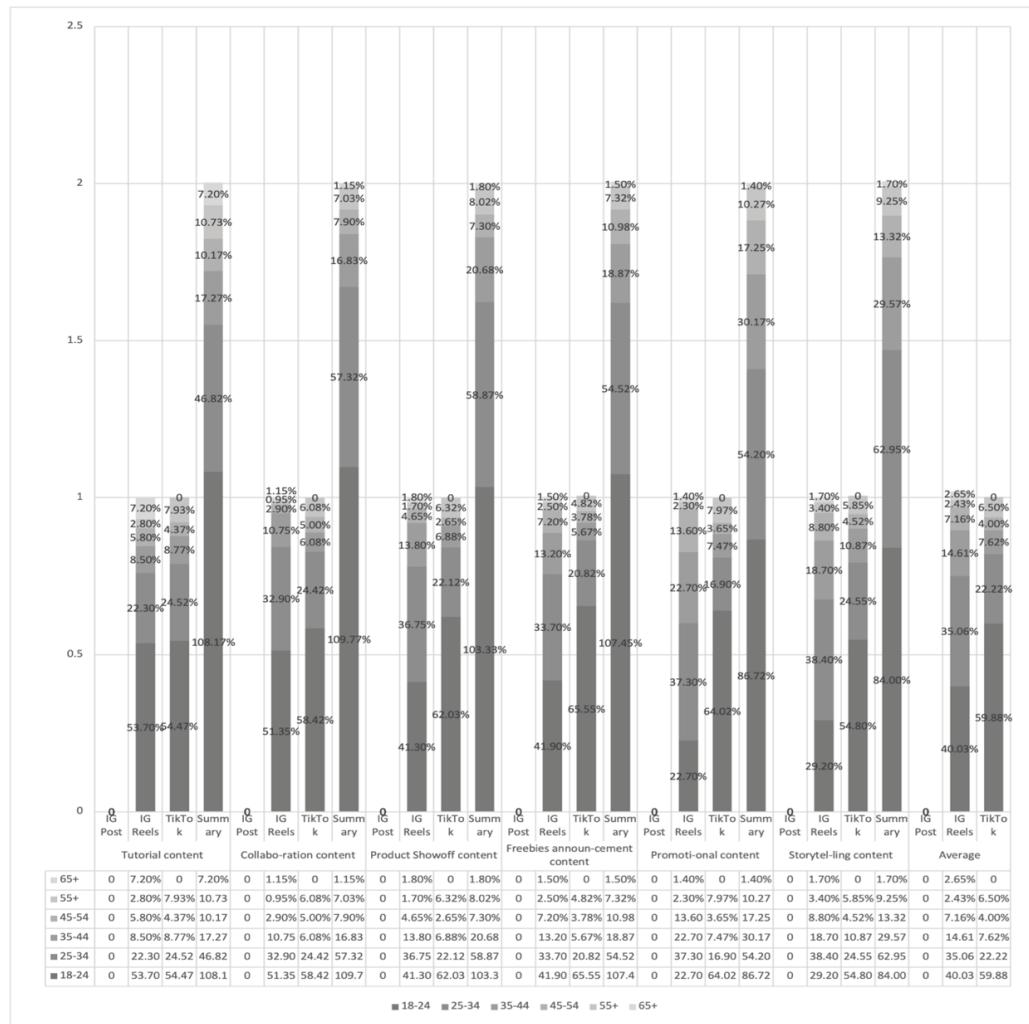


Figure 2 Average Target Audience Six Content Types by Age

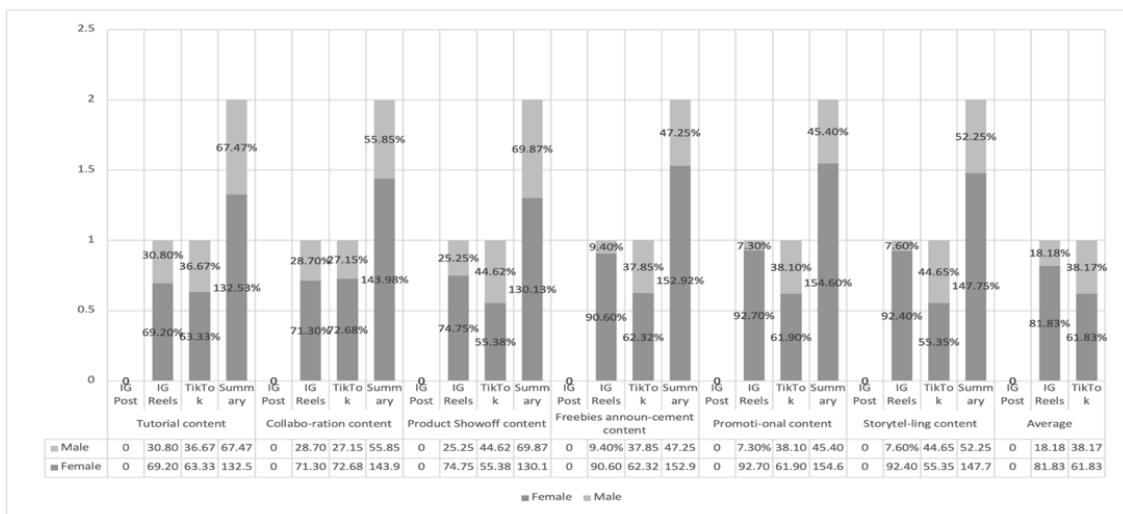


Figure 3 Average Target Audience Six Content Types by Gender

The data shows a higher female audience on both Instagram and TikTok. The 18-24 age group is most prominent, with 40.3% on Instagram and 59.88% on TikTok, followed by the 25-34 and 35-44 groups. Notably, TikTok's 55+ audience is slightly higher than its 45-54 group, almost competing with 35-44, while Instagram's audience decreases steadily by age. Instagram posts in all content types are marked as 0 or N.A., and only boosted Reels yield enough audience data for analysis. Age-based content preferences vary: 18-24

favors collaboration content, 25-34 prefer storytelling, 35-44 and 45-54 respond to promotional content, and 55+ show interest in tutorial content.

Content Formats Effectiveness on Instagram and Tiktok Platforms Which Affect to Reach on Magical Stories.

By tracking the reach across various types of content, Magical Stories can empirically identify the kind of content that resonates most effectively with their target audience from the reach data.

Table 1 Average Reach of Six Content Types

Types of Content	Instagram		TikTok Reach	Sum
	Post Reach	Reels Reach		
Tutorial Content	11	787	2,054	2,852
Collaborations Content	16	117	2,040	2,172
Product Showoff Content	14	128	1,499	1,641
Freebies Announcement Content	11	134	2,065	2,210
Promotional Content	11	500	3,353	3,864
Storytelling Content	10	697	2,153	2,860

TikTok outperforms Instagram in reach across all content types, with promotional content leading at a total reach of 3,864, followed closely by storytelling and tutorial

content, both with similar reach. Freebies announcement, collaboration, and product showoff content follow in reach totals.

Table 2 Boosted Contents on Instagram and TikTok

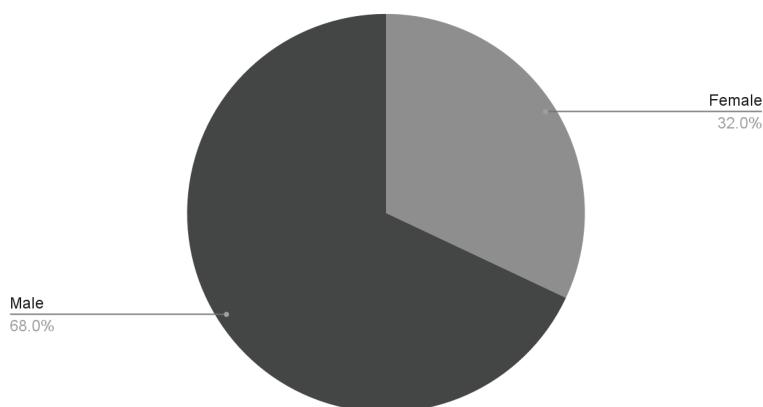
Types of content	Instagram			TikTok	
	Post Reach	Reels Reach	Engage	Reach	Engage
Tutorial Content	22	4,636	12	10,600	296
Collaborations Content	5	515	10	11,100	232
Product Showoff Content	51	653	34	7,900	274
Freebies Announcement Content	7	611	14	11,400	280
Promotional Content	19	2,913	16	18,700	6
Storytelling Content	20	3,450	35	11,400	289

Across both platforms with identical 100 baht daily ad spend, content performance varied. On Instagram, storytelling and product showcase content led engagement with 35 and 34 interactions, while collaboration content scored lowest at 10. TikTok's promotional content achieved the highest reach but minimal engagement, with freebies

and storytelling showing promising interaction potential.

Followers on Magical Stories

From November 2023 to April 2024, TikTok followers grew to 828. TikTok analytics provide insights into follower demographics, as illustrated in the figure below.

**Figure 4** TikTok Followers by Gender on Magical Stories

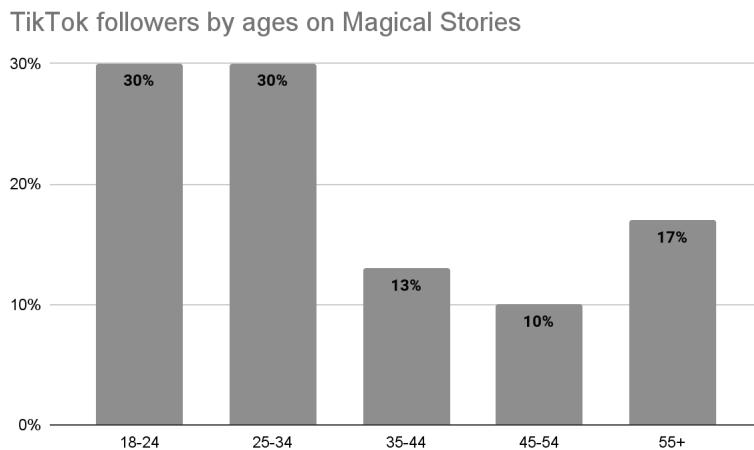


Figure 5 TikTok Followers by Ages on Magical Stories

On TikTok, Magical Stories' followers are a total of 828 followers, predominantly male (68%), with the 18-24 and 25-34 age groups being the largest (30% each). The oldest age group follows closely at 17%, with 34-44 and 45-54 age groups at 13% and 10%, respectively. Storytelling content with video formats on TikTok gains the most followers. In contrast, Instagram saw minimal growth, gaining only 37 followers over six months despite posting 36 pieces of content and 72 artworks, making the sample too small for insightful analysis.

Discussion

Video content formats, such as Instagram reels and TikTok videos, outperform Instagram image posts, aligning with media richness theory on the effectiveness of platform-specific content communication (Shahbaznezhad et al., 2020). Both platforms attract primarily females aged 18-24, consistent with Uses and gratifications theory, which explains younger audiences' preference for entertainment and interaction (Akello, 2024). TikTok's broader

appeal among the 55+ age group highlights digital inclusivity trends and older adults' media adoption (Yang et al., 2022).

TikTok achieves superior across content types due to its behavior-driven algorithm, while Instagram benefits from a network-focused algorithm (Barta et al., 2022), enhancing storytelling content type within established social circles. Instagram users aged 18-24 prefer collaboration content, while older audiences favor promotional and tutorial content, supporting findings on practical content's appeal to older demographics (Nimrod, 2016). TikTok promotional content achieves broad reach but limited engagement, whereas storytelling and freebie announcements resonate strongly with younger audiences.

Conclusions

Analysis shows TikTok outperforms Instagram for Magical Stories, with the 9:16 video format being most effective on both platforms. TikTok primarily attracts females aged 18-34, aligning with Kolotouchkina et al. (2023), who found younger audiences prefer

creative content like collaborations and storytelling. Audiences aged 35-54 favor promotional content highlighting product benefits, Supported by Van Kerckhove et al. (2022) and Arnett et al. (2020), older consumers, particularly those aged 45-54, value detailed, practical content that aligns with their mid-career priorities. TikTok's algorithm excels with Baby Boomers for tutorial content, likely due to family-oriented messaging (Kotler et al., 2021). TikTok has more male followers, reflecting Krasnova et al. (2017), which found men prioritize information-seeking, while women focus on close ties. Instagram covers a broader age range but sees declining reach in older demographics.

TikTok's content should make efforts on younger audiences (18-34) and seek more opportunities from older audiences (55+), leveraging TikTok's algorithm to achieve wide reach with promotional–seasonal–up-to-date,

and trends content. Instagram, on the other hand, should be used for engaging storytelling and product showoff content aimed at users aged 18-34, with a focus on creative story applied and product strength. Tutorial content is recommended on both platforms, as studies show high rates of both reach and engagement.

This research highlights the necessity of platform-specific strategies that accommodate the various age groups. In the future, campaigns should prioritize TikTok for reaching while using Instagram's strengths for targeted demographic groups. This study emphasizes the importance of adapting content strategy based on platform strengths and audience preferences. This study provides marketers with valuable insights to prioritize platforms, content formats, and content types tailored to each demographic, enabling more targeted and effective strategies in the future.

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