

GENERATION ZOMBIE

Usage characteristics effect on preference regarding BBM Advertising amongst Rhodes high school learners

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Introduction

Generation Z, the digital front runners, have a tendency to pick up current trends quickly when it comes to communication and social networks. Therefore, this generation is extremely difficult to market to, and marketers should find new ways to market to them, as their attention span is limited. What sparked an interest in this topic is that the youth is synonymous with social media, thus advertisers and marketers saw fit to market to them via this medium. Hence, Instant Messaging (IM) social networks are of interest to advertisers simply because of its prevalent usage in this group.

Problem statement and research objective

IM has become increasingly popular and BlackBerry Messenger (BBM) is the front-runner of this service in South Africa. Advertisers have seen an opportunity to reach their consumers through this medium, but as the users only use BBM for personal communication, research was conducted to discover if the users would approve of being targeted via this personal platform. Furthermore, advertisers have noted the effectiveness of Facebook marketing communications and, therefore, it would be of value to establish if BBM would also be efficient for the same target market. The primary objective was to ascertain the perceived preference of BBM advertising among Rhodes High School learners. The secondary objective was to establish if usage characteristics have an influence on Generation Z's preference towards BBM advertising.

Literature review

Users admitted to finding advertising on websites more noticeable than advertising via traditional methods (Mokoena, 2013). IM happens in real-time and is distinct, since IM is based on consumers who connect with specified known users on a contact list. More advanced IM allows live voice or video calling and video chat, which is one of the main reasons why it has become popular with young people and also because of its speed, ease of use and privacy (Cooper & Tyson, 2013). Mybroadband (2013) notes that BBM is an Internet-based instant messenger application on BlackBerry devices, which allows messaging between BlackBerry devices. Messages that are sent via BBM are sent over the Internet, which uses a PIN to connect to another BBM user. BlackBerry allows users to use a QR Code barcode to add each other to their respective friends' lists. BBM also enables users to send pictures, audio recordings, files, location on a map, and a wide selection of emoticons. A total of 70% of the South African market belongs to BlackBerry, according to the Vodacom service provider. BlackBerry is the dominant smartphone in the South African market owing to BlackBerry Internet Service (BIS) that facilitates inexpensive Internet access (Alfreds, 2011). BBM does allow for brands, companies and events to capitalise on its basic usage ability. Since an actual advertising service platform is offered by BlackBerry Research in Motion (RIM). One way of advertising on BBM is for a brand to be added by consumers, much the same way that they would add a friend. In this way, the brand is a normal contact on the consumers list of BBM friend contacts, and is able to communicate with them.

Research methodology and design

The research was quantitative in nature and a survey was used to gather the data. The questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice questions and a Likert scale, which was used to determine the respondents' general attitudes towards BBM advertising. Descriptive research is necessary when the problem or knowledge of a particular market or marketing aspect is needed, and when knowledge is vague or unclear (Diggin & Wiid, 2009:55). The research data was captured and analysed by using SPSS, which was then portrayed by means of descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, means and graphs.

Findings, discussion and analysis

A majority of Generation Z agreed that BBM advertising resulted in preference towards brands (Figure 1).

Access aspect: There was no major difference when respondents accessed BBM via mobile device or via personal computer and mobile device. In terms of preference of brands that are advertised on the BBM platform (Figure 2). An increasing number of people are now accessing their social media accounts via mobile devices instead of via their personal computer (BizReport, 2013).

Period of usage (years): The preference for a brand advertising on BBM was more effective when a user initially began to use BBM for 1 - 3 years and then again after they had been using it for 5 years or longer (Figure 3). Almost all social media sites have either seen a decline or stagnation in their importance to the teen demographic (Crook, 2013).

Usage frequency: The research revealed that there was no major difference for the preference of brands that are advertised BBM between those who use it daily or several times a week (Figure 4). Young teenagers aged 12 - 13 (26%) use the sites a number of times per day, while nearly double the number of teenagers ages 14 - 17 (47%) use the sites frequently (Derickson, 2013).

Log-in duration (hours): The preference for brands that are advertised on BBM generally increased the longer the respondents used it (Figure 5). The time that teens spent on social media has escalated from 1 hour 45 minutes to 2 and half hours a day (ZeeNews, 2013).

Number of brands advertising: It was discovered that generally, the more brands/companies that were followed on BBM, the greater the preference shown towards these brands/companies owing to advertising on BBM (Figure 6). Several teenagers pointed out that advertising on their social networking sites was acceptable, because it kept the use of the site free. None of the teens said that they avoided the adverts because of excessive clutter of advertising on the sites (Drennan, Kelly & Kerr 2010).

Conclusions and recommendations

Social media advertising is frequently used to reach larger targeted audiences. Companies and brands should continue to engage with this form of digital advertising, although they should heed, which social networks to use and how to use them. This study's findings definitely assist brands in planning more accurately on how to target the youth, since it uncovered the perceptions of Generation Z (high school learners) to BBM advertising, showing that it did cause preference for brands that are promoted on the aforementioned medium. This study provided clarity that BBM advertising was preferred by the youth target market, as well as general users of the application. It is recommended that companies should centre their efforts on certain usage characteristics, such as period of usage, log-in duration and number of brands that the user interacts with on the BBM platform, since these usage aspects have a major influence on having a brand preferred over another when advertising on BBM and yield the greatest ROI in respect of eliciting preference.

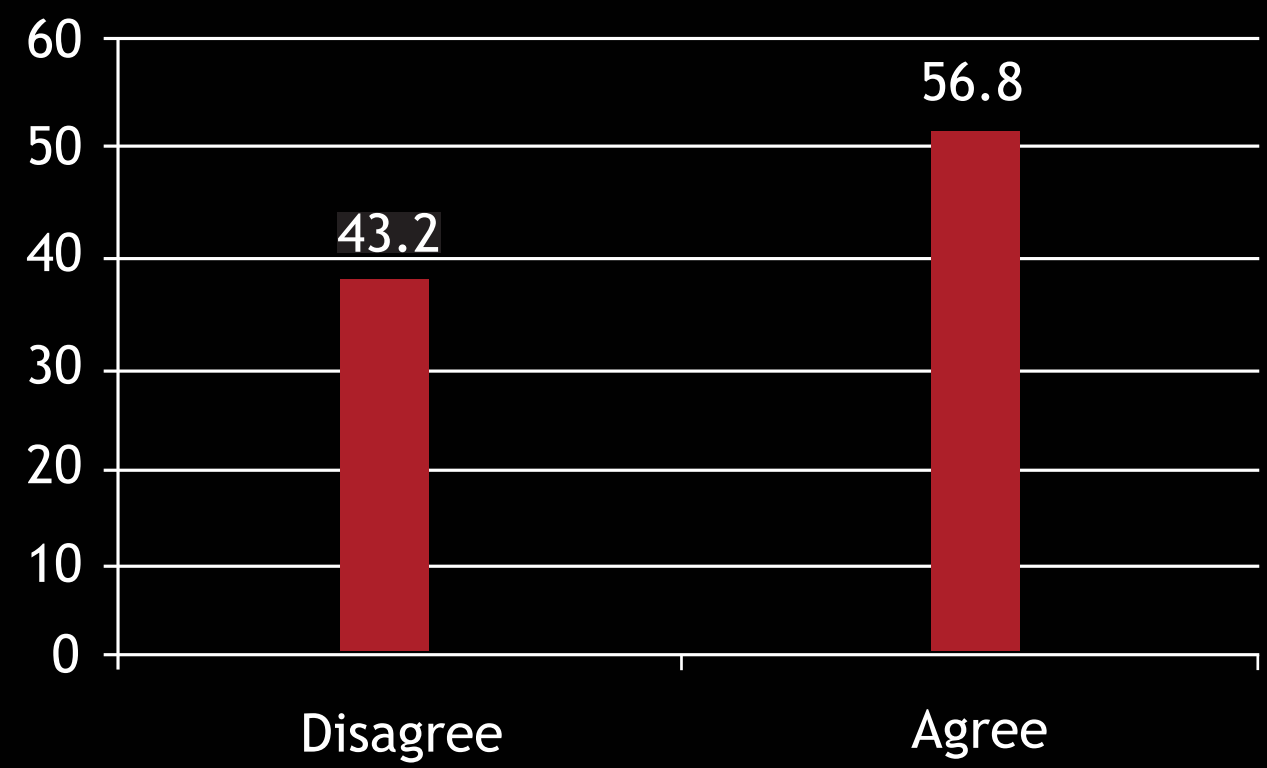


Figure 1: General preference

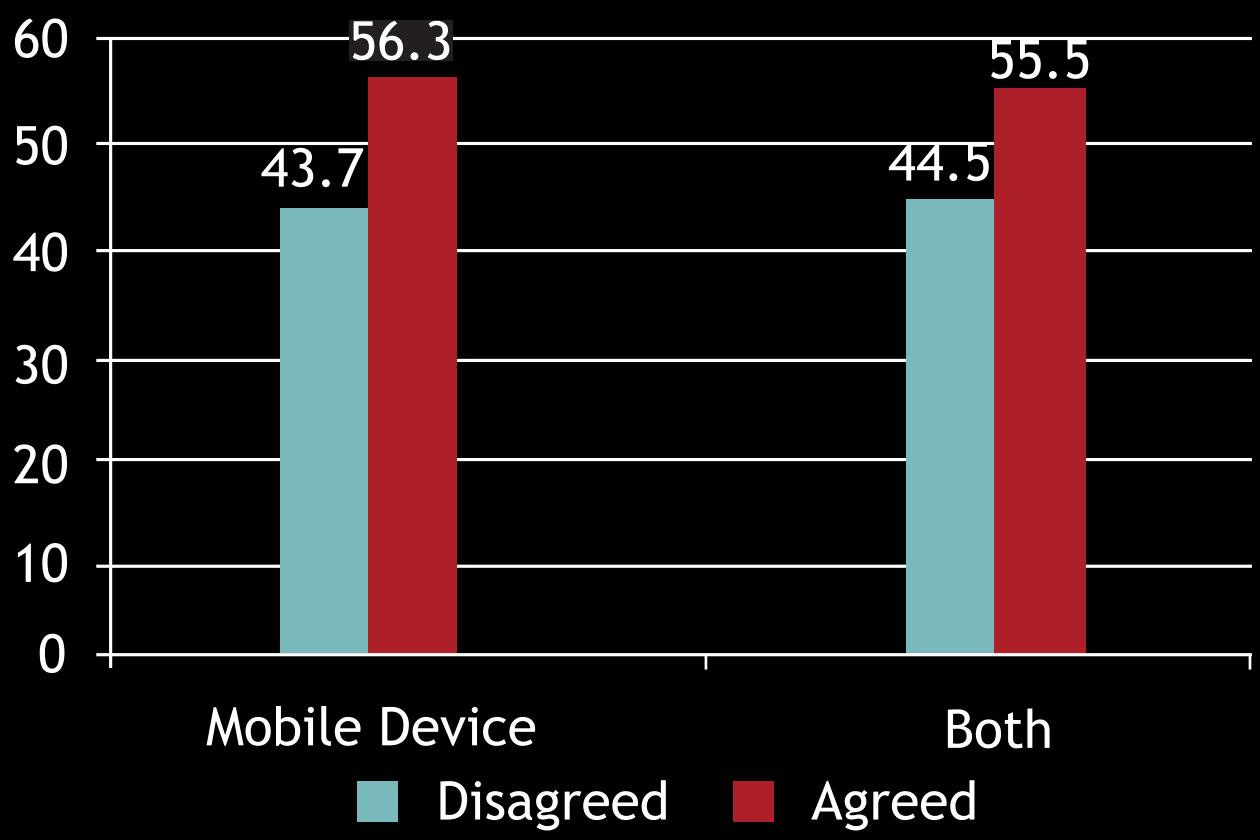


Figure 2: Access aspects

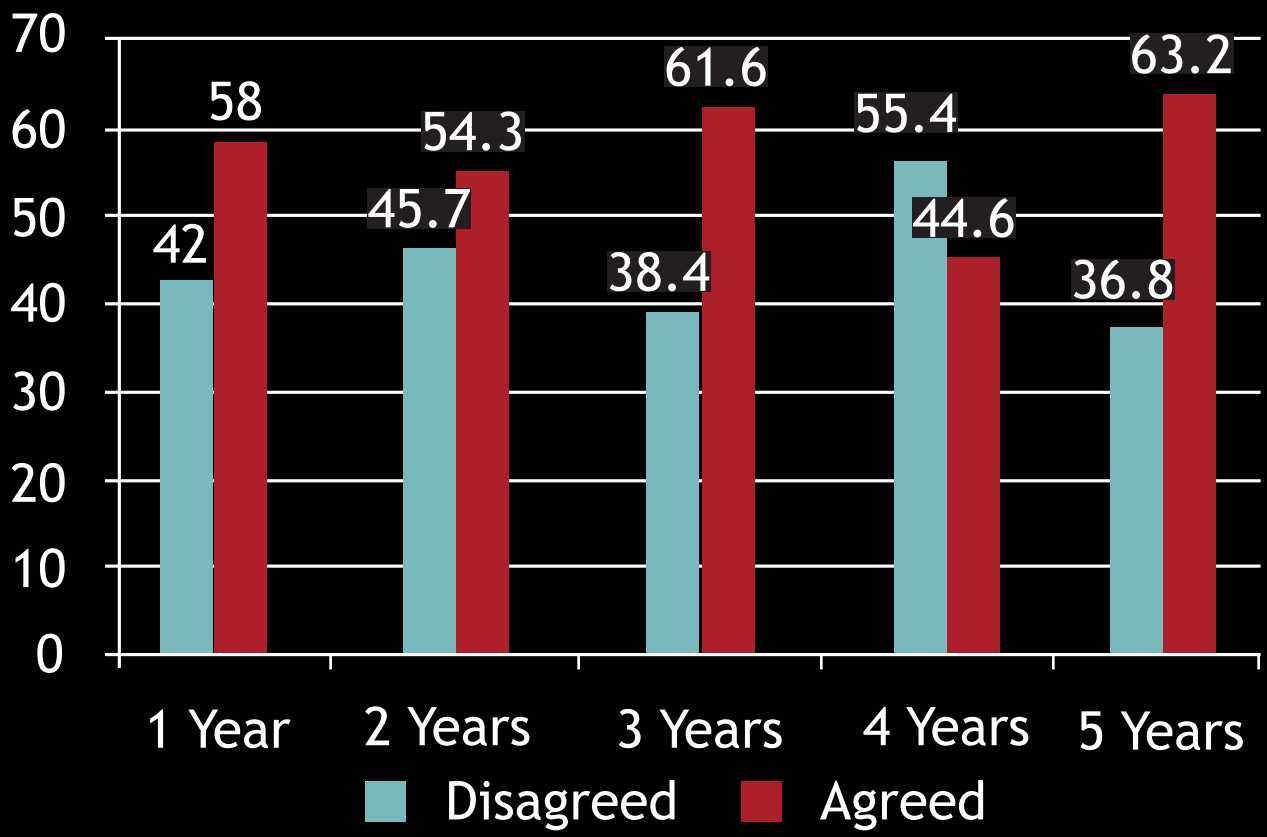


Figure 3: Period of usage

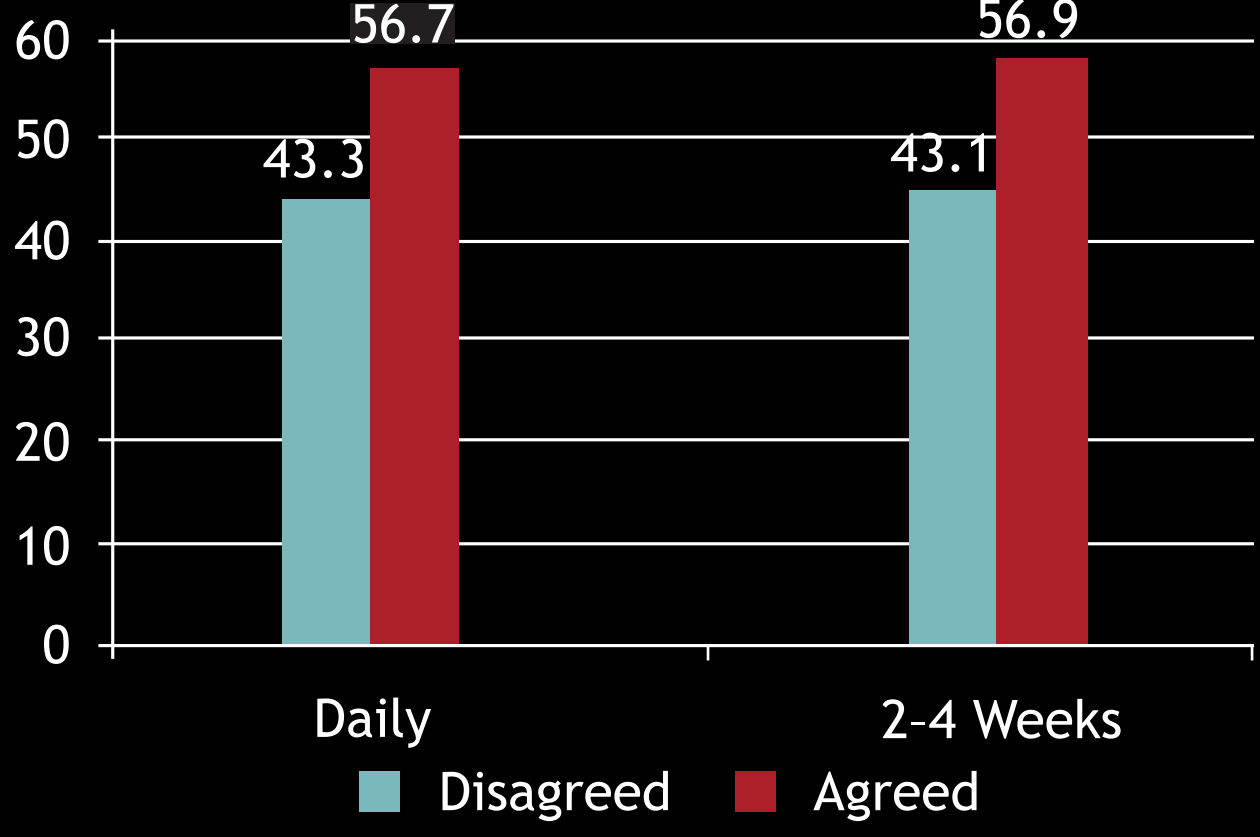


Figure 4: Usage frequency

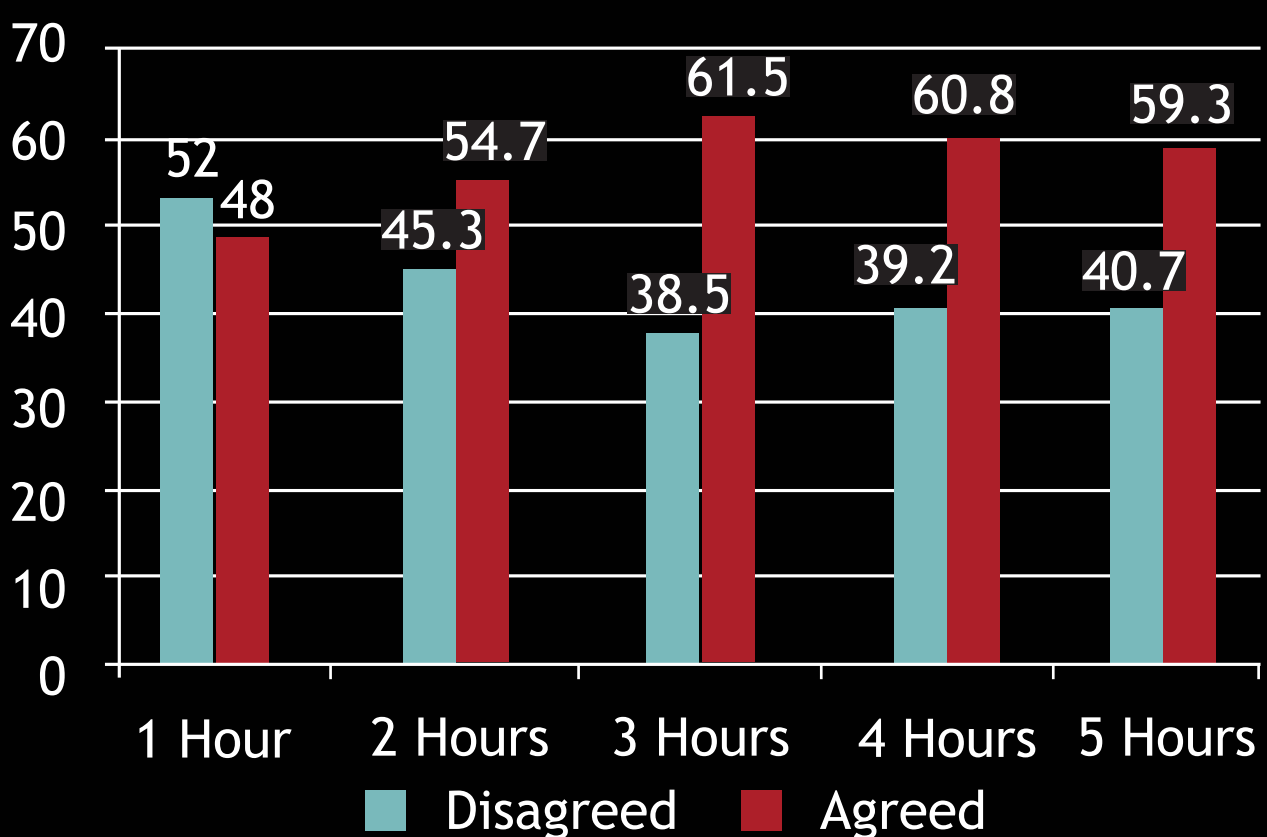


Figure 5: Log-in duration

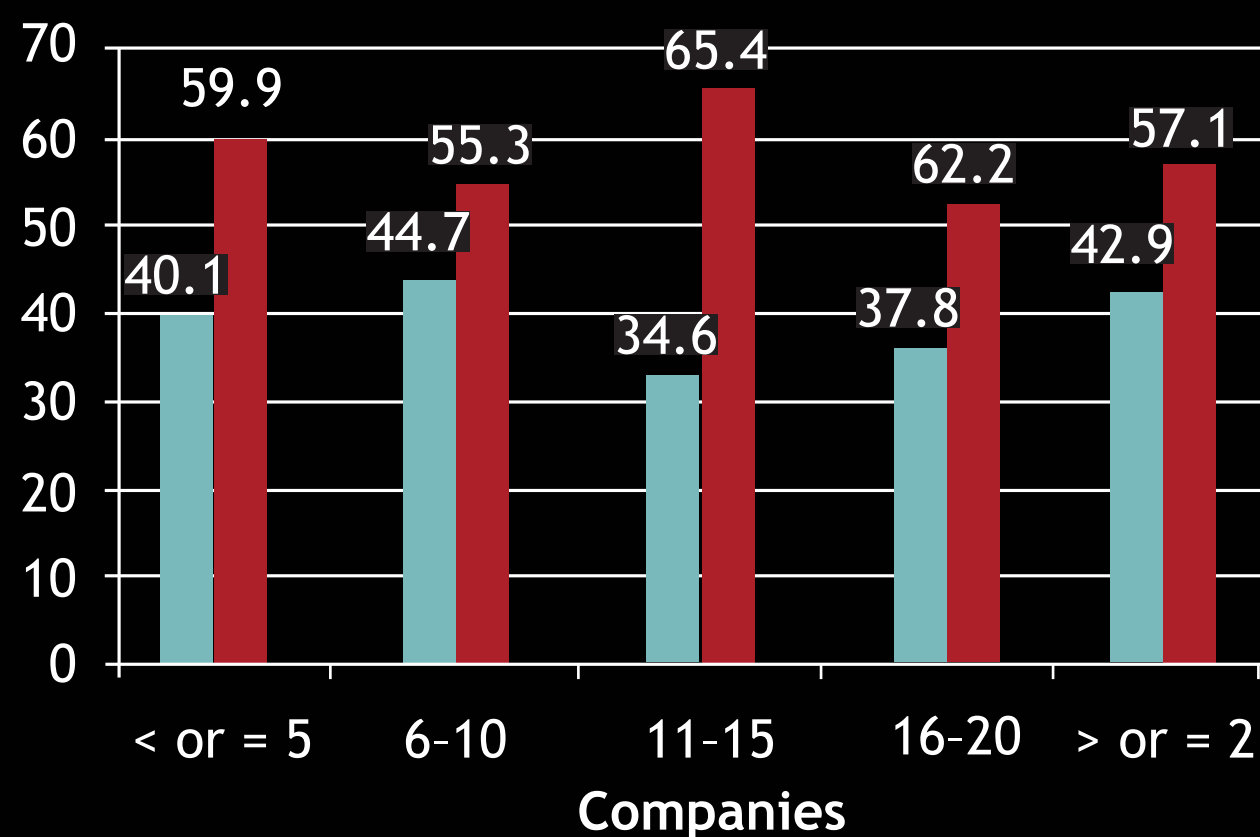


Figure 6: Number of companies/brands followed

Reference List

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