

An Examination of Generational Differences in Women's Engagement with and Perceptions of Feminist Content on Social Media.

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Introduction

Social media has been commended as a powerful frontier through which the feminist movement has advanced, owing to its ability to raise awareness of women's rights, and build communities across social and geographical borders. However, the benefits of using social media as a tool of feminism are experienced in various ways by different generations of women.

Objectives

- Examine how different generations of self-identifying women in the United Kingdom engage with feminist-related content on social media.
- Provide insights into the most effective means of spreading feminist messages to different generations of women, in order to maintain inter-generational feminist involvement.
- Investigate perceptions and experiences of feminist online activism to analyse how useful social media is as a tool of feminism.

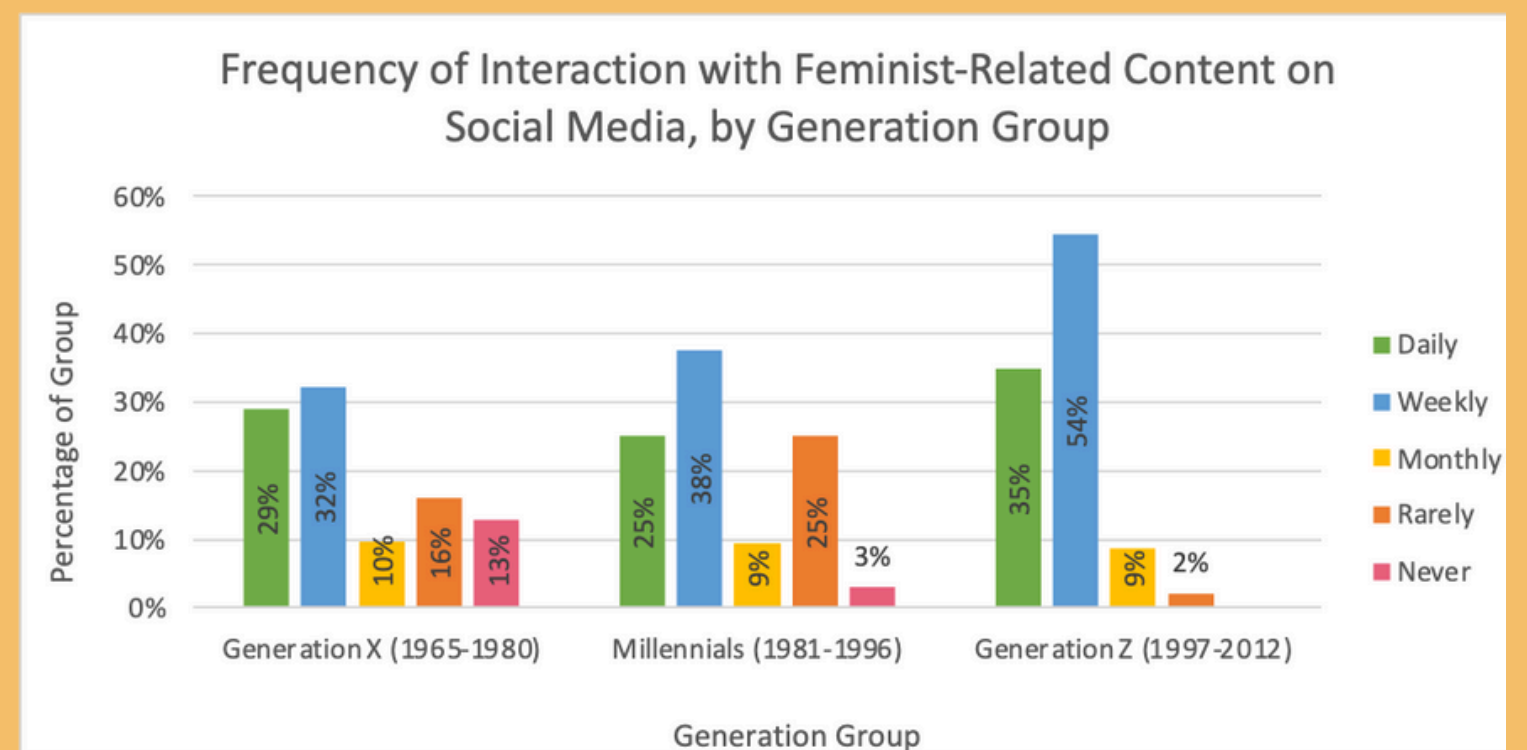
Methodology

- Survey, answered by 111 self-identifying women in the UK, who belong to the following generation groups: Generation X (1965-1980), Millennials (1981-1996), and Generation Z (1997-2012).
- A range of questions investigating engagement patterns and perceptions about social media as a tool of feminism.

Research Questions

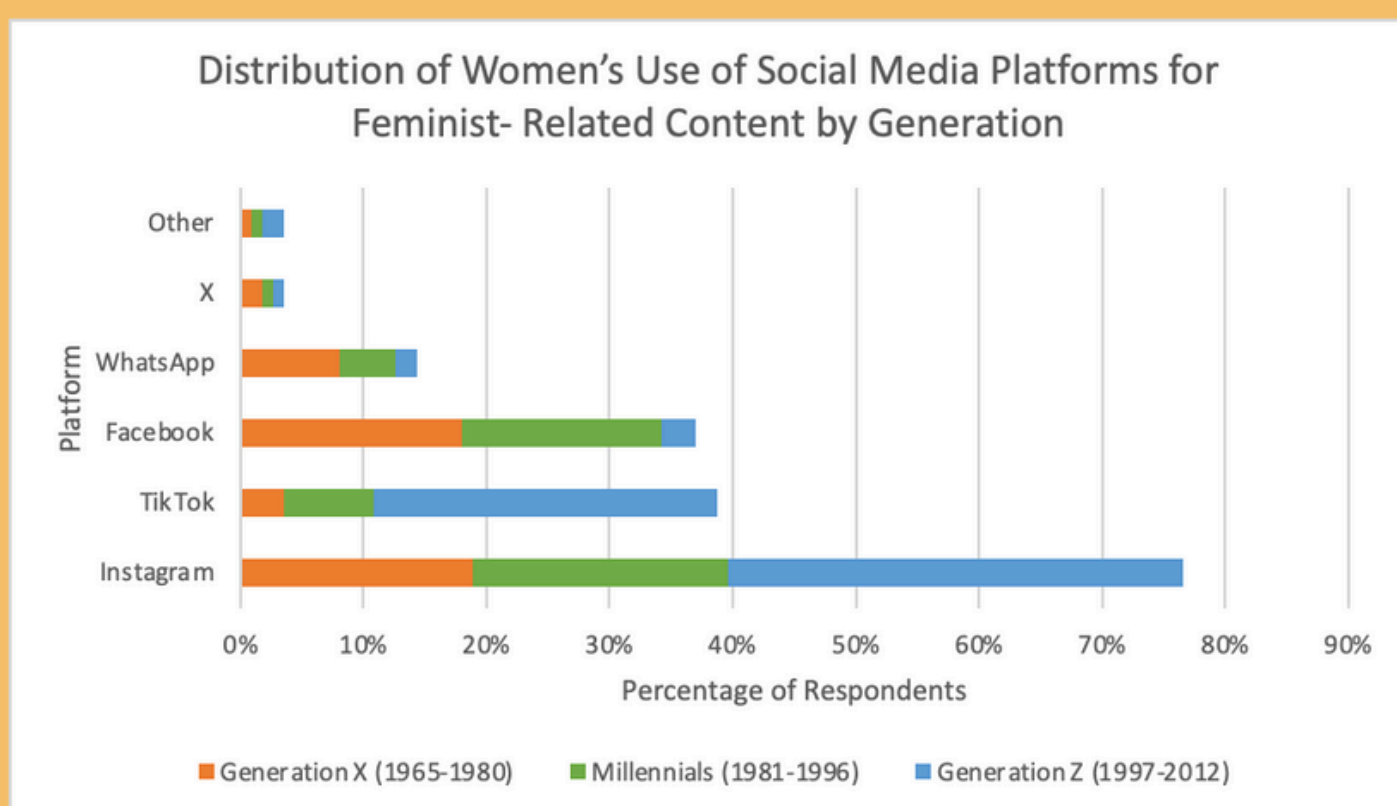
- How do women engage with social media as a tool of feminism?
- What motivates and discourages women from engaging and interacting with online feminist activism?
- Is social media perceived as a positive influence for the feminist movement?

Data and findings



- Generation Z interact with feminist content on social media most frequently.
- A higher proportion of Generation X never interact with feminist content on social media, highlighting the pattern that online feminist activism is mobilising generations of women differently.

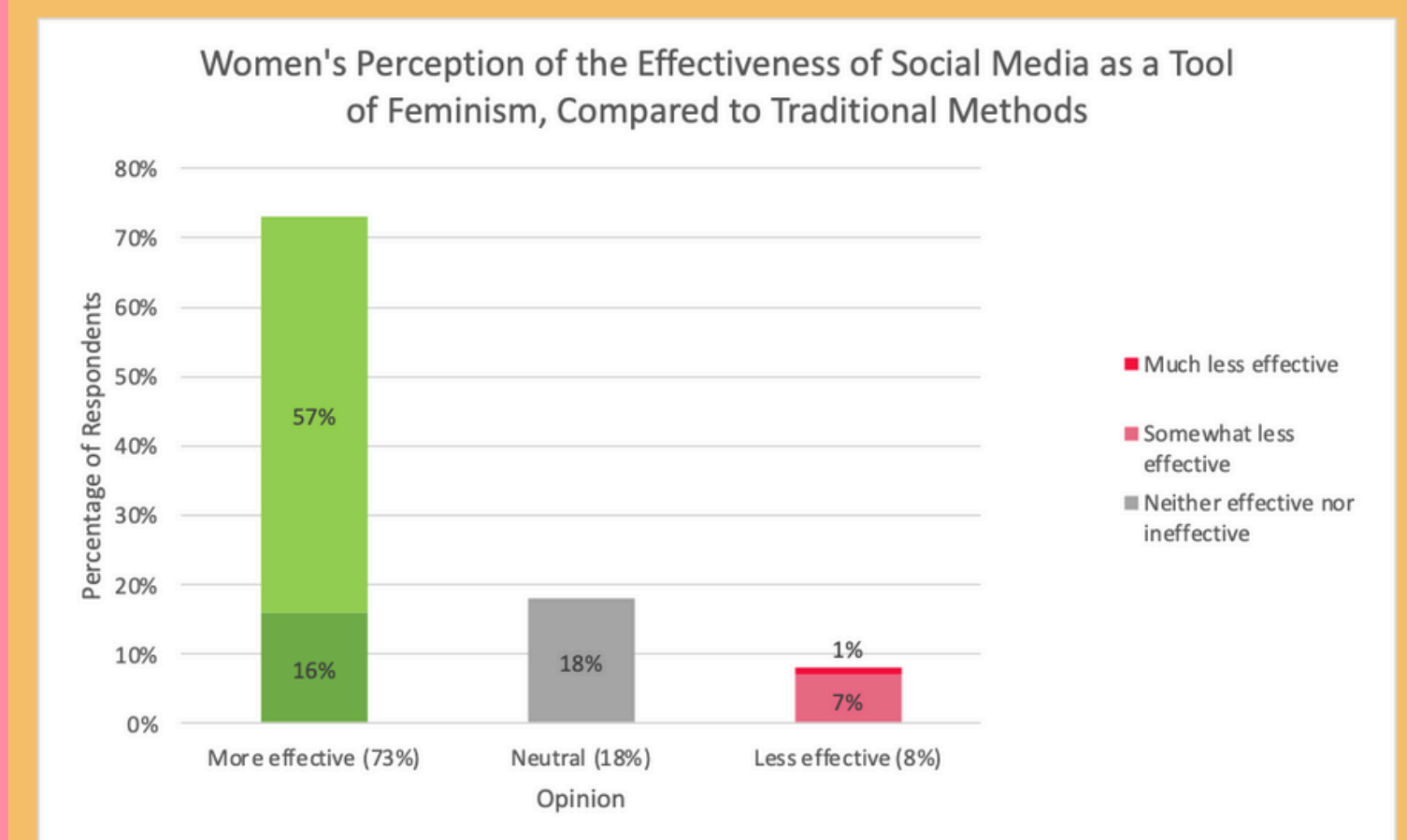
78% of respondents totally agree that social media is a beneficial tool for feminism



- Instagram is the most popular and effective social media platform to spread feminist messages to women belonging to Generation X, Millennials and Generation Z.
- TikTok is being increasingly used as a tool of feminism, growing in popularity amongst Generation Z.

- Anti-feminist content on social media was not found to discourage women's engagement with online feminist activism, but rather encourage collective feminist participation, due to shared anger and experience.

- The majority of respondents believe that the use of social media is more effective in advancing the feminist movement compared to traditional methods, owing largely to its accessibility, and its ability to connect women around the world.



70% of respondents encounter anti-feminist content on social media, in the form of posts and comments.

Conclusion

- Generation Z is the most digitally-active generation in the feminist movement.
- Millennials and Generation X engage with feminist content on social media less frequently than Generation Z, and display a greater reliance on Facebook.
- Instagram is the most effective platform for reaching Generation Z, Millennials and Generation X most equally.
- The general sentiment amongst women is that, though imperfect, social media is a beneficial tool for feminism.