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Department Marketing & Sales

Master thesis

A contemporary cross-sectional insight into the usage and relevance of Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok as platforms for marketing consumption among generations X, Y, and Z within the socio-cultural sphere of Graz

executed at the Department Marketing & Sales

by

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Declaration of honour

I declare on my honour that I

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Patricia Hammer

Abstract

Soziale Medien sind kein neuartiges Phänomen mehr. Während sowohl Einzelpersonen als auch Unternehmen weltweit sie seit über einem Jahrzehnt nutzen und einsetzen, sollten wir uns folgende faszinierende Frage stellen: Hat die Stadt oder der Ort, in dem der Nutzer lebt, einen kulturellen Einfluss darauf, wie sie oder er verschiedene soziale Medienplattformen nutzt und mit ihnen interagiert, insbesondere aus einer Marketingperspektive? Diese Masterarbeit befasst sich mit der Frage, ob der soziokulturelle Raum von Graz einen Einfluss auf den Konsum von Social Media-Marketing bei seinen Bewohnern hat, indem sie die Dynamiken und Interaktionen seiner generationalen Demografie (Fokus auf die Generationen X, Y und Z) untersucht. Dies wird insbesondere durch die Betrachtung ihrer Interaktionen mit den vier beliebtesten sozialen Plattformen in Österreich, nämlich Facebook, Instagram, YouTube und TikTok, realisiert. Die Arbeit beginnt mit den Definitionen der Generationen X, Y und Z, gefolgt von Darstellungen und Erklärungen der ausgewählten sozialen Medien, einschließlich einer Erklärung des Social Media-Phänomens, sowie der Nutzung sozialer Medien unter den genannten Generationen, die durch Statistiken unterstützt wird. Anschließend wurde versucht, die Kultur Österreichs sowie die Kultur von Graz zu definieren, um die Basis für die Arbeit zu legen. Darüber hinaus wurde ein tieferer Kontext bezüglich des Verbraucherverhaltens und des Einflusses der Kultur auf Konsum und Marketing bereitgestellt. Die für diese Masterarbeit gewählte Methodik umfasste qualitative Forschungsmethoden, einschließlich Diskussionen in Fokusgruppen und halbstrukturierten Interviews. Detailliert erklärt wird ebenfalls der Prozess der Datenerhebung und Datenanalyse. Die Ergebnisse der qualitativen Forschung zeigten, dass der soziokulturelle Raum von Graz laut den meisten Teilnehmern einen Einfluss auf die generationelle Nutzung sozialer Medien und deren Interaktionen mit auf sozialen Medien basierenden Marketingpraktiken haben kann. Weitere Einflussfaktoren werden zudem ausführlich erklärt. Diese Studie zeigte zudem nicht nur, dass Instagram das am meisten genutzte soziale Medium unter allen einbezogenen Generationen ist, sondern auch andere bemerkenswerte Erkenntnisse.

Keywords: soziale Medien, Generationen X, Y und Z, Marketingkonsum, Kultur, Graz

Social media is no longer a novel phenomenon. Whilst both individuals and companies around the world have been utilising and employing it for over a decade, the intriguing question to ask ourselves is: Does the city or location in which the user resides have a cultural impact on how they use and interact with different social media platforms, particularly from a marketing perspective?

This master thesis deals with the question as to whether the socio-cultural sphere of Graz has an influence on the social media marketing consumption of its residents by inquiring into the dynamics and interactions of its generational demographics (i.e. focusing on generations X, Y, and Z). This is effectuated by inquiring particularly on their interactions with the four most popular social media platforms in Austria, namely, Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok.

This thesis begins with providing definitions for generations X, Y, and Z, followed by depictions and explanations of the selected social media platforms, including an explanation of the social media phenomenon, as well as social media usage among the aforementioned generations, as per supported by the statistics. Subsequently, an attempt was made to define the culture of Austria as well as of Graz, in order to set the scene. Furthermore, greater underlying context was provided with respect to consumer behaviour and the impact of culture on consumption and marketing. The methodology chosen for this master thesis incorporated qualitative research methods, which included focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews, followed in the chapter by a detailed explanation on the data collection and data analysis process.

The findings of the qualitative research demonstrated that the socio-cultural sphere of Graz itself can have an impact on the generational usage of social media and their interactions with social media-based marketing practices according to most participants. Further influencing factors are additionally explained in extensive detail. This study further indicated the most used social media platform among all included generations is Instagram as well as several other noteworthy findings.

Keywords: social media, generations X, Y, and Z, marketing consumption, culture, Graz

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1. Introduction

How do people living in Graz use social media with respect to marketing consumption? Is there a difference between the usage and interaction of generation X, Y, and Z? How influential is the local socio-culture of Graz concerning this usage? Are the social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok relevant as marketing and promotion platforms? As stated in the master thesis' title, this investigative paper deals with the relevance and usage of the four social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok in Graz, focusing on the generation X, Y, and Z regarding marketing consumption. But how is this relevant and for whom?

Companies today, especially their (Online) Marketing Managers, often struggle to address the right customers at the right time in the right place, the aim of bringing them closer to their products or services. This author counts herself to be one of these Online Marketing Managers, trying to decide as to where and how she can best address possible customers who might be interested in the company's products, the knowledge it offers, and the solutions it holds. But the question is, how does one find a solution?

A primary challenge to solve these struggles is to define, on which social media platform the target group spends time, how interactive they are on the channel, and how consciously the users consume the shown topics, posts, or ads. For a better understanding of the problem, let me walk through an example with you: A new start-up has just launched its very first product on the Austrian market, starting in Graz. In order to bring awareness to the product, the start-up decides to promote it on social media. The company has already defined their desired main target group, it had also already come up with content ideas, and now the start-up needs to answer the following questions: How can it reach their ideal target group? Which platform would be best for showing their newest innovation to the people? And how influential is the socio-cultural sphere of Graz for the success of the promotion?

This thesis aims to give Marketing Managers a useful insight into the behaviour of the generations X, Y, and Z in Graz on social media platforms as well as their marketing consumption and help them identify the right platform for their promotion.

It is interesting to discover how users being part of generation X, people born between 1965 and 1980 (Dimock, 2019, p. 4), act on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok. What do they use these platforms for in respect to marketing consumption? Are they actively taking part in the community or are they just quiet watchers? Do they keep contact with friends or are they seeking entertainment and distraction? Are they open to being shown new ideas, products, and services? Do they use all the named platforms to the same extent or can a tendency to one or more be seen?

What do generation Y, people born between 1981 and 1996 (Dimock, 2019, p. 4) commonly referred to as ‘Millennials’, do on platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, or TikTok? Are they posting content themselves, are they consuming marketing ads or are they even buying products they have seen on those channels? Are they looking for distraction, inspiration, or social contacts?

The youngest generation, generation Z, are young people born between 1997 and 2012 (Dimock, 2019, p. 4): Are the rumours true, that generation Z barely use Facebook anymore? If this is fact, what about Instagram? Are these platforms even relevant nowadays for reaching people between the age of eleven and 26, or are YouTube and TikTok more interesting? What does the younger generation use these platforms for? Are they keeping contact with friends and family, do they just consume other people’s content, or do they post themselves?

Of course, the thesis and the outputs could not only be relevant for Marketing managers but also for other interested parties such as companies, freelancers, clubs, or influencers.

This master thesis aims to give an overview of the relevance and usage of the social media platforms with respect to marketing consumption within the named age groups as well as to draw connections between the usage of the social media platforms and the local culture in Graz. In order to find more meaningful answers to the questions above, a focus group discussion and a series of qualitative interviews were conducted as a form of anthropological research to gain deeper insights, and not just to scratch the surface. This was conducted on the one hand, to define the contemporary state of the relevance and usage of the social media platforms and on the other hand to draw conclusions for interested stakeholders such as companies and marketing managers. The discussion and interviews aimed to find popular opinions or tendencies within the generations X, Y, and Z as well as to provide a springboard for more in-depth insight and investigation on the influence of cultural aspects on social media usage. In the interviews, questions are focused around how interviewees perceive the local culture of Graz and the influence on social media, or how they experience the culture of Graz in their age group.

The first step, however, is to take a closer look at the literature as well as the demographics of Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, the local culture in Graz, and the dynamics of the named generations with respect to their interaction on social media. Following this, the methodology and then the results gathered in the interviews are explained. These results will be analysed and discussed in detail. To complete the master thesis, well-founded conclusions and recommendations by the author will be drawn.

Of course, the outputs of the study and the interviews cannot be seen representatively for every country and culture but can give insights and maybe help draw conclusions or assist with conducting further investigation.

2. Literature Review

The following literature review aims to define the generations X, Y, and Z, give an overview of the chosen social media platforms Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok as well as usage, and should furthermore display the socio-cultural aspects specific to Austria as well as Graz.

2.1 Demographics of generation X, Y, and Z

The literature review demonstrated that scholars tend to define the generational cohorts differently: For instance, Bolton et al. (2013, p. 247) defined the generation Y as humans born between 1981 and 1999 whilst Balakrishnan et al. (2016, p. 83) just mentioned generation Y as people born into the digital era. The goal of this chapter is to summarize the various definitions and come to one conclusion so as to maintain consistency throughout the thesis.

2.1.1 Generation X

Generation X includes people who were born between 1965 and 1980 (Michael Dimock, 2019, p. 4; Katz, 2017, p. 15) , which results in them being between the ages of 44 and 59 as of the present day. Being born before 1980 also implies, that this generation was born prior to the digital age and that they were the first people to adapt to the internet and the possibilities that came with it (Katz, 2017, p. 18). Generation X is described as being independent, resourceful, self-sufficient, and focused on maintaining a work-life balance. Core values within this generation are family, friends, and education (Manolică et al., 2022, p. 626).

As of the 1st of October 2023, 61,431 people born between 1965 and 1980, therefore representing generation X, registered their main place of residence in Graz (Stadt Graz - Statistik - EDC, 2023a).

2.1.2 Generation Y

Generation Y, also known as ‘Millennials’, are people born between 1981 and 1996 (Michael Dimock, 2019, p. 4). At the time of writing, these people are now between the

age of 28 and 43. Millennials are considered as the first generation born and raised in the digital era (Kalavathy K.S. & Anitha Ramachander, 2018, p. 19), that is why they are also called digital natives (Grau et al., 2019, p. 202). As a fact, most Millennials have never come to know a life without the internet and have also grown up using social media platforms in one way or another, be it Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or Snapchat (Grau et al., 2019, p. 201 & 202).

As of the 1st of October 2023, 81,534 people born between 1981 and 1996, and therefore representing generation Y or Millennials, registered their main place of residence in Graz (Stadt Graz - Statistik - EDC, 2023a).

2.1.3 Generation Z

Generation Z is defined as people born between 1997 and 2012 (Michael Dimock, 2019, p.4). Calculating again, people of the generation Z are between the ages of 12 and 27 at the time in which this thesis was being composed. This so-called “online” generation grew up using different forms of the internet and social media on a daily basis and confident in using various online platforms for contacting, communicating, and interacting with people (Manolică et al., 2022, p. 625).

As of the 1st of October 2023, 57,246 people born between 1997 and 2012, and therefore representing generation Z, registered their main place of residence in Graz (Stadt Graz - Statistik - EDC, 2023a).

2.2 Social media platforms

Worldwide, 4.76 billion people use social media networks (Statista, 2023c, p. 4). For this thesis and research, the platforms Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok have been chosen, as these are the four most popular social media networks in Austria in 2023 (Statista, 2023a), but also for practicality purposes that the researcher of this thesis believed were suitably attainable within the logistical framework and constraints of this investigation. Before jumping into the statistics, clear definitions and explanations will have to be made.

2.2.1 The social media phenomenon

The phrase “social media” emerged from technologists mainly situated in the Bay Area of San Francisco after the dot-com crash (Boyd, 2015, p. 1), which happened in 2000 (Zöttl, 2021) and it refers to practices, tools and ideologies around the Web 2.0 (Boyd, 2015, p. 1). These technologists of the Silicon Valley envisioned tools that would enable people to connect, collaborate but also socialise and coordinate. In their vision of social media, they would take communication and community to the next level. Today, their former dream became a key aspect in contemporary digital life all around the globe (Boyd, 2015, p. 1 & 2), as social media are part of daily life as once newspapers were (Grabs et al., 2022, p. 25).

Social media networks are platforms and websites that enable users to set-up their own profile, share news, pictures, and videos and connect with friends and family (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 327). Social media users play, search, communicate, build and maintain relationships, but also create, share, and modify content across different sites and devices (Kietzmann et al., 2012, p. 109). Those platforms offer the possibility to connect people with similar interests, jobs, or situations in life (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 325).

Social media, as an evolution of the Web 2.0, has shifted the online power from contents of companies and brands to an energetic interaction driven by the consumer’s active engagement and participation. With social media the one-to-many communication known from classic advertisement is gone, come has the many-to-many communication (Grabs et al., 2022, p. 31). Through this development, conversations between people across different publishing sites, social media platforms, social games, and content sharing sites emerged (Kietzmann et al., 2012, p. 116).

2.2.2 Facebook

Facebook was originally founded for students, but in 2006 was made available for the broader mass, first in the USA and in 2008 and 2009 in Europe as well. Ever since, the social media platform Facebook is omnipresent (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 330). Today, Facebook is accessible in over 80 languages and has users all over the world

(Grabs et al., 2022, p. 116). In January 2023, over 2.95 billion people worldwide used Facebook (Statista, 2023c, p. 6). As mentioned beforehand, Facebook has the same features all social media platforms incorporate: People build their own profiles, connect and engage with others, and also gather information about products, brands, and companies (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022. p. 330 - 332). Within the last few years, Facebook has lost popularity, which Pahrmann and Kupka (2022) found several reasons for:

- Larger innovations and trends such as stories were incorporated late.
- The algorithm seemed to show more commercial pages and posts rather than the contributions of friends and family.
- Facebook had to deal with criticism due to late and insufficient reaction to fake news. This caused severe loss of trust, relevance, and credibility.
- The rather harsh culture of discussion is less welcoming.
- Page owners recognised that organic posts only reached very few people.
- Furthermore, the page usability for page owners is in need of improvement, as today's functions cannot be found or are not working tomorrow (p. 326 – 327).

Nonetheless, Facebook is still relevant for companies and brands to connect to and engage with people, and to advertise products or services. The main reason for this, is that the platform has gained popularity and acceptance among the population, especially concerning local and regional connections. Another point worth mentioning is that Facebook addresses people of all social classes regardless of age, education, origin, job, or income (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 327).

Marketing on Facebook

Today Facebook is also a well-established advertising platform and is more often than not part of a company's marketing mix. As Facebook has access to user data gathered over the years, it is valuable for advertising, especially given the targeting possibilities (Grabs et al., 2022, p. 117).

With Meta's ads manager, people and companies are enabled to show billions of users advertisements as they are scrolling through their feeds (Meta, 2023a). With ads on Facebook, several goals can be achieved, for instance brand awareness, traffic, interaction, leads, or conversions (Grabs et al., 2022, p. 151 & 152 & 153). The Meta ads manager gives advertisers the opportunity to set up campaigns: First, one of the named campaign goals needs to be decided, then a target group needs to be defined. For that, the location, language, demographics, interests, and behaviour of desired customers need to be set. After that follows a timeline as well as a fixed budget (Grabs et al., 2022, p. 154 & 155). Next, advertisers can choose, where they want to display the ads: in the Facebook Story, in the Facebook Reels, in the Facebook Feed or similar (Meta, 2023c). After choosing the placements, the ad itself needs to be created: Therefore, a text, the linked URL, the designed creative and a Call-to-Action button are needed (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 359). With the help of the Facebook Pixel, a JavaScript code, events, and conversions within the set campaign can be tracked. Furthermore, it enables more detailed target group settings (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 363).

Other marketing possibilities for companies on Facebook are the creation of events: With a few simple steps, a company can announce an upcoming event and invite users to take part. Furthermore, companies and brands can also create Facebook groups or join existing groups. These are places where it is common to exchange views on specialised topics (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 353 & 355).

2.2.3 Instagram

Worldwide, two billion people used Instagram as of January 2023 (Statista, 2023c, p. 6). The platform was founded in 2010 and taken over by Facebook two years later. Instagram is one of the most popular social media channels (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 377). The social media platform is originally known for the possibility to take and share photos, videos and stories. Instagram users connect with others, follow their interests in different brands and companies, discover products and find inspiration (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 402). Original focus topics such as food, fitness, travel, and fashion have nowadays greatly increased: All kinds of subjects and industries are

now represented on Instagram (Grabs et al., 2022, p. 223). Furthermore, Instagram evolved to a multi-purpose network with video sharing, messaging, and social commerce (Grabs et al., 2022, p. 219). The most important target group on Instagram is still people between the age of 18 and 35, even though older groups are joining more and more (Grabs et al., 2022, p. 223). Although the user base is growing fast, Instagram lately lost young users to the video platform TikTok (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 377).

The most popular features Instagram offers to its users are:

- Free-of-charge accounts for people and companies.
- For android and iOS devices as well as desktop (limited features).
- Editing of pictures with basic functions and filters.
- Use of hashtags for better discoverability.
- Videos and pictures in Instagram Stories are available only for 24 hours.
- Videos on Instagram can be up to 60 minutes.
- Reels are shorter videos that can be done and edited with the app itself.
- Instagram offers live videos, that can again be up to 60 minutes.
- Instagram offers an In-App-Shopping feature that grows in relevance and importance for users and companies (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 378 & 402).

Marketing on Instagram

In 2015, Instagram was integrated into the ads manager system of Facebook. Ads on Instagram can therefore be directly managed from the beforehand mentioned Meta ads manager. Generally, companies can promote existing Instagram posts as well as create new ads. The goals, that can be reached through Instagram advertising, are similar to Facebook: Awareness of products, brands or companies, engagement, traffic to the website, or conversions to the online shop (Grabs et al., 2022, p. 246 & 247). To reach these goals, Instagram offers different ads, as for instance photo ads, story ads, video ads, or carousel ads (Meta, 2023b).

Other possibilities, especially interesting for companies and brands, are user-generated content as well as takeovers by users or influencers (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 397).

Furthermore, the platform offers the possibility for Instagram Shopping. This enables brands and companies not only to tag products in pictures and videos and therefore directly link it, but also to have their own Instagram shop integrated. The company's products can then even be listed in the shopping tab of the Instagram app (Grabs et al., 2022, p. 242).

Another interesting feature is live shopping: During a live transmission on Instagram, products can be fixed on the screen and specifically recommended. Customers can then click on the fixed products, get more information, or directly buy them. Live shopping is not only about purchases, but also about building a loyal community (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 402).

2.2.4 YouTube

YouTube is a known video platform and a social media network, but also the second largest search engine in the world after Google. For many people, YouTube has replaced classic television. Users are searching specifically for topics and formats, like how-to videos, tutorials, vlogs or shows, and ad spots. Nevertheless, the video platform still is a social media network as well: People like, comment, and share the content. YouTube is mostly used on mobile devices, but still horizontal format performs better than vertical format (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 443 & 444 & 454). In January 2023, over 2.5 billion users were active on YouTube (Statista, 2023c, p. 6). With the prompt rise of TikTok, YouTube was forced to move as well: In 2021 it created the so-called "Shorts", videos of only 60 seconds (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 450).

In order to increase the visibility of a video on YouTube, but also on Google, several on-video steps have to be taken. The setting of a title, a description, and useful keywords is especially important (Grabs et al., 2022, p. 212).

Marketing on YouTube

To minimize scattering loss, companies can use Google Ads or YouTube video ads for purposeful targeting within their ad campaigns. As the Google database is enormous,

targeting for YouTube ads is rather detailed with the following options: Demographic aspects, interests, placements, themes, keywords as well as remarketing (users, who have already had contact with videos, the YouTube channel, the website or app of the company) (Grabs et al., 2022, p. 205 & 206).

For YouTube ads, the following formats are available:

- Skippable in-stream ads: Video ads that run before, during or after the video and that reach as many people as possible (YouTube Advertising, 2023b). These ads can be skipped after five seconds (Grabs et al., 2022, p. 214).
- Non-skippable in-stream ads: Ads that play before, during or after the video that cannot be skipped so that the user has to watch the full story (YouTube Advertising, 2023b).
- Bumper ads: Non-skippable six second video ads that play before the chosen video.
- TrueView video ads: A view for this type of ad is only counted when the user watches at least 30 seconds of the ad or interacts with it in some way (click on the call-to-action button or companion banner).
- YouTube shopping: Users can click on the cart symbol that is embedded in the video ad and can then see more details about the product or buy the product directly (Grabs et al., 2022, p. 215 & 216).
- Masthead: This ad is shown at the top of the users YouTube Home feed (YouTube Advertising, 2023b).
- Discovery ads on YouTube: In this format, pictures can be used to display when people scroll through their YouTube Home and Watch Next feeds, the Discovery feed as well as the Promotions and Social tabs on the e-mail provider Gmail (YouTube Advertising, 2023a).

A topic that was previously mentioned, is especially interesting for companies: On YouTube it is very common to work together with influencers as these offer new target groups. Smaller influencers, labelled as micro- and nano-influencers, are usually

particularly authentic. They offer a smaller target group with a higher engagement rate (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 455 & 456).

2.2.5 TikTok

TikTok is a social media and video platform that strongly competes with YouTube, Instagram, and Snapchat. The platform's original name was musical.ly, where mainly young people posted videos of them dancing and lip syncing. Musical.ly was bought in 2018 by the Chinese media company Beijing Bytedance Technology and was renamed to TikTok (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p.460). In January 2023, more than 1.05 billion people used the social media platform (Statista, 2023c, p. 6).

On TikTok it is not that important to gather followers and fans as it is on the social media platforms Facebook or Instagram. The goal is much more focussed towards producing creative videos that can hit many, even millions of views. TikTok users create videos of different topics such as traveling, sports, gaming, or comedy (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 460 & 461 & 464). In these videos, users tell stories of their lives or re-play funny scenes that happened to them (Grabs et al., 2022, p. 298). Although it may seem that TikTok is more of an entertainment platform, microlearning is also very popular (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 463).

Marketing on TikTok

Although advertising on TikTok is rather new, TikTok offers a lot of tools to support companies and their business accounts. For example, it provides the Commercial Music Library, where companies and brands can choose from over 150,000 free songs for their ads. Furthermore, there is the Business Creative Hub that serves as an inspirational platform with explanations for content creation and best practices (Grabs et al., 2022, p. 304).

Additionally to organic videos and TikTok ads, influencer cooperations are relevant. To bring brands and influencers together, TikTok incorporated the Creator Marketplace (Grabs et al., 2022, p. 306).

Starting from 2021, the TikTok ads manager can be used in German-speaking countries as well. This tool is similar to recognised ads managers, like the beforehand mentioned, Meta ads manager. For TikTok ads, the following formats are available:

- In-feed ads: These ads are displayed as the users scroll through their feeds.
- Top View: These video ads are shown at the very beginning when users open the app.
- Branded mission: Companies can work together with creators and boost the most successful videos as ads.
- Branded effects: Brands and companies can create their own effects that users on TikTok all over the world can use.
- Spark ads: Companies can promote their own videos, videos of creators, or simply videos where the brand is mentioned (TikTok for Business, 2023).

According to Pahrmann and Kupka (2022) companies must keep several aspects in mind:

- It is important that companies do not hastily jump onto the platform, but rather beforehand evaluate whether TikTok users and influencers are the most fitting for their needs.
- Furthermore, companies must keep in mind that content from other platforms should not be recycled, as TikTok and its users have other requirements.
- Another point worth mentioning is that the created videos should be relatively short: Every video has to regain the user's attention.
- TikTok is a very popular platform for influencer cooperations. It is important that the influencer should be authentic and a fit for the company.
- Lastly, the users on TikTok are strongly represented by generation Z and they are not huge fans of advertisements. Therefore, advertising on TikTok should be entertaining, creative, and authentic (Pahrmann & Kupka, 2022, p. 461 & 465 & 466).

2.2.6 Social media usage within the generations X, Y, and Z

Dorie and Loranger (2020) discovered in their research on generational differences in the use of channels, that age has a substantial impact. They further suggest that channel use could be motivated by priorities, developed through life experience, significant to the different generations (p. 409). In their 2018 cross-cultural study of generation and gender-dependent differences in social media usage in Germany, South Africa, and Poland, Fietkiewicz et al. discovered that patterns in cross-cultural social media use are consistent considering the age structure of users. According to the authors, younger generations show a distinctive tendency to leave longer established networks, such as Twitter and Facebook. On the other hand, Fietkiewicz et al. found that younger people like to explore new media channels as for instance, Instagram (2018, p. 197).

According to Manolică et al. (2022), generation Y, also called Millennials, actively consume, share, generate, or search for content on social media platforms. Generation Z shows more tendencies than other generations to use social media platforms for keeping contact and engaging with other users they know. Generation Z is used to giving active feedback about brands or services as well as values receiving feedback in the same way. In the research Manolică et al. (2022) conducted in Romania it is shown that generation Z and people who are closer to the age of generation Z are more likely to use the social media platform Instagram, while people who are close to the age of or part of generation X seem to tend towards Facebook (p. 625 & 626 & 628).

In their 2019 published study in Spain on "*Generational differences in technology behaviour: comparing millennials and Generation X"*, Calvo-Porral and Pesqueira-Sanchez came to the conclusion that the main motivation for Millennials for technology behaviour is entertainment: Members of generation Y will therefore be fully engaged in in technology when they feel entertained and enjoy themselves. Generation X, on the other hand, displays in their usage and engagement with technology a significant search motivation. Therefore, the authors assumed that the behaviour concerning technology is influenced by the generational cohorts (p. 2766 & 2768).

In their research in Romania, Manolică et al. (2022) furthermore tried to identify, how much time the generations X, Y, and Z spend on social media daily. Their findings showed that members of generation X spend between one or two hours a day on various social media channels. Millennials spend anywhere between two or four hours of their time daily on social media, whilst generation Z spends between two to six hours a day on social networks. According to these findings, generation Z tends to spend more time on social media, which leads to the conclusion that they are more dependent on usage. Still, the authors incorporate the fact that it is possible the younger generation use social media platforms not just for entertainment, but also for work-related issues (p. 628).

The findings of Manolică et al. (2022) can be complemented with the results of Kalavathy's and Ramachander's (2018) study of behaviour and social media use patterns within generation Y in Bangalorecity, India. They discovered that among Millennials, Facebook seems to be the most popular social media network. Other popular and used platforms are Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest, and LinkedIn. The authors discovered that the majority of the study’s participants use social media channels for up to two hours per day (p. 19).

In contradiction to these results, Reisenwitz (2021) stated in his research paper on implications for marketers regarding the differences in the generations Y and Z, that there are no substantial differences concerning the social media usage between the named two generations. His findings suggest that both cohorts use social media channels equally. He draws the conclusion that this might be an indication that the social media use is saturated or that the social media usage has reached a maturity level with users, as there does not appear to be an increase in usage within generation Z (p. 87).

2.2.7 Social media usage in Austria within the generations X, Y, and Z in numbers

In August 2023, a study by Statista showed, that 67% of Austrians use social media platforms on a daily basis, while 19% of the people asked claimed they at least use social media a few times per week (Statista, 2023b).

The four most popular social media networks in Austria in 2023 according to another Statista survey are:

- In first place YouTube with 68%.
- In second place Facebook with 67%.
- In third place Instagram with 60%.
- In fourth place TikTok with 32% (Statista, 2023a).

See below for the full list of social media networks and their popularity in 2023 in Austria:

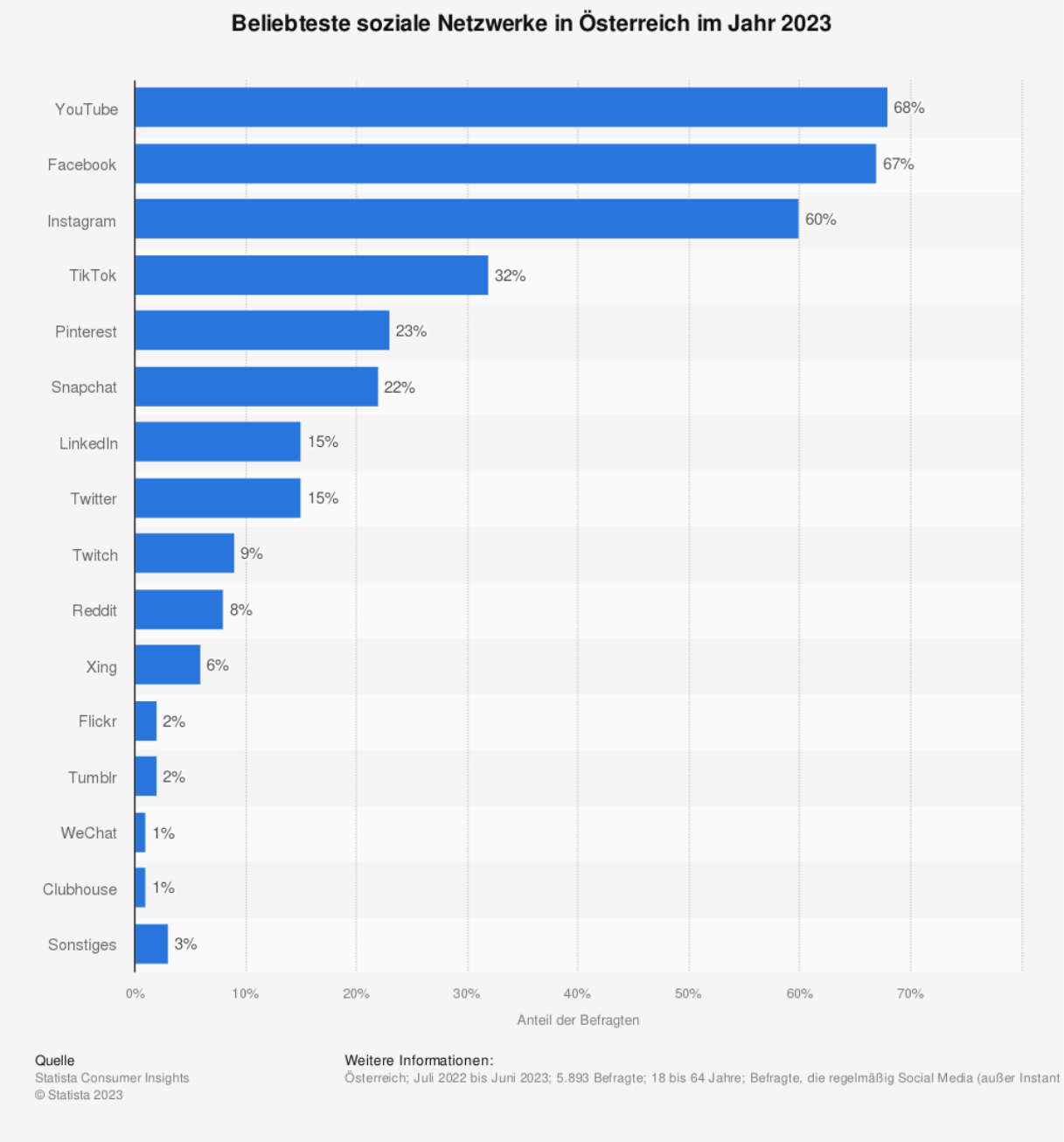


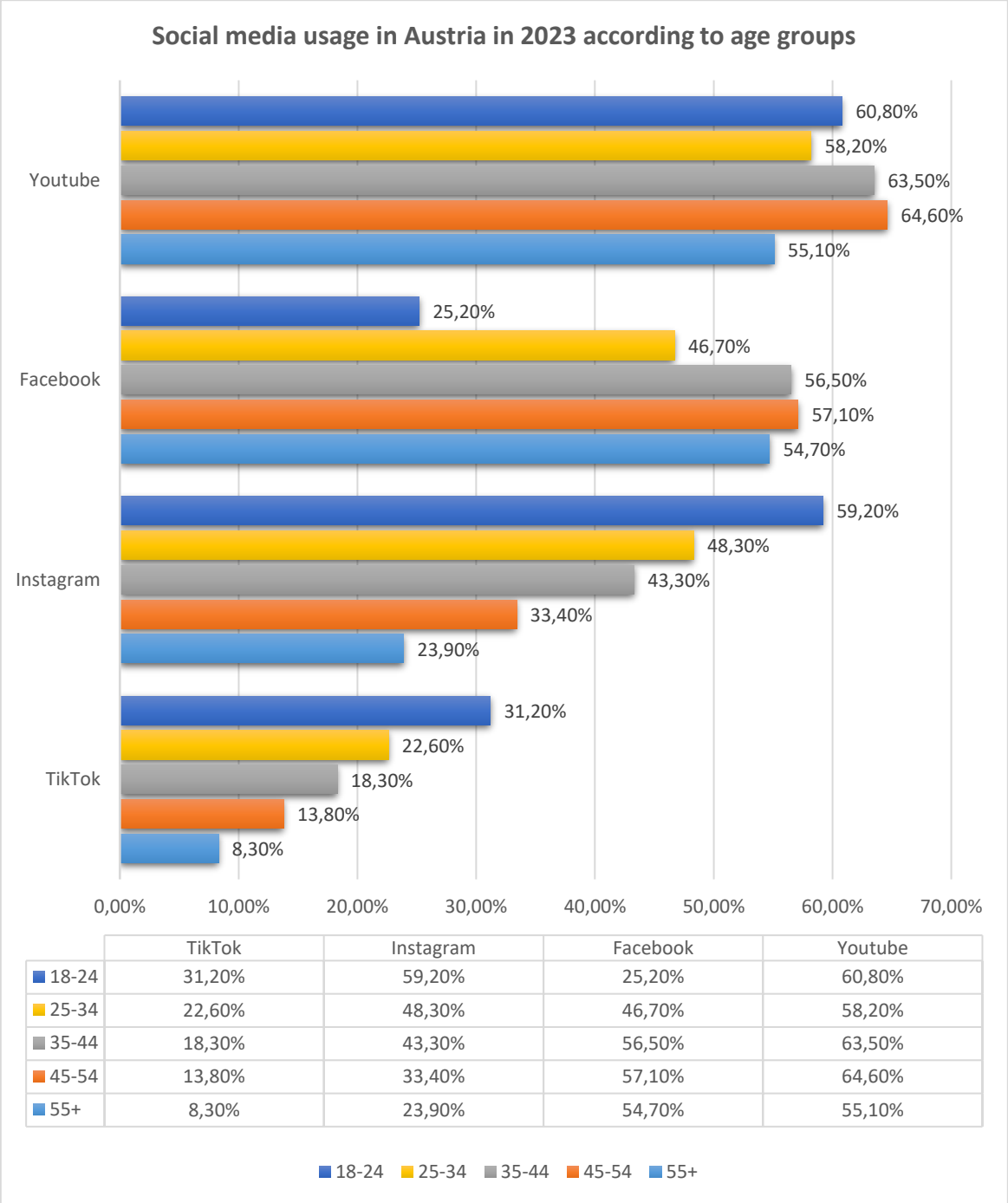
Figure 1: Most popular social media networks in Austria in the year 2023
Source: Statista, 2023a

The Digital News Report Austria 2023 (Gadringer et al., 2023, p. 88) showed the following usage numbers according to age and social media platform:

- YouTube: The largest age group using YouTube in 2023 are people between the age of 45 and 54 (generation X) with 64.6%, followed by users between the

age of 35 and 44 (generation Y) with 63.5% and people between the age of 18 and 24 (generation Z) with 60.8%. People between the ages of 25 and 34 (parts of both generation Z and Y) follow with 58.2% and the age group over 55 of age with 55.1%.

- Facebook: The largest age group using Facebook in 2023 are people between the ages of 45 and 54 (generation X) with 57.1%, closely followed by people between the age of 35 and 44 (parts of generation Y) with 56.5%. Then, people over the age of 55 (in parts generation X) with 54.7% and users between the age of 25 and 34 (parts of both generation Z and Y) with 46.7%. With quite the distance, in the age group between 18 and 24 (generation Z), only 25.2% use Facebook in 2023.
- Instagram: The age group that uses Instagram most in 2023 is between 18 and 24 (generation Z) with 59.2%, followed by users between the age of 25 and 34 (parts of both generation Z and Y) with 48.3%, and people between the ages of 35 and 44 (generation Y) with 43.3%. People between the ages of 45 and 54 and users above the age of 55 use Instagram the least with 33.4% and 23.9% respectively.
- TikTok: Identically to Instagram, the older the age group, the less they use the social media platform TikTok. The largest user group of TikTok is between the ages of 18 and 24 (generation Z) with 31.2%, followed by people between the ages of 25 and 34 (parts of both generation Z and Y) with 22.6%. Next, users between the ages of 35 and 44 (generation Y) follow with 18.3%. TikTok is used the least by people between 45 and 54 as well as people above the age of 55 with 13.8% and 8.3% respectively.



	TikTok	Instagram	Facebook	Youtube
18-24	31,20%	59,20%	25,20%	60,80%
25-34	22,60%	48,30%	46,70%	58,20%
35-44	18,30%	43,30%	56,50%	63,50%
45-54	13,80%	33,40%	57,10%	64,60%
55+	8,30%	23,90%	54,70%	55,10%

Figure 2: Social media usage in Austria in 2023 according to age groups
Source: Gadringer et al., 2023, p. 88.

2.3 An attempt to define Austria

2.3.1 Austria in dates and numbers

The republic of Austria was re-announced after the Second World War in 1945. Political parties agreed on working together and the lows of the post-war period were overcome. Since then, conflicts were solved non-violently. In 1955, Austria became part of the United Nations Organization (UNO) and in 1956 joined the council of Europe. In 1995 Austria was officially accepted as a member of the European Union and the euro was introduced in 1999 (really 2002) (Vocelka, 2019, p. 113 & 117 & 123).

At the beginning of 2023, more than 9.1 million people lived in Austria, which depicts an increase of 1.4% compared to 2022. In 2013, the country counted 8.4 million inhabitants (Mohr, 2023c). The largest city in 2023 is Vienna with more than 1.98 million citizens (Mohr, 2023d). Of the 9.1 million inhabitants living in Austria in 2023, 19% are migrants, which equates to a total of 1.7 million people from different countries living in Austria (Mohr, 2023a). Of these 1.7 million foreigners 225,106 are Germans, 147,403 Romanians, and 122,016 Serbians (Mohr, 2023b).

2.3.2 Xenophobia in Austria

In the summer of 2015, 5,000 migrants had to live under extremely bad conditions in the completely overcrowded refugee camp in Traiskirchen. More than ten times as many refugees as foreseen were staying there. While the head of the FPÖ (Austrian Freedom Party) at the time, Heinz Christian Strache, held diatribes and hate speeches, the Austrian population showed empathy, helpfulness, and solidarity in donating food, clothes, and toys. The situation in Traiskirchen displayed Austria's long-standing disunity between the people who want an isolated country and those who see Traiskirchen as a depiction of tragic war, and forced migration (Siebenhaar, 2017, p. 214).

Austria, as part of central Europe, has long been a country with a heavy influx of migrants. As early as at the turn of the century in 1900, the flow of migrants as well as the language barriers and integration problems have been part of the daily life. Already

in 1900, 62% of the Viennese population were foreigners, only 38% were born here. Even now, at the beginning of 2021, every fifth inhabitant of Austria was born in a foreign country (Lendvai, 2022, p. 233 & 239).

Although several studies show that the performance and the economic advantages of migrants by far outweigh the short-term burdens to the social security system and the public budget. Two thirds of people nevertheless see refugees and migration as the greatest threat to the Austrian identity, shown from a 2020 survey among 1.000 Austrians (Lendvai, 2022, p. 240 & 241).

This can be seen as an indication of the strong right-wing populism in Austria (Siebenhaar, 2017, p. 25). The FPÖ was founded in 1956, originating from the VdU (Association of the Independent) (Lendvai, 2022, p. 59), a party formed in 1949 and consisting of less accused followers of the nazi regime (Hämmerle, 2018, p. 291). The most successful but also most contradictory politician within the FPÖ was Jörg Haider. Even in 1986, when he became leader of the party, he chose migration politics as one of his main topics for aggressive speeches with rhetorical brilliance (Lendvai, 2022, p. 64 & 65). Ever since, the FPÖ has preached the end of the second republic, calls to fight against the system and fuels conflict against new and old enemies (Hämmerle, 2018, p. 290). The Austrian society has experienced a shift to the right and the ideas and ideologies of the FPÖ are already weakening the fundaments of Austria (Siebenhaar, 2017, p. 25).

2.3.3 Insecurity, uncertainty, and fear of the future

Austria is no longer an “island of the blessed”, as it has been called for years (Vocelka, 2019, p. 124). Several studies show the loss of trust in institutions and political leaders as well as the fear of the COVID-19 pandemics’ consequences, climate change and the economic crisis. Never before has Austria had to deal with as many, unpredictable and severe crises. A 2021 study of the SORA institution discovered that six out of ten people strongly believe that the political system works ineffectively or not at all. Causes for that, among others, were taken the measures to fight the pandemic and the chat affairs of Sebastian Kurz (Lendvai, 2022, p. 245 & 246 & 269).

Hämmerle (2018) identified another characteristic of Austria in the present day, the "*simultaneity of the non-simultaneous"* as he calls it. This peculiarity says that on the one hand the world is spinning at a breathtaking tempo: New technologies evolving, digitalisation influences every aspect of life (for the good and the bad), millions of refugees all over the world, Islamic terror attacks amid Europe, Russia manipulating western political votes and so on and so forth. On the other hand, there are the Austrian specific factors: The feeling that the time stands still, nothing new happens, and that the existing is already part of the law. Concluding, this is the feeling Austria is facing: Helplessly caught in the whirlwind of the worlds happenings and history and at home, a change-refusing political system (p. 284 & 285 & 286).

2.3.4 What makes Austria special?

Austria is famous for its rich culture that is part of the national identity: World-class music, arts and literature that are second to none, namely the festivals in Salzburg, Bregenz or the popular Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra (Siebenhaar, 2017, p. 239). It is furthermore rich in museums, palaces, and concert halls. Music and theatre are of great importance and are barely comparable to any other European country (Gieler, 2017, p. 116). Austria can therefore be defined, among other things, as a nation of culture (Brühl, 2017).

Compared to other European countries, Austrians enjoy free time activities as well as culture and spend a great part of their income on these indulgences, such as good food, coffee, and alcohol (Benz et al., 2019). The country is known for its intense coffeehouse culture: Austrians drink a lot of coffee, the coffee custom is most cultivated in Vienna (Gieler, 2017, p. 111). Up until 1938, the Viennese coffeehouses had an especially important role in society, they were meeting places for intellectuals (Roraff & Krejci, 2011, p. 136), where artists, actors, writers, journalists, politicians as well as opera singers frequented (Gieler, 2017, p. 111). Austrians also enjoy good wine: Austrian wine growers produce excellent wine in small, quality-focused production. One of the most famous Austrian white wines is "Grüner Veltliner" (Gieler, 2017, p. 114).

During wintertime, Austria is not only famous for internationally successful Alpine skiers, but also for Vienna's splendid ball season: More than three hundred balls take place, starting with the Emperor's Ball at the Hofburg. The highlight of the ball season has to be the 'Opernball' at the Vienna Opera House, which is broadcasted around the world (Gieler, 2017, p. 71 & 72 & 119).

While the ball season seems to be the city highlight in winter, Austrian tradition, consisting of religious festivals, ceremonies, and traditional festivities, are still common and thrive in villages and smaller towns. Each Austrian region has its own identity concerning not only the dialect but also the national costume: For these traditional festivities, men often wear loden jackets and leather breaches while women wear the classical "Dirndl", a traditional Austrian dress (Gieler, 2017, p. 58).

The typical Austrian inhabitant shows complexity in their character: While displaying a laidback composure as well as hospitality (Gieler, 2017, p. 48), the typical Austrian tends to complain a lot – about neighbours, children, colleagues, or their health (Roraff & Krejci, 2011, p. 41).

What does it mean to be an Austrian? Monika Sommer answered this question during her interview with Brühl (2017). She said that being an Austrian signifies to profess to democracy and human rights, as belonging to a nation includes admitting to the society's values and beliefs. Living in Austria also incorporates an awareness of life, marked by composure, modesty, humour and a down-to-earth attitude. This way of life is also marked by a righteous health system, stable economics as well as a feeling of safety. Furthermore, Austrians care deeply about and take care of their environment (Gieler, 2017, p. 50). Not without reason was Vienna, again, voted as the most liveable city in the world in 2022 (Zimmermann, 2023) and counts as one of Europe's wealthiest countries. The recognised Austrian pride can be found in its social harmony, wealth, cultural heritage as well as its beautiful nature (Gieler, 2017, p. 55 & 162).

2.3.5 Tourism in Austria

Austria is known as an attractive travel destination: Its landscape, the history as well as a diversity in culture and culinary delight are world famous. Between 2000 and 2010, the tourism sector was able to record constant growth in tourist numbers and revenue. Tourists from Germany are especially important for Austrian, followed by the Dutch and Swiss (Mohr, 2023e, p. 3 & 12). However, in March 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic struck with full force: Schools, restaurants, and hotels were closed, the economy was almost completely shut down and flights were cancelled. Curfews, closed borders, and face masks became a symbol of the times (Zolles et al., 2020, p. 4).

Due to the strong industrial sector, Austria was never as dependent on the travel sector as some southern European countries. Nevertheless, it was hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic, especially in the winter season of 2020 and 2021. To show losses, the comparison of the following numbers give a clear illustration: In 2019, the gross value added through the accommodation and catering sector (including tourism) counted 18.9 billion, compared to 2020, where it only reached 12.4 billion. Another memorable comparison: In 2019, the share of the accommodation and catering sector in total gross value added was 5.3%. In 2020, this number decreased to 3.8% (Mohr, 2023e, p. 5 & 7).

2.4 Local culture of Graz

This chapter deals with the architectural and historical developments of Graz, as well as the culture and economy of the city and the influence of migration. It furthermore tries to draw a picture of today's people living in Graz.

2.4.1 Architecture and history

Graz is one of few well-preserved historic cities and the old town can even function as a history book. The town displays buildings in Romanesque, Renaissance, Gothic, Baroque, Classicism, period of promoterism historicism as well as contemporary architecture. The expansion of the castle and the cathedral stand for the late medieval reign of Emperor Friedrich the Third and his son Emperor Maximilian the First. The

confessional age is shown in the ‘Landhaus’, with its late renaissance style, whilst the mausoleum reflects the counter reformation of Emperor Ferdinand the Second, who carried out the expulsion of the Protestants. The bell tower on top of the famous “Schlossberg” was built for the Archduke Karl the Second. Today’s ‘Freiheitsplatz’ is a testimony of the Napoleonic era. The town hall in the city centre was built at the beginning of the 19th century, but was renewed in German nationalism style 80 years later (Dornik et al., 2022, p. 451 & 452).

2.4.2 Culture in Graz

The culture of Graz is versatile. Every year, Graz offers a remarkable amount of festivals. These include ‘Lendwirbel’, the design month of Graz, ‘La Strada’, ‘Klanglicht’, ‘steirischer herbst’ as well as the ‘Diagonale’ and the ‘styriarte’. Furthermore, the festival ‘Aufsteirern’ is hugely important, reaching 170,000 thousand visitors on two days in 2023 (Pock, 2023).

In Graz, not only festivals matter, it offers 19 different museums (Pock, 2023), including the children’s museum ‘Frida & freD’ and the Graz museum (Dornik et al., 2022, p. 452).

Another important cultural aspect are Styrian traditions, customs, and public holidays. The following list depicts some of them without any claim to completeness:

- Three saints’ Day on January 6th
- Carnival Tuesday in February
- Easter holidays in March or April
- Worker’s Day on May 1st
- All Saints’ Day on November 1st
- St. Nicholas’ Day on December 6th
- Christmas Day on December 24th
- New Years’ Eve on December 31st (Brauner, 1996, p. 9 & 12 & 14 & 21 & 24 & 25)

2.4.3 Economy in Graz

Graz is especially famous for mechanical and vehicle engineering as well as electrical engineering and electronics. Well-known companies are Andritz AG, Magna Steyr, Siemens Mobility, AVL, Mercedes G, and Anton Paar.

Within the last years, some well-known companies in Graz were forced to close: The Schediwy paper and stationary shop, the Kienreich bookshop, fashion Brühl, the Strehli confectionery as well as the Leykam bookshop but the greatest change is the now extinct looking former shopping mall ‘Annenstraße’ that connects the inner city of Graz with the main railway station. The COVID-19 pandemic did not help this either.

In the year 2000, the gross domestic product per inhabitant was 33,300 euros, in 2018 it increased to 50,400 euros. Although it grew 52%, compared to Styria, with an increase of 72% and the whole of Austria, with a growth of 63%, it is behind (Dornik et al., 2022, p. 433).

2.4.4 Students in Graz

The city of Graz has been and still is the centre of education in the south-east of Austria and beyond (Dornik et al., 2022, p. 451). In all eight universities and universities of applied sciences, 63,000 students are studying (Pock, 2023). Compared to the number of inhabitants in the following subchapter, 63,000 students count for almost 19% of the society in Graz.

2.4.5 Multicultural Graz

Graz had to deal with an extreme growth of inhabitants within the last few years: In January 2006, 285,314 people lived in Graz, whereas in October 2023 it was 337,767 (Stadt Graz - Statistik - EDC, 2023b). This is an increase in population of more than 18%. The largest population group by age in 2006 were people between 18 and 30 years old (generation Y and Z) with 22%, whereas in 2023 it was the group over the age of 60 with, again, 22% of the population. One can therefore conclude that the population of Graz is slowly growing older. The most densely populated districts of Graz in 2023 are Lend, Gries, and Jakomini (Stadt Graz - Statistik - EDC, 2023b).

In 2006, out of 285,314 people, 247,315 (87%) had the Austrian citizenship, while 37,999 people (13%) had citizenships from other countries, such as Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, Germany, Turkey, and others. In 2023, out of 337,767 people living in Graz, 242,573 (72%) had the Austrian citizenship, whereas 92,899 of the inhabitants had citizenships from other countries, such as Croatia, Romania, Germany, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and others (Stadt Graz - Statistik - EDC, 2023b). One can therefore conclude that there has been a heavy influx of migration, more than 144% within the last 17 years.

While the numbers stated it beforehand, Martina Pock of the Graz Museum (2023) added in her written interview with the author, that the people of Croatia, Romania, and Bosnia and Herzegovina have a major impact on the culture of Graz, especially concerning music and food.

*2.4.6 The 'Grazer*in' in today's world*

Dornik (2022) states in his book that Graz nowadays has, as any city and place in the world, to deal with multiple crises: From the climate crisis to growing social injustice, religious fundamentalism, gender injustice and the democratic crisis to racism, and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic (p. 431).

In September 2021, long-term mayor Siegfried Nagl of the ÖVP (Austrian People's Party) resigned after 18 years of term in office. The most recent election resulted in the KPÖ (Austrian Communist Party) gaining a record-high 29% of the votes, whilst the ÖVP only reached 26%, followed by the Grünen (Green Party) with 17%, the FPÖ (Austrian Freedom Party) and the SPÖ (Austrian Social Party). As a result, Elke Kahr became the first female communist mayor of Graz and even the first female communist mayor of any state capital of Austria. This was tantamount to a reversal of the political situation in Graz (Dornik et al., 2022, p. 431 & 432).

Not only has the political situation changed within the last years, Graz seems to be just as divided as other state capitals of Austria, Austria itself and even Europe. Reason for this might be the COVID-19 pandemic, but also the large increase of refugees,

especially in 2015 and the subsequent discussions about African, Arabic, and Asian migrants, Anti-Semitism as well as xenophobia in general (Dornik et al., 2022, p. 438 & 456).

However, Graz is more than the dealing with crises. Graz is also a city of universities, museums, design and music festivals and media companies. It is furthermore home to successful football teams (SK Sturm Graz and GAK) and was announced as a UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) World Heritage site in 2003 (Dornik et al., 2022, p. 444 & 449 & 454). Graz does a lot of work concerning inclusion, which is a particularly noteworthy fact. In 2020, the network 'Kultur Inklusiv' was founded with cultural and social facilities to reach the goal of enabling everyone to experience the culture of Graz, including people with disabilities (Pock, 2023).

Martina Pock said in her interview with the author (2023) that she believes that there is no "real Grazer". The reasons for this might be the blurred border between Graz and its surroundings, or maybe its proximity to Slovenia and their shared history.

2.5 (Online) consumer behaviour

This chapter aims to give a brief definition and overview of as well as depict influences on (online) consumer behaviour. Furthermore, influencing factors of recent developments such as the social media phenomenon and the COVID-19 pandemic are incorporated.

2.5.1 Definition: Consumer behaviour

Consumer behaviour can be defined considering two aspects: First, the psychological method of deciding and secondly, the following physical action. The decision-making process therefore depicts a consumer's choice process when buying products or services (Alsubagh, 2015, p. 209). Multiple factors influence consumers throughout the decision making and the purchase process. Ramya & Ali (2016) defined in their research paper five major forces:

- Internal or psychological factors such as beliefs and attitudes, motivation, or perception.
- Social factors like family or role and status.
- Cultural factors incorporating culture, subculture, or social class.
- Economic factors including personal income, liquid assets, or government policy.
- Personal factors such as personality, age, or lifestyle (p. 76).

Such factors are related to the media and access to internet, as these influence the social attitudes and a person's view of the world (Bartosik-Purgat & Filimon, 2023, p. 9). Online consumer behaviour furthermore describes the procedure of customer decision-making when purchasing products through online commerce (Iyer & Soni, 2023, p. 101 & 102). Carrigan & Attalla (2001) discovered in their research that consumer's purchase decisions are influenced by criteria such as price, quality, value, and brand familiarity whilst a company's social responsibility, although at the centre stage of marketing in the early 2000, has no influence on a customer's buying behaviour (p. 563 & 565 & 570).

Consumer behaviour is deeply affected by changes in the consumer's surroundings (Bartosik-Purgat & Filimon, 2023, p. 12). Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, online consumer behaviour has developed rapidly within the last years. The pandemic caused e-commerce to evolve in a way beyond reasonability or predictability: This development is characterized by a significant shift from established brick-and-mortar stores towards online shopping concerning the consumer buying experience (Iyer & Soni, 2023, p. 101).

2.5.2 Influence of (online) marketing, online platforms, and social media networks on consumer behaviour

The emergence of social media networks has led to a global phenomenon, as stated in previous chapters, that has given consumers the intensified possibility for support and information online (Alsubagh, 2015, p. 210). Consumers can access information on multiple platforms like Google, Amazon, Facebook, Instagram and many more

(Kumar, 2022, p. 374; Bartosik-Purgat & Filimon, 2023, p. 12). This and the widely spread digitalisation as well as technological advancements resulted in the creation of a new information society (Bartosik-Purgat & Filimon, 2023, p. 9). Individuals on social media use these platforms to share their thoughts, beliefs, opinions, and also judgements with others. Alsubagh (2015) furthermore discovered in his research, that a majority of online customers trust word-of-mouth (WOM) when considering buying products or services (p. 210 & 211).

Digital marketing today, as a marketing tool for online promotion of products and services, is more efficient than ever, people use their devices to purchase online instead of visiting brick-and-mortar-stores. Therefore, digital marketing possesses the power to overcome geophysical barriers, resulting in the ability to turn people all over the world into possible customers (Tiewul, 2020, p. 40).

Meeting today's consumer expectations, such as product availability, affordable shipping, delivery transparency and a convenient purchase experience will determine whether an online purchase is going to happen and if this purchase might result in a loyal customer (Iyer & Soni, 2023, p. 102).

2.5.3 Generational influence on consumer behaviour

The usage of the internet and the many tools that come with it differs among consumers concerning attitude, frequency and importantly, age. Whilst many elderly consumers use the internet to gather information about services and products, they still prefer buying these in physical stores rather than purchasing online. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and all the restrictions and consequences that came with it, a lot of older consumers were forced to use the internet as well as their mobile devices more.

The younger generation on the other hand are known to be the most positive and adaptable concerning the internet, mobile devices, and their applications as well as online commerce (Bartosik-Purgat & Filimon, 2023, p. 9 & 10).

2.5.4 Consumer behaviour in Germany

Consumer's beliefs and values are strongly influenced by culture. Research suggests that there can be no human being independent of culture. Culture can be defined as a group of people who are influenced by the same education, language, ethnic group or experiences in life (Koskinen, 2019, p. 7 & 8).

Germany has been chosen to representatively stand for the DACH (Germany, Austria, and Switzerland) region in order to assess consumer behaviour in this area and therefore draw conclusions for Austria, due to the fact that this researcher could not find any relevant literature concerning Austria.

In her 2019 study, Koskinen (2019) identified the following aspects concerning Germans while trying to depict their (consumer) behaviour: German people enjoy a high standard of living. Germany is one of the largest e-commerce markets in Europe, which implies that the German population are familiar with online shopping (Koskinen, 2019, p. 18 & 19 & 20), although Hinner (2023) does state in his research, that German consumers are more hesitant concerning digital media usage than their neighbouring countries (p. 99). Here, privacy is an important factor (Koskinen, 2019, p. 18 & 19), shown by the fact that some consumers in Germany do not want to use the Internet because it allows consumer behaviour tracking (Hinner, 2023, p. 109).

The culture one grows up in has a huge impact on consumer behaviour. In Germany, people have witnessed wars and destruction of property and life for many years. This could explain the wish and search for stability, security, and safety (Hinner, 2023, p. 106). Germans exhibited a cultural shift between 2015 and 2018 towards environmentally friendly products (Koskinen, 2019, p. 19). Therefore, they prefer shopping for food in local stores rather than ordering online (Hinner, 2023, p. 109).

2.6 The impact of culture on (online) consumption and marketing

Culture consists of values and traditions, human achievements as well as their beliefs and doings (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952, p. 181). Adler defines in their 2012 paper value as a desirable outcome of an individual or group. Furthermore, they define

behaviour as any type of human action, in addition to this, behaviour is strongly impacted by the culture. Attitude, on the other hand, is described as an expression of values and therefore leads to a certain action or reaction of an individual (p. 30 & 31).

A society's cultural orientation is a reflection of the complex interaction of the attitudes, values, and behaviours the society's participants show (Adler, 2012, p. 30). Through participating in a society, people follow unwritten rules that simplify everyday tasks, as for instance, when to eat dinner (Usunier & Lee, 2013, p. 5). Furthermore, religion plays an influencing role in culture, as it has a major impact on values, attitudes, and behaviour of individuals (Gupta et al., 2023, p. 94).

According to Usunier and Lee (2013) four elements are of importance for culture: Language, institutions, material productions, and symbolic productions (p. 6). Language, as the primary possibility to share and transmit information between society members, is essential for culture. Furthermore, the authors state that the language we learn in the society we grow up in, also shapes our view of the world and social behaviour because it influences how we act or solve problems. Institutions organize individuals into groups. They include family as well as political groups or social organizations. Material products are divided in four elements: Artistic products (art or music), intellectual productions (books or articles), services (education, banks, or media) as well as physical products (machinery but also food and clothing) (Usunier & Lee, 2013, p. 7 & 8).

The heritage of a culture strongly influences the way of feeling, thinking, and behaviour of human beings. Therefore, cultures vary in significant ways (Adler, 2012, p. 43). One needs to note here, that many people experience and live in more than one culture, for instance immigrants, business professionals, or bilinguals (Usunier & Lee, 2013, p. 6).

In today's society, religious and cultural beliefs have an impact on people's attitudes that influence how individuals behave in different consumer situations. Groups of similar backgrounds of ethnic and religion though show similar buying intentions (Gupta et al., 2023, p. 101). Communities, whether online or offline, revolve among other

things, around family, hobbies, religious beliefs, goals as well as place of residence in order to create bonds and relationships among the members (Tuten, 2021, p. 85).

Whilst international marketing needs to pay attention to culture, not everything and everyone is culturally driven. An individual's behaviour is strongly influenced but not completely determined by culture. A reason for that is that culture is only one of many aspects of (consumer) behaviour. Businesses need to focus on effective communication in marketing (Usunier & Lee, 2013, p. 4 & 10).

In order to successfully communicate to consumers, marketers use several segmentations to optimize targeting of specific groups:

- Demographic segmentation allows marketers to differentiate age, gender, ethnic background, income, education, family as well as occupation.
- Geographic segmentation enables the segmentation of consumers according to region, country, climate, market size, and market density.
- Psychographic segmentation utilizes aspects such as motives, personality, lifestyle, as well as attitudes and opinions.
- Behavioural segmentation allows for the distinction of people based on their actions, for instance brand loyalty, frequency of purchase or usage as well as used distribution channels.
- Benefit segmentation divides costumers according to the benefits they hope to get from the available product range (Tuten, 2021, p. 40 & 41 & 42 & 43 & 44).

Considering this, marketers need to emphasize knowing who the consumers are in order to identify the customer's needs, reflect them, and then deliver a relevant product or service. Therefore, content is still considered important and also relevant to address different audiences (Chaffey & Smith, 2017, p. 175 & 177 & 254), based on the upon previously mentioned segments.

3. Methodology

The following chapter displays the chosen and followed methodology, including the incorporated research paradigm, research design and strategy as well as the data collection and analysis methods. Furthermore, this chapter includes the argumentation for deciding on the qualitative approach.

3.1 Research philosophy and approach

Before diving into the ontological and epistemological assumptions that underlie the author's research, the two scientific terms need to be explained.

Ontology originates from the old Latin word 'ontologia' as well as the word for 'to be' from the Ancient Greek. In the realm of research, the term ontology focuses on the beliefs of the researcher about the nature of reality. Questions such as 'What is true?' and 'What exists?' are exemplary (Killam, 2013, p. 7). Ontology seeks to identify the real nature and it examines the researcher's underlying belief system (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p. 27). The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines ontology as "*a particular theory about the nature of being or the kinds of things that have existence"* (Merriam-Webster-Dictionary, 2023b).

Epistemology on the other hand is driven by beliefs of ontology (Killam, 2013, p. 8). The philosophical word stems from Greek origin and means knowledge. Epistemology focuses on the connection between the researcher and the knowledge during the discovery, meaning how people come to know what they know (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p. 27). In epistemology questions such as 'How is knowledge gained?' and 'How do people come to know what they know?' are focused on (Killam, 2013, p. 8). The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines epistemology as "*the study or a theory of the nature and grounds of knowledge especially with reference to its limits and validity*" (Merriam-Webster-Dictionary, 2023a).

As the terms are now defined, what ontological and epistemological assumptions are underlying the author's research?

The author grew up and spent her life near to or in the city of Graz. Beginning with eight years of schooling in Graz, she studied as well as worked in different companies situated in the city. Furthermore, most members of her family reside in Graz. It is therefore safe to say that Graz was chosen because of personal interest as well as first-hand experience. As a result of the time spent in the city, the relationships she made as well as the experiences she had in Graz, the author was able to see first-hand how inhabitants behave, what aspects influence this behaviour and what issues are important to them. The author therefore believes that the culture of Graz is, compared to its surrounding rural areas as well as Austria itself, different. She believes that some aspects of the city are special due to its socio-cultural sphere, as for instance, the fact that Graz can be seen as a student's city. Furthermore, the author is of the opinion that factors such as the booming industrial companies like Magna Steyr, Knapp, Anton Paar or Andritz AG as well as the environmental awareness, have an influencing impact on the culture and the behaviour of inhabitants of Graz. The author believes that people living in Graz therefore, might show a different behaviour in the usage and consumption of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, especially concerning the different age groups.

As the author herself has been working in social media marketing for years, she focuses her research on the impact of the culture in Graz on the social media usage and behaviour of the different age groups inhabitant to the city.

For this thesis, the interpretivist paradigm was chosen as this approach focuses on understanding the individual participants as well as their interpretation of the surrounding world. It is important to make the effort to try to understand the perspective of the observed person rather than the viewpoint of the researcher and observer. This way, theory does follow the research so that it is based on the gathered data and does not precede the research process. The interpretivist paradigms' ontology assumes that there cannot be a single reality. Stating this, this paradigm requires an epistemology that enables interpretation of the participants own realities, meaning that the interpretivist epistemology supports the fact that knowledge is not to be found, but created individually or constructed socially. This paradigm therefore allows the

conclusion that there are multiple truths as individuals construct their own reality by interpreting their experiences. By choosing the interpretivist paradigm, qualitative data collection and research methods would be best suited for this study (Kivunja & Kuyini, 2017, p. 33 & 36 & 37).

That the interpretivist paradigm suggests a qualitative approach is just one reason why the author chose the qualitative path. The preceding literature review shows that there is no comparable research that combines all relevant aspects chosen for this research. There have been studies researching and comparing social media usage in different countries (Yang, 2022; Kim et al., 2011; Xiao et al., 2021; Fietkiewicz et al., 2018), while other researchers focused on generational differences in social media use (Dorie & Loranger, 2020; Manolică et al., 2022; Kalavathy K.S. & Anitha Ramachander, 2018; Reisenwitz, 2021). Again other scholars concentrated on researching possible cultural impact on marketing (Bartosik-Purgat & Filimon, 2023; Gupta et al., 2023; Adler, 2012; Usunier & Lee, 2013), whilst no scientific paper could be found on the socio-cultural sphere of Graz.

Different authors furthermore mentioned a lack of literature concerning the impact of culture on social media (Balakrishnan et al., 2016, p. 83), the limited research on how underlying values influence the behaviour on social media (Xiao et al., 2021, p. 103), or the necessity for more cross-cultural research on social media (Fietkiewicz et al., 2018, p. 185). These findings thus demonstrate that there exists an ostensible research gap concerning the social media usage among generations X, Y, and Z, and categorically within the socio-cultural sphere of Graz.

The author is of the opinion that this research gap can be best addressed with a qualitative study, as qualitative research analyses how different people interpret the world and surroundings in which they live as well as their experiences. Qualitative studies are typically chosen when new theories, constructs, or hypotheses are developed, when a deeper understanding of an issue or topic is to be achieved, or when a phenomenon is to be described. Qualitative study methodologies enable the researcher to gain a detailed understanding of the way people think about specific

topics through in-depth interviews or observations (Trochim et al., 2016, p. 57 & 58 & 59). Furthermore, there is not enough information existent in the literature, otherwise a quantitative approach with detailed questions would be possible. Another point worth mentioning is that the qualitative research design is adaptable throughout the study, as new realisations or directions might emerge. Lastly, personal sentiments towards a topic can hardly be explained and understood in detail through quantitative research.

As this study aims to have a deeper understanding of the individual experience and opinion of generation X, Y, and Z on the impact of the Graz culture on social media usage, a qualitative approach seems most reasonable.

Considering all preceding statements and information, the following research question shall be answered through a qualitative approach: Are there socio-cultural determinants that influence the interaction with social media marketing among distinct generational groups within the Graz (Austria) populace?

The author is determined to understand, how generations X, Y, and Z living in Graz use Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok, especially with respect to marketing consumption and, how influential the socio-cultural sphere of Graz is on this usage.

3.2 Research design and strategy

For this master thesis, the qualitative tradition of phenomenology is most pertinent, although ethnography should also be mentioned. These qualitative schools of thought, complemented by field research and grounded theory, display a way of conducting qualitative research: A tradition depicts the purpose and the stages of the research, the researcher's role as well as the method of data analysis. The tradition of phenomenology describes the study of how a phenomenon is experienced by the participants through research. Therefore, this school of thought concentrates on the participant's subjective interpretations and experiences of the world. Stating this, as Trochim et al. (2016) explained in their book, the phenomenological researcher's wish to understand the perspective of others, how they experience and see the world (p. 60 & 61). The author would like to mention, that in order to conduct qualitative research in

the tradition of phenomenology properly, a much longer period of time would be necessary. As the timeframe for this to happen is not given, the author will try to do the research in the tradition of phenomenology to the best of her belief and ability.

The tradition of ethnography must be mentioned as well. This school of thought developed mainly from the field of anthropology. Its emphasis lies on the study of a phenomenon in its cultural context (Trochim et al., 2016, p. 60). Again, the author feels the need to mention that to follow a proper research method in the tradition of ethnography, much more time would be needed. As mentioned beforehand, the set scenario within the master thesis does not allow for a long-term study, therefore the author will work to the best of her belief and ability.

Why are these two qualitative traditions believed to be best suited for this master thesis? As the aim of this study is to achieve a deeper understanding of the usage of social media platforms for marketing consumption within the socio-cultural sphere of Graz under special consideration of the generations X, Y, and Z. Therefore, with the opinions and experiences of the study's participants, we are looking at a phenomenological approach as the social media usage in this context can be seen as a phenomenon. Furthermore, the study's cultural context of Graz, which is decisive for the ethnographic tradition, plays an important role as well. This results in the choice of both traditions, phenomenology as well as ethnography.

In the following chapters the qualitative methods, that were chosen for this study, as well as the sampling strategy, data collection and data analysis will be explained in detail.

3.3 Data collection

For the purpose of this master thesis, the first qualitative method that comes to use is a focus group discussion (Trochim et al., 2016; Carrigan & Attalla, 2001). Focus groups enable the researcher to gather detailed information about opinions, preferences, or attitudes of the participants, therein they are popular in different kinds of social research, including marketing. Focus group discussions can furthermore be used as a

first step for developing a survey: By identifying issues that are relevant to a certain group of people, further topics and questions can arise (Trochim et al., 2016, p. 64). These can be used for following in-depth interviews.

As this researcher did not have completely structured interview questions and wanted to avoid leading the participants in a certain direction, a focus group discussion in advance was thought to be useful. This way, the researcher could evaluate relevant aspects within the study by discussing it with chosen participants. For the focus group discussion, the researcher aimed to talk to six people, two participants of each previously defined generational group. In the end, five people took part in this conversation. Throughout the discussion, the researcher hoped for input and interesting realisations.

After the focus group discussion, this researcher had enough input to conduct semi-structured interviews (Whiting & Williams, 2013; Chwialkowska & Kontkanen, 2017; Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018). This type of interview allows conversations with participants without having to have a clear protocol, but rather some rough guidance. Furthermore, through this form of interview the interviewer is free to steer a conversation in another direction, following the interests and topics that might emerge throughout the interaction (Trochim et al., 2016, p. 63).

To avoid having too little guidance in the focus group discussions, the author roughly developed topics that should be talked about. Therefore, it was thought to be useful to have a sort of checklist prepared that includes the topics that should be covered but also leaves space for upcoming directions to emerge. For the interviews, some guidelines should be established in advance, such as the inclusion of some questions that should be discussed. Nevertheless, these guidelines should give other emerging topics some room to develop.

Topics that should be covered in the focus group discussion as well as the interviews are the following: First, the social media usage and behaviour of the participants shall be determined, focusing on most used channels, time spent on social media and engaged activities. Then the participants will be questioned about their consumption

and interaction with companies' social media content or advertisements. The most important part will be about the culture of Graz and the possible impact of cultural determinants on social media usage: The participants will be asked to describe the unique aspects of Graz's culture they were able to observe throughout their years spent in the city. Furthermore, they will be asked how they perceive the influence of Graz's culture on theirs or others' social media behaviours and preferences and how much they believe these differ generationally, if at all.

Both research methods, the focus group discussion and the in-depth interviews, were conducted in German. Reason for that is that the researcher wanted to obtain in-depth and naturalistic answer in the language in which the participants are most familiar and comfortable in expressing themselves.

Furthermore, the focus group discussion and the in-depth interviews were conducted online via the software Microsoft Teams. The advantages the author hoped to see were that first of all, timeslots for the meetings with the participants could be set up quicker online than meeting in person. Furthermore, the author is aware, from personal experience, that the inhibition threshold to participate in a study is lower when the effort for the participant is kept as low as possible, this was provided by conducting the conversations online. Another point worth mentioning is that video calls via Microsoft Teams can be recorded, making revision easier for the researcher and therefore enabling full focus on the conversation and the participant. Additionally, a recording allows the author to watch the whole interaction multiple times, which is necessary when facial expressions and gestures come into analysis. Nonetheless, the author is well aware that, because the talks did not take place face-to-face, there might have been some loss in mimicry and gestures, as mobile devices separate the researcher and the participants. The author firmly believes, however, that this fact meant only a minimal restriction and trusts that the conversations were nevertheless successful.

Resulting from the chosen qualitative methods, individuals in the focus group and the in-depth interviews are the data sources. Concerning the choice of the participants, nonprobability sampling was applied. Specifically for this research, convenience

sampling was used, complemented with the snowball sampling method: First, people available to the researcher (convenience sampling) who met the defined criteria, that follow below, were identified. They then recommended further participants (snowball sampling) who also met the requirements (Trochim et al., 2016, p. 86 & 90).

The following requirements needed to be met by the participants in order to be part of the focus group discussion or to be chosen as an in-depth interview partner:

- The participant needs to be part of either generation X (born between 1965 and 1980), generation Y (born between 1981 and 1996), or generation Z (born between 1997 and 2012).
- The participant must have lived in Graz for at least ten years.
- The participant must use at least one of the four chosen social media channels, either Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, or TikTok.

Additionally, the researcher made a point of having a diverse target group and not discriminating against anyone and a proportionately equal number of women and men were chosen. Furthermore, the ethnic background was not taken into consideration, as long as the participant had lived at least ten years in Graz. This requirement is necessary as the researcher believes, that people who have not spent that much time living in Graz, might not have taken on the cultural specialties of the city.

People who did not meet the criteria of being part of one generation as well as people who did not use one of the above-mentioned social media platforms, were not included in the sampling, as they would not have been able to contribute to the research purpose.

As snowball samplings are more likely to be biased, the researcher tried to reasonably select every participant according to fitting requirements, not only based on availability. In addition, the researcher made a point of not being biased herself and remained open-minded.

In order to protect the participants confidentiality and anonymity, their names were anonymised. This is intended as an example: Instead of ‘Patricia Hammer’, the participant would be called ‘Ms. H’. Furthermore, the social desirability bias as a major issue in ethical research was taken into account: People tend to answer in a more socially desirable notion (Wiederhold & Martinez, 2018, p. 422 & 423). By providing the participants with anonymity and a pleasant and comforting atmosphere, the researcher hoped for honest answers.

Another point worth mentioning is that in order to prepare for the focus group discussion and the in-depth interviews, this author wanted to talk to an expert in contemporary culture of Graz. Therefore, the author first contacted Mag. Dr. Wolfram Dornik, an expert in the culture and history of Graz and one of the authors of the book “Graz Biographie—Geschichte einer Stadt” that was used in the prior literature review. Mag. Dr. Dornik believed that the director of the Graz Museum, Mag. Sibylle Dienesch, would be a better fit for the questions that needed answering, as she is an expert in contemporary culture of Graz. Following this tip, the author contacted the Graz Museum and was able to speak to Mag. Martina Pock, MA, who is responsible for Marketing and Public Relations for the Graz Museum. Together with Mag. Dienesch, Mag. Pock, MA, was able to explain in detail topics such as the most relevant aspects defining the culture of Graz, the typical inhabitant of Graz’s opinions, or the multicultural Graz. These answers helped the author on the one hand with missing parts in the literature review, and on the other hand allowed for a better preparation for the following focus group discussion and semi-structured interviews.

3.4 Data analysis

After conducting the focus group discussion and the semi-structured in-depth interviews and before starting to analyse the collected data, this author took several preparatory steps. First of all, all conversations, done with the application Microsoft Teams, were recorded. When recording a conversion on Microsoft Teams, the spoken words are automatically transcribed. This gave the author the possibility to download not only the recording but also a transcript after the interview took place. Following this,

the author revised all the transcriptions whilst watching the recordings to make sure that there were no mistakes and that no information was lost.

Qualitative data analysis is defined as a non-linear process and can often be recursive, meaning it is possible the analysing process might repeat itself when new information emerges (Khandkar, 2009, p. 1).

After transcribing and cleaning the data collected in the focus group discussion and the in-depth semi-structured interviews, the researcher analysed the gathered qualitative data through the method of open coding (Corbin & Strauss, 1990; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Khandkar, 2009). Open coding is generally seen as the initial stage of qualitative data analysis (Khandkar, 2009, p. 5): In this interpretive process, the data is analytically broken down in order to give new insights (Corbin & Strauss, 1990, p. 12). Throughout the process of open coding, data gathered in the focus group discussion and interviews was broken down and abstracted, a procedure that is called 'concepting'. Researchers tend to work with in-vivo codes (Strauss & Corbin, 1998, p. 105), 1st order concepts, 2nd order themes and then develop aggregated dimensions (Harrison & Rouse, 2014, p. 1265). Through working with the open coding method new concepts emerge from the gathered data that can later be grouped in conceptual categories (Khandkar, 2009, p. 8). In order to conduct open coding properly, this author made use of the software MaxQDA.

The researcher chose the open coding method, as she wanted to analyse the gathered information regarding possible similarities between the answers of the conversation partners. This way, she hopes to identify common cultural aspects that seem to influence the social media behaviour within the generations X, Y, and Z. Even though the interview partners might not directly indicate similarities, throughout the open coding process, shared categories might be developed.

4. Results and analysis

4.1 Participants

This researcher initially aimed for 20 participants within the qualitative research, six of them should take part in the focus group discussion while 14 were planned to be part of the semi-structured interviews. One participant from the focus group was not able to participate in the discussion at short notice but was then willing to be an interviewee. Furthermore, the originally 14 planned interview participants extended to 19. Overall, this resulted in 24 participants, with five being part of the focus group discussion and 19 people in the semi-structured interviews.

As noted beforehand, the participants had to fulfil three requirements: They must have been part of one of the generations X, Y, or Z, they must have lived in Graz for at least ten years, and they must have used at least one of the four focused social media channels. The following table depicts all necessary information about the participants for the following chapter of findings and analysis whilst anonymising the interviewees.

Overall, seven participants were part of generation X, ten participants were part of generation Y, and seven participants were part of generation Z, resulting in a diverse set of ages. Furthermore, 12 participants were male and 12 participants were female.

All participants were informed that the recordings of the interviews will not be distributed in any way and are recorded for the sole reason of scientific work. They were additionally informed that their names and any information that could allow conclusions to be drawn would be anonymised.

Participant	Sex	Generation	Lived in Graz for	Used social media channels	Type of participation
Mr. W	male	Z	25 years	Instagram, YouTube, TikTok	Focus group
Ms. SC	female	Y	12 years	Instagram, YouTube	Focus group
Mr. R	male	Y	10 years	Facebook, Instagram, YouTube	Focus group
Mr. S	male	X	21 years	Facebook, Instagram, YouTube	Focus group
Ms. P	female	Z	24 years	Instagram, YouTube, TikTok	Focus group
Ms. S	female	X	25 years	Instagram	Interview
Mr. M	male	Y	12 years	Facebook, Instagram	Interview
Mr. Re	male	Y	10 years	Facebook, Instagram, TikTok	Interview
Ms. W	female	Z	25 years	Facebook, Instagram, YouTube	Interview
Ms. H	female	Y	10 years	Facebook, Instagram	Interview
Ms. Sa	female	Z	11 years	Facebook, Instagram	Interview
Ms. Wa	female	X	10 years	Instagram, TikTok	Interview
Mr. K	male	X	46 years	Facebook	Interview
Mr. E	male	X	54 years	Facebook, Instagram, TikTok	Interview
Ms. B	female	Z	26 years	Instagram, YouTube, TikTok	Interview
Mr. O	male	Z	24 years	Instagram, YouTube, TikTok	Interview
Ms. O	female	X	53 years	Instagram, YouTube	Interview
Ms. H	male	X	48 years	Facebook, Instagram	Interview
Mr. Ka	male	Y	17 years	Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok	Interview
Mr. Ma	male	Z	25 years	Instagram	Interview
Ms. K	female	Y	38 years	Facebook, Instagram	Interview
Ms. Ka	female	Y	14 years	Instagram	Interview
Ms. Ko	female	Y	27 years	Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok	Interview
Mr. U	male	Y	20 years	Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, TikTok	Interview

Table 1: Participant’s information

4.2 Interview guideline and questionnaire

As explained in the methodology chapter, the researcher conducted a focus group discussion prior to having the semi-structured interviews. During the focus group discussion, the researcher was able to refine the predefined guidelines and questions. Furthermore, this researcher discovered some other aspects to be optimised, for instance the participants mostly refer to advertising, as well as organic content by companies, as company content in general, leading to the conclusion that most of them do not or cannot make a distinction between organic and paid content on social media.

As the talks were conducted as semi-structured interviews, some interviews were focusing more on one topic than others and vice versa. The interviewer followed the interviewees lead if reasonable, or steered the interview in a direction she believed more interesting for this particular interview partner. Following this is the set of questions that served as a rough guideline throughout all the conversations. These questions are clustered in the topics social media use, cultural aspects of Graz, and additional questions:

Social media use:

- Can you walk me through the social media platforms you use throughout a typical day or week? Which one do you find yourself spending the most time on, and why?
- Could you describe to me what you do on social media, what activities you engage in? How do these activities vary across different platforms?
- How do you interact with content or advertisements from companies on social media? What motivates you to engage with company content or ignore it?
- From your perspective, how does engagement with social media differ between the three generations (generation X being born between 1965 and 1980, generation Y being born between 1981 and 1996, and generation Z being born between 1997 and 2012)? Do you believe that certain social media channels are more interesting for one generation over another? If so, can you think of an explanation for it?

Cultural aspects of Graz:

- In your own words, how would you describe Graz? Are there any cultural aspects that come to your mind?
- What behaviours, attitudes, and values have you observed among residents of Graz? How might these be particularly significant in the cultural context of Graz?
- How do you perceive the influence of Graz's culture on your own or others' social media behaviour? Do you think this behaviour varies from generation to generation? If so, how?

Additional questions:

- Have you noticed any changes in your social media usage over time? If so, what factors do you believe have influenced these changes?
- Can you describe any differences you may have noticed in content or social media usage during local events or cultural celebrations in Graz, for instance ‘Aufsteirern’, ‘Klanglicht’, or ‘Diagonale’?

4.3 Social media use within the generations

The qualitative research led to the following insights and realisations concerning the most used social media channels that furthermore indicate important conclusions from a marketing perspective:

- Facebook is used by 14 people out of 24, this equates to a use percentage of 58%, which makes Facebook the second most popular channel within this research group.
- The most used social media channel across all generations is Instagram, where 23 out of 24 participants, 96%, have an account and spent time using it.
- YouTube is used by 12 out of 24 participants, this is a percentage of exactly 50% and makes YouTube the third most popular social media platform here.

- Lastly, TikTok is used by ten out of 24 interview partners, equalling a usage of 42%.

The following graph depicts these results:

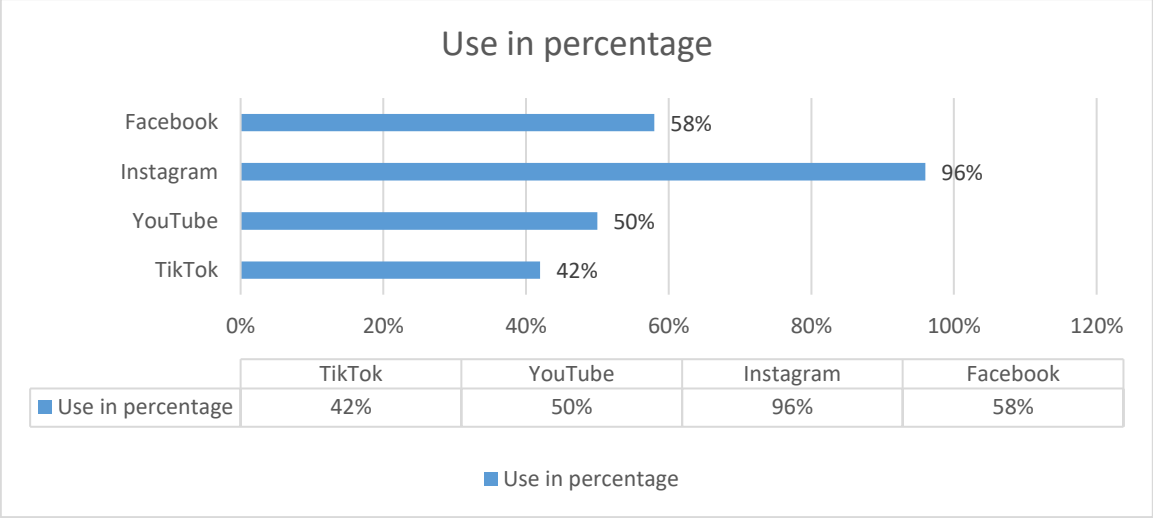


Figure 3: Use in percentage

The research furthermore showed which social media platform is the most popular within the different generations:

- The most used social media platform within generation X is Instagram, on which six out of seven participants had an account and spent time on regularly. This equates to a use percentage of 86%.
- The most used social media channel in generation Y is Instagram, on which ten out of ten participants had an account and spent time on regularly. This equates to a use percentage of 100%.
- The most used social media network in generation Z is Instagram, on which seven out of seven participants had an account and spent time on regularly. This equates to a use percentage of 100%.

The following graph demonstrates these results:

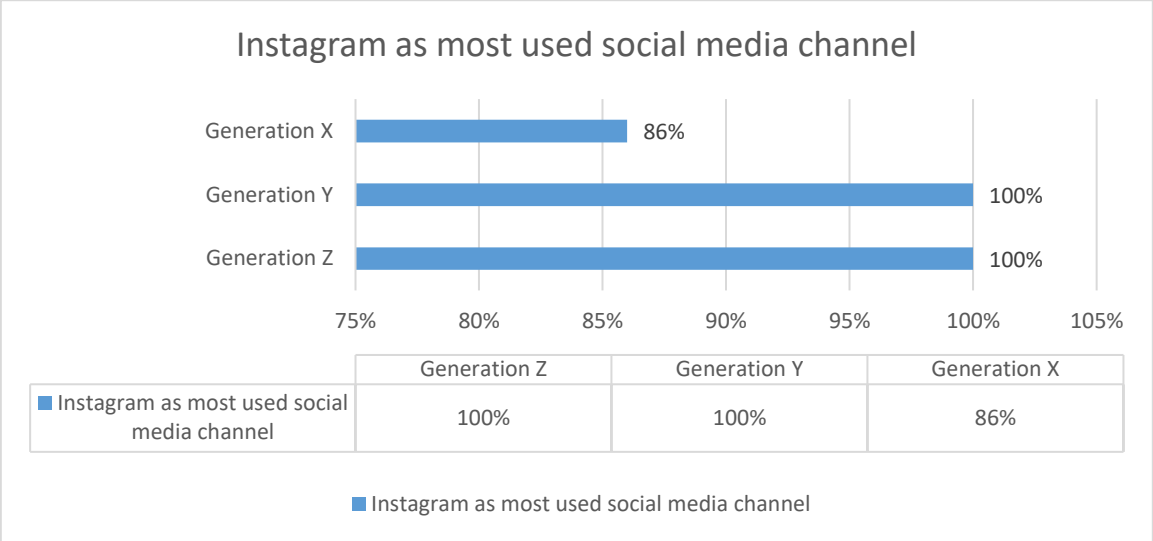


Figure 4: Instagram as most used social media channel

Taking a closer look at generation X, the researcher was able to find the following results:

- Facebook is used by four out of seven people, equating to a use percentage of 57%.
- Instagram is used by six out of seven participants, equating to a use percentage of 86%.
- YouTube is used by two out of seven interview partners, equating to a use percentage of 29%.
- TikTok is used by two out of seven people, equating to a use percentage of 29%.

Generation Y allows for the following insights to be drawn:

- Facebook is used by eight out of ten people, equating to a use percentage of 80%.
- Instagram is used by ten out of ten participants, equating to a use percentage of 100%.
- YouTube is used by five out of ten interview partners, equating to a use percentage of 50%.

- TikTok is used by four out of ten people, equating to a use percentage of 40%.

Generation Z shows these findings:

- Facebook is used by two out of seven people, equating to a use percentage of 29%.
- Instagram is used by seven out of seven participants, equating to a use percentage of 100%.
- YouTube is used by five out of seven interview partners, equating to a use percentage of 71%.
- TikTok is used by four out of seven people, equating to a use percentage of 57%.

The following graph shows this usage over all social media channels within the generations:

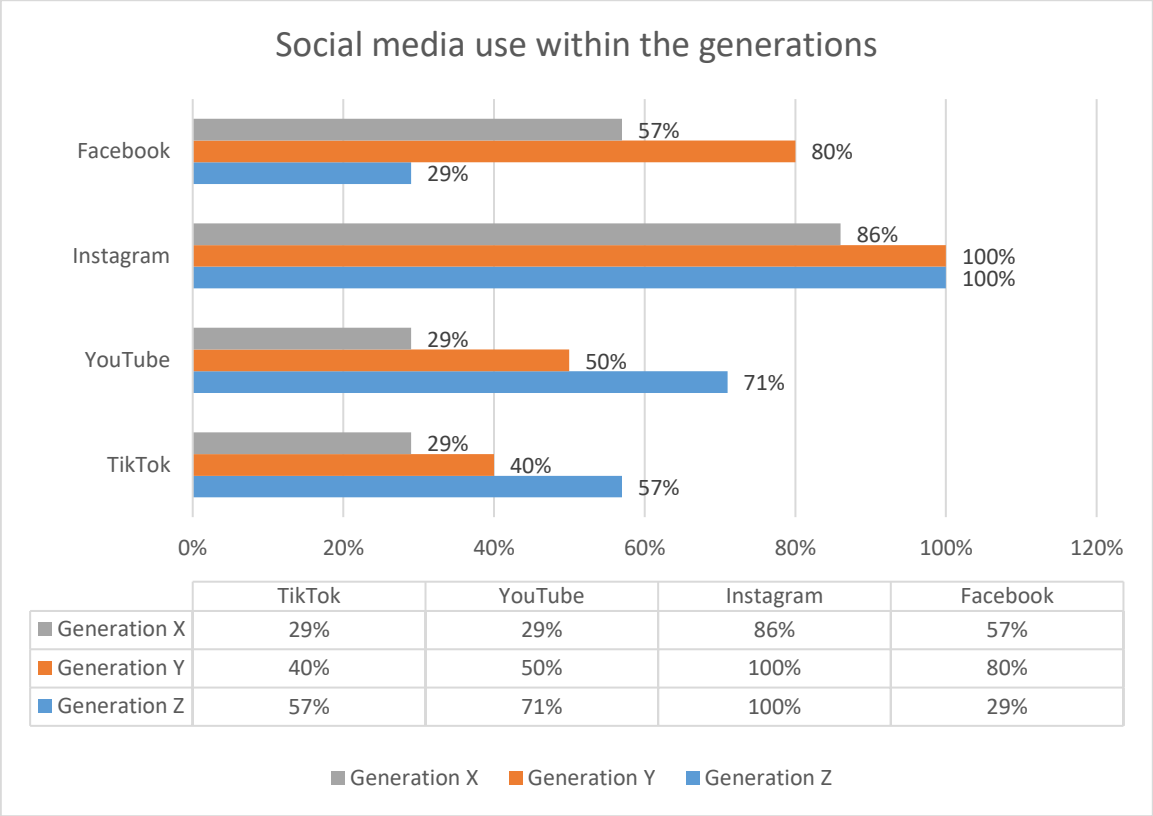


Figure 5: Social media use within the generations

All these results show that Instagram is the most used platform within all three generations. Furthermore, it demonstrates that Facebook is most used within the generation Y and least used in generation Z, while TikTok is most used in generation Z and least used in generation X. YouTube is most used in generation Z and least used in generation X. In generation Y, Facebook and Instagram are the most used social media platforms.

Another point worth mentioning is the different social media preferences between the female and male participants.

Female participants stated the following:

- Facebook is used by five out of 12 women, equating to a use percentage of 42%.
- Instagram is used by 12 out of 12 women, equating to a use percentage of 100%.
- YouTube is used by four out of 12 women, equating to a use percentage of 33%.

- TikTok is used by four out of 12 people, equating to a use percentage of 33%.

Meanwhile, men displayed the following:

- Facebook is used by nine out of 12 men, equating to a use percentage of 75%.
- Instagram is used by eleven out of 12 men, equating to a use percentage of 92%.
- YouTube is used by five out of 12 interview partners, equating to a use percentage of 42%.
- TikTok is used by six out of 12 men, equating to a use percentage of 50%.

These results indicate, again, that the most popular social media platform in both genders is Instagram. Female users clearly prefer the social media channel Instagram, followed at some distance by Facebook. YouTube and TikTok display a similar frequency but are behind. For men, Instagram is again the most popular, as already stated, but the other social media channels do not depict such a distance, as Facebook follows with a use percentage of 75%. According to the data, men in this participation group use TikTok more often than women. The following graph shows the results between female and male social media use.

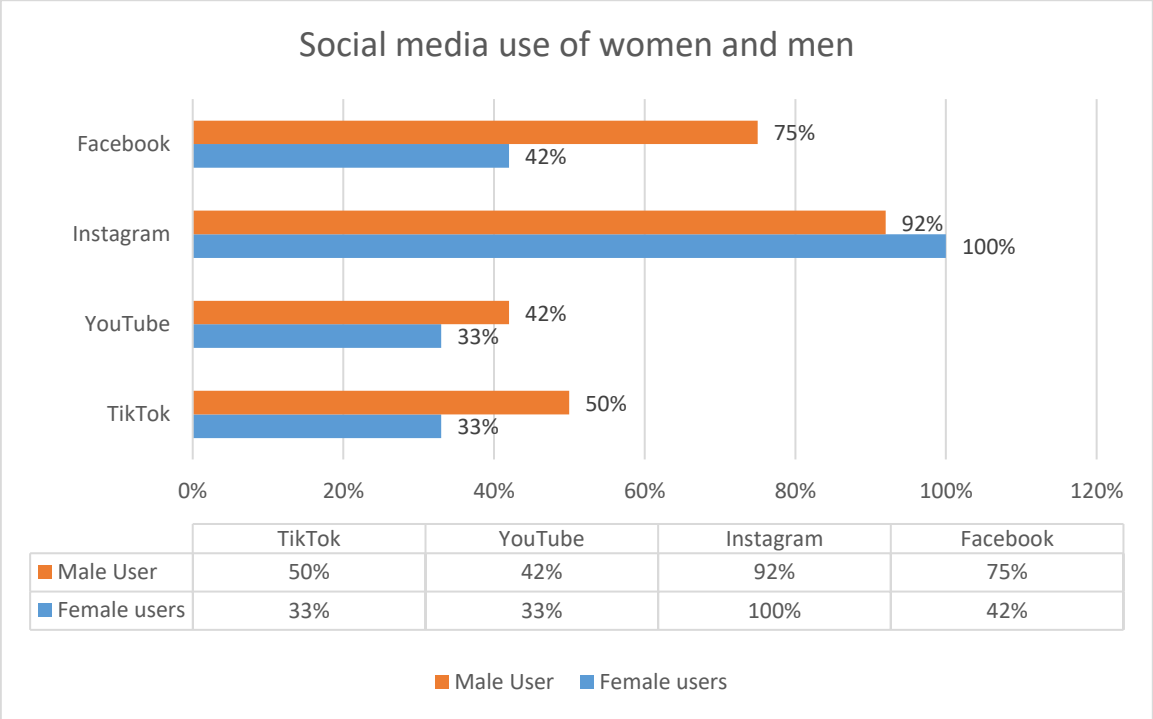


Figure 6: Social media use of women and men

These results indicate that Instagram needs to be the most interesting platform for companies and their marketing strategies, followed by Facebook, as the participants use these networks the most, which furthermore could lead to the conclusion that advertisement but also organic content on these platforms seem to have the highest chances of being seen. But one also needs to note here that TikTok use seems to be increasing, allowing for another interesting insight concerning the marketer's perspective.

Here it should be mentioned that although all of these results give an interesting insight into the social media use within the generations and genders in this research, this data cannot be seen representative of all members of the generations within the socio-cultural sphere of Graz.

4.4 Results and analysis of open coding process

But how do people living in Graz use these social media platforms with respect to marketing consumption and how influential do they perceive the culture of Graz to be? The following figures show the results from the open coding process, summarised in 1st order concepts, 2nd order themes, and eventually, aggregated dimensions. It should be mentioned here that the participants' quotes used in the following pages were translated with the help of DeepL.

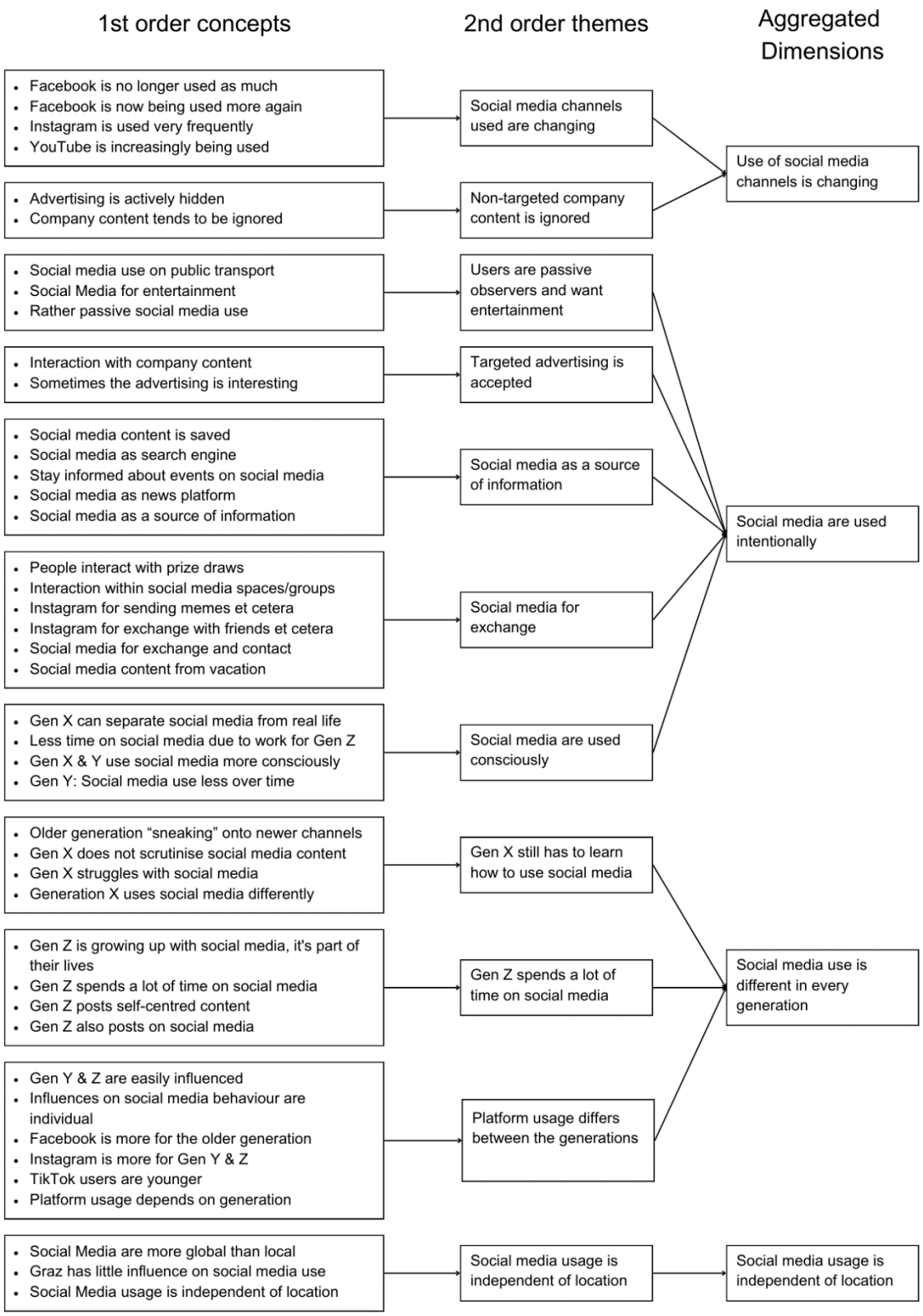


Figure 7: 1st order concepts, 2nd order themes, and aggregated dimensions

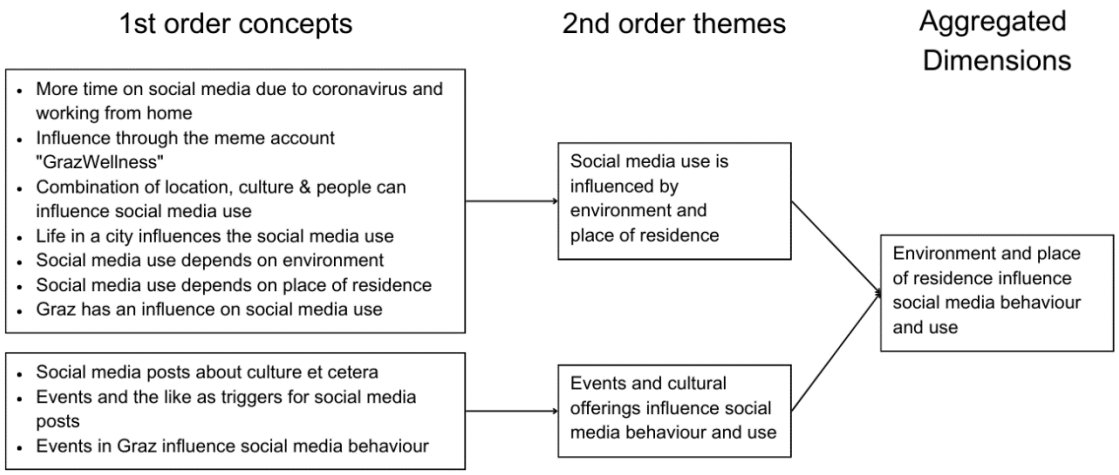


Figure 8: 1st order concepts, 2nd order themes, and aggregated dimensions

The open coding process started with 343 in-vivo codes and resulted in 56 1st order concepts, eleven 2nd order themes, and five aggregated dimensions. These five final dimensions are:

- The use of social media channels is changing.
- Social media are used intentionally.
- Social media use is different in every generation.
- The social media usage is independent of the location.
- The environment and the place of residence influence social media behaviour and use.

These five results are the most important learnings of the study. In the open coding process, this researcher focused on how the participants use social media networks with special regards on marketing consumption and how they perceive a possible influence of the socio-cultural sphere of Graz on this usage and consumption, possible cultural aspects will be included in the discussion chapter later. As some participants stated that the culture of Graz has no influence on their social media use while others mentioned that it actually had an influence, both answers found their way into the five most important learnings, but with different weights to the result. On

several occasions, some participants stated one thing, whilst others stated the exact opposite. This of course has been taken into account.

4.4.1 Use of social media channels is changing

The first aggregated dimension concluded that the use of social media channels is changing, building on 61 in-vivo codes, six 1st order concepts as well as two 2nd order themes, state that:

- Facebook is no longer used as much, found in 14 in-vivo codes.
- Facebook is being used more again, found in five in-vivo codes.
- Instagram is used more frequently, found in 17 in-vivo codes.
- YouTube is increasingly used, found in six in-vivo codes.
    - These four concepts resulted in the 2nd order theme of: Social media channels used are changing.
- Advertising is actively hidden, found in two in-vivo codes.
- Company content tends to be ignored, found in 17 in-vivo codes.
    - These resulted in the 2nd order theme of: Non-targeted company content is ignored.

These results show that participants feel that they are using social media channels differently now. Most of the 14 in-vivo codes stating that Facebook is no longer used as much, were part of the younger generations, but also members of generation X believed that Facebook is no longer that interesting or used. Mr. E, part of generation X, put it in his interview with the researcher on 24th of January 2024 like this*: "I think Facebook is actually completely out now, let me put it that way."* Interestingly though, a few participants claimed that they started using Facebook more often again.

On the other hand, 17 participants were of the opinion that Instagram is the most used social media platform or that they themselves perceive Instagram to be their most used social media platform at the moment. Mr. Ka even put it this way in his interview with this researcher on the 25th of January 2024: *"I believe that as soon as the older target group spreads on a social network, the young ones disappear elsewhere. That's why I*

believe that only old people are on Facebook. It's probably a good mix on Instagram, because I think that's simply the gold network now, everyone is there." This aligns with the previous analysis of social media use that concluded 23 of 24 participants in this research use Instagram, additionally underlined by the fact that Instagram is the most used social media platform within all three generations in this study. Therefore, it can be said that Instagram might be the most interesting platform from a marketing perspective right now.

These results reflect the findings of Fietkiewicz et al., as discussed in the literature review beforehand, who discovered in 2018 that younger generations show a distinctive tendency to leave longer established networks, such as Twitter and Facebook, whilst on the other hand like to explore new media channels as, for instance, Instagram (p. 197). These results are furthermore underlined by the research Manolică et al. (2022) conducted in Romania: It shows that generation Z and people who are closer to the age of generation Z are more likely to use the social media platform Instagram, while people who are near the age of generation X or part of generation X seem to tend towards Facebook (p. 625 & 626 & 628).

Another point worth mentioning is that one 1st order concept in this dimension came to the conclusion that the usage of YouTube is also increasing. Mr. U said in his interview with the researcher on the 1st of February 2024: *"With YouTube, I think it's becoming more common for the older generation to use it, simply because they realise, hey, I can watch something about gardening, to put it bluntly."* Not only the older generation uses YouTube more often, but also the younger generations do, as Ms. Ko states in her interview from the 30th of January 2024: *"I watch very little television, but we watch a lot of YouTube in the evening."* This underlines what Pahrmann & Kupka discovered: For many people, YouTube has replaced classic television (2022, p. 443).

Another important topic to mention is that 17 of 24 interview partners said that they ignore company content, organic content as well as paid advertisement, on social media. Answering the question why they tend to ignore company content, participants stated that the content, be it advertising or organic content, is not interesting for them

or is shown at the wrong time, for instance. Mr. R put it like this in the focus group discussion from the 17th of January 2024: *"Otherwise, it seems to me that the advertising is often far too late, because then you get advertisements after the purchase, which seems to me to be too late. Because either I've already made my decision or what I'm shown isn't that relevant after all."*

4.4.2 Social media are used intentionally

The second aggregated dimension came to the conclusion that social media are used intentionally, building on 109 in-vivo codes, 20 1st order themes as well as five 2nd order themes:

- Social media use on public transport, found in three in-vivo codes.
- Social media for entertainment, found in 12 in-vivo codes.
- Rather passive social media use, found in 22 in-vivo codes.
    - These three resulted in the 2nd order theme: Users are passive observers and want entertainment.
- Interaction with company content, found in three in-vivo codes.
- Sometimes the advertising is interesting, found in seven in-vivo codes.
    - These two concepts resulted in the 2nd order theme of: Targeted advertising is accepted.
- Social media content is saved, found in two in-vivo codes.
- Social media as a search engine, found in two in-vivo codes.
- Stay informed about events on social media, found in three in-vivo codes.
- Social media as news platform, found in six in-vivo codes.
- Social media as a source of information, found in eleven in-vivo codes.
    - These concepts resulted in the 2nd order theme of: Social media as a source of information.
- People interact with prize draws, found in three in-vivo codes.
- Interaction with social media spaces/groups, found in four in-vivo codes.
- Instagram for sending memes et cetera, found in four in-vivo codes.
- Instagram for exchange with friends et cetera, found in four in-vivo codes.

- Social media for exchange and contact, found in seven in-vivo codes.
- Social media content from vacation, found in three in-vivo codes.
    - These six concepts resulted in the 2nd order theme of: Social media for exchange.
- Generation X can separate social media from real life, found in two in-vivo codes.
- Less time on social media due to work for generation Z, found in two in-vivo codes.
- Generation X and Y use social media more consciously, found in four in-vivo codes.
- Generation Y: Social media use less over time, found in five in-vivo codes.
    - These resulted in the 2nd order theme of: Social media are used consciously.

All these in-vivo codes, 1st order concepts, and 2nd order themes resulted in the aggregated dimension that social media are used intentionally, that people spend time on social media following specific activities and with an intention, whether it is gaining information, an exchange with friends or just being entertained. Although the participants use social media intentionally, 22 of them stated that they use social media passively, meaning that they do not actively post much themselves or interact much with others, especially with unknown individuals or companies. Some of the interview partners continued to say that sometimes they interact with advertisements or click on it if it is interesting. Combined with the 2nd order theme of the previous dimension, that non-targeted company content is ignored because advertisements are often not interesting for the target group or are shown, as Mr. R's quote said beforehand, too late, marketers could conclude that most advertisements are ignored, unless the targeting was done properly and the content was designed in an interesting way in order to be appealing to the potential customer. This conclusion aligns with the part of the previous literature review saying that for marketers it is important to know who the customers are in order to identify the consumer's needs, reflect them, and then deliver

a relevant product or service. This also includes appealing content for the audiences (Chaffey & Smith, 2017, p. 254).

One more topic worth pointing out is the 1st order concept that says social media is used as a search engine. Interestingly, these statements only concerned people being part of generation Z, which could lead to the conclusion that the younger generation uses social media differently. The following statement made by Ms. P, member of generation Z, in the focus group discussion on the 17th of January 2024 underlines this in saying: *"And I also use TikTok a lot as a search engine for travelling. […] for restaurants, for the best spots to see, photo spots, for all those things."*

Furthermore, there seems to be a tendency, especially within generation Y and X, to use social media more consciously, meaning for instance actively reducing time spent on social media, posting less or to avoid using social media while completely lost in thought.

4.4.3 Social media use is different in every generation

The third aggregated dimension concluded that social media use is different in every generation, building on 105 in-vivo codes, 14 1st order concepts, and three 2nd order themes:

- Older generation "sneaking" onto newer channels, found in three in-vivo codes.
- Generation X does not scrutinise social media content, found in four in-vivo codes.
- Generation X struggles with social media, found in five in-vivo codes.
- Generation X uses social media differently, found in six in-vivo codes.
    - These four concepts resulted in the 2nd order theme of: Generation X still has to learn how to use social media.
- Generation Z is growing up with social media, it is part of their lives, found in 12 in-vivo codes.
- Generation Z spends a lot of time on social media, found in 12 in-vivo codes.
- Generation Z posts self-centred content, found in two in-vivo codes.

- Generation Z also posts on social media, found in three in-vivo codes.
    - These resulted in the 2nd order theme of: Generation Z spends a lot of time on social media.
- Generation Y and Z are easily influenced, found in six in-vivo codes.
- Influences on social media behaviour are individual, found in two in-vivo codes.
- Facebook is more for the older generation, found in 17 in-vivo codes.
- Instagram is more for generation Y and Z, found in eight in-vivo codes.
- TikTok users are younger, found in 19 in-vivo codes.
- Platform usage depends on generation, found in six in-vivo codes.
    - These six concepts resulted in the 2nd order concept of: Platform usage differs between generations.

This aggregated dimension came to the conclusion that the social media use is different in every generation. Facebook is for instance perceived as a platform more popular among the older generation, a result stated by several participants, as for instance Mr. M in his interview from the 20th of January 2024: *"I think the older generation is now more likely to be on Facebook."*

TikTok, on the other hand, is believed to attract younger people. Several participants from all generations supported this, among them Mr. E in his interview from the 24th of January: *"I just think TikTok is the most popular among young people."*

Furthermore, participants through all generations were of the opinion that generation X still has to learn how to use social media, while generation Z already grew up with social media being part of their lives. Additionally, participants believe that generation Z spends a lot of time on different social media platforms. This aligns with the results of Manolică et al. and their 2022 study, where they discovered that generation Z spends between two to six hours a day on social networks (p. 628). Furthermore, some of the participants are of the opinion that generation Z posts more often on social networks and that these postings are somewhat self-centred.

4.4.4 Social media usage is independent of the location

The fourth aggregated dimension includes 21 in-vivo codes, three 1st order concepts, and one 2nd order theme and came to the conclusion that the social media usage is independent of the location. Following are the 1st order concepts and the 2nd order theme:

- Social media are global rather than local, found in three in-vivo codes.
- Graz has little influence on the social media use, found in 14 in-vivo codes.
- Social media usage is independent of the location, found in four in-vivo codes.
    - These resulted in the 2nd order theme of: Social media usage is independent of location.

This leads to the conclusion that several participants believe Graz has little to no influence on their social media behaviour and marketing consumption, or at least that they do not perceive it consciously. Underlining this, Ms. P stated in the focus group discussion on the 17th of January 2024: *"[…] I would not say that, I don't know events in Graz or the culture in Graz, have an influence on my social media use."*

Some participants added that it would most likely make no difference if they lived in another city. They do not believe that a city itself can have an impact on the social media use, as Ms. Ko said in her interview with this researcher on the 30th of January 2024 when comparing living in Graz to living in Vienna: *"So, I think it really doesn't matter where I would be, my behaviour on social media wouldn't change much as a result."* Furthermore, some participants mentioned that the place of residence also does not really have an impact on their marketing consumption and consumer behaviour: They do not specifically consume content by a company because it is situated in Graz or they do not buy products of a local company, just because is it close by. This trend might also be supported by the fact that nowadays, most products can easily be ordered online, therefore the location of the producing and selling company would not matter that much.

4.4.5 The environment and the place of residence influence social media behaviour and use

The last aggregated dimension concluded that the environment and the place of residence do have an influence on the social media use and marketing consumption, building on 47 in-vivo codes, ten 1st order concepts as well as two 2nd order themes:

- More time on social media due to coronavirus and working from home, found in two in-vivo codes.
- Influence through the meme account 'GrazWellness', found in four in-vivo codes.
- Combination of location, culture, and people can influence social media use, found in five in-vivo codes.
- Life in a city influences social media use, found in eight in-vivo codes.
- Social media use depends on environment, found in seven in-vivo codes.
- Social media use depends on the place of residence, found in four in-vivo codes.
- Graz has an influence on social media use, found in eight in-vivo codes.
    - These seven concepts resulted in the 2nd order theme of: Social media use is influenced by environment and place of residence.
- Social media posts about culture et cetera, found in three in-vivo codes.
- Events and the like as triggers for social media posts, found in five in-vivo codes.
- Events in Graz influence social media behaviour, found in one in-vivo code.
    - These resulted in the 2nd order theme of: Events and cultural offerings influence social media behaviour and use.

This aggregated dimension found that a city, including Graz, can have an impact on the social media use of people, for instance through its events, its culture or people. It needs to be mentioned here that some of these in-vivo codes did not explicitly mean Graz, but rather the influence of a city in general, therefore including Graz. Interestingly, several participants mentioned the Instagram meme account 'GrazWellness' as influential of their social media use. Furthermore, some participants mentioned that when coming across social media content or advertisements related to Graz, the city they live in, they automatically take a closer look and oftentimes can identify more with

the content because they recognise the location, the company, or similar. These results can be connected to this part of the literature review, by saying that communities, whether online or offline, revolve, among other things, around family, hobbies, religious beliefs, goals as well as place of residence to create bonds and relationships among the members (Tuten, 2021, p. 85).

Having had a look at all these results, the researcher feels the need to point out that some statements and results occurred more often while others might just have been mentioned, giving different weights to the different results. This is also the reason every 1st order concept was underlined with the number of in-vivo codes that were sorted into this concept. For instance: 21 in-vivo codes resulted in the aggregated dimension that social media use is independent of the locations, whilst 47 in-vivo codes were sorted into the dimension that the environment and the place of residence do have somehow an impact on the social media behaviour and marketing consumption. Stating this, more participants seem to perceive the socio-cultural sphere of a city as influential. Going forward, this must be taken into consideration.

5. Discussion

Before diving into the discussion of the most significant results from the open coding process, this researcher wants to discuss some other aspects that arose throughout the focus group discussion and the interviews.

One interesting result to start with is that Instagram is the most used social media platform within the participant group. Although not unexpected, the researcher would not have believed Instagram to be the most popular social media platform by such a wide margin. However, this study, underlined by the preceding literature review, led to this result. This outcome though, cannot be representative for all residents of Graz, but it definitely shows a tendency and might even put forward the most important platform for marketers and the users marketing consumption.

Another interesting aspect of this study is that, although most participants stated in their conversations with this researcher that they believe Facebook is not interesting anymore, it still is used by more than half of the participants, even if not as often as beforehand. Again, this aspect has been proven not only through this study but is also the outcome of the previous literature review.

Another aspect the researcher noticed in the focus group discussion as well as the interviews was that some participants do not automatically refer to YouTube as a social media platform and therefore often did not think of YouTube in the beginning when asked about their used social media platforms. Oftentimes, the researcher even had to actively ask, if YouTube was used and then received answers like this from Mr. Ka in his interview on the 25th of January 2024: *"YouTube? Is that a social network, YouTube?"*. Regardless of whether people perceive YouTube as a social media channel or not, the usage of YouTube seems to increase, which also leads to the conclusion that YouTube should not be underestimated as an important network for a broad marketing channel mix.

Furthermore, TikTok seems to be an established social media platform nowadays, with ten participants out of 24 actively using it. Although TikTok has grown throughout the

last years, the researcher believes that the platform, as with the other social media channels, benefited from the COVID-19 pandemic. She saw it in her own time spent on social media, especially TikTok, during the pandemic and got furthermore confirmed by a participant, Ms. Ka who said in her interview with the researcher on the 29th of January 2024: *"I think COVID-19 has made it much more common for me to be on social media."*

Another interesting topic the researcher discovered in her interviews with the participants was that some members of generation X believe generation Z to be credulous and that they do not scrutinise what they see on social media. Contrastively, generation Z is of the opinion that it is exactly the other way around, that generation X believes everything they see. Mr. Ma, part of generation Z, put it in his interview with the researcher on the 25th of January like this: *"I only heard recently, that our generation or someone who has grown up with these social networks or with the internet, they tend not to believe everything, tend to be more cautious. I don't think you can lump everyone together, but I do believe, for example, our parents' generation won't be so careful when it comes to information, they are more likely to believe fake news, especially when it comes to AI [Artificial Intelligence], which is actually already pretty good anyway, in terms of quality, image generation or texts, it's almost indistinguishable. And I think the older generation and perhaps also the millennials, who are more in the middle between us and the older generation, I think they just find it really difficult to differentiate and I don't think they can judge how good AI already is."* This researcher shares Mr. Ma's opinion based on her own experiences and observations and also believes that people who already grew up with social media, find it easier to distinguish true and trustworthy information than members of the older generation, who might not fully understand the possibilities and facets of social media platforms. Furthermore, this researcher can imagine that some members of the older generation might have troubles distinguishing between social media content and company advertising. This also plays into the result, that although social media can be viewed as established, generation X might still need to learn how to use it. Of course, as Mr. Ma also mentioned, this conclusion cannot be drawn for everybody. Surely, there are enough members of generation X who

understand all aspects of social media, while members of generation Z or younger might have problems differentiating between true and false information.

One aspect that might be worth having a closer look at in future research is this finding: Within the participants of this research, two couples were chosen to do the interviews, individually of course. Interestingly, both partners in these relationships used the same social media platforms. This might be a coincidence, but it also might be an approach for research on understanding social media use and the influence of relationships on this usage as well as the marketing consumption. This researcher believes that being in a relationship, the marketing consumption might change slightly. An example: Before being in a relationship, an advertisement regarding a special product or company would not have been of interest. But knowing the partner and their interests or preferences, seeing the same advertisement might suddenly be interesting after all. Therefore, this researcher believes that being in a relationship might influence the social media use and marketing consumption.

To summarize, the most significant results of this open coding process, that have been discussed in detail beforehand, are:

- The use of social media channels is changing.
- Social media are used intentionally.
- Social media use is different in every generation.
- The social media usage is independent of the location.
- The environment and the place of residence influence social media behaviour and use.

These results might be influenced by the following aspects the researcher found during the conversations with the participants about Graz and its culture:

- Graz is being perceived as being the perfect size, not too big or small, with everything necessary for daily life.

- Graz has a lot of culture to offer, including historic sights, museums, the old town, varied events such as ‘Klanglicht’, ‘Aufsteirern’ and more or similar, while also offering its residents different sports and activities.
- Graz is perceived as a city worth living in.
- All participants view Graz as a student city.
- Some participants also see Graz as a young, modern and dynamic city, while others believe it is a bit conservative.
- Eight of the 24 participants said that they would not describe Graz as a city for cyclists, while six of these 24 believed that it is.
- More participants believe that Graz is a multi-cultural city than not.

Furthermore, these are some characteristics the participants seem to have observed in themselves or other individuals living in Graz: Residents seem to be rather friendly, open-minded, have no dialect and are sociable, while some still follow a rather conservative way of thinking.

These aspects lead to the following conclusions that have been supported by different participants. Firstly, all participants perceive Graz to be a student city, as mentioned above, which has also been demonstrated in the prior literature review: In all eight universities and universities of applied sciences, 63,000 students are doing their studies in Graz (Pock, 2023). Therefore, the participants believe that the students have an impact on Graz and its culture, for instance restaurants, bars and clubs, the housing situation as well as the political direction Graz is following, meaning a leaning towards the green and the communist parties, as shown in the literature: The previous election resulted in the KPÖ (Austrian Communist Party) gaining a record-high 29% of the votes, whilst the ÖVP only reached 26%, followed by the Grünen (Green Party) with 17%, the FPÖ (Austrian Freedom Party) and the SPÖ (Austrian Social Party). As a result, Elke Kahr became the first female communist mayor of Graz and even the first female communist mayor of any state capital of Austria. This was tantamount to a reversal of the political situation in Graz (Dornik et al., 2022, p. 431 & 432).

These influences shall be underlined by the following statement of Mr. Ma in his interview from the 25th of January 2024: *“Just walking through the city park, seeing how people interact there, right through to the city centre, where there are now these hip shops or vegan restaurants, for example. There probably wouldn't be such a variety if Graz wasn't such a student city.”*

Furthermore, the participants believe that the students make Graz younger, more open-minded, and also have an impact on environmental protection and sustainability, as Mr. O said in his interview on the 24th of January 2024: *“I do believe that they [students] make the city younger, because it's often people who are studying, it seems to me, who are more committed to changing something in their environment. More cycle paths or other things like that. Other people are often way less interested in that than academics.”*

This leads to another finding: Most participants would not say that Graz can really be seen as protective of its environment, that it is actively taking part in sustainable projects, or at least feel that Graz could do a lot more regarding environmental issues. Some participants said that Graz wants to be a lot of things, multi-cultural, a city for cycling or environmentally friendly, but simply is not.

What do all these findings have to do with this master thesis? They do have an impact on how some of the participants in this study use social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, or TikTok, with a special focus on their marketing consumption.

Events such as the ‘Klanglicht’, ‘Aufsteirern’, ‘Diagonale’, or similar and the cultural sites such as the Schlossberg or the old town, talked about in detail in the literature review on the basis of Dornik et al. (2022) as well as Pock (2023), seem to have an impact on the social media use of the Graz residents: If there are interesting things happening or nice sites to see in Graz, people like to post something about it on various social media platforms. On the one hand to show that they have been there or part of it, on the other hand to demonstrate that Graz is a beautiful city with interesting things to do and see, as the interview partner Ms. Sa said in her conversation with the researcher on the 22nd of January 2024. It can therefore be concluded that events and

culture trigger more social media posts, which definitely demonstrates an impact on the social media use, an aspect that might as well be interesting for marketing individuals. It is furthermore an aspect this researcher was able to observe herself countless times within the last years: Especially events like ‘Aufsteirern’ trigger participating people to post something in their story and feed to show that they were part of it. For this researcher it even went as far as that this type of behaviour initiated a ticket purchase for a concert series taking place in Graz that the researcher had seen several times in some friend’s stories, different advertisements and after some time and multiple touchpoints with the marketing of this concert wanted to see herself.

Another point worth mentioning is the food scene in Graz. This researcher’s opinion, that there are restaurants from all over the world and all different kinds of culture to be found in Graz, was supported by several participants. The participants believed that the reason for this is not only that Graz is open for other cultures and traditions, but also that the students of Graz impact these settlements. This trend is something that also found its way onto social media: Several Facebook spaces or Instagram accounts give recommendations on where to eat in Graz and what new food to try. Mr. K said the following in his interview with the researcher from the 23rd of January 2024: *“I also think many people are influenced by that [food scene in Graz]. This has hardly anything to do with events, it's just that socialising comes back. For instance, if I want to know: Where can I go, where is a good place to eat? Where do most people go? Or when something new opens, you can always see that people are quick to join in.”* This can also be seen as one impact on the social media use of participants.

Another interesting point of view was given by Mr. O in his interview from the 24th of January 2024, when he said that if Graz did not offer as many sporting activities, like sports club, fitness studios, or similar, he believed that more people would spend more time on social media platforms, simply because they would have more time. This also displays another impact Graz might have on the social media use of the study’s participants.

But Mr. O had another very interesting point to make: He also believes that if the cycle paths in Graz were better developed, residents would spend less time on social media. This resulted of his discussion with this researcher about social media use on public transport. Mr. O as well as this researcher discovered that they, along with many people using public transport or even waiting for the public transport, almost immediately pull out their phones and have a look at various social media platforms. Mr. O therefore mentioned, that if the cycle paths in Graz were better developed, more people might make use of them, and would therefore have less time to spend on social media. This fact of living in a city such as Graz can therefore also be seen as another impact on the social media use of the residents of Graz and might even be another approach for future research.

This result also plays a role in a statement another participant, Ms. Wa made in her interview on the 22nd of January 2024: She said that whenever she is in Graz and she sees a lot of people on their phones, she automatically pulls out her phone as well. From this aspect it can be concluded that the behaviour of people might be reflected in the behaviour of others. If these people spend a lot of time on their phones, very likely on social media, others will do so too.

The researcher feels the urgent need to point out that not all participants did observe an influence of the socio-cultural sphere of Graz, as stated beforehand, concluding that the above-mentioned examples of impacts are only accountable for those participants who felt the impact on their social media use. Still, the result of this study is that more participants observe an influence of the culture of Graz on their social media use and marketing consumption, than not. Concluding, it can be said that for every topic or aspect there are two sides of the story, some believe Graz to be international and multi-cultural, while others would absolutely disagree. Another aspect this researcher wants to add is that some of these influences might be specific for Graz, while others might be transferrable to other cities. Therefore, it can also be concluded that a city can have an impact on the social media use and as Graz is a city, it can have an impact.

6. Conclusion and limitations

Summarising all above-mentioned results and taking the literature review, the analysis, and discussion into account, it can be said that a city, such as Graz, and its culture, people, events, and venues, can have an impact on the social media use and marketing consumption of its residents. Although this cannot be stated for all residents, this researcher believes, after having talked to 24 people about this topic, that the socio-cultural aspects of Graz do influence the social media usage of the people living here, even if it is only subconsciously.

But what does this mean for the marketers, the main target group of this thesis, who are trying to bring their companies' products and services closer to the residents of Graz? Having all findings of this research in mind, it means that marketers need to define and know their exact target group in advance, create appealing content, whether organic or paid, but also take the cultural environment of their target group into consideration. This is especially relevant when considering the outcome that people learn to use social media more intentionally, because it means that the content and advertisements need to be absolutely on point regarding content, creative, and targeting. For marketers, this study's results mean that events happening in Graz raise the target group's awareness but also that people listen to the opinion of others. The research also showed that not all social media channels are used equally, that marketing personnel might want to hop on newer trends such as TikTok, as the younger generation spends increasingly more time on it. It would therefore be sensible to develop a social media strategy and marketing channel mix, where each generation is evaluated separately: The younger generation might enjoy more entertaining content on TikTok, while the older generation might prefer more informative content on Facebook. This might offer an approach for future research: To evaluate which content is appealing to which generation and furthermore leads to desired actions of the marketing team behind, while also taking into consideration the cultural background of the consumers.

This research laid a foundation on social media usage and marketing consumption within the socio-cultural sphere of Graz within the generations X, Y, and Z, and therefore, leaves room for interesting future studies.

As mentioned beforehand, it might be interesting to have a closer look on the influence of a relationship on the partner's social media usage and marketing consumption.

Another interesting topic worth looking into might be, how well generation X and older have already adapted to social media usage. In this study's interviews, it was mentioned several times that the participants believed that generation X still had to learn how to really use social media. This aspect might be combined with the opposite opinions of generation X and Z, both almost accusing the other of not scrutinising social media content and believing everything they see.

Another aspect for future research might be to include other social media platforms such as Twitter, BeReal, or Pinterest, in order to find out which generations use these platforms, how they use these platforms and also what role these platforms could play for marketers in Graz.

Although this qualitative research already holds 24 participants, one limitation of this study might be the sample size: These 24 conversation partners gave an interesting and in-depth insight into how people of different generational groups perceive their social media and marketing behaviour, observe their fellow Graz residents and see Graz as a city with cultural aspects. As these topics can be perceived very differently from individual to individual, the participants gave varying answers within a broad spectrum. In order to assess these aspects better, a larger sample size might bring more results.

Furthermore, it needs to be mentioned that a representative result concerning social media use within generations X, Y, and Z might only really be reached with a quantitative study, but this, as explained in detail beforehand, was not the aim of this researcher. For this study, the gathered data is sufficient in order to obtain tendencies in social media use within the generations in combination with the cultural aspects of

Graz and its possible influence on marketing consumption. A quantitative approach would not have given the researcher the results she was looking for.

Another limitation is that not all generational groups living in Graz were considered for this study, as people born prior to 1965 and after 2012 were not included. However, this researcher decided on purpose not to include those, as she believes that they make up the smallest age groups concerning social media usage.

Another point worth mentioning is the chosen traditions: As stated beforehand, this research moves in the realm of phenomenology as well as ethnography. In order to really do justice to these traditions, a study over a longer period of time should be conducted.

In general, it can be said that this research gave interesting insights, showed tendencies and trends and also gave several ideas for future research approaches, but cannot be seen representatively for all Graz residents. Concluding, it is therefore suggested that, in order to have representative results that can also be transferred to other research contexts, a study with a larger sample size as well as a longer period of time should be taken into consideration.

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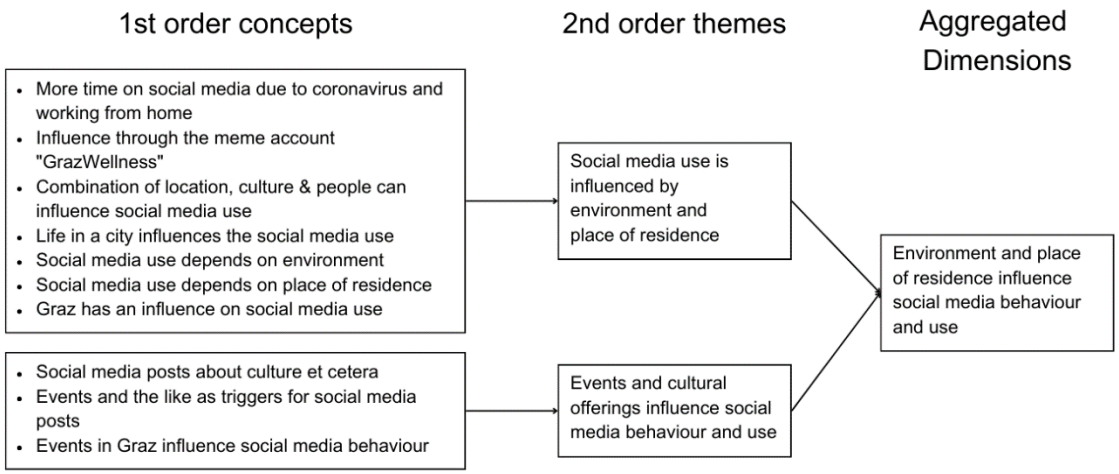
Appendix

The appendix once again displays the results of the open coding process, including 1st order concepts, 2nd order themes as well as the aggregated dimensions.

Following this, one interview transcript is attached, once in English and once in German, the original language the interviews took place in. It is intended as an example of how all the interviews went and what results emerged from them. For reasons of simplicity and colloquial language, gender-neutral language was not used in the interviews. Furthermore, it should be noted here that the English transcript was translated with the help of Chat GPT 4.

1. Results of open coding process


1st order concepts
2nd order themes
Aggregated Dimensions
Facebook is no longer used as much
Facebook is now being used more again
Instagram is used very frequently
YouTube is increasingly being used
Social media channels used are changing
Advertising is actively hidden
Company content tends to be ignored
Non-targeted company content is ignored
Use of social media channels is changing
Social media use on public transport
Social Media for entertainment
Rather passive social media use
Users are passive observers and want entertainment
Interaction with company content
Sometimes the advertising is interesting
Targeted advertising is accepted
Social media content is saved
Social media as search engine
Stay informed about events on social media
Social media as news platform
Social media as a source of information
Social media as a source of information
Social media are used intentionally
People interact with prize draws
Interaction within social media spaces/groups
Instagram for sending memes et cetera
Instagram for exchange with friends et cetera
Social media for exchange and contact
Social media content from vacation
Social media for exchange
Gen X can separate social media from real life
Less time on social media due to work for Gen Z
Gen X & Y use social media more consciously
Gen Y: Social media use less over time
Social media are used consciously
Older generation “sneaking” onto newer channels
Gen X does not scrutinise social media content
Gen X struggles with social media
Generation X uses social media differently
Gen X still has to learn how to use social media
Gen Z is growing up with social media, it's part of their lives
Gen Z spends a lot of time on social media
Gen Z posts self-centred content
Gen Z also posts on social media
Gen Z spends a lot of time on social media
Social media use is different in every generation
Gen Y & Z are easily influenced
Influences on social media behaviour are individual
Facebook is more for the older generation
Instagram is more for Gen Y & Z
TikTok users are younger
Platform usage depends on generation
Platform usage differs between the generations
Social Media are more global than local
Graz has little influence on social media use
Social Media usage is independent of location
Social media usage is independent of location
Social media usage is independent of location


1st order concepts
2nd order themes
Aggregated Dimensions
More time on social media due to coronavirus and working from home
Influence through the meme account "GrazWellness"
Combination of location, culture & people can influence social media use
Life in a city influences the social media use
Social media use depends on environment
Social media use depends on place of residence
Graz has an influence on social media use
Social media posts about culture et cetera
Events and the like as triggers for social media posts
Events in Graz influence social media behaviour
Social media use is influenced by environment and place of residence
Events and cultural offerings influence social media behaviour and use
Environment and place of residence influence social media behaviour and use

2. Interview transcript Ms. Ko 30th of January 2024: English

Interviewer: “Ok, first question: Which social platforms do you use daily or weekly, which one the most, and why the most?“

Ms. Ko: “Oh, across the board, so Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, does WhatsApp count too?”

Interviewer: “It counts, but in my work, I focus on Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, and TikTok.”

Ms. Ko: “YouTube, oh yes, that's a good point. It would mostly be Instagram, I guess, simply because most people I know are on Instagram. Yeah, and it really captures you once you start looking at it. Like, I find myself sitting on the sofa, not knowing what to do, okay, let's quickly open Instagram and then you get stuck on the Stories or some Reels or something. And then I think YouTube comes next because I hardly watch TV anymore, we watch a lot of YouTube in the evening.”

Interviewer: “And what do you watch there?”

Ms. Ko: “All kinds of things, it depends on whether I'm alone or if we're watching together. So if we're watching together, it ranges from silly ranking videos to Formula 1 content to, I don't know. Lately, we've been watching a lot of reaction videos on socio-critical topics, something like that. When I'm alone, I watch, well, makeup videos. I don't wear much makeup anymore, but it happens. Or product tests by various influencers, something in that direction. And I'm still active on Facebook, but more passively, meaning I don't post anything, just look at what other people are posting.”

Interviewer: “Okay, so it depends on the channel, how you behave or what you do on each platform?”

Ms. Ko: “Yes, I'm generally not a big poster on any channel. So, at most Instagram. On my private Instagram, almost nothing gets posted and if, then more likely a story. A bit more for the dog [Instagram account for their own dog], but I've also become very lazy with that, so I'm really more of a passive user.”

Interviewer: “Okay, and there are companies that place ads on social media or post other organic content. How do you interact with such corporate content?”

Ms. Ko: “So, I mostly come into contact with such content actually through the Stories, you swipe through and then at some point, an ad comes up. Then it totally depends on what it is, so if it's an ad for something that I'm not interested in at all, then it gets swiped away immediately, but it also happens quite often that I click on it and take a look.”

Interviewer: “And when you see content from companies, do you interact with it, like writing a comment, liking, or saving it?”

Ms. Ko: “Liking occasionally, but quite rarely. But commenting or saving, no.”

Interviewer: “Okay. In my thesis, I focus on three generations: First, generation X born between 1965 and 1980, generation Y born between 1981 and 1996, and generation Z born between 1997 and 2012. My question would be: What do you think, how do different generations interact with social media?”

Ms. Ko: “From what I observe, I don't want to confirm stereotypes or anything, but the older generation is more on Facebook and posts everything from photos to quotes, like those picture quotes. And sometimes content that might not be very reflected. Just, they think it should be posted at the moment, but not really looking into the background of it or what else the original poster might be sending out into the world. Younger people, I don't know many, it sounds so dumb, but the really young ones, if you say up to 2012. What I notice, for example, we have an apprentice at the company, she is now 19, so born in 2004, and she is on Instagram. So not on Facebook at all, more on

Instagram, and she does these typical selfie postings. So not classic selfies, like how I used to take them, holding the phone in front of you, but really with a tripod and fully edited, then also really edits the photos. And I think they use it 90% just for self-presentation, so it seems to me. A bit in this milieu, that if you are nothing on Instagram, then you are nothing. And YouTube, I don't know if younger people are on YouTube, no idea, probably, but no idea."

Interviewer: "Yes, maybe more for consumption, but there's every bubble on YouTube you can imagine."

Ms. Ko: "That's true."

Interviewer: "You already mentioned that certain platforms might be more appealing and interesting for one generation than for another."

Ms. Ko: "Mhm."

Interviewer: "Have you noticed any changes in your behaviour on social media over time? And if so, what do you think influenced these changes in behaviour?"

Ms. Ko: "Mhm, I've noticed that I've become less active myself because I used to be someone who really posted something every week or at least a story."

Interviewer: "Mhm."

Ms. Ko: "The start of me becoming less active was actually when I worked professionally as a social media manager and just didn't care about it personally anymore. And also: I don't have anything in my life that's so important that I think I need to post it. And to go through the effort to pick out a nice picture, maybe edit the picture, and write a text, then I think, who really cares about it in truth. I think, I don't know, it's just because I've gotten older. So that has gone hand in hand a bit. And I think it's also because my boyfriend himself is just not on social media at all. So I think, if he were

more active, that we would link each other in stories or something, that might have motivated me, but since that's just not happening at all, I also lack a bit of motivation to make the effort, stupidly said."

Interviewer: "I see. Now away from the social media topic, how would you describe Graz in your own words?"

Ms. Ko: "Graz is a very young city, I find. A city where you can grow up well, I grew up in Graz very happily. It's of a good size, so there's enough of what you need to live a liveable life. But it's also not so big that you feel uncomfortable or could get lost. Of course, you can still get lost, but still, it's very centered, you can basically get everywhere on foot or otherwise by bike. Graz is a mostly modern city, they try at least, and Graz is the city of construction sites, especially in the summer it's terrible in Graz."

Interviewer: "Okay, yes. And how would you describe Graz in terms of its cultural offerings or how would you generally describe the culture of Graz?"

Ms. Ko: "For someone for whom culture is important, but not that important, sufficient. So you can do something cultural if you want, there's enough offer, but if you're really like a culture freak or, I don't know, only coming to Graz for that reason, I'm not sure if it would be enough."

Interviewer: "Okay, and would you say that Graz is a diverse or multicultural city?"

Ms. Ko: "Yes, I would say that, yes."

Interviewer: "Do you have an example for me?"

Ms. Ko: "Hmm, for example, when I look at it, I was a bit involved in the LGBTQ scene during my university days, Tuntenball and so on, and now there are already several organizations and institutions that deal with the topic and also try to make it more transparent and advocate for it."

Interviewer: “Mhm, and do you think the city of Graz and its residents are open to such topics, like LGBTQ or maybe migration as well?”

Ms. Ko: “Really difficult. I think you can't generalize. There are of course always enough people who are committed to it, but there are enough people who always have something stupid to say. I would wish for it and I think with the current government it would be possible, but unfortunately, there are enough people who say, "No, not in our city.””

Interviewer: “Ok, and what you just said, does that refer only to the LGBTQ topic or also to migration?”

Ms. Ko: “To migration, foreigners, the whole topic, general tolerance.”

Interviewer: “Okay. Next question: Would you describe Graz as a student city?”

Ms. Ko: “Yes.”

Interviewer: “And what influences or aspects do you perceive in this regard?”

Ms. Ko: “Well, you just need to go downtown on the weekend, then it's 90% students there.”

Interviewer: “Mhm, and do you think the students also have an influence on the cityscape of Graz?”

Ms. Ko: “Difficult. I think the problem, so to speak, is that many of our students do not live in Graz or are not from Graz, and not even from Styria, but also many come from Carinthia or from Germany to study, where the interest is simply not there to change Graz. I mean, of course, there are also some who say Graz is such a cool city, I might stay here now, but there are many who say, "I'm here to study and when I'm done, I'm gone, I don't care what becomes of it.””

Interviewer: “Next question: Would you describe Graz as a bicycle city?”

Ms. Ko: “Yes and no, so if you're in the city centre, yes, for a city centre it's cyclist-friendly. In general, I used to ride my bike a lot, I always rode my bike to school and downtown, etc., and I grew up in Liebenau and from there it was never a problem to ride completely on bike paths for the whole route. But I know from enough friends who also bike a lot, they say the bike path is not there where they need it or again closed or detoured or whatever. From personal, private experience, I would say yes, but from what I've heard from others, well.”

Interviewer: “And now the last aspect about the city of Graz: Do you think that Graz, its government, and its residents, value sustainability and climate protection?”

Ms. Ko: “That's again so divided: I would say, certain districts maybe. If we think a bit, well that's now full of cliché thinking, but if we think about the Annenviertel and Grieß and so, where many alternative people live, yes. On the other hand, there are enough districts where I think, or, enough districts is maybe stupid to say because in every district both types of people can live, but it's very, hm difficult. Yes, there are also enough people who say they don't care.”

Interviewer: “Mhm, so you've said in several points now, you can't say yes or no, there's always both.”

Ms. Ko: “Yes, I would wish for it.”

Interviewer: “What do you think, why is that? Or do you feel that maybe there's a certain, without wanting to sound judgmental, a certain population group that might be more against LGBTQ or migration or maybe also values sustainability less? Is there, do you think, just a clear division between those who are for it and those who are against it, or is it different per topic?”

Ms. Ko: “I think it's different per topic, and it's also different within the groups. I know people who come from, let's say - not meant to sound judgmental either - but maybe simpler circumstances, where the mother is the biggest racist and you're born a man, you'll stay a man forever, there's nothing in between, and whatnot. And the daughter is then totally pro, saying these are just people too or whatever, even though they come from the same social class actually. That might be a generational issue, but there are just as many young people who say no, there are only two genders, there's nothing in between, for example. Or it doesn't matter if we recycle because in the end, everything gets thrown together again or such things. So, I don't know what the decisive reason is why a person thinks that way, so I find you can't pin it on age or social class.”

Interviewer: “Okay. And how would you describe a person from Graz? In terms of characteristics, behaviours, values, or attitudes.”

Ms. Ko: “Phew. Graz is very diverse, there are many people who live in Graz, but now from my circle of acquaintances, the typical person from Graz is someone who went to school in Graz, then studied at the Karl Franzens University, and goes to Kultus on the weekend. What's also very typical for people from Graz is that they don't have a dialect and are a bit proud of it, so they do use abbreviations like 'net' instead of 'nicht', but not really a dialect where you can immediately conclude "Ah, that's a person from Graz!" so that's a bit of a Graz thing, I think. And very important, when you meet in the city, you meet at the Weikhard clock.”

Interviewer: “Haha, that's true.”

Ms. Ko: “That's how it is.”

Interviewer: “Even I do that as a person not being from Graz, where else would you meet?”

Ms. Ko: “Yes, how else would you find each other? Haha.”

Interviewer: “Ok, and would you say that the typical person from Graz, let's call it that, differs per generation, that people from Graz in each generation have different behaviours, characteristics, et cetera?”

Ms. Ko: “Yes, it seems to me that, say the majority of young people from Graz, become more tolerant and also take things more seriously. In the sense of "We need to live a bit more consciously and we need to be a bit more careful about what we do and maybe not drive the five minutes to the supermarket by car, but maybe just walk." or whatever. I do think so, but as I said, there are always a few outliers. So, I do think something is happening.”

Interviewer: “Mhm.”

Ms. Ko: “Especially with the young generation, that might also be a bit of wishful thinking on my part, or something I only want to see, but it does seem that way to me.”

Interviewer: “Do you think the young generation might also have a different awareness for these topics or a different perception because they're much more present through, I don't know, constant social media presence or something else?”

Ms. Ko: “Yes, I also think they're interested in it because in the past you could just more easily close your eyes to such things if you didn't read the newspaper and watch the news, you didn't catch it.”

Interviewer: “Mhm.”

Ms. Ko: “But such topics are omnipresent now, just if I think of, say, climate activists, when I'm on social media, I've seen at least one video of some climate activists being carried away by the police or so. So, I do think that especially through social media, something has changed.”

Interviewer: “I'd like to bring these two topics, social media and the city of Graz, together now, to the following question: Do you feel that Graz as a city, with its residents, its quirks, and everything around it, influences your social media behaviour?”

Ms. Ko: “Hmm, no, I don't think so.”

Interviewer: “Okay. Do you perhaps feel that it might be the case for other generations, that older or younger people might feel the influence, or maybe even be influenced subconsciously?”

Ms. Ko: “Hard to answer.”

Interviewer: “It's not an easy question, I know.”

Ms. Ko: “No. I'm trying to think of a situation where that might be the case.”

Interviewer: “If you like, I can give you some food for thought.”

Ms. Ko: “Sure.”

Interviewer: “Sure. Do local events like the Aufsteirern, Klanglicht, Diagonale, the Christmas markets, or concerts et cetera perhaps have an influence? Or do you think maybe the existing gastronomy and talking about it has an influence? Or perhaps the way people from Graz tick, maybe you're in a bubble or see it with acquaintances, who are perhaps more surrounded by environmentally conscious people and are therefore perhaps also differently attuned to the topic. For example, such things.”

Ms. Ko: “Hmm, I can only imagine it perhaps in the frequency of use somehow, that especially when such events are happening or something, that just more is posted about it.”

Interviewer: “Mhm.”

Ms. Ko: “But otherwise? That's so far away from my own experiences that I find it hard to imagine that for others. If we had conducted this interview ten years ago, I would probably have thought completely differently about it.”

Interviewer: “Mhm.”

Ms. Ko: “If social media had been as advanced ten years ago as it is today and I were ten years younger, haha. So social media still plays a big role in my life, but just not as much as it used to. Simply because there are more important things, I've come to realize, so I'm not really engaging with the topic as much anymore.”

Interviewer: “Ah ok. Because you mentioned, you don't feel that Graz influences your social media use.”

Ms. Ko: “Mhm.”

Interviewer: “Do you think it's just because, if there is an influence, it's due to city versus country or that, when such events etc. take place, it's just because there's an event and not because it happens in Graz?”

Ms. Ko: “Well, because something happens that's worth posting about. But that could just as well be in Vienna or wherever.”

Interviewer: “Mhm. I heard a very interesting thought from another interviewee: She originally comes from Brazil and has been living in Graz for 12 years. And I asked her if she feels that since she lives in Graz, which is of course a bit difficult because 12 years ago social media wasn't as advanced as it is today, clearly, but that she uses social media differently because she lives in Graz? And she said, aside from the fact that of course many friends are in Brazil, with whom one can easily keep in touch via Instagram and Co, she doesn't feel that it makes any difference, because social media are generally so international that it doesn't matter where she lives, because she still

sees the same content. She said maybe a touch more Graz content, because she has new friends here and so, but actually social media are so international that it doesn't make a difference. What do you say to that?”

Ms. Ko: “Yeah totally, I completely agree. So, for me, it would make no difference whether I'm in Graz or elsewhere. I mean, of course, I find it funny, I also follow GrazWellness on Instagram or such pages, where mostly Graz content is shared, because it's just the city where I grew up, with which I also feel very connected and then of course, I know the places I see there, I find that funny.”

Interviewer: “Mhm.”

Ms. Ko: “On the other hand, if I lived in Vienna, I would probably do the same with Vienna, so if there are any meme pages or whatever there, I would follow them and would find it cool.”

Interviewer: “Mhm.”

Ms. Ko: “So, I think, it's really irrelevant where you are or where I would be, my behaviour on social media wouldn't change much because of that.”

Interviewer: “Okay. I'm just checking if I have any questions left open. Maybe this one: How do you think social media influences your interaction with your acquaintances, friends, etc., or simply your social circle in Graz?”

Ms. Ko: “Yeah, very much. Especially in terms of keeping in touch with people or even re-finding contacts. So, for example, on Facebook, which is almost dead by now, but a few years ago, before Instagram became so big, I re-found all my primary school friends on Facebook, with whom I otherwise would never have come into contact again in life. Or also keeping in touch with former university colleagues or so.”

Interviewer: “Mhm.”

Ms. Ko: “When I think about it, 90% of my communication with my former university colleagues is based on responding to their stories or something like that, which probably wouldn't be the case otherwise, so we wouldn't write letters to each other, haha.”

Interviewer: “Haha, mhm.”

Ms. Ko: “From that perspective, definitely. And also generally, when you see something where you think "Wow, XY would definitely find this super funny," that you just forward it and that starts a conversation through social media, so definitely like that.”

Interviewer: “Yes, okay.”

Ms. Ko: “I keep thinking about Snapchat because that's actually the app I use the most, but you're not looking at that. So, I don't want to digress too much, but on Snapchat, I just notice it extremely in terms of keeping in touch. I snap with people I never see, but whom I just know so well through Snapchat. So, we have conversations as if we were seeing each other and when we do see each other, it's as if we had seen each other the day before, I notice that extremely. On Instagram too, so it's not that, especially in terms of forwarding stuff or responding to stories.”

Interviewer: “I understand, yes okay, feel free to bring in Snapchat and Co, I mean, I focus on the four, but if you see interesting aspects, then please do bring them in.”

Ms. Ko: “Yes, great. No, I do use Instagram more than Snapchat. It's not like that, but I've been using Snapchat a lot lately.”

Interviewer: “Yes, I find it funny that you say that. Because I have a friend, I met him during my bachelor's studies, and he has been living in Italy for three years, in Faenza, working for a Formula 1 team there, and I actually always snap with him just like that.

And he sends the coolest snaps and I find that totally cool, because I wouldn't just go and write "Hey, how are you doing?", but this way, you just send each other a snap.”

Ms. Ko: “Totally! I was talking to Julian about that recently, because Snapchat is just so understated, there's so little commitment involved, you just send some photo, you don't need to have a deep conversation or anything, it's enough if you just send some photo, the other sends a photo back. And that's also a form of communication, so to say, like "Look, what I'm doing right now, look, where I am!" and I find that really fascinating about Snapchat, because it's just so easy.”

Interviewer: “Yes.”

Ms. Ko: “And if you don't snap back once, it's also okay, but if you don't reply to a message, that's somehow not nice. So that's really funny. I also have a friend who lives in Graz, he lives ten minutes away from me, we never see each other, but we've been snapping every day for 1,070 days. We just have 1,070 flames.”

Interviewer: “Wow, okay, that's a lot.”

Ms. Ko: “Yes, it's really a lot. It would even be more if we hadn't forgotten a day once, but it's totally weird, we live so close to each other. We see each other once in a while when we randomly cross paths, at the stadium or at a soccer game, but we never really arranged to meet up, "Let's meet today, let's have a coffee or whatever". But interestingly enough, he's one of my best friends, he knows a lot about me and I know a lot about him.”

Interviewer: “Mhm. So in this context, Snapchat actually replaces a normal conversation or a normal meeting because you're always up-to-date.”

Ms. Ko: “Exactly, I see where he is, I know what his office looks like, although I've never been there. It's actually weird, it's a bit like a long-distance relationship through photos.”

Interviewer: “But super interesting, mhm. Do you have anything else you'd like to add, where you feel it needs to be added here, but we haven't talked about it? If not, that's okay too, I just want to give you space to add it.”

Ms. Ko: “I'm thinking. Hmm. Maybe about interacting with corporate postings: I didn't say this earlier, but what I often do, if there's really a stupid posting, I take a screenshot and forward it, so that happens too. Or if it's in the story, that I forward it and then tell a friend, how stupid is that, who needs that, what do you need that for, or whatever. Or if there's a spelling mistake in it or so, I'm very meticulous, that I then somehow, not comment, but forward it somehow. But otherwise, I think I've said everything there is to say.”

Interviewer: “Yes, cool, thank you very much.”

3. Interview transcript Ms. Ko 30th of January 2024: German

Interviewer: „Ok, erste Frage: Welche sozialen Plattformen nutzt du am Tag oder in der Woche, welche davon am meisten und warum am meisten?“

Ms. Ko: „Boah, quer durch die Bank, also Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, zählt WhatsApp auch dazu?“

Interviewer: „Es zählt, aber in meiner Arbeit fokussiere ich mich auf Facebook, Instagram, YouTube und TikTok.“

Ms. Ko: „YouTube ah ja, das ist auch ein guter Hinweis. Am meisten wird es Instagram sein, schätze ich, weil einfach die meisten Leute, die ich kenne, auf Instagram sind. Ja, und es nimmt einen halt schon gefangen, wenn man mal darauf schaut kurz. Oder ich habe das halt so, ich sitze auf dem Sofa, weiß nicht was ich tun soll, okay, dann machen wir schnell Instagram auf und dann bleibt man bei den Stories hängen oder bei irgendwelchen Reels oder so. Und dann kommt glaube ich YouTube, weil ich schaue sehr wenig fern, sondern wir schauen echt viel YouTube am Abend.“

Interviewer: „Und was schaut ihr da?“

Ms. Ko: „Alles Mögliche, es kommt darauf an, ob ich allein bin oder ob wir zu zweit schauen. Also wenn wir zu zweit schauen, ist es von blöden Ranking-Videos bis hin zu Formel 1-Content bis hin zu, keine Ahnung. Wir schauen in letzter Zeit so viel Reaction-Videos auf irgendwelche sozial-kritischen Themen, keine Ahnung sowas in die Richtung. Wenn ich allein bin, schau ich mir halt so, ja, Schminkvideos an. Ich schmink mich jetzt nicht mehr so viel, aber es kommt doch vor. Oder irgendwelche Produkttests oder so von irgendwelchen Influencern, also in die Richtung. Und auf Facebook bin ich

zwar noch aktiv, aber eher so passiv, also ich poste nichts, sondern schaue eher, was andere Leute posten.“

Interviewer: „Okay, das heißt aber, es ist bei dir abhängig vom Kanal, wie du dich selbst verhältst oder was du auf den einzelnen Plattformen machst?“

Ms. Ko: „Ja, also ich bin jetzt generell nicht der große Poster, auf keinem Kanal. Also am ehesten noch Instagram. Auf meinem privaten Instagram, da kommt so gut wie gar nichts und wenn dann eher eine Story. Ein bisschen mehr beim Hund [Instagram-Account für den eigenen Hund], aber da bin ich auch sehr faul geworden, also ich bin echt so eher so ein passiver Nutzer.“

Interviewer: „Okay, und es gibt ja Unternehmen, die Werbung schalten auf Social Media oder andere organische Inhalte posten. Wie interagierst du mit solchen Unternehmensinhalten?“

Ms. Ko: „Also den meisten Kontakt mit solchen Inhalten habe ich eigentlich eh durch die Stories, dass man halt durchswipt und dann kommt irgendwann Werbung. Dann kommt es voll darauf an, was es ist, also wenn es jetzt irgendeine Werbung ist, für irgendwas, was mich überhaupt nicht interessiert, dann wird es gleich weg geswipt, aber es kommt auch durchaus oft vor, dass ich da mal daraufklicke und mir das anschaue.“

Interviewer: „Und wenn du jetzt Content von Unternehmen siehst, interagierst du anders auch damit, also schreibst du einen Kommentar, likest oder speicherst du das?“

Ms. Ko: „Liken hin und wieder, aber eher ganz selten. Aber Kommentar oder Speichern, nein.“

Interviewer: „Okay. In meiner Arbeit habe ich ja drei Generationen im Fokus: Das ist erstens die Generation X zwischen 1965 und 1980 geboren, die Generation Y

zwischen 1981 und 1996 geboren und die Generation Z zwischen 1997 und 2012 geboren. Meine Frage wäre jetzt: Was glaubst du, wie gehen die verschiedenen Generationen mit sozialen Medien um?“

Ms. Ko: „Also was ich so mitbekomme, ich will jetzt nicht irgendwie Klischees bestätigen oder so, aber die ältere Generation ist halt vermehrt auf Facebook unterwegs und postet von Fotos über Zitate, also so in die Richtung, so diese Sprüchebilder. Und auch manchmal Inhalte, die vielleicht nicht so reflektiert sind. Also einfach, wenn man gerade der Meinung ist, dass gehört gepostet, aber überhaupt nicht schaut, was das für einen Hintergrund hat oder was der originale Ersteller sonst noch für Sachen in die Welt hinausschickt. Jüngere Leute kenne ich nicht so viele, das klingt so dumm, aber jetzt wirklich die ganz Jungen, wenn du sagst bis 2012. Was ich halt mitbekomme, wir haben zum Beispiel einen Lehrling in der Firma, die ist jetzt 19, also ist 2004 geboren und die ist auf Instagram. Also auf Facebook ist sie gar nicht, eher so auf Instagram und macht halt diese typischen Selfie-Postings. Also jetzt keine klassischen Selfies, so wie wir, wie ich sie noch gemacht, wo man sich das Handy so vorne hingehalten hat, sondern wirklich mit Stativ und voll aufbereitet, die dann auch wirklich die Fotos bearbeitet. Und sie nutzen das glaub ich zu 90% einfach zur Selbstdarstellung, also so kommt es mir halt vor. Ein bisschen in diesem Milieu, dass wenn du auf Instagram nichts bist, dann bist du auch nichts. Und zum Beispiel YouTube, ich weiß nicht, ob jüngere Leute auf YouTube unterwegs sind, keine Ahnung, wahrscheinlich schon, aber keine Ahnung.“

Interviewer: „Ja, vielleicht eher zum Konsumieren, aber es gibt auf YouTube ja jede Bubble, die du dir vorstellen könntest.“

Ms. Ko: „Das stimmt.“

Interviewer: „Du hast das eh schon gesagt, dass gewisse Plattformen vielleicht für eine Generation ansprechender und interessanter sind, als für andere.“

Ms. Ko: „Mhm.“

Interviewer: „Ist dir im Laufe der Zeit, seit du auf sozialen Medien unterwegs bist, eine Veränderung in deinem Verhalten aufgefallen? Und wenn ja, was glaubst du welche Faktoren haben diese Verhaltensveränderung beeinflusst?“

Ms. Ko: „Mhm, also mir ist schon aufgefallen, dass ich selbst einfach weniger aktiv geworden bin, weil früher war ich halt auch so, dass ich wirklich jede Woche irgendein Posting rausgehaut hab oder eben zumindest eine Story.“

Interviewer: „Mhm.“

Ms. Ko: „Angefangen damit, dass ich wirklich weniger aktiv geworden bin, hat es eigentlich damit, dass ich beruflich als Social Media-Manager gearbeitet habe und es mich selbst einfach nicht mehr geschert hat privat. Und auch: Ich habe jetzt blöd gesagt in meinem Leben nichts, das ist jetzt so wichtig ist, dass ich mir denke, dass muss ich jetzt posten. Und dass ich mir die Mühe mache, da ein schönes Bild rauszusuchen, das Bild vielleicht zu bearbeiten und einen Text dazu zu schreiben, dann denke ich mir, wen interessiert das in Wahrheit. Das war glaube ich, keine Ahnung, einfach weil ich älter geworden bin. Also dass das mit dem ein bisschen einhergegangen ist. Und ich glaube, es liegt auch daran, dass mein Freund selbst auf Social Media einfach überhaupt nicht unterwegs ist. Also ich glaube, wenn er aktiver wäre, dass wir uns gegenseitig in Stories verlinken oder so, dass mich das vielleicht motiviert hätte, aber dadurch, dass das halt überhaupt nicht stattfindet, fehlt mir auch ein bisschen die Motivation, jetzt mir die Mühe zu machen, blöd gesagt.“

Interviewer: „Verstehe. Jetzt kurz weg vom Social Media-Thema, und zwar: Wie würdest du in deinen eigenen Worten Graz beschreiben?“

Ms. Ko: „Graz ist eine sehr junge Stadt, finde ich. Eine Stadt, wo man gut aufwachsen kann, also ich bin sehr gerne in Graz aufgewachsen. Es hat eine gute Größe, so dass

es genug gibt, also was man so braucht, um lebenswert zu leben. Aber es ist jetzt auch nicht so groß, dass man sich irgendwie unwohl fühlt oder verlaufen könnte. Also man kann sich natürlich schon verlaufen, aber jetzt irgendwie es ist dann trotzdem sehr zentriert, fußläufig kommt man eigentlich überall hin oder sonst mit dem Rad. Graz ist eine meistens moderne Stadt, also sie versuchen es zumindest, und Graz ist die Stadt der Baustellen, also gerade im Sommer ist das furchtbar in Graz.“

Interviewer: „Okay, ja. Und wie würdest du Graz im Hinblick auf sein kulturelles Angebot beschreiben beziehungsweise wie würdest du generell die Kultur von Graz beschreiben?“

Ms. Ko: „Für jemanden, dem Kultur schon wichtig ist, aber jetzt nicht so wichtig, ausreichend. Also man kann etwas Kulturelles unternehmen, wenn man möchte, es ist genug Angebot da, aber wenn du jetzt wirklich so der Kultur-Freak bist oder, ich weiß nicht, nur deswegen nach Graz kommst, bin ich nicht sicher, ob es genug wäre.“

Interviewer: „Okay, und würdest du sagen, dass Graz eine diverse beziehungsweise multikulturelle Stadt ist?“

Ms. Ko: „Ja schon, würde ich schon sagen, ja.“

Interviewer: „Hättest du ein Beispiel für mich?“

Ms. Ko: „Hm, wenn ich mir zum Beispiel anschaue, ich war ja noch zu Studienzeiten so ein bisschen in der LGBTQ-Szene unterwegs, Tuntenball und so, und da gibt es schon mittlerweile einige Organisationen und Einrichtungen, die sich mit dem Thema beschäftigen und da auch versuchen, das transparenter zu machen und sich dafür einsetzen.“

Interviewer: „Mhm, und glaubst du, dass die Stadt Graz und seine Bewohner offen sind für so etwas, also für Themen wie LGBTQ oder Migration vielleicht auch?“

Ms. Ko: „Voll schwierig. Also ich finde, man kann das nicht verallgemeinern. Es gibt natürlich immer genug Leute, die sich dafür einsetzen, aber es gibt genug Leute, die immer was Deppates zu sagen haben. Ich würde es mir wünschen und ich glaube auch mit der aktuellen Regierung wäre das möglich, aber es gibt leider genug Leute, die sagen „Nein, nicht in unserer Stadt.““

Interviewer: „Ok, und was du gerade gesagt hast, bezieht sich das jetzt nur auf das LGBTQ-Thema oder auch auf Migration?“

Ms. Ko: „Auf Migration, Ausländer, die ganze Thematik, generell die Toleranz.“

Interviewer: „Okay. Nächste Frage: Würdest du Graz als eine Studentenstadt beschreiben?“

Ms. Ko: „Ja.“

Interviewer: „Und welche Einflüsse oder Aspekte nimmst du in diesem Bezug wahr?“

Ms. Ko: „Naja, man braucht nur am Wochenende in die Stadt gehen, das sind dann 90% Studenten dort.“

Interviewer: „Mhm, und glaubst du, haben die Studenten auch einen Einfluss auf das Grazer Stadtbild?“

Ms. Ko: „Schwierig. Ich glaube, das Problem unter Anführungszeichen ist, dass viele unserer Studenten nicht in Graz wohnen oder nicht aus Graz sind und auch nicht einmal aus der Steiermark, sondern eben auch viele aus Kärnten oder aus Deutschland zum Studieren herkommen, wo das Interesse halt einfach auch nicht da ist, Graz zu verändern. Ich meine, natürlich sind auch einige dabei, die sagen Graz ist so eine coole

Stadt, da bleibe ich jetzt vielleicht, aber es gibt viele, die „Ich bin jetzt zum Studieren da und wenn ich fertig bin, bin ich wieder weg, ist mir egal, was da wird.“ sagen.“

Interviewer: „Nächste Frage: Würdest du Graz als Fahrradstadt bezeichnen?“
Ms. Ko: „Ja und nein, also wenn man in der Innenstadt unterwegs ist, ja, also für eine Innenstadt ist es schon Radfahrerfreundlich. Grundsätzlich, also ich bin früher viel mit dem Rad gefahren, also ich bin auch immer in die Schule mit dem Rad gefahren und in die Stadt und so, und ich bin in Liebenau aufgewachsen und von da war es nie ein Problem, ganze Strecken komplett am Radweg zu fahren. Aber ich weiß es von genug Freunden, die auch viel mit dem Rad unterwegs sind, die sagen, der Radweg ist nicht da, wo sie ihn brauchen oder wieder mal gesperrt oder umgeleitet oder was auch immer. Aus privater, persönlicher Erfahrung würde ich sagen ja, aber was ich so von anderen gehört habe, naja.“

Interviewer: „Und jetzt der letzte Aspekt zum Thema Stadt Graz: Findest du, dass Graz, seine Regierung und seine Bewohner, Wert legen auf Nachhaltigkeit und Klimaschutz?“

Ms. Ko: „Das ist schon wieder so geteilt: Ich würde sagen, gewisse Bezirke vielleicht schon. Wenn man jetzt so ein bisschen, mei das ist jetzt voll Klischeedenken, aber wenn wir jetzt ans Annenviertel denken und an Grieß und so, wo halt auch viele alternative Leute leben, ja. Andererseits gibt es dann genug Bezirke, wo ich mir denke oder, genug Bezirk ist vielleicht zu blöd gesagt, weil in jedem Bezirk können beide Arten von Leuten leben, aber es ist voll, hm schwierig. Ja, es gibt auch genug Leute, die sagen, es ist ihnen wurscht.“

Interviewer: „Mhm, also du hast jetzt glaube ich generell in mehreren Punkten gesagt, man kann nicht sagen ja oder nein, es gibt immer beides.“

Ms. Ko: „Ja, ich würde es mir wünschen.“

Interviewer: „Was glaubst du, woran das liegt? Oder hast du das Gefühl, dass es vielleicht eine gewisse, ohne jetzt wertend klingen zu wollen, dass es ist eine gewisse Bevölkerungsgruppe gibt, die vielleicht eher gegen LGBTQ oder Migration ist oder vielleicht auch weniger Wert auf Nachhaltigkeit legt? Gibt es da, glaubst du, einfach eine klare Spaltung zwischen denen, die dafür sind und denen, sie dagegen sind oder ist das pro Thema anders?“

Ms. Ko: „Ich glaube, es ist pro Thema anders, und es ist dann auch innerhalb der Gruppen anders. Ich kenne Leute, die jetzt aus, ich sage jetzt einmal - soll auch nicht wertend klingen - aber vielleicht aus einfacheren Verhältnissen kommen, wo die Mutter der größte Rassist ist und man wird als Mann geboren wird, bleibt für immer ein Mann, da gibt es nichts dazwischen und was weiß ich. Und die Tochter ist dann aber voll pro, also sagt das sind auch nur Menschen oder was auch immer, obwohl sie aus der gleichen Gesellschaftsschicht eigentlich kommen. Das könnte vielleicht ein Generationenthema sein, aber es gibt genauso genug junge Leute, die sagen nein, es gibt nur zwei Geschlechter, es gibt nichts dazwischen, zu dem Beispiel jetzt. Oder es ist eh wurscht, ob wir recyceln, weil am Ende wird eh wieder alles zusammen geschmissen oder solche Sachen. Also ich weiß nicht, was der ausschlaggebende Grund ist, warum eine Person so denkt, also ich finde man kann das weder am Alter noch an der Gesellschaftsschicht festmachen.“

Interviewer: „Alles klar. Und wie würdest du einen Grazer beschreiben? Also jetzt hinsichtlich Charaktereigenschaften, Verhaltensweisen, Werte oder Einstellungen.“

Ms. Ko: „Puh. Graz ist sehr vielfältig, es gibt viele Menschen, die in Graz leben, aber jetzt so aus meinem Bekanntenkreis, so der typische Grazer, ist jemand, der in Graz in die Schule gegangen ist, dann an der Karl Franzens-Universität studiert und am Wochenende ins Kultus geht. Was den Grazern auch sehr eigen ist, dass sie keinen Dialekt haben und ein bisschen stolz drauf sind, also zwar schon jetzt so Abkürzungen

wie net statt nicht, aber so jetzt nicht wirklich ein Dialekt haben, wo man sofort daraus schließen kann „Ah, der ist Grazer!“ also das ist so ein bisschen ein Grazer Ding, glaube ich. Und ganz wichtig, dass man sich, wenn man sich in der Stadt trifft, bei der Weikhard Uhr trifft.“

Interviewer: „Haha da, das ist wahr.“

Ms. Ko: „Das ist so.“

Interviewer: „Das mache sogar ich als Nicht-Grazerin, wo trifft man sich sonst?“

Ms. Ko: „Ja, wie soll man sich sonst finden? Haha.“

Interviewer: „Ok und würdest du sagen, dass sich der typische Grazer, nennen wir es mal so, dass sich der pro Generation unterscheidet, dass die Grazer in jeder Generation andere Verhaltensweisen, Charaktereigenschaften et cetera haben?“

Ms. Ko: „Ja, mir kommt schon vor, dass sagen wir mal der Großteil der jungen Grazer toleranter wird und auch Dinge ernster nimmt. Also jetzt im Sinne von „Wir müssen ein bisschen bewusster leben und wir müssen ein bisschen mehr schauen, was wir tun und vielleicht nicht die fünf Minuten zum Supermarkt mit dem Auto fahren, sondern vielleicht einfach mal zu Fuß gehen.“ oder was auch immer.
Das glaube ich schon, aber wie gesagt, es gibt auch immer ein paar Ausreißer. Also ich glaube schon, dass sich ein bisschen was tut.“

Interviewer: „Mhm.“

Ms. Ko: „Gerade mit der jungen Generation, das ist vielleicht auch ein bisschen mein Wunschdenken, oder etwas, was ich nur sehen will, das kann auch sein, aber es kommt mir schon so vor.“

Interviewer: „Glaubst du, dass die junge Generation vielleicht auch ein anderes Bewusstsein für die Themen hat oder andere Wahrnehmung, dass sie viel präsenter sind durch, keine Ahnung, vielleicht durch die konstante Social Media-Präsenz oder anderes?“

Ms. Ko: „Ja, ich glaube auch, dass sie sich auch dafür interessieren, weil früher hast du halt einfach deine Augen leichter vor solchen Dingen verschließen können, wenn du nicht Zeitung gelesen hast und Nachrichten geschaut hast, hast du das nicht mitkriegt.“

Interviewer: „Mhm.“

Ms. Ko: „Dabei sind solche Themen halt allgegenwärtig also, allein wenn ich an jetzt, sagen wir Klima-Kleber denk, wenn ich auf Social Media unterwegs bin, habe ich mindestens ein Video von irgendwelchen Klima-Klebern gesehen, die von der Polizei weggetragen werden oder so. Also das glaube ich schon, dass sich da vor allem durch Social Media etwas geändert hat.“

Interviewer: „Ich würde diese zwei Themen, Social Media und die Stadt Graz, jetzt gerne zusammenbringen, und zwar zu folgender Frage: Hast du das Gefühl, dass Graz als Stadt, mit seinen Einwohner, mit seinen Eigenheiten und allem drum und dran, Einfluss auf dein Social Media-Verhalten hat?“

Ms. Ko: „Hm, nein, ich glaube nicht.“

Interviewer: „Okay. Hast du vielleicht das Gefühl, dass es bei anderen Generationen so sein könnte, dass die Älteren oder Jüngeren vielleicht den Einfluss davon spüren, oder vielleicht auch unbewusst beeinflusst werden?“

Ms. Ko: „Schwer zu beantworten.“

Interviewer: „Das ist keine leichte Frage, ich weiß.“

Ms. Ko: „Nein. Überlege grad, in welcher Situation das so sein könnte.“

Interviewer: „Wenn du magst, kann ich dir sonst ein paar Denkanstöße geben.“

Ms. Ko: „Gern.“

Interviewer: „Gern. Haben zum Beispiel lokale Events wie das Aufsteirern, Klanglicht, Diagonale, die Christkindlmärkte oder Konzerte et cetera vielleicht einen Einfluss? Oder glaubst du, dass vielleicht die vorhandene Gastronomie und das darüber geredet wird, einen Einfluss haben? Oder vielleicht die Art, wie Grazer ticken, vielleicht bist du in einer Bubble drinnen oder siehst es bei Bekannten, die sind vielleicht eher von umweltbewussten Leuten umgeben und sind deswegen vielleicht auch selbst anders gestimmt zu dem Thema. Also solche Dinge beispielsweise.“

Ms. Ko: „Mhm, ich kann es mir nur vielleicht in der Frequentierung der Nutzung irgendwie vorstellen, dass gerade wenn solche Events sind oder irgendwas, dass einfach mehr gepostet wird darüber.“

Interviewer: „Mhm.“
Ms. Ko: „Aber sonst? Das ist so weit weg von meinen eigenen Erfahrungen, dass ich mir da schwertue, mir das für andere vorzustellen. Wenn wir das Interview vor zehn Jahren geführt hätten, hätte ich wahrscheinlich komplett anders darüber gedacht.“

Interviewer: „Mhm.“

Ms. Ko: „Also wenn Social Media soweit gewesen wäre vor zehn Jahren, wie es heute ist und ich zehn Jahre jünger wäre, haha. Also Social Media spielt noch immer eine große Rolle in meinem Leben, aber halt nicht mehr so, wie es schon mal war. Einfach, weil es wichtigere Dinge gibt, bin ich draufkommen, deswegen beschäftige ich mich auch gar nicht mehr so viel mit dem Thema.“

Interviewer: „Ah ok. Weil du gemeint hast, du hast nicht das Gefühl, dass Graz einen Einfluss auf deine Social Media-Nutzung hat.“
Ms. Ko: „Mhm.

Interviewer: „Glaubst du, liegt es einfach daran, dass wenn der Einfluss da ist, es wegen Stadt versus Land ist oder dass, wenn solche Events etc. stattfinden, es einfach daran liegt, dass es ein Event gibt und nicht daran, dass es in Graz passiert?“

Ms. Ko: „Naja, weil was passiert, über das es sich lohnt zu posten. Das könnte jetzt aber genauso gut in Wien oder wo auch immer sein.“

Interviewer: „Mhm. Ich habe von einer anderen Interviewpartnerin einen sehr spannenden Gedanken dazu gehört: Sie kommt aus Brasilien ursprünglich und wohnt seit 12 Jahren in Graz. Und sie habe ich gefragt, ob sie das Gefühl hat, dass seit sie in Graz wohnt, was natürlich schon etwas schwierig ist, weil vor 12 Jahren war Social Media noch nicht so weit, wie es heute ist, eh klar, aber dass sie Social Media jetzt anders nutzt, weil sie in Graz wohnt? Und sie hat gemeint, abgesehen davon, dass natürlich viele Freunde in Brasilien sind, mit denen man leichter über Instagram und Co Kontakt halten kann, hat sie nicht das Gefühl, dass es irgendeinen Unterschied macht, weil Social Media generell so international sind, dass es wurscht wäre, wo sie wohnt, weil sie trotzdem den gleichen Content sieht. Sie meinte vielleicht eine Spur mehr Graz-Content, weil man neue Freunde da hat und so, aber eigentlich Social Media so international ist das keinen Unterschied macht. Was sagst du dazu?“

Ms. Ko: „Ja voll, stimme ich voll zu. Also für mich würde es keinen Unterschied machen, ob ich in Graz bin oder sonst wo. Ich meine, natürlich ich find schon lustig, ich folge auf Instagram auch GrazWellness oder solchen Seiten, wo vermehrt Graz-Content geteilt wird, weil es einfach die Stadt ist, wo ich aufgewachsen bin, mit der ich mich auch sehr verbunden fühle und dann natürlich, ich kenne die Orte, die ich da sehe, das finde ich lustig.“

Interviewer: „Mhm.“

Ms. Ko: „Andererseits, wenn ich in Wien wohnen würde, würde ich wahrscheinlich das Gleiche mit Wien machen, also wenn es da auch irgendwelche Meme-Seiten oder was auch immer gibt, würde ich denen folgen und würde das cool finden.“

Interviewer: „Mhm.“

Ms. Ko: „Also, ich glaube, es ist echt wurscht, wo du bist oder wo ich wäre, mein Verhalten auf Social Media würde sich nicht viel ändern dadurch.“

Interviewer: „Okay. Ich schaue gerade, ob ich noch eine Frage offen habe. Vielleicht die: Wie denkst du, dass die sozialen Medien deine Interaktion mit deinen Bekannten, Freunden et cetera oder einfach deinem sozialen Kreis in Graz beeinflussen?“

Ms. Ko: „Ja, schon sehr. Also gerade so was vor allem Kontakthalten betrifft mit Leuten oder auch Kontakte wiederfinden. Also ich habe zum Beispiel auf Facebook, was mittlerweile eh schon wieder fast tot ist, aber vor ein paar Jahren, bevor Instagram so groß geworden ist, habe ich meine ganzen Volksschule-Freunde wieder getroffen, also wiedergefunden auf Facebook, mit denen ich sonst nie im Leben wieder irgendwie in Kontakt getreten wäre. Oder auch Kontakt halten eben mit Ex-Studienkollegen oder so.“

Interviewer: „Mhm.“

Ms. Ko: „Wenn ich nachdenke, 90% meiner Kommunikation mit meinen Ex-Studienkollegen basiert darauf, dass ich auf ihre Stories antworte oder so irgendwas, was wahrscheinlich sonst nicht so wäre, also wir würden uns keine Briefe schreiben, haha.“

Interviewer: „Haha, mhm.“

Ms. Ko: „Von dem her sicher. Und auch generell, wenn du irgendwas siehst, wo du denkst „Mah, das würde XY sicher voll lustig finden“, dass man das einfach weiterschickt und das so eine Konversation startet über Social Media, also das ist auf jeden Fall so.“

Interviewer: „Ja, okay.“

Ms. Ko: „Ich muss die ganze Zeit an Snapchat denken, weil das eigentlich die App ist, die ich am meisten benutzt, aber die schaust du ja nicht an. Deswegen möchte ich jetzt nicht so ausschweifen, aber auf Snapchat merke ich es einfach extrem, was das Kontakthalten betrifft. Also ich snape mit Leuten, die ich nie sehe, aber die ich über Snapchat einfach so gut kenne. Also wir führen da Gespräche, als würden wir uns sehen und wenn wir uns dann mal sehen, ist das auch so, als hätten wir uns vorgestern gesehen, also das merke ich extrem. Auf Instagram aber auch, also so ist es nicht, also gerade was so Sachen weiterschicken oder auf Stories antworten betrifft.“

Interviewer: „Verstehe, ja okay, du kannst gerne Snapchat und Co auch einbringen, also ich sage mal, ich fokussiere mich auf die vier, wenn du aber spannende Aspekte siehst, dann bitte gerne einbringen.“

Ms. Ko: „Ja super. Nein, ich benutze Instagram schon mehr als Snapchat. So ist es nicht, aber ich benutze Snapchat sehr viel in letzter Zeit.“

Interviewer: „Ja, ich finde es so lustig, dass du das sagst. Weil ich habe einen Freund, den ich im Studium kennengelernt habe, im Bachelor, und der wohnt seit drei Jahren in Italien, in Faenza, arbeitet für ein Formel 1-Team dort und mit dem snape ich eigentlich immer wieder einfach. Und der schickt einfach die coolsten Snaps und das finde ich total cool, weil mit dem würde ich jetzt nicht einfach hergehen und schreiben „He, wie gehts dir so?“, aber so schickt man sich halt dann einen Snap.“

Ms. Ko: „Voll! Ich habe da letztens mit dem Julian darüber geredet, weil Snapchat eigentlich so unterschwellig ist einfach, da ist so wenig Commitment dabei, du schickst halt einfach irgendein Foto, du brauchst jetzt nicht eine tiefe Konversation irgendwie führen, sondern es reicht einfach, wenn du irgendein Foto schickst, der andere schickt ein Foto zurück. Und das ist aber auch eine Art von Kommunikation, also quasi so „Schau, was ich grad mache, schau, wo ich grad bin!“ und das finde ich an Snapchat eigentlich voll faszinierend, weil es eben so easy ist.“

Interviewer: „Ja.“

Ms. Ko: „Und wenn du einmal nicht zurück snapst, ist es auch wurscht, aber wenn du auf eine Nachricht nicht antwortet, ist das irgendwie ungut. Also das ist ganz, ganz lustig. Ich habe auch einen Freund, der wohnt in Graz, also der wohnt zehn Minuten von mir entfernt, wir sehen uns nie, aber wir snapen seit 1.070 Tagen jeden Tag. Wir haben einfach 1.070 Flammen.“

Interviewer: „Wahnsinn, okay, das ist richtig viel.“

Ms. Ko: „Ja, das ist wirklich viel. Es wären sogar noch mehr, wenn wir nicht einmal einen Tag vergessen hätten, aber ist total schräg, wir wohnen echt so nah beieinander. Wir sehen uns einmal zwischendurch, wenn wir uns zufällig über den Weg laufen, beim Stadion oder so beim Fußballspiel, aber wir haben uns jetzt nie so gezielt ausgemacht, „Wir treffen uns heute, gehen wir einen Kaffee trinken oder was auch immer“. Das wieder finde ich total spannend. Das ist aber lustigerweise einer meiner besten Freunde, der weiß total viel von mir und ich weiß total viel von ihm.“

Interviewer: „Mhm. Das heißt in dem Kontext ersetzt Snapchat eigentlich eine normale Konversation oder ein normales Treffen, weil du eh ständig Up-to-Date bist.“

Ms. Ko: „Genau, ich sehe, wo er ist, ich weiß, wie es in seinem Büro ausschaut, obwohl ich dort noch nie war. Es ist eigentlich schräg, das ist ein bisschen wie eine Fernbeziehung über Fotos.“

Interviewer: „Aber super spannend, mhm. Hättest du noch irgendwas, was du gerne ergänzen möchtest, wo du das Gefühl hast, das gehört da noch dazu, aber darüber haben wir nicht gesprochen? Wenn nicht, ist auch okay, ich will dir nur Raum geben, dass du das noch ergänzen kannst.“

Ms. Ko: „Ich überlege gerade. Mhm. Vielleicht zur Interaktion mit Unternehmens-Postings: Das habe ich vorhin nicht gesagt, was ich ganz oft mache, ist, wenn es wirklich ein blödes Posting ist, dass ich einen Screenshot mache und den weiterschicke, also das kommt auch vor. Oder dass ich, wenn es in der Story ist, dass ich das weiterschicke und dann einer Freundin sage, wie deppert ist das, wer braucht das, wozu braucht man das oder was auch immer. Oder wenn ein Rechtschreibfehler drinnen ist oder so, da bin ich sehr penibel, dass ich dann irgendwie, nicht kommentiert, aber halt irgendwie weiterschicke. Aber sonst, glaube ich, habe ich alles gesagt, was zu sagen ist.“

Interviewer: „Ja, cool super, danke schön.“