LUISS

A Comparative Study of Spotify Wrapped and Apple Music Replay: The Mediating Role of Impression Management on User-Generated Content

Prof. Luigi Laura

_____

Supervisor

Prof. Francisco J. Villarroel Ordens

_____

Co-supervisor

Beatrice Zecchini (756461)

_____

Candidate

Academic Year 2022/2023

E mai un pensiero
non al denaro,
non all'amore
né al cielo

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1.   Background of the study

Recent technological development and digitization have caused a paradigm shift in a variety of industries, moving operations from the real world to the virtual one, from store shelves to e-commerce. Online services facilitate many of our daily activities (Anderson et al., 2020), ranging from social interaction (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok), to information retrieval (Google, Bing, Yahoo) and content consumption (Youtube, Netflix, Spotify). This process has resulted in the creation of "empowered" customers (Edelman and Singer, 2015), so expert in their use of tools and information that they no longer accept the role of passive recipients of marketing communication (Acar and Puntoni, 2016). The connection between consumers and brands is becoming deeper, giving consumers an increasingly decisive role in promoting a particular brand.

The music industry has also been strongly influenced by this phenomenon: from 2001 onwards, sales of CDs and vinyl records began to suffer the impact of the appearance of new technologies, thus initiating a digital age where the consumer has greater capacity for decision (Arditi, 2014). Nowadays, music streaming services are the fastest growing music option (Cesareo and Pastore, 2014), not only because of the immediacy of use but also because they incorporate social features that allow users to interact with one another and use music tracks as social objects (Hagen and Luders, 2017). The streaming music market is highly competitive, requiring players to implement strategies to make their services increasingly refined and personalised. Competing for the title of market leader are two companies (Statista, 2023): on the one hand Spotify, a music and media streaming service founded in Sweden in 2016 (Vonderau, 2017), on the other Apple Music, a music and video streaming service developed by Apple Inc. and launched in June 2015. According to a Statista report (2023), at the end of the second quarter of 2022, 30.5% of streaming music service subscribers had a Spotify membership. Apple Music held 13.7%, however, followed by other services such as Tencent Music, Amazon Music, and YouTube Music. Certainly, Spotify and Apple Music represent the largest share of the market, and they compete for the role of first movers in the race for continuous news to offer their users.

In recent years, both Spotify and Apple Music have introduced features that allow users to reflect on their musical preferences and activity over the past year through Spotify Wrapped and Apple Music Replay, respectively. These services provide users with a recap of their music listening activity over a specific time period, typically at the end of the year; for this reason and for the sake of simplicity, in this research they will be addressed as "end-of-year recaps" when meaning to refer to both. Spotify Wrapped is a recap containing the individual user's personal statistics, in a pop and highly shareable format. In the past few years, it has

gained an increasing virality[1] on social media, becoming a true annual tradition and eliciting a huge amount of user-generated content (UGC) in the period immediately following its annual release (Galant, 2020). Apple Music Replay, on the other hand, has not gained the same level of popularity or recognition as its competitor. The hypothesis under investigation in this instance is that the graphic design, interactive and engaging features of Spotify Wrapped (Galant, 2020; Forde, 2022) have a positive influence on users' willingness to engage in impression management, which in turn stimulates the production of UGC. Arguably, the personalised nature of Spotify Wrapped creates a direct connection with the customer, encouraging them to share music tastes and personal statistics with their friends and followers on social media (Galant, 2020; Weiss, 2018). On the other hand, Apple Music Replay lacks the same level of personalization and interactivity, which may explain its lower impact on users' willingness to engage in UGC.

The concept of user-generated content, particularly in relation to brands, is a widely debated topic in academia. Numerous studies have focused on brand-related content spontaneously created by users, as in the case of Spotify Wrapped. The various currents of thought regarding the definition of this construct will be elaborated in more detail in the upcoming chapter of this paper. The reasons behind the creation of this specific type of user-generated content vary and include personal expression, sharing experiences and preferences, entertainment, seeking status, and building communities (Berthon, Pitt, and Campbell, 2008). For the introductory purposes of this chapter, only the most influential study that forms the basis of the research question will be referenced. In his work, Shao (2009) proposed that people conduct a wide variety of online activities, including sharing UGC. However, he theorised that all these activities, although different, can be traced back to three basic purposes. One of these purposes, the most relevant in this context, concerns the production of self-expression and self-actualization, where "production" refers to posting one's own content on the platform.

The virality of Spotify Wrapped reveals the extent to which algorithms are integrated into the way we create our identity within the digital consumer culture, opening the discussion on how much, what and, most importantly, why our personal identity is shared on social media. The hypothesis under consideration in this thesis is that one of the reasons behind the virality of Spotify Wrapped is that it stimulates impression management, which in turn encourages UGC. Impression management stems from Erving Goffman's theory on human behaviour "dramaturgy", according to which individuals are like actors whose everyday actions take place on a stage (Goffman, 1959). Leary and Kowalski (1990) defined impression management as "individuals' attempt to control the impressions others form of them". Arguably then, the online version of an individual is its extension, but one that is inherently manufactured and performative (Marshall, 2021).

---

[1] The term is used to describe something that quickly becomes very popular or well known by being published on the internet or sent from person to person by email or phone (Source: Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary & Thesaurus, Cambridge University Press)

Spotify Wrapped and similar algorithms contribute to creating and refining a certain type of perception of us to be shared online. The basis for this argument lies in an inherent characteristic of end-of-year recaps: presenting a real and accurate overview of users' musical tastes. A substantial body of literature provides evidence that music and musical tastes are extremely relevant in defining an individual's identity. Indeed, music has historically played a crucial role in human society, acting as a universal language that connects people across generations and cultures on both an emotional and cultural plane (Larsen et al., 2009, 2010; Naveed et al., 2017). The Social Identity Theory (Tajfel and Turner, 1979) holds that a person's social identity is derived from the groups to which they belong. Extensive research has demonstrated that an individual's musical preferences can serve as a means of signalling social identity (Tarrant, North, and Hargreaves, 2001), and offer a window into their personal identity (Steele and Brown, 1995). In fact, North and Hargreaves (1999) have even referred to music preferences as a "badge of identity" that individuals use to indicate their personality and align themselves with particular social groups. Ultimately, according to Belk (2013), digital, sharing, and access modes of consumption can offer useful tools for constructing identities, and possibly additional opportunities for identity to be controlled and shared with more individuals.

What this research sets out to test is whether the willingness to control the impression other people have of them, coupled with a sense of need to signal one's membership in a particular social group, may have had a positive influence in the massive UGC creation of end of year recaps by means of social media. In other words, the goal is to test whether, in the relationship between Spotify Wrapped and the high rate of UGC on social media, impression management acts as a mediator. To prove this correlation, Spotify Wrapped will be compared with the willingness to produce UGC generated by the equivalent service offered by Apple Music, Apple Music Replay.

The research is set to study the behaviour of Generation Z. Finneman and Spagnuolo, in McKinsey Podcast "Meet Generation Z: Shaping the future of shopping" (2020), assert how the so-called "digital natives" represent the core influencers today, having a really big impact on both millennials and Gen Xers in terms of purchase decisions. Furthermore, the topic of social media use in young adults is extremely actual and of great relevance, both academically and managerially. Digital natives have coexisted with technology their whole lives, which has inevitably played a significant role in their development and creation of identities (Pempek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert, 2009). The use of social networks occupies a large part of young people's days, offering them a space in which individual media preferences, friendship, romantic relationships, and ideology can converge and be displayed at the same time.

1.2.   Significance of the study

According to Wilson (2022), streaming has changed the music industry, from sound quality to distribution and how users access and consume music. The phenomenon involves a vast number of stakeholders; in

particular, literature often distinguishes three types of stakeholders: platform users (end consumers), item providers, and the platform itself (Abdollahpouri et al., 2017, Sonboli et al., 2021). Platform users represent the most significant stakeholder segment - consider that, in 2022, paid account users alone reached 589 million (IFPI, 2023); of these, 205 million were Spotify subscribers (Spotify, 2023).

In support of the significance of the phenomenon, reference is made to the International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (IFPI) Global Music Record 2023. Said report, which represents the most comprehensive and reliable global state of the industry, found that at the end of 2022 the music market experienced its eighth consecutive year of growth, with revenues for the global recorded music market amounting to 26.2 billion U.S. dollars; a market growth of 9.0% with respect to the previous year. The 8th annual Spotify Wrapped campaign, launched in 2022, has drawn more than 150 million MAU - a 30% growth year-on-year. In that same year, Spotify Wrapped generated 425,000,000 Tweets in the first three days after its launch (Woods, 2023). Hence, although official data regarding the media resonance of these campaigns are scarce and jealously guarded by the respective music streaming services, it is not difficult to imagine the enormous power in terms of marketing that users of these platforms wield. It follows that understanding how to elicit UGC proves to be crucial for managers and academics, as it might carry relevant insights in terms of refining marketing strategies, personalising user experiences, stimulating advocacy and boosting user retention.
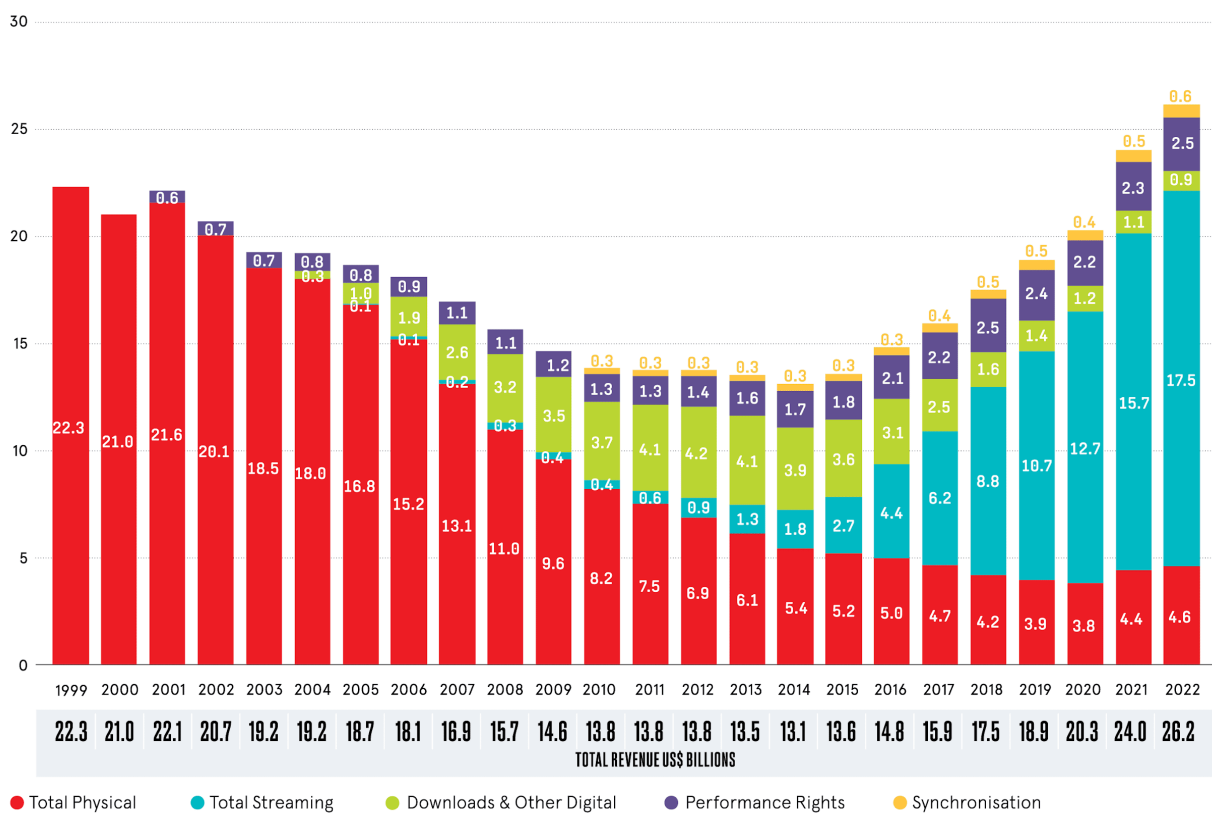

Figure 1. Global Recorded Music Industry Revenues 1999-2022 (USD billions)

In a recent Forbes article, Duke (2023) emphasises the wide range of benefits that user-generated content can deliver to managers, if properly stimulated. By being more experience-driven and authentic compared to content fabricated by brands, UGC is considered as a modern form of word-of-mouth advertising. The creation of UGC allows customers to be part of a brand's community, thus enhancing brand loyalty and affinity. Therefore, understanding UGC as a behavioural manifestation of consumer engagement and the subsequent impact on business (e.g., brand attitude, brand awareness, brand equity and purchase intentions) is crucial for academics and managers alike (Langaro et al., 2018; Hutter et al., 2013). This is demonstrated by the fact that businesses are getting progressively active in customer engagement marketing, which aims to inspire, empower, and track users' voluntary participation in brand-related social media content (Harmeling et al., 2017; Matute et al., 2019).

In this research, impression management is hypothesised to have a positive influence on UGC creation. Reasons for this supposition lie in previous studies, which have suggested that people are engaged on their own identity projects as increasingly virtually connected individuals (Deighton and Kornfeld, 2009). Since impression management tends to be more easily controlled online than in person (Ellison, Heino amd Gibbs, 2006; Fullwood, 2019; Ward, 2017), a large body of studies on impression management has focused on the social media context (Ellison, Hancock and Toma, 2011; Sun and Wu, 2012), showing that users engage with social media in search of gratifications associated with social, functional and emotional values (Kim et al., 2012; Jahn and Kunz, 2012; Leiner et al., 2018) and, ultimately, for exercising some degree of strategic self-promotion. In this virtual self-affirmation process, brand-related UGC serves as an exchange of symbolic meanings in the marketplace of social media, offering new possibilities to study how the production of user-generated content is used for impression management purposes.

Ultimately, findings from this study may have practical implications for the design of future personalised products, to encourage user engagement and virality, specially created to meet the requirements of Gen Z.

1.3.   Research Gap

Considering the substantial impact that brand-related UGC is able to generate on a company, for example by bringing benefits in terms of brand attitude, brand awareness, brand equity and purchase intentions (Langaro et al., 2018; Hutter et al., 2013), coupled with its viral spread characteristic, the social media marketing literature is gaining increasing interest in the discipline (Muntinga et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2012; Halliday, 2016). Nevertheless, a significant lack of research studies is identified that address explicitly how consumers experience creating brand-related UGC, and how the process of creation of UGC and the relative characteristics may be influenced by the desire to control one's impression on others. Understanding brand-related UGC as a behavioural expression of consumer engagement is of vital importance to both scholars and, more importantly, managers: indeed, it is acknowledged that additional research is still

necessary to enable businesses to fully realise some of the untapped marketing potential located within brand communities (He et al., 2017). The study of the underlying psychological and social instances that compel users to create brand-related UGC can provide marketers with useful insights on the communication strategies to adopt to better engage consumers in brand and product co-creation processes. By focusing on non-sponsored UGC, i.e. material independently created by users with no formal incentive by the brand (Burmann, 2010) the current study seeks to expand the consumer engagement marketing line of research.

Impression management studies have been typically focusing on the motives (Baumeister, 1982; Leary and Kowalski, 1990), goals (Rosenbaum, Johnson, Stepman and Nuijten, 2009), and outcomes of impression management (Gioaba and Krings, 2017; Wayne and Kacmar, 1991). In recent years however, researchers have been showing growing interest in applying the concept of impression management to social media platforms such as YouTube (Chen, 2016), Facebook (Sun and Wu, 2012), blogging (Trammell and Keshelashvili, 2005), and online dating (Ellison et al., 2011). Social media motivations literature is rife with examples of personal identity-related motivations. For instance, Boyd (2007) and Bumgarner (2007) highlighted, respectively, impression management and identity expression as major motivators of utilising social networking sites; Papacharissi (2007) found that writing a weblog is driven by a need for self-fulfilment; and Nov (2007) found that people who contribute to Wikipedia are motivated by the opportunities for self-enhancement that this generates.

This body of research has shown that people can manage their impressions more strategically online than in face-to-face situations (Ellison et al., 2006; Papacharissi, 2002), for example, by exaggerating their sense of humour and wisdom, and employing tactics for self-promotion (such as posting about their positive achievements) (Huang, 2014). The present study attempts to link the research on brand-related UGC to the theoretical framework of impression management. Arguably, since a person's possessions (either digital or physical) are major contributors that reflect his or her own identity (Schau and Gilly, 2003), brand-related UGC can be used as a tool for self-presentation.

The grounds for which Spotify Wrapped lends itself as a valuable case study include its extreme current relevance, the almost immediate success it enjoyed after launch, and the huge amount of user-generated content it stimulates each year. Being such a recent phenomenon, the level of information and research surrounding this topic is very limited and not systematic enough. Research conducted on the Spotify brand mainly focuses on the technical aspects of recommendation systems, playlist creation, and data collection. Several recent studies have investigated Spotify's algorithms and the dynamics of playlist creation. Leisewitz and Musgrave (2022), for instance, studied Spotify's "Discover Weekly" playlist with the goal of determining the extent to which algorithmically created playlists, conceptualised as cultural intermediaries, create a sort of attachment between music consumers and artists. Eriksson et al. (2019), in the book "Spotify Teardown: Inside the Black Box of Streaming Music" delve into the inner workings of Spotify by analysing

its data and business practices, revealing how the platform's music recommendation algorithm influences users' listening experience. Furthermore, they explore the social and political implications of music streaming consumption. Rosengren and Dahlén (2019), studied data on Spotify users' listening habits and preferences to better understand how the platform influences new music discovery and consumption. According to the findings, Spotify's algorithmic suggestions and curated playlists play an important role in boosting new music discovery and consumption.

However, none of them focus specifically on Spotify Wrapped, other than brief mentions. To the best of my knowledge, there is a significant gap of knowledge as there have been no extensive studies investigating the motivations for users to share their Spotify Wrapped - and none that have linked this phenomenon to the concept of impression management. Furthermore, no studies have investigated the Spotify Wrapped phenomenon from a marketing perspective by comparing it with Apple Music Replay.

1.4. Research Objectives and Questions

1.4.1. Objectives

This study builds on previous research to make two primary contributions. The first objective is to explore if Spotify Wrapped ownership incentives the production of user-generated content on social media to a greater extent than owning Apple Music Replay. Furthermore, albeit it is well-known how the emergence of this type of personalised content has led to an increase in user-generated content on social media, the underlying motivations for sharing such content are not well understood.

As a second goal, this research aims to contribute to the academic discussion regarding impression management and the dynamics of self-presentation in social media. Impression management has been found to be a powerful motivator for online behaviour, including sharing content on social media (Schau and Gilly, 2003). By examining the role of impression management in the relationship between end-of-year recaps and UGC on social media, it can be gained an understanding on why users may be motivated to share their results.

In summary, this thesis proposes to provide insights into the motivations behind sharing Spotify Wrapped or Apple Music Replay results on social media, and whether an individual's willingness to assert his or her personal identity has a positive mediating effect on the desire to share his or her results. The ultimate objective of the research is to enable the industry to create value for its consumers and ensure adequate levels of profitability (Chen et al., 2018; Vock et al., 2013; Wang et al., 2013).

The data used for the analysis will be collected through a self-administered questionnaire. Due to time and resource constraints, the research will focus only on the Italian market. In addition, the questionnaire will

only be administered to individuals between the ages of 18 and 26 (Gen Z[2]). The reasons for this choice will be explored in more detail in the chapters to follow.

1.4.2. Research Questions

As described above, previous studies have suggested connections between personalised content like Spotify Wrapped and Apple Music Replay, brand-related user-generated content and impression management. How these components work together remains unclear. This thesis will tackle this research gap by analysing Spotify Wrapped or Apple Music Replay ownership, brand-related UGC creation and impression management in the same model.

Therefore, this thesis sets out to address the following research questions:

RQ1: To investigate the impact of receiving Spotify Wrapped, as opposed to receiving Apple Music Replay, on user-generated content on social media.

RQ2: To examine the role of impression management in motivating users to share their results on social media.

RQ3: To determine whether impression management mediates the relationship between end-of-year summaries and UGC on social media.

Furthermore, the research sets the ambitious goal of deriving insights and opening discussion regarding two additional research questions:

RQ4: To identify the types of users who are most likely to share their results on social media, based on their self-identity characteristics.

RQ5: To provide insights into how personalised content and self-identity can be used to increase engagement and sharing behaviour on social media.

Thus, the assumption under consideration is that Spotify Wrapped will have a direct positive relationship to user-generated content creation in a fashion that is higher than that generated by Apple Music Replay; and that impression management will have a positive moderating effect on said relationship.

---

[2] Although Generation Z includes all individuals born between 1997 and 2012 (source: Treccani), for consensus concerns I have decided to collect data only from those in the over-18 age group, which, at the time of writing, comprises those born by May 2004.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1. Conceptual framework

Music has long been recognized as a social object capable of connecting people, shaping identity, and fostering a sense of belonging. With the rise of music streaming platforms such as Spotify and Apple Music, music has become all the more intertwined with our online and social lives. As a matter of fact, these platforms offer users the ability to curate their own music experience, create playlists, and share their musical tastes with others. In recent years, both Spotify and Apple Music have introduced features that allow users to reflect on their musical preferences and activity over the past year through Spotify Wrapped and Apple Music Replay, respectively.

However, these features are not only about music, but also about users and how they present themselves online. User-generated content is becoming increasingly important in the marketing strategies of brands, including those in the music industry. Brand-related UGC can help create a more authentic and relatable brand image, as well as foster a sense of community among customers. In this chapter, UGC will be explored and defined, with a focus on brand-related UGC in online environments such as music streaming platforms.

The chapter will then delve into the concepts of impression management and self-presentation, which are key aspects of UGC. Impression management refers to the strategies individuals use to control the impression they make on others, while self-presentation refers to the way individuals present themselves to others. These concepts are particularly relevant in the context of UGC and the extended self, which refers to the idea that possessions and brands are an extension of the self. The chapter will also examine the concept of digital self-presentation and how it differs from traditional self-presentation. A comprehensive understanding of these concepts can aid in comprehending the motivations behind UGC and how brands can effectively leverage it to engage with their audiences.

Overall, this chapter aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how music streaming platforms have influenced the creation and dissemination of UGC and the importance of impression management in this relationship.

2.2.   Exploring the social nature of music: insights from Spotify and Apple Music

The modality of consuming music products has evolved significantly in recent years. New digital music distribution concepts have been established, including "Music as a Service (MaaS)" (Doerr et al., 2010), which differs from the widely known download in that the content is not transferred, thus promoting full access at all times instead of physical ownership (Sinclair and Tinson, 2017). In the transition from the

physical format to the digital age, the increase and ease of access to the Internet was crucial for the emergence of legal streaming platforms to occur (Hamari et al., 2016; Sinclair and Tinson, 2017). Another factor that has contributed to the formation of this phenomenon of expansion in the fruition of music content is undoubtedly the constant use of technology through smartphones (Johansson et al., 2019).

2.2.1. Music as a social object

Music has historically played a crucial role in human society. It has served as a universal language that connects people across generations and cultures on both an emotional and cultural level (Larsen et al., 2009, 2010; Naveed et al., 2017). An extensive body of research proves that musical preferences can communicate a great deal of information about an individual's personality: they can serve as a means of signalling social identity (Tarrant, North, and Hargreaves, 2001), and offer a window into their personal identity (Steele and Brown, 1995). Indeed, North and Hargreaves (1999) have even referred to music preferences as a "badge of identity" that individuals use to indicate their personality and align themselves with particular social groups.

According to Anderson et al. (2020), in terms of human behaviour, music streaming data have at least six benefits over other kinds of digital records. As a first point, they argue that listening to music entails a significant amount of individual choice, ranging from what to listen to when, where and how to listen to the content; therefore, it might allow to seize subtle information about personal preferences and attitudes. As a second point, by being listened to in a vast range of situations, music can provide a clear depiction of an individual's routine. Third, music induces and communicates emotions, evokes autobiographical memories, affects people's moods, and activates brain regions linked to emotion and creativity (McPherson et al., 2016; Taruffi and Koelsch, 2014; Zentner et al., 2008), providing a large window into a person's emotional life. Fourth, compared to data sources that involve circumstantial and occasional activity, listening to music spans much longer timescales, sometimes extending over an individual's entire daily activity (North et al., 2004; Sloboda et al., 2001), possibly capturing more consistent behaviours and characteristics. Fifth, prior big data studies on personality have often relied on data that may suffer from social desirability biases (e.g., liked Facebook pages and Twitter activity). Spotify and other streaming services, on the other hand, feature an "incognito mode" that keeps others from seeing what a user is presently listening to, and a person's whole listening history is never disclosed publicly, thus making music streaming data not subject to the same biases. Sixth, prior studies used behavioural data generated by participants in an intermittent and inactive way: in their study about the connection between music listening on Spotify and personality, Anderson et al. (2020) empirically proved that music streaming data are equivalent, if not even better, than data coming from social media like Facebook and Twitter in predicting human personality. Whereas some argue that music is inherently personal and may therefore constrain sharing practices, studies prove that music listening promotes a sense of belonging and relates one's sense of self to one's larger community and even one's "generation" of peers (Van Dijck, 2007). As a marker of identity, music links to how we relate to

contemporary heterogeneous taste cultures, with cultural taste being a means for ritual identification and of constructing social relations (DiMaggio, 1987).

With the advent of Web 2.0 and music streaming services, music has succeeded even more in accentuating its role as a social conduit, becoming a significant object of exchange that in turn stimulates social interactions between friends and acquaintances using social networks as a medium (Komulainen et al., 2010; Leong and Wright, 2013). Music streaming platforms do embed social features, which allow users to connect with each other and utilise music as a social object. Examples of these features include integrations with Facebook and Instagram (Brandtzæg, 2012; Ellison et al., 2007).

2.2.2.   Spotify and Spotify Wrapped

The creation of Spotify occurred in 2002 from the mind of Daniel Ek, at the time a 19-year-old Swedish student. The secret to Spotify's success is that Ek was able to identify a huge opportunity among consumers in the music industry and thus took advantage of being the first to fill a need that did not yet exist. Arguably, the foundation for Spotify's success was laid by Napster, a file-sharing program created by Shawn Fanning and Sean Parker and active between 1999 and 2001, which introduced a new way to listen to music without the limitations of physical media (CDs) or copyrights. After Napster was shut down by legal authorities, Ek realised that it was time to create a piracy-free service that would remunerate artists and the recording industry in an appropriate manner (Vonderau, 2017). Ek's real stroke of genius lies in having identified and created a niche between two extremes in the music market: at one end was Napster, which was very popular but illegal. On the other was Apple's iTunes, which sold individual songs for about $2 per track. The vast gap between these two extremes is where Spotify carved out space to develop. In a nutshell, what made Spotify such a bold and ambitious idea was to do the same thing as Napster, but legally (Forbes, 2021). The official launch of Spotify took place only in 2008, following the successful partnership formed in 2006 between Ek and Martin Lorentzon, a very famous Swedish entrepreneur at the time (Vonderau, 2017). However, Spotify landed in the USA only in 2011, following numerous complications with major U.S. record companies, who were unconvinced of the business model and conversion rates.

Despite the high number of competitors that have entered the market ever since, among which Apple Music, YouTube Music, Amazon Music, Pandora, Deezer Music and the like, Spotify remains the undisputed market leader. According to data from the fourth quarter of 2022, monthly active users (MAU) amounted to 489 million, of which 30% is represented by European users; they also reported a strong growth from Gen Z listeners (Spotify, 2023). From the same source, it is known that total revenues amounted to 3,166 million, of which 2,717 million came from premium users' subscriptions.

As of today, Spotify is the most widely used audio streaming subscription service worldwide, with more than 500 million users in over 180 markets, including over 205 million premium subscribers. According to recent

research by Statista (2023), in the second quarter of 2022, 30.5% of music streaming subscribers worldwide had a subscription with Spotify, almost double the share of those subscribed to Apple Music, its nearest rival. Additional services included in the study were Amazon, Tencent Music, and YouTube.

Spotify offers access to over 100 million tracks and 5 million podcasts titles for free, but users can also choose to upgrade to Spotify premium to enjoy exclusive features, such as improved sound quality and the ability to listen to music on-demand, offline, and without ads.

Business model

Spotify's revenue model is called Freemium, a business model that combines the terms "free" and "premium". It provides users with essential features of a product or service without any cost and charges a premium for supplemental or advanced features. The freemium model is now widespread in web services such as Mailchimp, Dropbox or the most recent ChatGPT. Spotify applies the freemium model principle by including some limitations in the free version. In fact, you cannot listen to tracks in sequence but only in random order, you can only skip 5 tracks and, most importantly, the free version includes advertising between a song and the other (a very important source of revenue for the company).

The premium version, on the other hand, has no limitations: premium users can listen to every track, can skip through songs limitlessly, can download music to play it when offline and, obviously, have access to an ad-free experience. Since 2017, being a premium user also grants access to your personal Spotify Wrapped. The strength of Spotify lies in giving an almost unlimited service to the premium user who, for a fixed price of 9,99€/month, gets to manage in complete freedom what, how and when to listen.

The goal of the freemium model is to attract as wide a range of users as possible (Chen et al., 2018; Kumar, 2014), consequently increasing the likelihood of maximising the number of upgrades to a premium account (Anderson, 2009; Dinsmore et al., 2017; Wagner and Hess, 2013). By means of the freemium business model, Spotify gives its users the appearance of being able to choose whether or not to pay for the service. In reality, the free version is specifically structured to entice users to upgrade to premium.

Spotify Wrapped

Since 2017, once a year Spotify Wrapped has been giving users the story of their year in music. This initiative, which has become increasingly viral, brings together graphic design, data analysis, and storytelling. Through user data, the streaming platform generates an annual report on Spotify community activities and each user's individual preferences, creating a personalised and highly shareable experience (Galant, 2020).

The Wrapped appears within the app as a collection of animated graphics in Instagram Stories format that narrate favourite songs, artists, and genres, allowing the user to relive moments and memories and stimulating him or her to use other social platforms to share achievements (Rosengren and Dahlén, 2019).

Right from the start, the campaign has been very successful and can be considered a best practice on using data to develop relevant marketing initiatives for customers (Woods, 2022). In fact, the ability to do data analysis and communication (visual and otherwise) of the same analysed data in a way that presents it in an engaging and shareable way meant that the "wrapped moment" became particularly anticipated by most premium subscribers (Weiss, 2018). The strength lies in the ability to leverage the highly personalised narrative that is generated through each individual user's memories. It is a narrative that touches, therefore, the listener closely, not least because the music triggers a highly emotional process: the possibility of retrieving memories of a given time of the year, that is, of when a certain song was significant for some reason (Anderson et al., 2020). Furthermore, by using an informal and direct register with the audience, the personalization of the initiative becomes even stronger, and a more direct connection is generated especially with Millennials and Gen Z.

The real strength of the initiative, however, lies not only in the visual communication and data opportunities, but also in giving its consumers a reason to become, in a sense, brand influencers. The listener participation aspect is why Spotify Wrapped has become a particularly viral initiative. Indeed, the brand succeeds in stimulating and facilitating the need for comparison hidden in every consumer, taking a data analysis initiative to another level of realisation, making it a kind of influencer marketing initiative, where the influencers are the consumers themselves (Weiss, 2018). The main trigger provided by the brand, in addition to showing data summarising the most listened to artists and favourite genres, is the presence of the quantitative data of minutes spent listening to Spotify (Galant, 2020). This expedient makes it possible to enact a comparison between subscribers stimulating them also to share the result on social channels, becoming, as mentioned, a kind of brand influencer. The moment one comes into possession of information that can enable the consumer to be viewed positively by other people, the tendency to share that information would increase, as explained by Jonah Berger in his book "Contagious" (2013).

It follows that the virality of Spotify Wrapped comes from the sharing instinct generated by the brand through the strategies presented above. In this way, there is no need to make use of numerous parallel marketing campaigns aimed at communicating the initiative; the initiative is "self-communicating" because of the inherent power it possesses and its consumers (Spotify, 2023).

2.2.3. Apple Music and Apple Music Replay

Launched in 2015 (Apple Newsroom, 2015)[3], Apple Music proves to be among Spotify's main competitors and confirms its strength especially in the United States where it leads in terms of number of subscribers (Statista, 2023). Apple is not new to the music market: for more than a decade its iPods and iTunes have been the main way of accessing music for many people. Although Apple maintained the lead on music players for years, one must admit its failure to recognize the future of the market in online streaming services, leaving easy entry and subsequent growth almost without competition to Spotify. The latter, in fact, had already reached 22 million subscribers when Apple decided to enter the market with Apple music. Due to Apple Music's policy of not releasing official numbers, statistics on the platform are scarce.

Apple Music's business model is also identifiable as online streaming on demand. However, there are differences, the first of which is the business model: while Spotify uses a freemium model, a paid account must necessarily be created to access Apple Music. Users can choose among three different subscription plans: individual, family, and students. Apple Music includes access to 70 million songs, the user's iTunes library, and the ability to listen on multiple devices. More than 60 million people are subscribed to the service, and Apple recently released the Apple One subscription package, which bundles Apple Music with other services, such as Apple TV and iCloud Storage.

In November 2019, the first release of Apple Music Replay took place. The feature compiles a playlist of the songs and artists the user has listened to the most. In essence, albeit with differences, Apple Music Replay is the competing function to Spotify's Wrapped. The service presents each user with the most played songs from the past 365 days. Starting from 2022, the traditional direct playlist has been joined by an animated guide to each user's musical highlights such as the total amount of time spent listening to music and the number of different songs and artists played. The Replay is available on iPhone and iPad but is even more detailed in the desktop browser version via the Internet, which is where the new animation is located. The animation is extremely similar to the graphics of how memories are displayed on the iPhone. Finally, there is the complete Apple Music Replay 2022 playlist of about 100 songs, arranged by number of listens.

The most significant difference with Spotify Wrapped is that while the Wrapped is released only once at the end of the year, Apple Music Replay can be accessed by the user at any time. Indeed, the Replay updates every Sunday with the latest list of the user's favourite music on Apple Music. When December arrives, a total list of the 100 favourite songs on Apple Music will be saved in the playlist. Furthermore, contrarily to Replay, Spotify Wrapped provides users with custom playlists, quizzes, and other interactive features

---

[3]Source:
https://www.apple.com/newsroom/2015/06/08Introducing-Apple-Music-All-The-Ways-You-Love-Music-All-in-One-Place-/

2.3. Defining brand-related UGC

2.3.1. User-Generated Content

As anticipated in the previous chapter, the insurgence of online environments and social media are transforming consumers from passive recipients of information to active creators of content (Edelman and Singer, 2015; Acar and Puntoni, 2016). Indeed, Ochoa and Duval (2008) regard the production of user-generated content as one of the most prominent activities among social media users. This "empowerment" of the consumer can represent a gold mine for brands, which can exploit it to develop new business models and opportunities (Cha, Kwak, Rodriguez, Ahn and Moon, 2007).

The term user-generated content (UGC) refers to various types of media content primarily produced and distributed on the Internet and created by common people rather than paid marketing professionals (Daugherty, Eastin and Bright, 2008). What characterises UGC is therefore that consumers are the ones actually producing, designing, publishing, or editing the content in the media, rather than the ones receiving it (Krishnamurthy and Dou 2008). The phenomenon is not new, as people have been creating their own content for ages. What is new is the much more extended ability to share said contents not only with a group of close friends, but also with a mass audience; this has been made possible only after the advent of Web 2.0, and furtherly enhanced by the fast growth of social networking sites (Christodoulides et al., 2012).

User-generated content, user-created content (UCC), and consumer-generated media (CGM) are terms frequently used interchangeably (Arnhold, 2010). According to Stöckl et al. (2007), user-generated content is a special type of content that is independently produced by a user with the aid of the Internet for an unspecified public without a direct financial benefit. UGC is furtherly defined by Daugherty et al. (2010) as media content produced by members of the public as opposed to compensated experts and predominantly disseminated online.

However, this research will rely on the definition of UGC provided by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2007), which argues that to be defined as such, user-generated content must meet three basic requirements. These requirements will be listed below, along with a discussion of the views of other researchers considered noteworthy. First is the so-called "publication requirement"; that is, the content in question must be available through a publicly accessible medium of transmission, such as the Internet (OECD, 2007; Arnhold, 2010). Included in this definition are also social networking sites (SNS) that are accessible only to a small group of people, as long as they belong to the general public (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). Not included, however, are all forms of two-way communication, such as instant messages and emails. Furthermore Stöckl et al. (2007) state that UGC is mass media orientated content that is produced for an uncertain number of recipients. This does not mean, however, that any self-created content will reach a mass audience. On the contrary, it may be said that a large part of user-generated content reaches

only a few recipients (Stöckl et al., 2007). The second is called the "creative efforts requirement"; as can be guessed, it is required that the creator of user-generated content adds value to the content, reflecting some form of creative effort such as adapting and mixing pre-existing work or creating new content (OECD, 2007; Arnhold, 2010). Thus, it is not enough to replicate pre-existing content in order to speak of UGC: for example, reposting a newspaper article without adding any commentary or editing does not meet the second requirement (Kaplan and Haenlein 2010). Although the amount of creativity needed is debatable, examples can be found in sharing of comments and other forms of opinion expression (such as advice, reviews, peer-to-peer discussions, and personal experience), the creation of entirely original content (such as home videos, recordings, and original poems), remixes of previously published works (such as recut trailers and remixed songs), and hybrid forms that combine original and self-made content (such as lip-syncing or memes) (Arnhold, 2010). Arnhold (2010), points out that the above does not exclude that creative effort can be collaboratively produced, modified, shared, and consumed to create the ultimate content; Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) further add that it "can be seen as the sum of all ways in which people make use of social media". Third, now consumers have become the producers of the content (Arnhold, 2010; Daugherty et al., 2010). UGC is separated from content produced by the traditional media producers ("creation outside professional routines requirement") (OECD, 2007; Arnhold, 2010). UGC is understood as a non-professional grassroots movement outside institutional, commercial and professional routines and practices. This is the primary feature of user-generated content, as it involves customers taking on an active role in creating content, rather than being passive recipients (Bowman and Willis, 2003; Stöckl et al., 2007). It should be highlighted as well that UGC is currently seen as being produced for free with no prospect of payment or immediate profit (Christodoulides et al., 2012).

This three-part definition provided by OECD is not universally accepted in the academic world. Ochoa and Duval (2008), for example, argue that some UGC is merely accessible for a closed group (as in the case of private social media accounts) or is just rather a repackaging of content without any actual contribution or is created by professionals such as brand-sponsored blogs. However, they agree that the OECD's definition reflects the main characteristics shared by the numerous and very various content types published by the online users.

UGC proves to be a gold mine for brands: it is more authentic and experience-driven than brand-pushed content because it does not involve fabrication, embellishment, or Photoshop. Instead, UGC serves as a modern form of word-of-mouth advertising, which has always been crucial in driving consumer purchasing decisions. As a first point, UGC provides social proof that influences the buyer's journey by validating prospective buyers' needs and providing existing customers' stamp of approval on a product or service. This social proof is more trustworthy than brand advertising because people trust their peers more than they trust marketers. Consumers turn to UGC as they would to their friends, family, or professional networks, which

helps build consumer confidence. As a result, UGC can serve as a successful means for a brand to sway its target audience and transform them into purchasers. When people see their peers wearing or using a product in UGC, it feels more relatable and helps influence them to purchase. According to a Stackla (2021) survey, content from a friend or family member influences the purchase decisions of an average of 60% of consumers. Secondly, a brand fostering UGC signals a willingness to engage in two-way conversations that foster deeper relationships with consumers. As a third point, by creating a sense of community around shared interests, UGC fosters a sense of belonging and generates buzz around a product or service, ultimately increasing web traffic, user engagement, brand exposure, and conversion. Traditional advertising cannot compete with UGC, and there are countless ways for brands to encourage consumers to generate their own content.

2.3.2. Brand-related UGC

The exponential rise of UGC has deeply altered the way consumers experience brands (Muñiz and Schau, 2007). Today a significant amount of user-generated content involves brand-related material (Burmann and Arnhold, 2008).

This research will focus exclusively on brand-related UGC, which is also often referred to as consumer generated media (CGM) or consumer-generated content (CGC) (Christodoulides et al., 2012). In order to come up with a definition of brand-related UGC, the research applies a brand-related perspective to the previously mentioned OECD definition. The three general UGC principles, i.e. publication requirement, creative effort, and creation outside of professional routines are adopted as foundation of brand-related UGC. In addition to these principles, brand-related UGC refers to all those user-generated contents that relate to a specific brand (Christodoulides et al., 2012). Arnhold (2010) suggests that brand-related UGC is a consumer's personal interpretation of a brand that is visualised in a certain way.

Brand-related UGC covers opinions, experiences, advices, feedbacks, reviews, commentary and all kinds of social interactions regarding products, services, companies and, broadly speaking, brands. These are usually based on consumer's personal experience that is then published on public or semi-public platforms (Krishnamurthy and Dou, 2008). However, Arnhold (2010) contends that the term should not be limited to just brand consumers because brand-related user-generated content might be created without regard to consumption or customer experience.

Brand-related UGC requires a certain degree of creativity by either conforming and modifying existing content or producing new content (Krishnamurthy and Dou, 2008; Arnhold, 2010). Therefore, the description excludes simply copying and participating original brand content (Arnhold, 2010). Applying the UGC principle of creation outside professional routines implies that the creators of the brand-related UGC are the consumers and not the professional marketers or assigned agencies of the brand (Arnhold, 2010).

Still, this does not exclude the professional or quasi-professional creators who engage outside their own primary employment and create brand-related UGC without financial prospects.Content dedicated to Spotify Wrapped can be classified as UGC since, generally, users add comments before sharing, select some specific juncture to share, or create memes on the topic.

2.3.3. UGC in online environments

The world of UGC is heterogeneous and includes numerous environments, contents and users. For the purposes of this research, however, only online environments will be considered.

Since the advent of the Internet, it has become extremely easy to create and share content online, as communication mechanisms are an inherent feature of the structure of information space (Daugherty, 2008). However, Daugherty (2008) states how more adjustable content became possible only after the appearance of Web 2.0 applications that collect information and user-generated content according to the specifications of their users. These technological tools and applications have made the consumption, creation and distribution of UGC far more accessible. With the passage of time, especially in the last decade, the Internet has become an extremely rich information space, offering consumers a wide range of possibilities to be able to create and dispose of UGC quickly and easily.

Examples of the prominent Web 2.0-based Internet sites that support both the creation and consumption of user-generated content include question-answer databases, forums, review-sites, video sharing sites (e.g. YouTube and TikTok), social networking sites (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram), blogging (e.g. blogger), wikis (e.g. Wikipedia), photo-sharing (e.g. Pinterest), podcasts and personal web pages, among many others (Arnhold, 2010; Daugherty, 2008). Existing social networks have been classified into two distinct categories by Guo, Tan, Chen, Zhang, and Zhao (2009) depending on their different objectives: networking-oriented social networks and knowledge-sharing-oriented social networks. Social contact and relationships are at the heart of networking-focused social networks like Facebook and Instagram, which emphasise networking features. The majority of content sharing on these social sites occurs in semi-private settings between friends (Guo et al., 2009).

Yet, the public distribution of UGC is not restricted to the Internet. All new media technologies, such as mobile and other electronic devices, may also be platforms for disseminating and consuming user-generated content (UGC) related to brands (Arnhold, 2010).
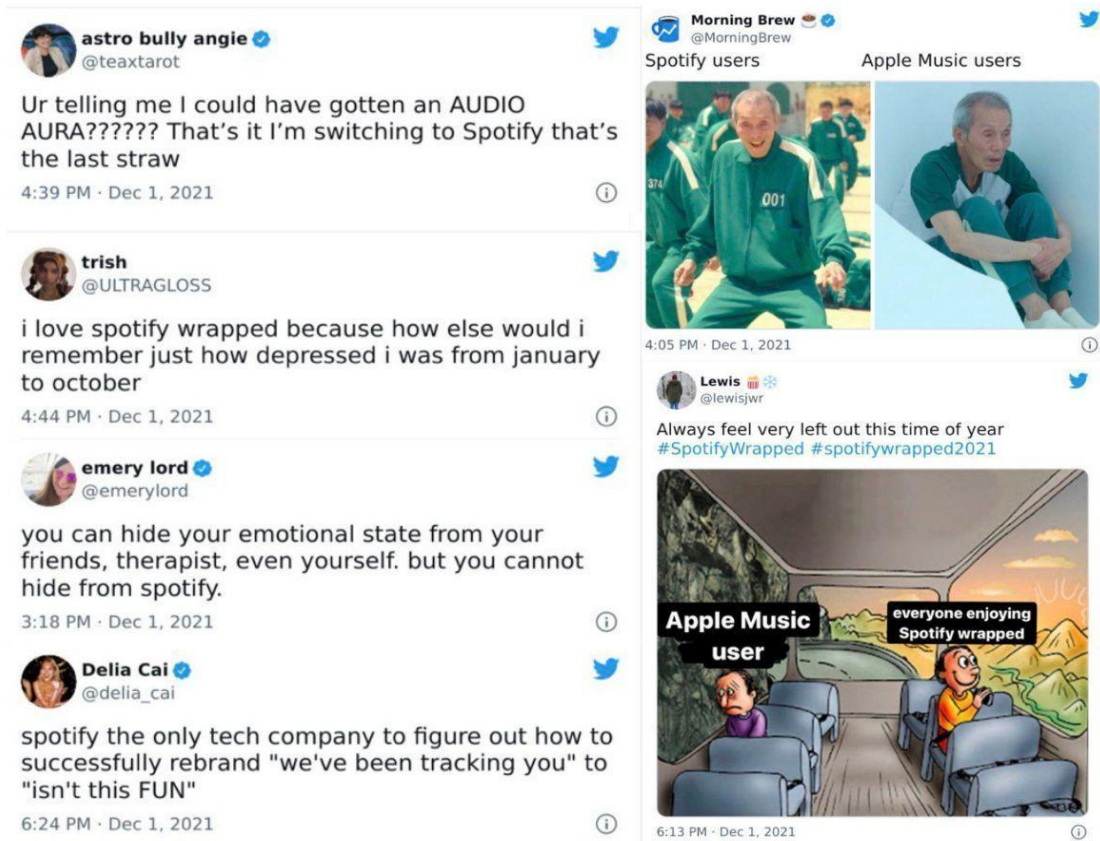
Figure 2. Examples of Spotify Wrapped-related UGC[4]

2.3.4. Drivers of user-generated content

With regard to the motivations driving the creation of user-generated content, previous studies have identified several reasons. Stöckl et al. (2007) developed a model identifying six motivations for creating and consuming UGC: external economic incentives (monetary and signalling incentives), personal documentation (self-presentation and recording of experiences), enjoyment (fun and entertainment), passing time (e.g., diversion), information dissemination (presenting and sharing information) and contact (communication with others). The research argued that the most relevant motivations were enjoyment, information dissemination, desire for contact, and personal documentation. These primary factors can be considered to be intrinsic motivations, which suggests that the activity of creating UGC itself is part of the desired satisfaction. Whereas the more extrinsic motivations, such as monetary and economic purpose, had an inferior role. However, the study (Stöckl et al., 2007) suggested that the desire to enhance reputation and recognition from others seemed to be relevant.

Katz's (1960) classification suggests that attitudes serve different functions, such as utilitarian, knowledge, ego-defensive, and value-expressive functions. Daugherty et al. (2010) added a "social function" to this classification, suggesting that it motivates users to create user-generated content. Their study found that

---

creators of UGC rely on the ego-defensive and social functions when forming attitudes towards UGC. UGC works as an ego-defensive function by helping consumers minimise their self-doubts and defend their self-image from internal insecurities and external threats. The social function refers to the motivation for social adjustment, where consumers want to be part of activities that are perceived favourably by important others and have the opportunity to associate with friends. The study indicated a negative correlation with the value-expressive function and no significant relationships with the utilitarian and knowledge functions contributing to attitudes toward the creation of UGC.

Berthon, Pitt, and Campbell's (2008) study examined user-generated advertising (UGA), which involves creating brand-related content that endorses and promotes a specific brand. The research identified three primary motivational factors for consumers who engage in UGA. First, intrinsic enjoyment motivates consumers who have a strong passion or interest in a brand to explore its products and create content that they find interesting, insightful, or creative. Second, self-promotion motivates consumers who want to associate themselves with high-profile brands by creating content that focuses on themselves rather than the brand or message. Third, changing perceptions of others motivates consumers to either promote a brand that needs support (e.g., a humanitarian association) or criticise a brand that is seen as disingenuous (e.g., an oil company). In this case, the focus is on the message rather than on self-promotion.

The literature suggests that there are common reasons for creating user-generated content related to brands, but it is important to note that there is no "average" UGC user (Ochoa and Duval, 2008). Motivations for creating UGC also vary depending on the online environment and the type of content. For example, Stöckl et al. (2008) illustrated how video producers and bloggers have different reasons for creating content, with video production being more associated with fun and blogging being more focused on spreading information.

However, what is clear is that extrinsic (monetary) motivations play an inferior role and especially the majority of active users were not (yet) attracted by monetary incentives. Instead, intrinsic motivations, where the activity itself is satisfying, are the main drivers. There are also barriers to producing UGC, such as the perception that it is time-consuming, not having anything interesting to say or show, concerns about privacy, and a general disinterest in the matter (Stöckl et al. 2008).

To summarise this section, it can therefore be concluded that user-generated content related to well-known brands has become an extremely widespread phenomenon on social media. Consumers use UGC as a form of personal expression, to share their experiences and tastes, to entertain, to inform and to socialise with other users. Motivations related to personal expression and impression management will be investigated in the next section.

2.4. Impression Management and the digital context

2.4.1. Defining Impression Management and Self-Presentation

Impression management is defined as "the process whereby people seek to influence the image others have of them" (Rosenfeld, Giacalone, and Riordan, 1995). The concept of impression management derives from Erving Goffman's theory of behaviour called "dramaturgy": Goffman theorised that individuals are like actors performing their everyday actions on a stage and that, when placed in front of others, they adjust their behaviour so that they can convey the best impression of themselves to their audience (Goffman, 1959).

The application of the concept of impression management to social media platforms has gained a growing interest in the academic world. Impression management has previously been applied to YouTube (Chen, 2016), Facebook (Sun and Wu, 2012), blogging (Trammell and Keshelashvili, 2005), and online dating (Ellison et al., 2011). Studies have suggested that impressions can be more strategically managed online rather than in face-to-face situations (Ellison, Heino and Gibbs, 2006; Fullwood, 2019; Ward, 2017), having more time to decide what to publish, to which audience to expose the content, and whether to edit the content through the use of filters. A study by Holmberg, Berg, Hillman, Lissner and Chaplin (2018), for example, discovered that overweight people employed impression management strategies by avoiding posting on social media content unveiling their bodies or weight. Although self-presentation is considered by some to be a part of impression management (Owens, 2006), many scholars have used the two terms as synonyms (e.g., Schlenker 2003). For the purposes of this research, I will adhere to the latter current of thought, as, after a lengthy review of the literature, the two terms appeared to indicate the same intrinsic characteristics under examination in this thesis.

As a matter of fact, Belk (1988; 2013) postulates that the terms "identity", "self" and "sense of self" can be interpreted as synonyms that identify how an individual subjectively perceives and defines himself. The concept of "self" is more precisely defined by Stets and Burke (2000) as the "set of meanings we hold for ourselves when we look at ourselves. It is based on our observations of ourselves, our inferences about who we are, based on how others act toward us, our wishes and desires, and our evaluations of us".

These meanings and observations that an individual attributes to himself in the process of defining himself as an individual, while also attempting to connect to other people and social groups in affiliative relationships, are inherently based on social roles, personal characteristics and other aspects and attributes. (Kleine, Kleine III, and Allen, 1995; Ibarra and Barbulescu 2010).

Self-presentation can thus be understood as the effort made by a person to communicate a certain image and identity of himself to others (Zywica and Danowski, 2008). Goffman's (1959) theory of self-presentation states that interactions between individuals can be interpreted as impression management: people are

inclined to present what they believe to be the positive aspects of themselves in order to make the best possible impression on others; the ultimate goal is that of increasing the positivity and decreasing the negativity of an individual's self-view (Sedikides and Strube, 1997). Goffman also points out that the self is shaped and staged according to the contexts in which one finds oneself; in other words, individuals consciously modify the impressions they communicate in order to try to have some sort of control over the impressions that are received by others. An individual's sense of self thus emerges as a product of social interactions, and is an artefact based on each person's internal definitions of himself, generated via a dialectical interplay with how we perceive that others define us (Blumer, 1998; Mead and Morris, 1967). Goffman's definitions, though dated, prove to be all the more relevant since public communication has moved to online spaces.

2.4.2. Presentation of Self

As previously discussed, the act of consuming is a self-defining and self-expressive behaviour (Schau and Gilly, 2003). Consumers are prone to desire products, services and brands that can in some way communicate their identity or a certain image to others. By associating their image with objects (material or otherwise), consumers make their identities tangible and self-present (Schau and Gilly, 2003). These products and brands with which consumers associate themselves communicate to others who they are and what they stand for. This "effort to express a specific image and identity to others" (Zywica and Danowski, 2008) is called the performance of self-presentation (Goffman, 1959).

Goffman's (1959) research on self-presentation explains how a person can enact strategic activities to ''convey an impression to others which it is in his interests to convey''. Social roles are the main means by which people communicate information: people use specific scenes, roles, and scripts to express themselves, and they announce their roles through social information (Goffman, 1959). For example, when an individual comes into contact with others, they usually try to carp about his socio-economic status, his conception of self, his attitudes toward them, his trustworthiness, and so forth. Concordantly, the individual himself may want others to perceive him positively. Regardless of the goal, it is in a person's natural interest to control the conduct of others, especially the responsive treatment of him. A person can influence and have an impact on this by expressing himself in a way that communicates to others the kind of impression that will voluntarily prompt them to behave as he wishes. Therefore, the individual will try to self-present an impression to others that is beneficial to his interests. However, a single person simultaneously performs different roles depending on the scene he or she is in; moreover, in addition to being the actor in his or her own performance, the individual also plays the role of spectator to other people's performances, thus making social contexts extremely complex (Goffman, 1959; Ellison et al., 2006). Goffman (1959) argues that self-presentation is the intentional and tangible component of identity.

The impression of self is maintained or managed through a performance of consistent and complementary behaviours (Schau and Gilly, 2003). These impression management behaviours consist of communication in the traditional sense, e.g., spoken communication (expression given) and unintended communication, e.g., nonverbal communication cues (expression given off) (Goffman, 1959; Ellison et al. 2006).

Impression management relies on physical expressions and demonstrations to communicate the desired identity. However, the social actions required for self-presentation are consumption oriented and are made visible by people showing symbols, signs, brands, and practices to communicate the desired impression (Schau and Gilly, 2003).

Goffman (1959) suggests that people's understanding of society is supported by the social interactions, how people exchange information with each other, as well as how these exchanges collectively contribute to their social world. Goffman describes social interactions as a kind of theatrical performance. His dramaturgical framework contends that people perform numerous roles in their everyday lives just like actors in a theatre (Goffman, 1959). As in a theatre, front stages are spaces where social performances take place and the roles are executed. These performances are maintained and managed backstage. Whereas front stages are the public spaces where we express ourselves to the world, back stages are concealed spaces where people can temporarily suspend these performances. For example, teachers play a role in the classroom to the students, but in the break room they may drop their performance, complain about the work, and come up with new ways to keep the classroom in order (Goffman, 1959).

This manipulation of the sign, symbols and brands as well as embodied representations and experiences form the art of self-presentation (Schau and Gilly, 2003). According to Goffman (1959), self-presentation is situation-dependent, determined by a specific context and a predictable audience. Even in social interactions with unfamiliar people, individuals tend to engage in self-promotion, as suggested by Schlenker and Pontari (2000) and Ellison et al. (2006). However, Ellison et al. (2006) suggest that even if consumers feel the pressure to highlight one's positive attributes; they also feel the need or desire to present the true and authentic self to others. This tension between authenticity and impression management is inborn in many sides of self-disclosure (Ellison et al. 2006). Self-disclosure is the propensity a person has for revealing personal information to others and therefore relates heavily to self-presentation (Collins and Miller, 1994). Strategies of self-presentation often deal with suppressing personal information or replacing it with modified details more coincident with the desired self (Berg and Derlega, 1987; Schau and Gilly, 2003). When deciding what and when to self-disclose, people often have a hard time to combine opposing desires and needs such as autonomy and openness (Greene, Byrne, and Everett, 2006; Ellison et al. 2006).

It is commonly accepted that there are numerous aspects of the self, which are expressed or made salient in various contexts (Ellison et al. 2006). Higgins (1987) suggests that there are three domains of the self: the

actual self (attributes an individual have), the ideal self (attributes an individual would ideally have), and the ought self (attributes an individual ought to have). Digital environments have given people an abundance of extra freedom to express their identities through digital association rather than simply through possession or proximity (Ellison et al. 2006; Schau and Gilly, 2003). Moreover, consumers' ideal self may be revealed more clearly in online environments than in real life.

2.4.3. The extended self: linking consumption and impression management

This communicative effort is often associated with the consumption of products and brands (Belk, 1988, 2013; Schau and Gilly, 2003, Smith et al., 2012): in their everyday lives, consumers use material, symbolic and experiential resources to describe personal and collective identities (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). One of the first scholars to attempt to link consumption and personal identity was Belk (1988) who stated that "knowingly or unknowingly, intentionally or unintentionally, we regard our possessions as parts of ourselves". Belk's "extended self" theory holds that a person's possessions that make up the extended self often serve as input for others to form impressions. Consumption is used to extend, strengthen and maintain an individual's sense of identity across time and define oneself in relation to others. Properties represent a significant contributor and a mirror into one's individual identity. Tuan (1980) argues that our self-concept is vulnerable and requires reinforcement, which is often derived from owning and possessing objects. Essentially, what we own and possess forms a significant part of our identity. The suggestion "that we are what we have" or "that we are the sum of our possession" are perhaps the most basic and insightful idea of consumer behaviour (Belk, 1988).

The fast development of digital technology has led to the dematerialization of knowledge, possessions, and much of daily interaction and communication. At this day, the majority of the things we own—including texts, books, letters, images, films, music, and messages—have been turned into invisible, immaterial bits of data that can only be accessed through digital gadgets (Belk, 2013; Siddiqui and Turley, 2006). According to Dibble's (2000) research on music and CDs, although consumers might feel that some aspects of their possessions have become less tangible, digitalization has made it simpler to purchase music online and, in particular, has sped up the process of sharing playlists and music with people who are far away. According to Belk (2013), purchasing and appreciating music has changed from a more solitary activity to more of a social activity.

Consumers utilise digital possessions, products, and brands in online environments to present to others who they are, as well as who they are not (Schau and Gilly, 2013), just like in the actual world where possessions, products, and brands transmit meaning and are employed as social stimuli to define self (Solomon, 1983).

In contrast to material real world, in digital settings most of the actual useful value is removed from possessions, leaving merely a semiotic worth. According to Schau and Gilly (2003), in digital contexts

individuals identify with the symbolic meanings and popular interpretations drawn from these symbols. Interestingly, the aforementioned researchers also found that self-presentation techniques frequently resembled the true, physical world of the individual.

The tangible and intangible properties of a person therefore act as reflectors of the individual identity, signalling for example tastes, accomplishments, skills, or creativity (Schultz, Kleine III, and Kernan, 1989 in Schau and Gilly, 2003). Concurrently, possessions are a significant component of affiliative identification for they are used to convey one's identity to the intended individuals, including family, peer groups, and the community, as well as to establish and mirror oneself within the social world (Schau and Gilly, 2003).

Self-promotion and branding have also become ordinary and accepted practices in the life of average people. Many users (particularly young adults and teenagers) craft their online personas in imitation of celebrities' practices of self-promotion in an effort to become more popular and, ideally, achieve a comfortable degree of recognition and connectedness (Van Dijck, 2013).

2.4.4. Digital Self-Presentation

Social networking sites (SNSs) have become important venues for building and presenting the self (Ellison, 2007; Hall et al., 2014; McAndrew and Jeong, 2012; Yu et al., 2015) by giving users a new area to express deeper concepts and give themselves more depth through digital associations. The emergence of what Manuel Castells (2009, as in Van Dijck, 2013) referred to as "mass self-communication" refers to a global system of networked interactions - system in which social platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok offer key tools for perfecting and gilding strategic self-promotion (Kim and Lee, 2011; Lee-Won et al., 2014), while quickly enhancing personal identities (Zhao et al., 2008). In other words, social media pose as popular means of conveying self-expression, self-promotion and ultimately some degree of impression management. Social media allow users to be able to control how they present themselves to their audience through a wide variety of means, such as the possibility of creating multiple accounts on the same platform to better control who sees what aspects of themselves and their lives; an example of this is the phenomenon of "finsta" (i.e. fake Instagram) accounts popular among teenagers, which basically consists in owning two Instagram profiles: an open, public-facing one that presents one view of them, and another, private account often hidden behind a privacy wall and fake name, allowing the audience that sees it to be highly curated by the user (Bryan 2018).

Recent research on consumer activities on social media and user-generated content has focused on the motivations for which an individual should (or should not) be interested in using social networking sites, also commonly referred to as social media (e.g. Park, Kee and Valenzuela 2009, Raacke and Bonds-Raacke, 2008, Shao, 2009). Generally speaking, it has been amply proved how people tend to demonstrate a sugarcoated version of their self-image on social media (Manago et al. 2008). Stafford, Stafford and Schkade

(2004) identified three reasons, which they called "gratifications", for using the Internet as a medium. These gratifications are information, entertainment, and social aspects. Their findings were supported and extended by subsequent research, which identified information, entertainment, social interaction and community development, self-actualisation and self-expression as reasons (Shao, 2009; Courtois et al., 2009). Krishnamurthy and Dou (2008) summarised them into two basic categories of motivations: intellectual ones, such advocacy and knowledge sharing, and emotional ones, like social connection and self-expression. Similarly, in more recent times, Nadkarni and Hofmann (2012) proposed that the two basic needs driving people to use social networking sites are the need to belong and the need for self-presentation.

For the purposes of this research, I have identified the most fitting conclusions in the work of Shao (2009), who states that people perform a variety of activities online, which can be traced back to three basic gratifications. The first is for information and entertainment purposes ("information and entertainment consumption"); the second is for feeling part of a given community and engaging in interactions ("participation in social interaction and community development"); and the third concerns the need to express oneself and feel fulfilled ("production of self-expression and self-actualisation"). The wording choice is not casual: by "consumption", Shao means the act of reading the content that other users have shared, "participation" is the act of interacting (via comments, likes, re-posts, tags, and shares) on the work of others, and "production" is the act of posting one's own content. Shao (2009) additionally pointed out that the three activities are often combined, as people frequently engage in all three or a combination of two, and it is not always feasible to distinguish clearly between them.

According to Belk (2013), digital, sharing, and access modes of consumption can offer useful tools for constructing identities, and possibly additional opportunities for identity to be controlled and shared with more individuals. Moreover, social media gives consumers the opportunity to actively endorse brands or share advertisements, which can eventually become a part of their online identities (Taylor, Strutton, and Thompson 2012; Marder et al. 2018).

Arguably, end-of-year recaps, by offering a window into an individual's music preferences, can act as a badge to present an individual's self-identity in digital environments.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

This chapter is aimed at detailing the hypotheses under consideration and their rationale, the research design and sample selection criteria and, lastly, the data collection process and the related analysis plan.

To investigate the effects of the variable "impression management" in the relationship between end-of-year recaps and the production of user-generated content, the impact of impression management will be examined in the context of social media. Given the highly competitive nature of the music streaming market, coupled with the increasing use of social media as a vehicle for personal affirmation, especially by young adults, this study aims to contribute to the existing literature and provide insights into the effects that a marketing phenomenon such as Spotify Wrapped and Apple Music Replay can have on the production of user-generated content. This chapter outlines the research methodology used to test the proposed hypotheses, including the experimental design and procedure, the variables of interest, as well as details regarding the stimuli and sample used during the research.

3.1. Hypotheses definition and research model

The main objective of this experimental study consists in investigating how different types of end-of-year recaps in the context of music streaming services (Spotify Wrapped vs Apple Music Replay) affect the willingness to create brand-related UGC on social media. The conceptual framework was completed with the indirect effect represented by the mediation factor generated by impression management behaviours.

Following this assumption, the research model was built using a mediator factor, namely impression management. The following hypotheses were developed based on previous research on the topics of user-generated content, impression management, and social media behaviour.

Owning a Spotify Wrapped will increase the likelihood of users sharing brand-related content on social media to a greater extent than owning Apple Music Replay, as content related to well-known brands is proven to increase engagement and sharing behaviour (Katz, 1960; Berthon, Pitt, and Campbell, 2008). Furthermore, music, which is the central topic of the campaign, has been shown to be extremely connected to personal identity (Tarrant, North, and Hargreaves, 2001; Anderson et al., 2020), which in turn represents a strong predictor of online behaviour (Stafford and Schkade, 2004; Shao, 2009; Courtois et al., 2009). As a result, the following is hypothesised:

H1: Users who receive Spotify Wrapped are more likely to share brand-related UGC on social media than those who receive Apple Music Replay.

As Berger (2013) suggests in his book "Contagious", when an individual comes into possession of information or assets that can enable him or her to be viewed positively by other people, the tendency to

share that information will increase. Arguably, the possession of data that narrates favourite songs, artists, and genres, allowing the user to relive moments and memories of the past year, such as Spotify Wrapped, could fit Berger's definition. By sharing this type of information on social media, users can enhance their self-presentation and manage the impression they make on others (Goffman, 1959). Therefore, it is expected that the possession of Spotify Wrapped will increase users' desire to engage in impression management behaviours to a greater extent than the possession of Apple Music Replay.

H2: Spotify Wrapped ownership has a positive and significant effect on impression management behaviours, which is greater than the one of Apple Music Replay ownership.

Social media pose as popular means of conveying self-expression, self-promotion and ultimately some degree of impression management. Impression management behaviours are often associated with the consumption of products and brands (Belk, 1988, 2013; Schau and Gilly, 2003, Smith et al., 2012, Zywica and Danowski 2008). In fact, literature shows that consumers utilise digital possessions, products, and brands in online environments to present to others who they are, as well as who they are not (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Schau and Gilly, 2013). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok offer a variety of means for perfecting and gilding strategic self-promotion (Kim and Lee, 2011; Lee-Won et al., 2014), while quickly enhancing personal identities (Zhao et al., 2008).

Therefore, it is expected that users who engage in impression management behaviours will be more likely to create brand-related UGC.

H3: Impression management has a positive and significant effect on brand-related UGC creation

The possession of Spotify Wrapped is expected to increase users' desire to engage in impression management behaviours to a greater extent than owning Apple Music Replay, which in turn can lead to an increase in brand-related UGC production. However, the extent of this relationship may vary depending on users' levels of impression management. By taking into account the mediating role of impression management, it is plausible to presume that the relationship between end-of-year summaries possession and brand-related UGC production will be stronger among users with higher levels of impression management. Therefore, it is important to examine the moderating effect of impression management on this relationship to fully understand the mechanisms that drive brand-related UGC production.

H1': Users who receive Spotify Wrapped are more likely to share brand-related UGC on social media than those who receive Apple Music Replay. The correlation is greater when impression management levels are taken into account in the model.

For the development of the conceptual framework the traditional mediating model was adopted, which is characterised by the presence of one independent variable (IV), one dependent variable (DV) and one mediator (Med).

A.

B.
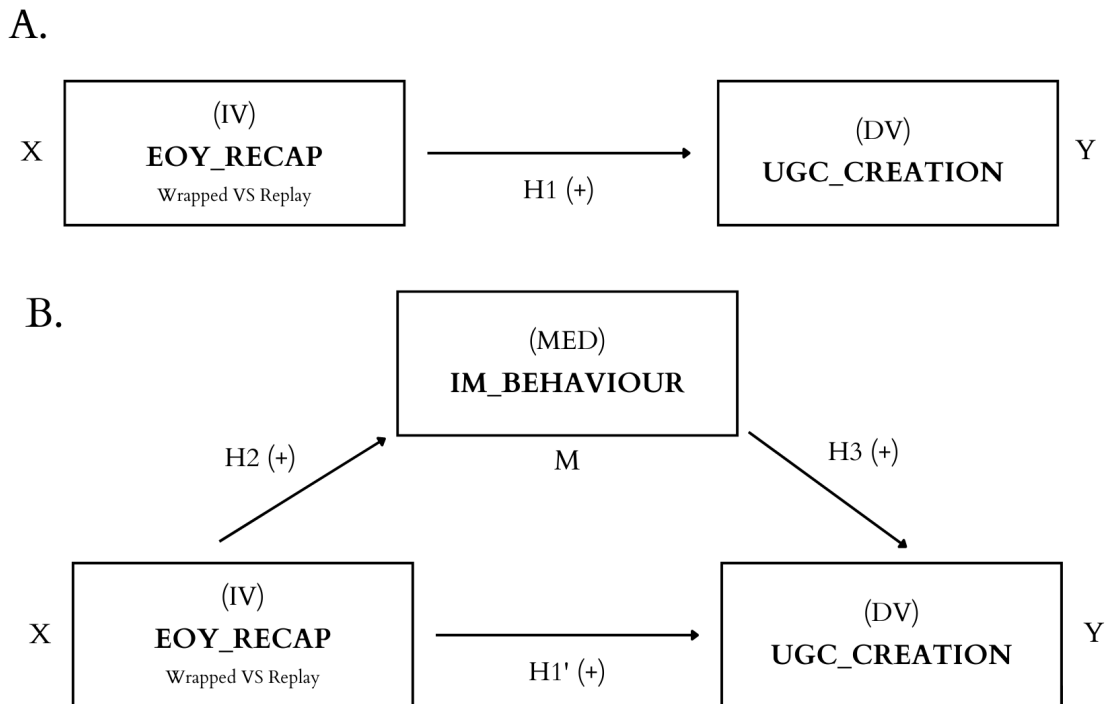
Figure 3. Research Model

3.2. Research design

Data were collected using a mixed methods approach (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998) based on quantitative, structured questions in a self-administered questionnaire. Respondents were asked to reflect on their propensity to share their Spotify Wrapped results or experiences on social media.

A questionnaire containing 11 items (9 specific and 2 demographic questions) was used to measure the customer's propensity to share brand-related UGC on social media and their sensitivity to impression management cues. The item scales were constructed with reference to pre-existing scales, which were adapted to the current research according to the protocol illustrated by Beaton, Bombardier, Guillemin, and Ferraz (2000)[5].

In order to manipulate the independent variable (EYR_RECAP: Wrapped vs Replay), it was necessary to develop an online questionnaire with two different visual stimuli, each made up of one of the two products. The first scenario consists of three cell phone screens containing mock-ups of the original Apple Music

---

[5] Beaton, D. E., Bombardier, C., Guillemin, F., and Ferraz, M. B. (2000). Guidelines for the process of cross-cultural adaptation of self-report measures. Spine, 25(24), 3186–3191.

Replay user interfaces. The second scenario consists of three cell phone screens containing mock-ups of the original Spotify Wrapped user interfaces. Both images were retrieved from Apple Music and Spotify official web pages, respectively. Every participant was randomly assigned to one of the two scenarios. Furthermore, the dependent variable and the two mediators were operationalised in the main survey. Specifically, individuals exposed to the Apple Music Replay condition represent the control group, while the manipulation group is represented by individuals exposed to the Spotify Wrapped.

The survey is subdivided into four sections.

In the initial section of the questionnaire, I have provided a clear understanding of the academic scope of the survey. The purpose and objective of the survey were explained to the respondents to help them comprehend the significance of their responses. Additionally, I have explicitly stated that the answers provided by the participants would be completely anonymous and confidential, thereby encouraging them to provide honest and truthful answers. Furthermore, I have also made it clear that there are no right or wrong answers, and that every response would be valuable in helping to achieve the research objectives.

The second part of the questionnaire is represented by a randomised block with two distinct scenarios. The randomization process is essential within the survey structure to obtain an even number of exposures to both the first and second stimulus. These scenarios, represented by images related to real brands, consisted of the two different visual stimuli illustrated below.
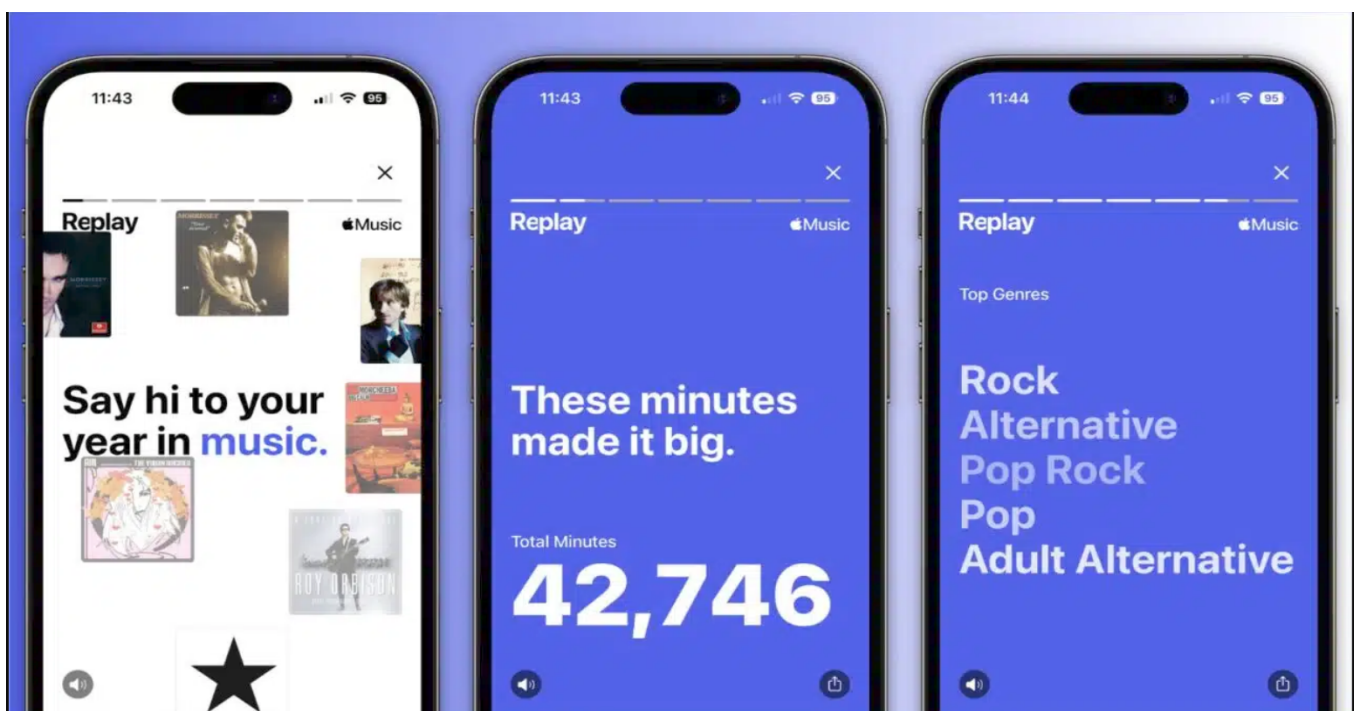
Figure 4. Condition 1 (Apple Music Replay)[6]

---

[6]Source: https://music.apple.com/us/replay
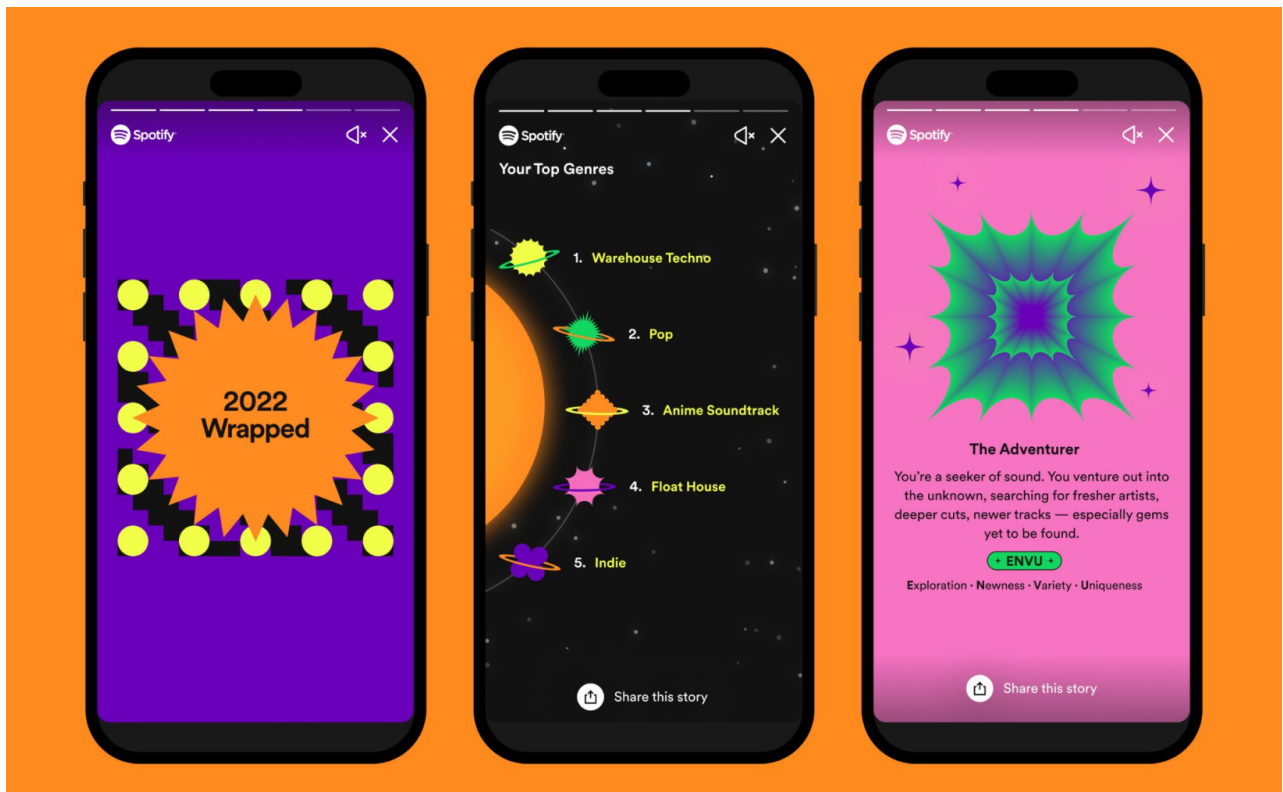
Figure 5. Condition 2 (Spotify Wrapped)[7]

The third part of the survey is introduced to respondents after they were subjected to observation of one of the two scenarios. This block of the questionnaire consisted of two different scales composed in total of 9 items: the first 5 relating to the mediator (IM_BEHAVIOUR) and the other 4 relating to the independent variable (UGC_PROPENSITY). All constructs were measured on a seven-point Likert scale anchored by "strongly disagree" (1) and "strongly agree" (7).

The first scale concerns impression management behaviours, that represent the mediator of the conceptual framework. Five, seven-point semantic differentials are used in this scale to measure how much a person perceives the manipulation shown as a form of self-presentation. The scale was used in the two studies reported by Escalas and Bettman (2005) and in both cases had Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.96$).

The second scale concerns the intention to produce UGC, that represents the dependent variable of the conceptual framework. Attitudes towards the creation of UGC were derived from an established scale found in literature and restated to match the context of this study. The scale is composed of four, seven-point Likert-type statements developed by Schivinski, Christodoulides, and Dabrowski, (2016). The reliability of this scale is given by the value of Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.95$).

Both scales were adapted according to the needs of the experimental research.

---

[7] Source: open.spotify.com

Finally, the fourth and last part of the questionnaire is characterised by the block addressed to the demographic questions, in which age and gender of the participants were asked.

For further details on the questionnaire, please refer to attachment (Appendix I, Main Test Questionnaire)

3.3. Sampling Strategy

The data used for the analysis have been collected through a self-administered questionnaire. Participants were selected using a non-probabilistic sampling methodology: in particular, I have decided to use a convenience sampling method, exploiting the ease of accessing and selecting population elements. The main advantages derived from this methodology are represented by speed of data collection, high response rate and low costs. This technique does not imply any economic cost and it is also beneficial in terms of short time frame and convenience in the selection process of respondents and in the phase of data acquisition. Due to time and resource constraints, the research focuses only on the Italian market. To ensure complete comprehensibility to the sample, the questionnaire has been administered in Italian. An English transcript, more faithful to the reference scales used, will be reported here. In addition, the questionnaire has only been administered to individuals born by May 2004, which represent the segment of Gen Z older than 18 at the time of writing. The reasons why I chose to analyse the behaviour of Generation Z are threefold:

As a first point, Spotify (2022) reports users belonging to Gen Z to represent 34% of their total audience; furthermore, they have "unique engagement with digital audio," and represent the most social generation of audio listeners. The same source reports that by the first quarter of 2022 they had already listened to more than 578 billion minutes of music on Spotify-more than any other demographic group and about 16 billion minutes more than users between the ages of 25 and 34.

The second reason is the extremely heavy use of social media by this generation who, as never before, share every aspect of their lives. Gen Z Italians make massive use of smartphones, with which they spend an average of 4.20 hours a day. Most of this time is divided between social media (02.49 hours) and streaming music services (02.01 hours) (Osservatorio Nazionale Influencer Marketing, 2021). The topic of social media use in young adults is extremely actual and of great relevance, both academically and managerially. Digital natives have coexisted with technology their whole lives, which has inevitably played a significant role in their development and the creation of their identities (Pempek, Yermolayeva, and Calvert, 2009). The use of social networks occupies a large part of young people's days, offering them a space in which individual media preferences, friendship, romantic relationships, and ideology can converge and be displayed at the same time.

The third and final reason is that Gen Z, which is now entering the workforce and consumer market, is referred to by experts as the generation that will revolutionise marketing and customer experience. Finneman

and Spagnuolo, in McKinsey Podcast "Meet Generation Z: Shaping the future of shopping" (2020), assert how the so-called "digital natives" represent the core influencers today, having a really big impact on both millennials and Gen Xers in terms of purchase decisions. Data were collected both from female and male respondents, as gender is not expected to make any significant difference in the data results.

3.4. Data collection procedure

The sample size for this study of 200 Italian participants was collected between May 1st and 15th, 2023. 176 individuals fully participated in the study completely answering all questions. The remaining 24 incomplete responses were discarded and deleted from the data set: 8 responses were not complete while 16 belonged to respondents outside the age segment of interest for this research (Gen Z). Incomplete responses were discarded for two main reasons: firstly, the interruption of the questionnaire led to incomplete and partial replies. Secondly, the time for completion of the answers was reduced to a minimum to reach the number of responses needed to conduct the experimental study in the shortest possible time. Each participant was instructed to complete the questionnaire in the most honest way.

Respondents were contacted through an anonymous link generated by the Qualtrics online platform and subsequently sent through instant messaging applications and social media networks as the main channels (Whatsapp, Instagram). The most reliable method for ensuring respondents' diversity and quantity was thought to be the Internet. Online field surveys, according to Tan and Teo (2000), have a number of advantages over conventional paper-based mail-in surveys. For instance, they are less expensive to execute, elicit replies more quickly, and are not location-based (Hsu and Lu, 2004). In recent years, such surveys have been widely used. In particular, Instagram is used as the context of this study as it represents a large base, with more than 1.28 billion active users (Statista, 2023), who get involved in a higher level of engagement with brands than users of Facebook or other leading platforms (Elliott, 2015). Not only that: according to Blogmeter's "Italians and Social Media 2022" report (2023), 90% of Italian Gen Z members claim to be subscribed to and regularly use Instagram. It was therefore considered the easiest and most effective method to reach the target segment for this research.

The average age of the respondents was found to be 22.8 years, although the age range fluctuated between a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 26 years (Appendix II, Table 1). Although not representative of the general population, the sample contains a large proportion of the typical users of the Internet, namely younger affluent consumers. Regarding the gender of the subjects, the predominant gender was found to be female, represented by 49.4% (87/176), while the male gender was characterised by 44.9% (79/176). The remaining 5.7% (10/176) preferred not to identify with a specific gender: 0.6% of respondents selected the third gender option (1/176), or preferred not to identify with a specific gender (5.1%; 9/176) (Appendix II, Table 2).

Chapter 4: Data analysis and results

The present experimental study consists of a conclusive causal between subjects 2x1 research design. The results of the experiment are represented by responses to a questionnaire obtained through a survey conducted independently in Italy during the month of May 2023, averaging the use of the Qualtrics XM online platform. Survey participants were selected by adopting a non-probabilistic sampling methodology. Specifically, it was decided to use a convenience method thus taking advantage of the ease and rapidity of accessing and selecting elements of the population. In fact, this technique involves no economic cost and is advantageous both in terms of high speed of data collection and high response rate. Considering the target sample, it was decided to include respondents with an age range of 18-26, collecting data from both female and male individuals, as demographic variables were not expected to influence the results of the experiment in a statistically significant way.

Statistical analyses were applied to identify the underlying factors that affect the variables of interest, to examine the validity and reliability of the measurement instruments, to assess the goodness of fit of the models, to test the significance of the relationships between the variables, and to compare the means of the groups. Overall, these statistical techniques provide a powerful set of tools to help interpret the data and draw meaningful conclusions from the research.

4.1.   Data Analysis

The data collected through the questionnaire provided by the survey generated on Qualtrics XM were exported to SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Science) statistical software for analysis.

Initially, it was decided to perform two exploratory factorial analyses, in order to examine and validate the items of the scales used in the conceptual research model. Specifically, principal component analysis (PCA) was performed as the extraction method, applying VARIMAX as the rotation technique. In order to decide how many factors to extract, the table of total explained variance was employed. According to Kaiser's rule[8], only factors carrying Eigenvalues greater than 1 and cumulative percentage of variance extracted of at least 60% should be retained for analysis.

In order to complete the interpretation of the extracted factors, the table of communalities was observed. This source holds that items can be discarded if they have a level of communalities below 0.5. All of the items were found to have a communality value greater than 0.5. Subsequently, the factor matrix was observed in order to define which factors to remove and which to retain. In particular, it is possible to delete

---

[8] Kaiser H. F. (1960). The application of electronic computers to factor analysis. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 20(1), 141–151. 10.1177/001316446002000116

items that have a value below 0.6 in the factors matrix. All of the items were found suitable also for this condition; therefore, it was decided to retain all of the items making up the scales by validating them.

After validating both scales, a reliability test was conducted to check the level of reliability of the scales considered. The value of the Cronbach Alpha's[9] of both constructs was detected in order to examine the reliability of each selected scale. An acceptable level of internal consistency was set at Cronbach's Alpha higher than 0.8 ($\alpha > 0.8$)[10]. For the first scale, related to the mediator, a value of 0.963 was found, while for the second scale, related to the dependent variable, a value of 0.930 was recorded. These data demonstrate that there is a high level in the internal solidity for both the variables' scales and that both scales chosen were reliable.

In addition, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) test related to the measure of sampling adequacy was performed. Regarding the first scale, related to the mediator, a value of 0.915 was found, while regarding the dependent variable scale, a value of 0.843 was recorded, which in both cases is above the threshold of 60%. Therefore, the level of adequacy was found to be more than good (i.e. > 0.8).

Next, Bartlett's test of sphericity was performed, which was found to be statistically significant by finding a p-value of 0.001 (p-value < α = 0.05) in both cases.

4.2.   Hypotheses testing results

After conducting both factor analyses and reliability tests, the main assumptions of the conceptual model were examined so that its significance and thus relative success could be confirmed or rejected.

The regression analysis was executed in order to assess the significance and the validity of the hypotheses and theories, by setting the end-of-year recap (coded as condition 0 = Replay, condition 1 = Wrapped) as the independent variable (IV), impression management as the mediator (Med) and UGC creation as the dependent variable (DV). To examine the significance of the main hypotheses of the experimental study, it was observed whether the p-value of each variable was below the significance level (α = 0.05) or not. In this way hypotheses were accepted with an interval of confidence of 95% with α = 0.05.

By employing regression analysis, the confidence intervals of the direct effect produced by the independent variable and the indirect effects produced by two mediators were examined. The presence of an adverse bootstrapping would be verified if the confidence interval of the effect contains 0. In the case of a direct

---

[9] Cronbach, L. J. (1951). Coefficient alpha and the internal structure of tests. psychometrika, 16(3), 297-334
[10] The work of Nunnally (1978) provided that the lower cut-off (0.70) was appropriate in the early stages of research (i.e., exploratory) such as during scale development, and more stringent cut-offs should be used for basic research (0.80 or higher) and applied research (0.90 or higher) (Lance et al., 2006).
Sources:
Nunnally, J. C. (1978). Psychometric theory: New York: McGraw-Hill, c1978. 2d ed.
Lance, C. E., Butts, M. M., & Michels, L. C. (2006). The Sources of Four Commonly Reported Cut-off Criteria: What Did They Really Say? Organizational Research Methods, 9(2), 202.

effect, a statistically insignificant main effect would be concluded when the product shown is Spotify Wrapped. If there is no mediating effect, it could be concluded that there is not a statistically significant mediating effect when Spotify Wrapped is shown. On the other hand, the presence of a favourable bootstrapping would be observed if the confidence interval of the effect does not contain 0. In the case of a direct effect, a statistically significant main effect would be concluded when the product shown is Spotify Wrapped. For an indirect effect, a statistically significant mediating effect would be confirmed when the product shown is Spotify Wrapped.

H1

To test the statistical significance of the direct hypothesis (H1), a comparison of means was conducted by applying a t-test, in particular a One-Way ANOVA test (analysis of variance), as an analysis to test the effect of the independent variable (EYR_RECAP) against the dependent variable (UGC_CREATION). Specifically, the independent variable (X) has a nominal categorical nature, and is distinct in two different conditions coded with 0 (Replay) and 1 (Wrapped), while the dependent variable (Y) has a metric nature. The expectation was that Spotify Wrapped would lead to an increased and positive UGC with respect to Apple Music Replay.

After performing the ANOVA, looking at the descriptive statistics table, it was possible to see that the group of subjects exposed to the scenario coded with 0 (92 individuals) had a mean value of 2.5299, a standard deviation = 1.07854 and a confidence interval composed by a lower bound = 2.3065 and an upper bound = 2.7533 while the respondents exposed to the visual condition coded with 1 (84 individuals) had a mean value of 5, a standard deviation = 1.5676 and a confidence interval composed by a lower bound = 3.1687 and an upper bound = 3.6646. Therefore, it was found that despite the subjects who were exposed to Spotify Wrapped were less than those exposed to Apple Music Replay, the second condition (Spotify Wrapped) has higher values in the mean, standard deviation and confidence interval with respect to the first condition (Apple Music Replay).

Additionally, considering ANOVA's table, it emerged a p-value related to the F-test equal to 0.001. If the p-value of the F-test statistic obtained from data is smaller than significance level ($p\text{-value} < \alpha = 0.05$), ANOVA's null hypothesis (H0) can be rejected, implying that group means are significantly different, and the effect of the independent variable is significant. Therefore, a statistically significant difference between the group averages could be ascertained, thus confirming the effect of X versus Y. In other words, based on these results, it can be stated that the independent variable is significant and consequently the type of end-of-year recap has a differential impact on user-generated content production. Ultimately, the direct hypothesis H1 (main effect) was proven.

H2-H3

In order to test the statistical significance of the indirect hypothesis (H2-H3), a regression analysis was conducted through the application of Model4 of the SPSS PROCESS Macro version 3.4 extension developed by Andrew F. Hayes[11] to test the mediating effect caused by impression management toward the relationship between the independent variable (EYR_RECAP) and the dependent variable (UGC_CREATION). To test the success of the mediation effect, it was necessary to distinguish it into two different relationships: a first effect between the independent variable and the mediator (H2) and a second effect between the mediator and the dependent variable (H3).

Specifically, to demonstrate the statistical significance of both hypotheses, a 95% confidence interval was adopted with an alpha (α) reference value of 5%. In addition, it was necessary to make sure that the extremes of the confidence range (LLCI= Lower Level of Confidence Interval; ULCI = Upper Level of Confidence Interval) for each relationship respected sign concordance (both positive or both negative) so that there was no zero within.

Finally, beta (β) coefficients of the regression analysis of both relationships between the variables were observed to assess sign (positive or negative) and magnitude of each effect in the relationships between the variables. Higher positive beta coefficients were expected when respondents were exposed to Spotify Wrapped, and lower negative beta coefficients were expected when participants were exposed to Apple Music Replay.

H2

The second hypothesis was tested to investigate the indirect effect of the independent variable (type of end-of-year recap: Wrapped vs Replay) on the dependent variable (UGC creation) through the mediator (impression management). It was anticipated that Spotify Wrapped would result in more positive impression management behaviour compared to Apple Music Replay.

Through observation of the SPSS output, for this first part of the indirect effect resulted a p-value equal to 0.0000, a favourable confidence interval (LLCI =2.9283; ULCI=3.6087), and a positive regression coefficient β equal to 3.2685 were noted. Therefore, this section of the indirect effect was found to be statistically significant, thus confirming hypothesis H2.

H3

The third hypothesis was tested to investigate the indirect effect yielded by the independent variable (type of end-of-year recap: Wrapped vs Replay) on the dependent one (UGC creation) observing the mediation factor

---

[11] Hayes A. F. (2017) Introduction to Mediation, Moderation, and Conditional Process Analysis.

given by the mediator (impression management) on the dependent variable (UGC creation). It was expected that a higher propensity to impression management would lead to an increased and positive UGC creation compared to Apple Music Replay.

Through observation of the SPSS output, for this second part of the indirect effect resulted a p-value equal to 0.0000, a favourable confidence interval (LLCI = 0.7730; ULCI= 0.9473), and a positive regression coefficient β equal to 0.8602 could be seen. Therefore, this section of the indirect effect was found to be statistically significant, thus confirming hypothesis H3.

In light of the results obtained, since both sections of the indirect effect were statistically significant, it was possible to confirm the overall success of the mediation effect.

With regards to the tables related with SPSS output for this section, please refer to attachment (Appendix II, Table 7 and 8)

4.3.   Discussion of results

The results of this structural model, a full mediation model, revealed acceptable fit statistics. The purpose of the study was to theorise and empirically investigate the mediating role of impression management on Spotify-related UGC. With respect to this objective, the results of the study revealed several important findings.

As originally expected, the hypothesised relationships were supported. First, results empirically demonstrate that correlation between end-of-year recap ownership and brand-related UGC exists and is positive; that is, receiving a personalised end-of-year recap either from Spotify or Apple Music increased users' willingness to create UGC associated with the respective brand. However, as expected, participants reported a higher willingness to create UGC related to their Spotify Wrapped experience, compared to their Apple Music Replay experience. This finding is consistent with the notion that Spotify Wrapped is more personal and engaging, with its graphic design, interactive features, and ability to directly address the customer, stimulating a greater desire to share the experience with others through UGC.

Second, results pointed out the significance of impression management in shaping users' willingness to create brand-related UGC. Indeed, participants reported being more likely to engage in UGC production when they believed it would enhance their social image. Impression management accentuates the effect of the correlation between end-of-year recaps and UGC, with participants reporting that they were more likely to create UGC when they believed it would enhance their social image. Furthermore, participants exposed to Spotify Wrapped showed a stronger identification with the product in terms of impression management compared to those exposed to Apple Music Replay. This finding underscores the importance of considering

the psychological motivations behind UGC creation and the desire for individuals to present themselves in a favourable light through their content.

Overall, the findings provide empirical evidence for the positive correlation between end-of-year recap ownership and brand-related UGC. The study contributes to the understanding of the impact of personalised recaps on user behaviour and highlights the role of impression management as a key factor in driving UGC production. Moreover, the results demonstrate the greater effectiveness of Spotify Wrapped in terms of generating user engagement and brand identification compared to Apple Music Replay.

These findings have practical implications for marketers. By utilising personalised end-of-year recaps and tapping into impression management mechanisms, companies can potentially stimulate UGC creation and strengthen user-brand relationships; indeed, leveraging these factors will likely increase engagement and build brand loyalty. Although this thesis focuses on the streaming music industry, the findings can be extended to marketers in any industry interested in integrating personalised content strategies to stimulate spontaneous UGC production.

Chapter 5: Conclusions

The study aimed to examine the interrelationships among end-of-year recap ownership, user-generated content creation, and impression management behaviours. This section will present a comprehensive summary of the research findings and draw conclusions based on the research objectives. The academic and managerial implications of the obtained results will be highlighted. The research outcomes are crucial to comprehend the role of impression management in driving user-generated content in music streaming services such as Spotify and Apple Music. The study contributes to the literature on the intersection of music, social media, and marketing by examining the impact of Spotify Wrapped and Apple Music Replay on UGC and the mediating role of impression management. The research furtherly provides important insights for brand managers and marketers who aim to leverage UGC in their marketing strategies. Understanding the multitude of ways in which self-presentation and impression management are exercised in various online environments is crucial to comprehend the promotional reach that social media users will be able to exercise in the years to come in the current postmodern society where consumers create brand-related content as a means of digital self-presentation. Lastly, the chapter will conclude by discussing the study's limitations and suggesting future research avenues to build on its findings and expand the current knowledge base on UGC in personalised content marketing.

5.1.   Academic and Managerial implications

5.1.1.   Academic implications

The study involved administering a questionnaire to representatives of the Italian Gen Z population, aiming to understand the process of UGC production and the underlying meanings and purposes of self-presentation. In this way, the present study contributes to the pre-existing literature concerning the behaviour of younger generations as members of online communities (Halliday, 2016). Moreover, this research contributes to the growing body of knowledge on user-generated content, specifically within the context of music streaming services. By exploring the motivations behind users sharing their end-of-year recaps on social media, this study offers insights into how users engage with music streaming services, express their identities, and connect with others, therefore examining the potential for developing self-presentation tools that allow individuals more nuanced ways of expressing themselves in the online environment (Ellison, Heino, and Gibbs, 2006). Building upon the work of Shao (2009), and in particular his "production of self-expression and self-actualisation" gratification theory, which emphasised self-expression and self-actualization as motivations for online activities, this research explored the motivations behind users' sharing behaviours and the role of impression management in mediating this relationship. The findings contribute to the understanding of how users engage with social media and its implications for marketing

and communication theory, particularly in the context of social media, by identifying sympathetic and revealing themes to explain individual and collective behaviours.

This research expands on existing literature on impression management, which has been explored in various contexts (Chen, 2016; Sun and Wu, 2012; Trammell and Keshelashvili, 2005; Ellison et al., 2011), by focusing on the context of social media and UGC. In fact, research in this area is not sufficiently thorough and up-to-date with the latest technology and marketing novelties. The study ambitiously aims to further the work of Belk (2013), who argued that digital, sharing, and access modes of consumption can offer useful tools for constructing identities, and possibly additional opportunities for identity to be controlled and shared with more individuals. By investigating the role of impression management in mediating the relationship between end-of-year recaps and the willingness to share on social media, this research provides insights into the mechanisms driving users' sharing behaviours and the reasons behind image manipulation in online settings, examining the implications for one's sense of identity, self-esteem and self-knowledge (Ellison, Hancock, and Toma, 2011).

The study provides a comprehensive understanding of the motivations that drive consumers to spontaneously create content related to a particular brand. It delves beyond brand associations and examines the manipulation of personal identity in the context of social media. Additionally, by investigating the relatively new phenomenon of personalised content, this research offers valuable marketing perspectives that are currently limited. Understanding personalised content allows for exploration of the psychological and behavioural aspects of consumer engagement with brands, shedding light on how individuals respond to personalised messages, recommendations, and experiences, and how these interactions influence attitudes, intentions, and purchase behaviour. This research advances knowledge in areas such as consumer psychology, consumer behaviour, and marketing communication. Furthermore, personalised content is closely linked to the concept of customization and co-creation, where consumers actively participate in shaping their brand experiences. Research in this area can uncover motivations, preferences, and decision-making processes behind consumer engagement with personalised content, as well as examine the effects of customization on brand perception, customer satisfaction, and loyalty.

The findings of this study will enhance our understanding of motivations for creating brand-related UGC, particularly in relation to impression management on social media. These academic findings can guide marketers in understanding the nuances of personalization, including the appropriate level of personalization that resonates with consumers, the types of data to collect for customization, and the ethical considerations involved.

5.1.2. Managerial Implications

In addition to making theoretical advancements, this study provides valuable insights for practitioners in the field. Although further research is needed to fully uncover the untapped marketing potential within brand communities (He et al., 2017), the conceptual model employed in this study yielded significant results from the data analysis. These findings have practical implications that can be applied in business and management contexts.

First, as businesses are getting progressively active in customer engagement marketing, aiming to inspire, empower, and track users' voluntary participation in brand-related social media content (Harmeling et al., 2017; Matute et al., 2019), it becomes crucial to comprehend the motivations driving user-generated content production. Understanding why users create brand-related UGC is of utmost importance due to the significant benefits it can yield, including high frequency and viral diffusion. By studying the psychological and social factors underlying UGC creation, marketers can gain valuable insights for effective communication strategies and engaging consumers in brand and product co-creation processes (He et al., 2017). To gain a competitive edge, product managers should prioritise developing persuasive UGC marketing strategies that encourage voluntary consumption, contribution, and creation of brand-related content, rather than forcing users to share positive content about products. Nurturing user engagement with the brand can foster the dissemination of positive UGC.

Secondly, by gaining a deeper understanding into the motivations behind consumer UGC creation and sharing, marketers can identify effective stimuli to incentivize UGC production. Specifically, this research focuses on the virality of personalised content such as Spotify Wrapped and Apple Music Replay. By understanding the rationale behind the popularity of these platforms, managers can develop marketing strategies that capitalise on the trend towards personalised content. Ultimately, the goal is to help managers develop marketing strategies that will effectively engage consumers and promote their brand or product.

The findings of this research offer valuable insights not only for social media platforms and music streaming services but also for various other industries. Social media platforms can benefit from understanding the motivations behind users' sharing behaviours, particularly in relation to brand-related UGC. This understanding can inform the development of features that facilitate and encourage sharing, thereby enhancing the overall user experience.

In the context of the music streaming industry, services like Spotify and Apple Music can leverage these research findings to create more personalised and shareable content that aligns with users' identities and fosters a sense of belonging. This, in turn, can increase user engagement and loyalty. Moreover, these insights can be applied beyond music streaming, with companies in diverse industries learning from this research and exploring ways to incorporate user-generated content into their marketing strategies. For

instance, in the entertainment industry, platforms such as Netflix and Disney+ can use these findings to develop new services that cater to audience preferences and enhance user engagement.

Furthermore, incorporating user-generated content into marketing strategies, particularly in the context of social media, can help companies create a more authentic and relatable brand image while fostering a sense of community among customers. This is especially relevant in today's saturated and competitive entertainment industry.

Ultimately, the practical implications of this study extend to the design of future personalised products that aim to enhance user engagement and virality, particularly for the preferences of Generation Z. By informing marketing practitioners and managers on effective personalization strategies, this research seeks to enable the industry to create value for consumers and ensure profitability.

5.2.   Limitations and future research

This study entails a series of limitations that should be considered in light of the findings.

First and foremost, it dealt with the influence of impression management on the realisation of UGC among Italian Gen Z, young adults aged 18 to 26 years. Although with the spreading of digital environments cultural boundaries have become increasingly labile (European Parliamentary Research Service, 2021), Holt (2012) and other relevant scholars argue that each market is greatly influenced by its cultural and social history and practices. Therefore, I believe that the Italian culture and mindset, coupled with behavioural methods have a significant impact on the motives, methods, and quality of information participants share on social media. The sample was a convenience sample, which implies that external validity will be affected to some extent; it is therefore reasonable to assume that if the study had been conducted on a consumer segment belonging to other ethnicities or cultures, the results would have been different. In addition, arbitrarily imposed age limits further restrict the model's ability to predict behaviour for a larger sample of consumers. Future research might therefore consider adopting a cross-cultural approach (cf. Sheldon et al., 2017) and investigate a different socio-cultural sample to confront the results with those of the present research. This could allow a better generalisation of results. Furthermore, future research could benefit by comparing the behaviours of different generations.

The study has been conducted within a single social media platform (Instagram) and was related to a particular product category. Overall, this study provides a comprehensive basis for further examination of these connections in other contexts, age groups, social media platforms and brands.

In this study, self-reported metrics were used. Future research using more objective measurements of UGC production and impression management, such as log data, is therefore required to get beyond the well-known problems with self-reported data (Straub and Limayen, 1995). In addition, future research could build on the

present theoretical research model and examine other variables, such as fear of missing out (Hodkinson, 2016), brand identification (He et al., 2017) or brand trust (Nosi et al., 2022), which may potentially moderate the theoretical relationships proposed herein.

Given the constantly evolving state of digital environments and social media in particular, users will always have new and unseen possibilities for creating user generated content, presenting themselves and practising impression management. The research possibilities are therefore almost limitless and not predictable at the moment. This area will probably offer very interesting research insights in the future.

Analysing the content of the UGC on social media could provide more detailed insight into the motivations behind posting about Spotify and how impression management plays a role.

Another limitation is represented by the sampling methodology adopted in this research, because it might lead to potential selection biases and could not be perfectly representative of the population. A survey can be very useful to test a bigger sample in the population at the same time. But in order to collect the best data this may not be the most complete experiment. The questionnaire may not be effective enough since it consists in an impersonal way to gather information from the respondents. In fact, the answers provided by a survey cannot represent the emotions and the facial movements of the people, as well as the heartbeat and sweating level. So, in order to have a complete overview in the research it could be interesting to test the variables through a neuroscience experiment. Examples of applicable methods could be eye-tracking, Galvanic Skin Response (GSR) and Electroencephalography (EEG).

The manipulations presented in the questionnaire represent only a portion of what is contained within products such as Spotify Wrapped and Apple Music Replay. In fact, these products feature animations, sounds, interactive graphics, and more. Such an experience could only be reproducible with an experiment that allows for physical interaction with respondents, such as the interview technique. Conducting qualitative research, such as interviews or focus groups, could provide a more in-depth understanding of how individuals perceive and use end-of-year recaps and how it affects their impression management on social media.

In addition, the images presented represent randomly selected artists and data. My hypothesis is that if each respondent were subjected to a stimulus designed specifically for him or her, his or her responses might be different from those given in this instance.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Abstract

Recent technological development and digitization have caused a paradigm shift in a variety of industries, moving operations from the real world to the virtual one, from store shelves to e-commerce, facilitating many daily activities (Anderson et al., 2020). This process has resulted in the creation of "empowered" customers (Edelman and Singer, 2015), so expert in their use of tools and information that they no longer accept the role of passive recipients of marketing communication (Acar and Puntoni, 2016): the connection between consumers and brands is becoming deeper, giving consumers an increasingly decisive role in promoting a particular brand. The music industry is no exception, indeed: the appearance of new technologies has initiated a digital age where the consumer has greater capacity for decision (Arditi, 2014). In recent years, music streaming services have become the fastest growing music option (Cesareo and Pastore, 2014), not only because of the immediacy of use but also because they incorporate social features that allow users to interact with one another and use music tracks as social objects (Hagen and Luders, 2017). The streaming music market is highly competitive, requiring players to implement strategies to make their services increasingly refined and personalized. Competing for the title of market leader are two companies (Statista, 2023): Spotify, a music and media streaming service founded in Sweden in 2016 (Vonderau, 2017), and Apple Music, a music and video streaming service developed by Apple Inc. and launched in June 2015. In recent years, both Spotify and Apple Music have introduced features that provide users with a recap of their music listening activity over a specific time period: Spotify Wrapped and Apple Music Replay, respectively. Since these services are typically provided at the end of the year, in the context of this study they will be addressed as "end-of-year recaps" when meaning to refer to both.

In the past few years, Spotify Wrapped has gained an increasing virality on social media, becoming a true annual tradition and eliciting a huge amount of user-generated content (UGC) in the period immediately following its annual release (Galant, 2020). Apple Music Replay, on the other hand, has not gained the same level of popularity or recognition as its competitor. The virality of Spotify Wrapped reveals the extent to which algorithms are integrated into the way we create our identity within the digital consumer culture, opening the discussion on how much, what and, most importantly, why our personal identity is shared on social media. Understanding UGC as a behavioral manifestation of consumer engagement is crucial for managers and academics (Langaro et al., 2018; Hutter et al., 2013), as understanding the reasons that have led to this phenomenon might carry relevant insights in terms of refining marketing strategies, personalizing user experiences, stimulating advocacy and boosting user retention. The hypothesis under consideration in this thesis is that one of the reasons behind the virality of Spotify Wrapped is that it stimulates impression management, which in turn encourages UGC. Leary and Kowalski (1990) defined impression management as "individuals' attempt to control the impressions others form of them". Arguably then, the online version of an individual is its extension, but one that is inherently manufactured and performative (Marshall, 2021). Spotify Wrapped and similar algorithms contribute to creating and refining a certain type of perception of us to be

shared online. The underlying assumption is that Spotify Wrapped will have a higher positive impact on user-generated content creation than Apple Music Replay, and that impression management will have a positive mediating effect on this relationship. The ultimate objective is to provide insights that can create value for consumers and ensure profitability for the industry. Ultimately, findings from this study may have practical implications for the design of future personalized products to encourage user engagement and virality, especially for Gen Z.

Literature review & Hypothesis development. The emergence of online environments and social media has transformed the act of sharing content online into an integral part of contemporary life (Berger et al., 2012). This shift has led consumers to transition from passive information recipients to active content creators (Edelman and Singer, 2015; Acar and Puntoni, 2016). User-generated content (UGC) production has become a prominent activity among social media users, as highlighted by Ochoa and Duval (2008): consumers often willingly share brand-related content, providing benefits to firms and brands such as raising awareness, engaging with the target audience, and facilitating sales, without incurring any costs (Batra and Keller, 2016; Kumar et al., 2013; Kumar et al., 2016; Colicev et al., 2018; Luo et al., 2013). One notable example of this phenomenon is the popularity of end-of-year recaps, exemplified by Spotify Wrapped, which has become a viral sensation on social media. In this study, Spotify Wrapped will be compared to a competing product, Apple Music Replay, with the aim of understanding the underlying reasons for the extensive UGC emerged as a result of the campaign. The challenging question is how companies can fully exploit some of the untapped marketing potential located within brand communities (He et al., 2017) by inducing spontaneous UGC production. The central hypothesis of this study posits that such products enhance impression management, consequently incentivizing UGC production.

End-of-year recaps In recent years, both Spotify and Apple Music have introduced features that allow users to reflect on their musical preferences and activity over the past year through Spotify Wrapped and Apple Music Replay, respectively. Spotify Wrapped is a recap containing the individual user's personal statistics, in a pop and highly shareable format. In the past few years, it has gained an increasing virality on social media, becoming a true annual tradition and eliciting a huge amount of user-generated content in the period immediately following its annual release. Apple Music Replay, on the other hand, has not gained the same level of popularity or recognition as its competitor. End-of-year recaps leverage the highly personalized narrative that is generated through each individual user's memories. It is a narrative that touches the listener closely, because music triggers a highly emotional process: the possibility of retrieving memories of a given time of the year, of when a certain song was significant for some reason. Furthermore, by using an informal and direct register with the audience, the personalization of the initiative becomes even stronger, and a more direct connection is generated especially with Millennials and Gen Z. These initiatives provide consumers with a reason to become, in a sense, brand influencers: the need for comparison hidden in every consumer is stimulated and facilitated, taking a data analysis initiative to another level of realization, making it a kind of influencer marketing initiative, where the influencers are the consumers themselves. The main trigger provided is the presence of the quantitative data of minutes spent listening to the platform; this expedient makes it possible to enact a comparison between subscribers stimulating them also to share the result on social channels.

User generated content The term user-generated content refers to various types of media content primarily produced and distributed on the Internet and created by common people rather than paid marketing professionals (Daugherty, Eastin and Bright, 2008). What characterizes UGC is therefore that consumers are the ones actually producing, designing, publishing, or editing the content in the media, rather than the ones receiving it (Krishnamurthy and Dou, 2008).

A more structured definition of UGC is provided by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, 2007), which argues that to be defined as such, user-generated content must meet three basic requirements: the "publication requirement", which holds that the content must be available through a publicly accessible medium of transmission, such as the Internet (OECD, 2007; Arnhold, 2010); the "creative efforts requirement"; which holds that the creator must add value to the content, reflecting some form of creative effort such as adapting and mixing pre-existing work or creating new content (OECD, 2007; Arnhold, 2010); and the "creation outside professional routines requirement" which requires consumers to be active producers of the content (Arnhold, 2010; Daugherty et al., 2010; OECD, 2007). Although this three-part definition is not universally accepted in the academic world (Ochoa and Duval, 2008), scholars agree that it reflects the main characteristics shared by the numerous and various content types published by the online users. UGC can potentially represent a gold mine for brands: it is more authentic and experience-driven than brand-pushed content because it does not involve fabrication, embellishment, or Photoshop. Instead, UGC serves as a modern form of word-of-mouth advertising, which has always been crucial in driving consumer purchasing decisions. The exponential rise of UGC has consequently deeply altered the way consumers experience brands (Muñiz and Schau, 2007): indeed, nowadays a significant amount of user-generated content involves brand-related material (Burmann and Arnhold, 2008). A precise definition of brand-related UGC is currently lacking; however, broadly speaking, it refers to all those user-generated contents that relate to a specific brand (Christodoulides et al., 2012). Arnhold (2010) suggests that brand-related UGC is a consumer's personal interpretation of a brand that is visualized in a certain way. Brand-related UGC covers opinions, experiences, advice, feedback, reviews, commentary and all kinds of social interactions regarding products, services, companies and brands. These are usually based on consumer's personal experience that is then published on public or semi-public platforms (Krishnamurthy and Dou, 2008). With the passage of time, especially in the last decade, the Internet has become an extremely rich information space, offering consumers a wide range of possibilities to be able to create and dispose of UGC quickly and easily (Arnhold, 2010; Daugherty, 2008). It is hypothesized that owning a personalized end-of-year recap will positively influence users' willingness to create brand-related UGC, as content related to well-known brands is proven to increase engagement and sharing behavior (Katz, 1960; Berthon, Pitt, and Campbell, 2008). Furthermore, music, which is the central topic of the campaigns taken into consideration, has been shown to be extremely connected to personal identity (Tarrant, North, and Hargreaves, 2001; Anderson et al., 2020), which in turn represents a strong predictor of online behavior (Stafford and Schkade, 2004; Shao, 2009; Courtois et al., 2009). Besides, it is hypothesized that owning a Spotify Wrapped will increase the likelihood of users sharing brand-related content on social media to a greater extent than owning Apple Music Replay: reasons for this supposition lie in a body of literature that, albeit limited, underlines Spotify Wrapped engaging features, as opposed to Apple Music Replay, which instead lacks in personalization and interactivity. **H1**: Users who receive Spotify Wrapped are more likely to share brand-related UGC on social media than those who receive Apple Music Replay.

Impression Management Impression management is defined as "the process whereby people seek to influence the image others have of them" (Rosenfeld, Giacalone, and Riordan, 1995). The concept of impression management derives from Erving Goffman's theory of behaviour called "dramaturgy": he theorized that individuals are like actors performing their everyday actions on a stage and that, when placed in front of others, they adjust their behaviour so that they can convey the best impression of themselves to their audience (Goffman, 1959). Goffman also points out that the self is shaped and staged according to the contexts in which one finds oneself; in other words, individuals consciously modify the impressions they communicate in order to try to have some sort of control over the impressions that are received by others. An individual's sense of self thus emerges as a product of social interactions, and is an artifact based on each person's internal definitions of himself, generated via a dialectical interplay with how we perceive that others define us (Blumer, 1998; Mead and Morris, 1967). The application of the concept of impression management to social media platforms has gained a growing interest in the academic world (Chen, 2016; Sun and Wu, 2012; Trammell and Keshelashvili, 2005; Ellison et al., 2011): studies have suggested that impressions can be more strategically managed online rather than in face-to-face situations (Ellison, Heino and Gibbs, 2006; Fullwood, 2019; Ward, 2017), having more time to decide what to publish, to which audience to expose the content, and whether to edit the content.

As Berger (2013) suggests in his book "Contagious", when an individual comes into possession of information or assets that can enable him or her to be viewed positively by other people, the tendency to share that information will be increased by the desire to practice impression management. Arguably, the possession of data that narrates favourite songs, artists, and genres, allowing the user to relive moments and memories of the past year, such as in the case of end-of-year recaps, could fit Berger's definition. By sharing this type of information on social media, users can enhance their self-presentation and manage the impression they make on others (Goffman, 1959). According to Belk (2013), purchasing and appreciating music has changed from a solitary activity to more of a social activity. Under these assumptions, it is therefore hypothesized that receiving an end-of-year recap increases users' desire to engage in impression management practices. Furthermore, it is expected that users who receive Spotify Wrapped will be more inclined to practice impression management than those who receive Apple Music Replay. **H2**: Spotify Wrapped ownership has a positive and significant effect on impression management behaviours, which is greater than the one of Apple Music Replay ownership.

Online self-Presentation through UGC: Self-presentation can be understood as the effort made by a person to communicate a certain image and identity of himself to others (Zywica and Danowski, 2008). Although self-presentation is considered by some to be a part of impression management (Owens, 2006), many scholars have used the two terms as synonyms (e.g., Schlenker 2003). Indeed, Goffman's (1959) theory of self-presentation states that interactions between individuals can be interpreted as impression management: people are inclined to present what they believe to be the positive aspects of themselves in order to make the best possible impression on others with the ultimate goal of increasing the positivity and decreasing the negativity of an individual's self-view (Sedikides and Strube, 1997).

In their everyday lives, consumers use material, symbolic and experiential resources to describe personal and collective identities (Arnould and Thompson, 2005). Belk's "extended self" theory holds that a person's possessions that make up the extended self often serve as input for others to form impressions. Properties represent a significant contributor and a mirror into one's individual identity, making the act of consuming a self-defining and self-expressive behaviour (Schau and Gilly, 2003). By associating their image with objects (material or otherwise), consumers make their identities tangible and self-present (Schau and Gilly, 2003), and ultimately communicate to others who they are and what they stand for. This "effort to express a specific image and identity to others" (Zywica and Danowski, 2008) is called the performance of self-presentation (Goffman, 1959). The social actions required for self-presentation are consumption oriented and are made visible by people showing symbols, signs, brands, and practices (Schau and Gilly, 2003). The tangible and intangible properties of a person therefore act as reflectors of the individual identity, signalling tastes, accomplishments, skills, or creativity (Schultz, Kleine III, and Kernan, 1989 in Schau and Gilly, 2003). Concurrently, possessions are a significant component of affiliative identification for they are used to convey one's identity to the intended individuals, as well as to establish and mirror oneself within the social world (Schau and Gilly, 2003).

The fast development of digital technology has led to the dematerialization of knowledge, possessions, and much of daily interaction and communication. At this day, the majority of the things we own—including texts, books, letters, images, films, music, and messages—have been turned into invisible, immaterial bits of data that can only be accessed through digital devices (Belk, 2013; Siddiqui and Turley, 2006). Consequently, social networking sites (SNSs) have become important venues for building and presenting the self (Ellison, 2007; Hall et al., 2014; McAndrew and Jeong, 2012; Yu et al., 2015) by giving users an abundance of extra freedom to express their identities through digital association rather than simply through possession or proximity (Ellison et al. 2006; Schau and Gilly, 2003). Indeed, social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok offer a variety of means for perfecting and gilding strategic self-promotion (Kim and Lee, 2011; Lee-Won et al., 2014), while quickly enhancing personal identities (Zhao et al., 2008). Recent research on consumer activities on social media and user-generated content has focused on the motivations for which an individual should (or should not) be interested in using social media (e.g., Park, Kee and Valenzuela 2009, Raacke and Bonds-Raacke, 2008, Shao, 2009). Generally speaking, it has been amply proved how people tend to demonstrate a sugar-coated version of their self-image on social media (Manago et al. 2008). Several scholars have tried to identify reasons for using the internet as a medium (Stafford, Stafford and Schkade, 2004; Courtois et al., 2009; Krishnamurthy and Dou, 2008; Nadkarni and Hofmann, 2012); however, for the purposes of this research, I have identified the most fitting conclusions in the work of Shao (2009). He states that people perform a variety of activities online, which can be traced back to three basic gratifications: "information and entertainment consumption", "participation in social interaction and community development" and "production of self-expression and self-actualisation" (Shao, 2009). According to Belk (2013), digital, sharing, and access modes of consumption can offer useful tools for constructing identities, and possibly additional opportunities for identity to be controlled and shared with more individuals. Moreover,

social media gives consumers the opportunity to actively endorse brands or share advertisements, which can eventually become a part of their online identities (Taylor, Strutton, and Thompson 2012; Marder et al. 2018). Impression management behaviours are often associated with the consumption of products and brands (Belk, 1988, 2013; Schau and Gilly, 2003, Smith et al., 2012, Zywica and Danowski 2008). In fact, literature shows that consumers utilize digital possessions, products, and brands in online environments to present to others who they are, as well as who they are not (Arnould and Thompson, 2005; Schau and Gilly, 2013).

Consumers utilize digital possessions, products, and brands in online environments to present to others who they are, as well as who they are not (Schau and Gilly, 2013), just like in the actual world where possessions, products, and brands transmit meaning and are employed as social stimuli to define self (Solomon, 1983). Therefore, it is expected that the desire to perform impression management on social media by means of possessions will positively influence the production brand-related UGC. **H3**: Impression management has a positive and significant effect on brand-related UGC creation.

Methodology For the development of the conceptual framework the traditional mediating model was adopted, which is characterized by the presence of one independent variable (IV), one dependent variable (DV) and one mediator (Med).
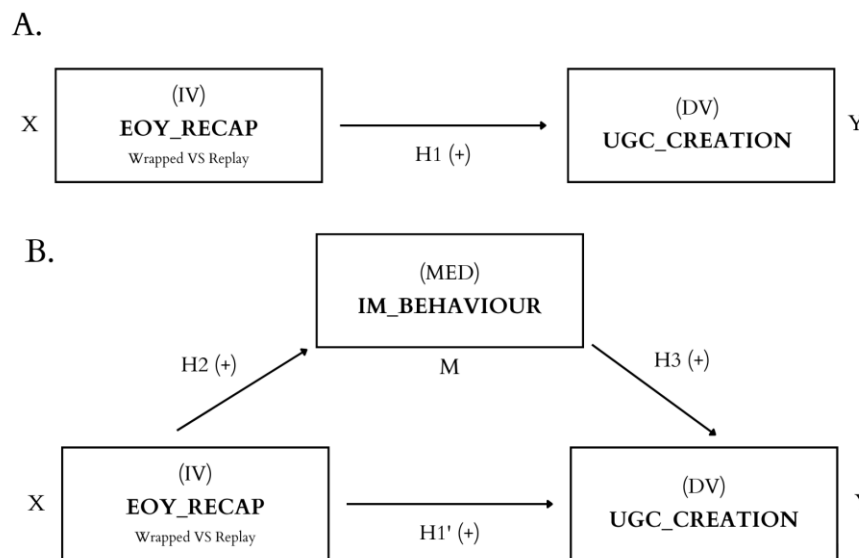
The present experimental study consists of a conclusive causal between subjects 2x1 research design. Data were collected using a mixed methods approach (Tashakkori and Teddlie, 1998) based on qualitative, structured questions in a self-administered questionnaire. Respondents were contacted through an anonymous link generated by the Qualtrics online platform and subsequently sent through instant messaging applications and social media networks as the main channels (Whatsapp, Instagram).

The questionnaire, containing 11 items (9 specific and 2 demographic questions), was used to measure the customer's propensity to share brand-related UGC on social media and their sensitivity to impression management cues. In order to manipulate the independent variable (EYR_RECAP: Wrapped vs Replay), it was necessary to develop an online questionnaire with two different visual stimuli, each made up of one of the two products. Two different scales compose the 9 specific items of the questionnaire: the first 5 items were

related to the mediator (IM_BEHAVIOUR) and the other 4 were related to the independent variable (UGC_PROPENSITY). The first scale concerned impression management behavior and had already been tested in two studies reported by Escalas and Bettman (2005); in both cases it proved reliable (Cronbach's Alpha $\alpha = 0.96$). The second scale concerned the intention to produce UGC and had already been tested by Schivinski, Christodoulides, and Dabrowski (2016). The reliability of this scale is given by the value of Cronbach's Alpha ($\alpha = 0.95$). All constructs were measured on a seven-point Likert scale anchored by "strongly disagree" (1) and "strongly agree" (7). Both scales were adapted according to the needs of the experimental research according to the protocol illustrated by Beaton, Bombardier, Guillemin, and Ferraz (2000).

The sample size for this study of 200 Italian participants was collected between May 1st and 15th, 2023. Participants were selected using a non-probabilistic sampling methodology: a convenience sampling method was used, exploiting the ease of accessing and selecting population elements. The questionnaire has only been administered to individuals born by May 2004, which represent the segment of Gen Z older than 18 at the time of writing. The reason for this choice, which may seem limiting, is grounded in current literature that identifies Gen Z as the generation that will "shape the future of shopping" (McKinsey, 2020), having a really big impact on both Millennials and Gen Xers in terms of purchase decisions. Besides, Gen Z Italians make massive use of smartphones, with which they spend an average of 4.20 hours a day. Most of this time is divided between social media (02.49 hours) and streaming music services (02.01 hours) (*Osservatorio Nazionale* Influencer Marketing, 2021). The topic of social media use in young adults is extremely actual and of great relevance, both academically and managerially. Data were collected both from female and male respondents, as gender is not expected to make any significant difference in the data results. 176 individuals fully participated in the study completely answering all questions. The remaining 24 incomplete responses were discarded and deleted from the data set: 8 responses were not complete while 16 belonged to respondents outside the age segment of interest for this research (Gen Z). Incomplete responses were discarded for two main reasons: firstly, the interruption of the questionnaire led to incomplete and partial replies. Secondly, the time for completion of the answers was reduced to a minimum to reach the number of responses needed to conduct the experimental study in the shortest possible time. Each participant was instructed to complete the questionnaire in the most honest way.

The average age of the respondents was found to be 22.8 years, although the age range fluctuated between a minimum of 18 and a maximum of 26 years. Although not representative of the general population, the sample contains a large proportion of the typical users of the Internet, namely younger affluent consumers. Regarding the gender of the subjects, the predominant gender was found to be female, represented by 49.4% (87/176), while the male gender was characterized by 44.9% (79/176). The remaining 5.7% (10/176) preferred not to identify with a specific gender: 0.6% of respondents selected the third gender option (1/176), or preferred not to identify with a specific gender (5.1%; 9/176).

Results and discussion. Statistical analyses were applied to identify the underlying factors that affect the variables of interest, to examine the validity and reliability of the measurement instruments, to assess the

goodness of fit of the models, to test the significance of the relationships between the variables, and to compare the means of the groups.

Initially, it was decided to carry out two factorial, exploratory analyses in order to examine and validate the items of the scales used in the conceptual research model. Specifically, principal component analysis was performed as the extraction method, applying VARIMAX as the relationship technique. To decide how many factors to extract, the table of the total explained variance was observed by verifying that, according to Kaiser's rule, the Eigenvalues were greater than 1, and that the cumulative variance as a percentage was greater than 60%. In addition, the table of commonalities and the component matrix were observed. All items were found to have an extraction value greater than 0.5 and a loading score greater than 0.3. Therefore, it was decided to retain all items making up the scales by validating them.

After validating both scales, a reliability test was conducted to check the level of reliability of the scales considered. In particular, the value of the Cronbach Alphas of both constructs was observed, making sure that it was above 80 percent. As for the first scale, related to the mediator, a value of 0.963 was found, while as for the dependent variable scale, a value of 0.930 was recorded. Therefore, both scales were found to be reliable. In addition, the KMO test related to the measure of sampling adequacy was performed. Regarding the first scale, related to the mediator, a value of 0.915 was found, while regarding the dependent variable scale, a value of 0.843 was recorded. Therefore, in both cases the level of adequacy was found to be more than good (> 0.8). Next, Bartlett's test of sphericity was carried out, which was found to be statistically significant by finding a p-value of 0.001 (p-value $< \alpha = 0.05$) in both cases.

After conducting both factor analyses and reliability tests, the main assumptions of the conceptual model were examined so that its significance and thus relative success could be confirmed or rejected.

H1: To test the statistical significance of the direct hypothesis (H1), a comparison of means was conducted by applying a One-Way ANOVA as an analysis for testing the effect of the independent variable (EOY_RECAP) against the dependent variable (UGC_PROPENSITY). Specifically, the independent variable (x) has a nominal categorical nature and is distinct in two different conditions coded with 0 (Replay) and 1 (Wrapped), while the dependent variable (Y) has a metric nature. After performing the ANOVA, looking at the descriptive statistics table, it was possible to see that the group of subjects subjected to the scenario coded with 0 (92 individuals) had a mean value of 2.5299, a standard deviation = 1.07854 and a confidence interval composed by a lower bound = 2.3065 and an upper bound = 2.7533, while the respondents exposed to the visual condition coded with 1 (84 individuals) had a mean value of 5, a standard deviation = 1.5676 and a confidence interval composed by a lower bound = 3.1687 and an upper bound = 3.6646. In addition, considering ANOVA's table, a p-value related to the F-test of 0.001 emerged, which was statistically significant (p-value $< \alpha = 0.05$) therefore a statistically significant difference between the group averages could be seen, thus confirming there the effect of X versus Y. Thus, the direct hypothesis H1 (main effect) was proved.

H2-H3: To test the statistical significance of the indirect hypothesis (H2-H3), a regression analysis was conducted through the application of Model4 of the SPSS Process Macro version 3.4. extension developed

by Andrew F. Hayes to test the mediating effect caused by impression management toward the relationship between the independent variable (EOY_RECAP) and the dependent variable (UGC_PROPENSITY). To test the success of the mediation effect, it was necessary to distinguish it into two different relationships: a first effect between the independent variable and the mediator (H2) and a second effect between the mediator and the dependent variable (H3). Specifically, to demonstrate the statistical significance of both hypotheses, a 95% confidence interval was adopted with an alpha reference value of 5%. In addition, it was necessary to make sure that the extremes of the confidence range (LLCI= Lower Level of Confidence Interval; ULCI = Upper Level of Confidence Interval) for each relationship met the sign concordance (both positive or both negative) so that there was no zero within. Finally, the beta coefficients of the regression analysis of both relationships between the variables were examined to assess sign and magnitude of each effect. Regarding the first part of the indirect effect, through observation of the SPSS output, a p-value equal to 0.0000, a favourable confidence interval (LLCI =2.9283; ULCI=3.6087), and a positive regression coefficient β equal to 3.2685 were noted. Therefore, this section of the indirect effect was found to be statistically significant, thus confirming H2. Regarding the second part of the indirect effect, through observation of the SPSS output, a p-value equal to 0.0000, a favourable confidence interval (LLCI = 0.7730; ULCI= 0.9473), and a positive regression coefficient β equal to 0.8602 could be seen. Therefore, this section of the indirect effect was found to be statistically significant, thus confirming H3. Considering results obtained, since both sections of the indirect effect were statistically significant, it was possible to confirm the overall success of the mediation effect.

As originally expected, the hypothesized relationships were supported. First, results empirically demonstrate that correlation between end-of-year recap ownership and brand-related UGC exists and is positive; that is, receiving a personalized end-of-year recap either from Spotify or Apple Music increased users' willingness to create UGC associated with the respective brand. However, as expected, participants reported a higher willingness to create UGC related to their Spotify Wrapped experience, compared to their Apple Music Replay experience. This finding is consistent with the notion that Spotify Wrapped is more personal and engaging, with its graphic design, interactive features, and ability to directly address the customer, stimulating a greater desire to share the experience with others through UGC. Second, results pointed out the significance of impression management in shaping users' willingness to create brand-related UGC. Indeed, participants reported being more likely to engage in UGC production when they believed it would enhance their social image. Impression management accentuates the effect of the correlation between end-of-year recaps and UGC, with participants reporting that they were more likely to create UGC when they believed it would enhance their social image. Furthermore, participants exposed to Spotify Wrapped showed a stronger identification with the product in terms of impression management compared to those exposed to Apple Music Replay. This finding underscores the importance of considering the psychological motivations behind UGC creation and the desire for individuals to present themselves in a favourable light through their content. Overall, the findings provide empirical evidence for the positive correlation between end-of-year recap ownership and brand-related UGC. The study contributes to our understanding of the impact of personalized recaps on user behaviour and highlights the role of impression management as a key factor in

driving UGC production. Moreover, the results demonstrate the greater effectiveness of Spotify Wrapped in terms of generating user engagement and brand identification compared to Apple Music Replay.

Theoretical and managerial contributions. This research has several academic contributions. First, it contributes to the existing literature on impression management, particularly in the context of social media and user-generated content. The study investigates the role of impression management in mediating the relationship between Spotify Wrapped and the willingness to share on social media. By doing so, it sheds light on the mechanisms that drive users' sharing behaviours and provides new insights into how users manipulate their online self-presentation.

Second, the research contributes to the growing body of literature on user-generated content, particularly in the context of music streaming services. By investigating the reasons why users share Spotify Wrapped on social media, the study provides new insights into how users engage with music streaming services and how they use these services to express their identities and connect with others.

Third, the study has implications for marketing and communication theory, particularly in the context of social media. By examining the motivations behind users' sharing behaviours and the role of impression management in mediating this relationship, the study contributes to our understanding of how users engage with social media and the ways in which social media can be used for marketing purposes.

Finally, the study expands the pre-existing literature on impression management by investigating this phenomenon on a social networking site that has not yet been covered in-depth. This contributes to a better understanding of impression management and its role in online self-presentation, which can be applied to other social media platforms and contexts.

This research also entails several managerial implications, particularly for marketing managers in various industries. The study provides insights into the motivations and behaviours behind user-generated content creation and sharing, particularly in the context of personalized content like Spotify Wrapped and Apple Music Replay. One practical implication is the development of a persuasive UGC marketing strategy that prioritizes encouraging users to voluntarily consume, contribute, and create brand-related content, rather than forcing them to share positive content about products. Managers can increase the dissemination of positive UGC by nurturing user engagement with the brand. By gaining a deeper understanding of the reasons why consumers create and share UGC, marketers can identify effective stimuli to incentivize UGC production. Additionally, businesses can leverage the findings from this research to develop more personalized, shareable content that resonates with users' identities and enhances their sense of belonging. This can help increase user engagement and loyalty, particularly among Gen Z consumers who value authenticity and community. Moreover, social media platforms can use insights from this research to better understand the motivations behind users' sharing behaviours, particularly for UGC related to brands. This could inform the development of features that encourage and facilitate sharing, thereby enhancing the user experience.

Overall, the managerial contributions of this research lie in the development of effective marketing strategies that can boost sales and profits by fostering user engagement and loyalty through UGC creation and sharing.

Limitations and future research. The study focuses on the influence of impression management on user-generated content (UGC) among Italian Gen Z, young adults aged 18 to 26 years, on Instagram. The study acknowledges that cultural and social history and practices influence each market and highlights that the Italian culture and mindset, coupled with behavioural methods, have a significant impact on the motives, methods, and quality of information shared on social media.

The study used a convenience sample, which may limit the external validity of the findings, as results may differ if conducted on a consumer segment belonging to other ethnicities or cultures. The study also arbitrarily imposed age limits, which restrict the model's ability to predict behaviour for a larger sample of consumers. Future research could adopt a cross-cultural approach and investigate different socio-cultural samples to confront the results with those of the present research, allowing better generalization of the results. Moreover, future research could benefit by comparing the behaviours of different generations.

The study was conducted within a single social media platform, Instagram, and concerned a particular product category, end-of-year recaps, which may limit the generalizability of the findings. The study provides a comprehensive basis for further examination of these connections in other contexts, age groups, social media platforms, and brands.

The study used self-reported metrics. Future research using more objective measurements of UGC production and impression management, such as log data, is required to get beyond the well-known problems with self-reported data. In addition, future research could examine other variables that may potentially moderate the theoretical relationships proposed herein, such as fear of missing out, brand identification, or brand trust. The constantly evolving state of digital environments and social media in particular means that users will always have new and unseen possibilities for creating user-generated content, presenting themselves, and practicing impression management. The research possibilities in this area are almost limitless and unpredictable.

Another limitation of the study is the sampling methodology adopted. A survey can be useful to test a bigger sample in the population at the same time, but it may lead to potential selection biases and may not be perfectly representative of the population. In order to have a complete overview of the research, neuroscience experiments such as eye-tracking, Galvanic Skin Response (GSR), and Electroencephalography (EEG) could be used to test the variables.

The study used manipulations presented in a questionnaire, representing only a portion of what is featured within products such as Spotify Wrapped and Apple Music Replay. The experience provided by such products could only be reproducible with an experiment that allows for physical interaction with respondents, such as the interview technique. Conducting qualitative research, such as interviews or focus groups, could provide a more in-depth understanding of how individuals perceive and use Spotify Wrapped and how it affects their impression management on social media. The images presented in the study represent randomly selected artists and data. It is possible that if each respondent were subjected to a stimulus designed specifically for him or her, their responses might differ from those given in this instance.

Main Test Questionnaire

Please use this scale from 1 to 7 to indicate how much you agree with the following statements.

(1) Strongly disagree

(2) Disagree

(3) Somewhat disagree

(4) Neither agree nor disagree

(5) Somewhat agree

(6) Agree

(7) Strongly agree

Impression Management Questions

1. This product reflects who I am.
2. I can identify myself with this product.
3. I would use this product to communicate who I am to other people.
4. This product helps me to be who I want to be.
5. This product reflects how I want to present myself to others.

UGC Propensity Questions

1. I would create a social media post related to this product.
2. I would create a story on social media related to this product.
3. I would create videos on social media related to this product.
4. I would start a conversation on social media related to this product.

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1: Age

Quanti anni hai?

		Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulativa
Valido	18	8	4,5	4,5	4,5
	19	14	8,0	8,0	12,5
	20	11	6,3	6,3	18,8
	21	13	7,4	7,4	26,1
	22	19	10,8	10,8	36,9
	23	29	16,5	16,5	53,4
	24	36	20,5	20,5	73,9
	25	25	14,2	14,2	88,1
	26	21	11,9	11,9	100,0
	Totale	176	100,0	100,0	

Quanti anni hai?
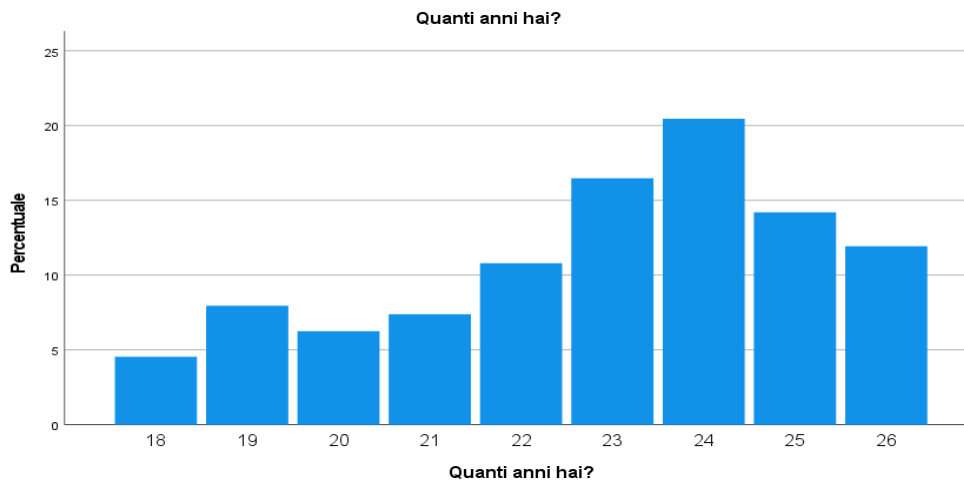
Table 2: Gender

Con quale genere ti identifichi?

		Frequenza	Percentuale	Percentuale valida	Percentuale cumulativa
Valido	Maschio	79	44,9	44,9	44,9
	Femmina	87	49,4	49,4	94,3
	Non binario	1	,6	,6	94,9
	Preferisco non dire	9	5,1	5,1	100,0
	Totale	176	100,0	100,0	

Con quale genere ti identifichi?

- Maschio
- Femmina
- Non binario
- Preferisco non dire
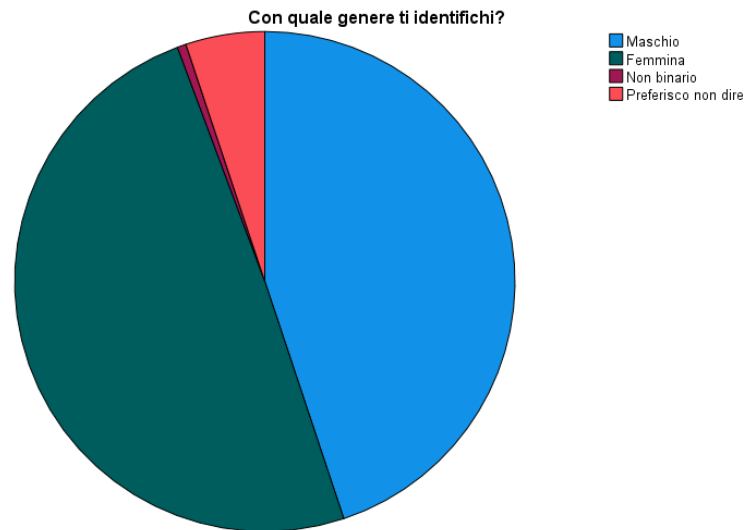
Mediator: Impression Management

Table 3: Factor Analysis

Varianza totale spiegata

Componente	Autovalori iniziali			Caricamenti somme dei quadrati di estrazione		
	Totale	% di varianza	% cumulativa	Totale	% di varianza	% cumulativa
1	4,368	87,357	87,357	4,368	87,357	87,357
2	,215	4,298	91,655			
3	,165	3,291	94,946			
4	,135	2,701	97,646			
5	,118	2,354	100,000			

Metodo di estrazione: Analisi dei componenti principali.

Comunalità

	Iniziale	Estrazione
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Potrei identificarmi con questo prodotto	1,000	,884
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Questo prodotto riflette chi sono	1,000	,899
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Userei questo prodotto per comunicare chi sono alle altre persone	1,000	,856
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Questo prodotto mi aiuta ad essere chi voglio essere	1,000	,847
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Questo prodotto riflette come voglio presentarmi agli altri	1,000	,881

Metodo di estrazione: Analisi dei componenti principali.

Matrice dei componenti[a]

	Componente 1
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Potrei identificarmi con questo prodotto	,940
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Questo prodotto riflette chi sono	,948
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Userei questo prodotto per comunicare chi sono alle altre persone	,925
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Questo prodotto mi aiuta ad essere chi voglio essere	,921
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d'accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Questo prodotto riflette come voglio presentarmi agli altri	,939

Metodo di estrazione: Analisi dei componenti principali.

a. 1 componenti estratti.

Test di KMO e Bartlett

Misura di Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin di adeguatezza del campionamento.		,915
Test della sfericità di Bartlett	Appross. Chi-quadrato	1132,861
	gl	10
	Sign.	<,001

Table 4: Reliability analysis

Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	192	100,0
	Escluso[a]	0	,0
	Totale	192	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

Statistiche di affidabilità

Alpha di Cronbach	Alpha di Cronbach basata su elementi standardizzati	N. di elementi
,963	,964	5

Dependent Variable: User-Generated Content

Table 5: Factor Analysis

Varianza totale spiegata

Componente	Autovalori iniziali			Caricamenti somme dei quadrati di estrazione		
	Totale	% di varianza	% cumulativa	Totale	% di varianza	% cumulativa
1	3,305	82,629	82,629	3,305	82,629	82,629
2	,296	7,402	90,031			
3	,224	5,598	95,630			
4	,175	4,370	100,000			

Metodo di estrazione: Analisi dei componenti principali.

Comunalità

	Iniziale	Estrazione
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d' accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Creerei un post sui social relativo a questo prodotto	1,000	,843
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d' accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Creerei una storia sui social relativa a questo prodotto	1,000	,814
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d' accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Creerei video sui social relativi a questo prodotto	1,000	,804
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d' accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Inizierei una conversazione sui social relativa a questo prodotto	1,000	,844

Metodo di estrazione: Analisi dei componenti principali.

Matrice dei componenti[a]

	Componente 1
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d' accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Creerei un post sui social relativo a questo prodotto	,918
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d' accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Creerei una storia sui social relativa a questo prodotto	,902
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d' accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Creerei video sui social relativi a questo prodotto	,897
Indicare su una scala da 1 (completamente in disaccordo) a 7 (completamente d' accordo) in quale misura sei d'accordo o in disaccordo con le seguenti affermazioni. - Inizierei una conversazione sui social relativa a questo prodotto	,919

Metodo di estrazione: Analisi dei componenti principali.

a. 1 componenti estratti.

Test di KMO e Bartlett

Misura di Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin di adeguatezza del campionamento.		,843
Test della sfericità di Bartlett	Appross. Chi-quadrato	615,992
	gl	6
	Sign.	<,001

Table 6: Reliability analysis

Riepilogo elaborazione casi

		N	%
Casi	Valido	192	100,0
	Escluso[a]	0	,0
	Totale	192	100,0

a. Eliminazione listwise basata su tutte le variabili nella procedura.

Statistiche di affidabilità

Alpha di Cronbach	Alpha di Cronbach basata su elementi standardizzati	N. di elementi
,930	,930	4

Table 7: One-Way ANOVA: X-Y

Descrittive

DV

					95% di intervallo di confidenza per la media			
	N	Medio	Deviazione std.	Errore std.	Limite inferiore	Limite superiore	Minimo	Massimo
,00	92	2,5299	1,07854	,11245	2,3065	2,7533	1,00	7,00
1,00	84	5,4405	1,29213	,14098	5,1601	5,7209	1,00	7,00
Totale	176	3,9190	1,87679	,14147	3,6398	4,1982	1,00	7,00

ANOVA

DV

	Somma dei quadrati	df	Media quadratica	F	Sig.
Tra gruppi	371,976	1	371,976	264,792	<,001
Entro i gruppi	244,433	174	1,405		
Totale	616,409	175			

Table 8: Regression Matrix: Mediation Model 4 (X-M-Y)

```
--------------------------------------------------------------------
Model  : 4
    Y  : DV
    X  : IV
    M  : MED

Sample
Size:  176

********************************************************************
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 MED

Model Summary
          R        R-sq        MSE          F         df1         df2           p
      ,8209       ,6739     1,3046    359,5807      1,0000    174,0000       ,0000

Model
              coeff         se          t          p         LLCI        ULCI
constant     2,4696       ,1191    20,7388      ,0000       2,2345      2,7046
IV           3,2685       ,1724    18,9626      ,0000       2,9283      3,6087

********************************************************************
```

```
OUTCOME VARIABLE:
 DV

Model Summary
          R        R-sq         MSE          F         df1         df2           p
      ,9359       ,8759       ,4421    610,5941      2,0000    173,0000       ,0000

Model
             coeff          se           t           p        LLCI        ULCI
constant     ,4057       ,1292      3,1407       ,0020       ,1507       ,6606
IV           ,0991       ,1757       ,5642       ,5734      -,2477       ,4460
MED          ,8602       ,0441     19,4899       ,0000       ,7730       ,9473

****************** DIRECT AND INDIRECT EFFECTS OF X ON Y ******************

Direct effect of X on Y
     Effect          se           t           p        LLCI        ULCI
      ,0991       ,1757       ,5642       ,5734      -,2477       ,4460

Indirect effect(s) of X on Y:
        Effect      BootSE    BootLLCI    BootULCI
MED     2,8114       ,2183      2,4100      3,2618

********************** ANALYSIS NOTES AND ERRORS **********************

Level of confidence for all confidence intervals in output:
  95,0000
```

REFERENCES

Abdollahpouri, H., Burke, R., and Mobasher, B. (2017b). "Recommender systems as multi-stakeholder environments," in Proceedings of the 25th Conference on User Modeling, Adaptation and Personalization, UMAP'17 (New York, NY: Association for Computing Machinery), 347–348.

Acar, O. A. and Puntoni, S. (2016). Customer Empowerment in the Digital Age. Journal of Advertising Research. 56. 4-8.

Anderson, C., (2009). FREE: the Future of a Radical Price. First ed. Random House Business Books.

Anderson, I., et al. (2020). "Just the Way You Are": Linking Music Listening on Spotify and Personality. Social Psychological and Personality Science.

Arditi, D., (2014). ITunes: breaking barriers and building walls. Popular Music Soc. 37 (4), 408–424.

Arnhold, U. (2010). User Generated Branding: Integrating User Generated Content into Brand Management. Dissertation University of Bremen.

Arnould, E. J. and Thompson, C. J. (2005). Consumer Culture Theory (CCT): Twenty Years of Research, Journal of Consumer Research. Vol. 31 (March), 868-82.

Ballhaus, W., Chow W., and Rivet, M. (2022). Perspectives from the global entertainment & media outlook 2022-2026. Downloaded March 12, 2023, from:
https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/industries/tmt/media/outlook/outlook-perspectives.html

Baumeister, R. F. (1982). A self-presentational view of social phenomena. Psychological Bulletin, 91(1), 3–26.

Belk, R. (2013). Extended self in a digital world. Journal of Consumer Research, 40, 477–500.

Belk, R. (2014). You are what you can access: Sharing and collaborative consumption online. Journal of Business Research, 67, 1595–1600.

Belk, R. (1988). Possessions and the extended self. Journal of Consumer Research, 15(2), 139.

Berg, J. H., and Derlega, V. J. (1987). Self-disclosure: Theory, research, and therapy

Berger, J. (2013). Contagious: why things catch on. 1st Simon & Schuster hardcover edition, New York, Simon & Schuster.

Berthon, P., Pitt, L. and Campbell, C. (2008), Ad Lib: When Customers Create The Ad. California Management Review, Vol. 50, No.4, pp. 6-30.

Blogmeter, (2023). Italiani e social media, edizione 2022. Downloaded April 7, 2023, from:
https://www.blogmeter.it/it/ism2021scarica-0?hs_preview=jNJwPayg-85480628087

Blumer H (1998[1969]) Symbolic Interactionism: Perspective and Method. Los Angeles: University of California Press.

Bowman, S., and Willis, C. (2003). We media. How audiences are shaping the future of news and information.

Boyd, D. (2007) "Why Youth (Heart) Social Network Sites: The Role of Networked Publics in Teenage Social Life." MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Learning – Youth, Identity, and Digital Media Volume (ed. David Buckingham). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Brandtzæg PB (2012) Social networking sites: Their users and social implications—A longitudinal study. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication 17(4): 467–488.

Bryan, C. (2018), The Case for Having a 'Finsta' As an Adult. Downloaded April 2, 2023, https://mashable.com/article/should-i-make-a-finsta-instagram/

Bumgarner, B. (2007). You have been poked: Exploring the uses and gratifications of Facebook among emerging adults. First Monday.

Castells M (2009) Communication Power. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Cesareo, L., Pastore, A., (2014). Consumers' attitude and behavior towards online music piracy and subscription-based services. Journal of Consumer Marketing 31 (6–7), 515–525.

Cha, M., Kwak, H., Rodriguez, P., Ahn, Y. Y., and Moon, S. (2007, October). I tube, you tube, everybody tubes: analyzing the world's largest user generated content video system. In Proceedings of the 7th ACM SIGCOMM conference on Internet measurement (pp. 1-14). ACM.

Chen, C.-. P. (2016). Forming digital self and parasocial relationships on YouTube. Journal of Consumer Culture, 16(1), 232–254.

Chen, C.C., Leon, S., Nakayama, M., (2018). Converting music streaming free users to paid subscribers: social influence or hedonic performance. International Journal of Electronic Business.

Christodoulides, G. and Jevons, C. and Bonhomme, J. (2012). Memo to Marketers: Quantitative Evidence for Change How User-Generated Content Really Affects Brands. Journal of Advertising Research

Collins, N. and Miller, L. (1994). Self-disclosure and liking: A meta-analytic review. Psychological bulletin. 116. 457-75. 10.1037//0033-2909.116.3.457.

Courtois C, Mechant P, De Marez L, and Verleye G (2009). Gratifications and Seeding Behavior of Online Adolescents. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication 15: 109–137.

Daugherty, T., Eastin, M. S., and Bright, L. (2008). Exploring Consumer Motivations for Creating User-Generated Content. Journal of Interactive Advertising.

Deighton, J., and Kornfeld, L. (2009). Interactivity's unanticipated consequences for marketers and marketing. Journal of Interactive Marketing, 23(1), 4–10.

DiMaggio P (1987) Classification in art. American Sociological Review 52(4): 440–455.

Dinsmore, J.B., Swani, K., Dugan, R.G., (2017). To "free" or not to "free": trait predictors of mobile app purchasing tendencies. Psychology of Marketing.

Doerr, J., Benlian, A., Vetter, J., Hess, T., (2010). Pricing of content services - an empirical investigation of Music as a Service. Lecture Notes Business Information Process.

Duke, D. (2023). Why is user generated content winning. Downloaded March 23, 2023, from https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesbusinesscouncil/2023/03/13/why-user-generated-content-is-winning/?sh=502cc5af6e94

Edelman, D. C., Singer, M., (2015). Competing on Customer Journeys. Downloaded March 1, 2023, from https://hbr.org/2015/11/competing-on-customer-journeys

Elliott, N. (2015), "How does your brand stack up on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram?". Downloaded April 7, 2023, from: https://www.forrester.com/blogs/15-09-15-how_does_your_brand_stack_up_on_facebook_twitter_and_instagram/

Ellison, N. B., Hancock, J. T., and Toma, C. L. (2011). Profile as promise: A framework for conceptualizing veracity in online dating self-presentations. New Media and Society, 14(1), 45–62.

Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., and Lampe, C. (2007). The benefits of facebook "friends:" social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 12(4), 1143–1168.

Ellison, N., Heino, R., and Gibbs, J. (2006). Managing impressions online: Self-presentation processes in the online dating environment. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 11(2), 415–441.

Eriksson, M., Fleischer, M., Johansson, A.,Snickars, P. and Vonderau, P. (2019) Spotify Teardown – Inside the Black Box of Streaming Music. MIT Press.

Escalas, J. E., and Bettman, J. R., (2005), "Self-Construal, Reference Groups, and Brand Meaning," Journal of Consumer Research, 32 (December), 378-389.

Forde, E. (2022). Spotify Comfortably Remains the Biggest Streaming Service Despite Its Market Share Being Eaten Into. Downloaded February 25, 2023, from https://www.forbes.com/sites/eamonnforde/2022/01/19/spotify-comfortably-remains-the-biggest-streaming-service-despite-its-market-share-being-eaten-into/?sh=1667f5863474

Fullwood, C. (2019). Impression management and self-presentation online. In A. Attrill-Smith, C. Fullwood, M. Keep, and D. J. Kuss (Eds.), The Oxford Handbook of Cyberpsychology (pp. 34–56). Oxford University Press.

Galant, S., 2020. Data Spotlight: How Spotify Wrapped Makes Music Data Feel Personable. Retrieved January 15, 2023, from: https://www.springboard.com/blog/spotify-data-insights/.

Gioaba, I., and Krings, F. (2017). Impression Management in the job interview: An effective way of mitigating discrimination against older applicants? Frontiers in Psychology, 8.

Goffman, E. (1959). The presentation of self in everyday life. New York: Doubleday.

Greene, K. K., Byrne, M. D., and Everett, S. P. (2006, August). A comparison of usability between voting methods. In Proceedings of the 2006 USENIX/ACCURATE Electronic Voting Technology Workshop (pp. 1-7).

Guo, L., Tan, E., Chen, S., Zhang, X., and Zhao, Y. E. (2009). Analyzing patterns of user content generation in online social networks. Proceedings of the 15th ACM SIGKDD international conference on Knowledge discovery and data mining (pp. 369-378). ACM.

Hagen, A. N., and Lüders, M. (2017). Social streaming? Navigating music as personal and social. Convergence, 23(6), 643-659.

Hall, J.A., Pennington, N. and Lueders, A. (2014), "Impression management and formation on Facebook: a lens model approach", New Media & Society.

Halliday, S. V. 2016. User-generated content about brands: Understanding its creators and consumers. Journal of Business Research 69(1), 137-144.

Hamari, J., Sjoklint, M., Ukkonen, A., (2016). The sharing economy: why people participate in collaborative consumption. J. Assoc. Info. Sci. Technol.

Harmeling, C.M., Moffett, J.W., Arnold, M.J. and Carlson, B. D. (2017), "Toward a theory of customer engagement marketing", Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science.

He, Y., Chen, Q., Lee, R.P., Wang, Y., Pohlmann, A., (2017). Consumers' Role Performance and Brand Identification: Evidence from a Survey and a Longitudinal Field Experiment, Journal of Interactive Marketing, Volume 38, Pages 1-11, ISSN 1094-9968,

He, Y., Q. Chen, R. P. Lee, Y. Wang, A. Pohlmann. (2017). Consumers' role performance and brand identification: Evidence from a survey and a longitudinal field experiment. Journal of Interactive Marketing 38(2), 1-11.

Higgins, E. T. (1987). Self-discrepancy: a theory relating self and affect. Psychological review, 94(3), 319.

Hodkinson, C. (2016). 'Fear of Missing Out' (FOMO) Marketing Appeals: A Conceptual model. Journal of Marketing Communications, 25(1), 65–88.

Holmberg, C., Berg, C., Hillman, T., Lissner, L., and Chaplin, J. E. (2018). Self-presentation in digital media among adolescent patients with obesity: Striving for integrity, risk-reduction, and social recognition. Digital Health.

Huang, H. (2014). Self-presentation Tactics in Social Media. In Proceedings of the 2014 International Conference on Social Science.

Hutter, K., Hautz, J., Dennhardt, S. and Füller, J. (2013), "The impact of user interactions in social media on brand awareness and purchase intention: the case of MINI on facebook", Journal of Product & Brand Management,

Ibarra, H., and Barbulescu, R. (2010). Identity as narrative: Prevalence, effectiveness, and consequences of narrative identity work in macro work role transitions. Academy of Management Review, 35(1), 135-154.

International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (2023), Global Music Record. Downloaded March 22, 2023, from: https://www.ifpi.org/our-industry/industry-data/.

Johansson, S., Werner, A., Åker, P., Goldenzwaig, G., (2019). Streaming Music: Practices, Media. First ed. Routledge, Cultures.

Kaplan, A. and Haenlein, M. (2010). Users of the World, Unite! The Challenges and Opportunities of Social Media. Business Horizons.

Katz, Daniel (1960). The Functional Approach to the Study of Attitudes. Public Opinion Quarterly, 24, 27-46.

Kim, J. and Lee, J.-E.R. (2011), "The Facebook paths to happiness: effects of the number of Facebook friends and self-presentation on subjective well-being", CyberPsychology, Behavior and Social Networking

Komulainen S, Karukka M, and Hakkila J (2010) Social music services in teenage life—A case study. In: 22nd Conference of the Computer-Human Interaction Special Interest Group of Australia on Computer-Human Interaction, Brisbane, Australia, 22-26 November 2010, pp. 364–367. New York: ACM Press.

Krishnamurthy, S. and Dou, W. (2008). Advertising with User-Generated Content: A Framework and Research Agenda, Journal of Interactive Advertising, 8(2):1-7

Kumar, V., 2014. Making "freemium" work: many start-ups fail to recognize the challenges of this popular business model. Harvard Business Review.

Langaro, D., Rita, P. and de Fatima Salgueiro, M. (2018), "Do social networking sites contribute for building brands? Evaluating the impact of users' participation on brand awareness and brand attitude", Journal of Marketing Communications, Vol. 24 No. 2, pp. 146-168.

Larsen, G., Lawson, R., Todd, S., (2009). The consumption of music as self-representation in social interaction. Australas. Market J. 17 (1), 16–26.

Larsen, G., Lawson, R., Todd, S., (2010). The symbolic consumption of music. J. Market. Manag. 26 (7–8), 671–685.

Leary, M. R., & Kowalski, R. M. (1990). Impression management: A literature review and two-component model. Psychological Bulletin, 107(1), 34–47.

Lee-Won, R.J., Shim, M., Joo, Y.K. and Park, S.G. (2014), "Who puts the best 'face' forward on Facebook? Positive self-presentation in online social networking and the role of self-consciousness, actual-to-total friends ratio, and culture", Computers in Human Behavior.

Leisewitz, A. and Musgrave, G. (2022). Does Spotify Create Attachment? Algorithmic Playlists, Intermediation and the Artist-Fan Relationship. Culture Unbound Journal of Current Cultural Research. 14. 75-100.

Leong, T.W. and Wright P.C., (2013) Revisiting social practices surrounding music. In: SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '13). Paris: ACM Press. pp. 951–960.

Manago, A.M., Graham, M.B., Greenfield P.M., and Salimkhan, G. (2008), "Self-Presentation and Gender on MySpace," Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology

Marder, B., Marchant, C., Archer-Brown, C., Yau, A., and Colliander J. (2018). Conspicuous Political Brand Interactions on Social Network Sites. European Journal of Marketing.

Matute, J., Palau-Saumell, R. and Occhiocupo, N. (2019). "Understanding customer brand engagement in user-initiated online brand communities: antecedents and consequences", Journal of Product & Brand Management

McAndrew, F.T. and Jeong, H.S. (2012), "Who does what on Facebook? Age, sex, and relationship status as predictors of Facebook use", Computers in Human Behavior,

McPherson, M. J., Barrett, F. S., Lopez-Gonzalez, M., Jiradejvong, P., and Limb, C. J. (2016). Emotional intent modulates the neural substrates of creativity: An fMRI study of emotionally targeted improvisation in jazz musicians. Scientific Reports.

Mead, G.H, and Morris, C.W. (1967[1934]) Mind, Self, and Society: From the Standpoint of a Social Behaviorist. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Muntinga, D., Smit, E.G. and Moorman, M. (2011), "Introducing COBRAs", International Journal of Advertising.

Nadkarni, A., and Hofmann, S. G. (2012). Why do people use Facebook? Personality and Individual Differences, 52(3), 243–249.

Naveed, K., Watanabe, C., Neittaanm€aki, P., (2017). Co-evolution between streaming and live music leads a way to the sustainable growth of music industry – lessons from the US experiences. Technol. Soc. 50, 1–19.

North, A. C., and Hargreaves, D. J. (1999). Music and adolescent identity. Music Education Research, 1(1), 75–92.

Nosi, C., Pucci, T., Melanthiou, Y. and Zanni, L. (2022), "The influence of online and offline brand trust on consumer buying intention", *EuroMed Journal of Business*, Vol. 17 No. 4, pp. 550-567

Nov, O. (2007). What motivates Wikipedians? Communications of the ACM, 50(11), 60–64.

Ochoa, X., and Duval, E. (2008). Quantitative analysis of user-generated content on the Web. pp. 19-26. In: Proceedings of the First International Workshop on Understanding Web Evolution

OECD (2007). Participative Web and User-Created Content: Web 2.0, Wikis, and Social Networking. Paris: Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Osservatorio Nazionale Influencer Marketing, (2021). La Gen-Z italiana. Downloaded March 24, 2023, from https://www.onim.it/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Gen-Z-Report-versione-free.pdf

Ostroff, D. (2022). Spotify Culture Next Report. Downloaded March 23, 2023, from: https://culturenext2022.byspotify.com/

Owens, T. (2006). Self and Identity. In J. Delamater (Ed.), Handbook of Social Psychology (pp. 205–233). Springer Science+Business Media, LLC.

Papacharissi, Z. (2002). The presentation of self in virtual life: characteristics of personal home pages. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 79(3), 643–660.

Park, N., Kee, K.F., and Valenzuela, S. (2009). Being Immersed in Social Networking Environment: Facebook Groups, Uses and Gratifications, and Social Outcomes, Cyberpsychology & Behavior

Pempek, T., and Yermolayeva, Y., and Calvert, S. (2009). College students' social networking experiences on Facebook. Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology. 30. 227-238.

Raacke, J. and Bonds-Raacke, J. 2008. MySpace and Facebook: Applying the Uses and Gratifications Theory to Exploring Friend-Networking Sites, Cyberpsychology & Behavior,

Rosenbaum, J., Johnson, B., Stepman, P., and Nuijten, K. (2009). Just being themselves? Goals and Strategies for Self-Presentation on Facebook.

Rosenfeld, P. R., Giacalone, R. A., and Riordan, C. A. (1995). Impression management in organizations: Theory, measurement, and practice. New York: Routledge.

Rosengren, S., and Dahlén, M. (2019). Spotify's role in new music consumption: An exploratory study. Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services, 51, 273-279.

Schau, H. J., and Gilly, M. C. (2003). We Are What We Post? Self-Presentation in Personal Web Space. Journal of Consumer Research.

Schivinski, B., and Christodoulides, G., and Dabrowski, D. (2016). Measuring Consumers' Engagement With Brand-Related Social-Media Content: Development and Validation of a Scale that Identifies Levels of Social-Media Engagement with Brands. Journal of Advertising Research. 56. 10.2501/JAR-2016-004.

Schlenker, B. R., and Pontari, B. A. (2000). The strategic control of information: Impression management and self-presentation in daily life.

Schultz, S. E., Kleine III, R. E., and Kernan, J. B. (1989). These Are A Few of My Favorite Things. Toward an Explication of Attachment as a Consumer Behavior Construct. Advances in Consumer Research, 16(1).

Sedikides, C. and Strube M.J. (1997), "Self-Evaluation: To Thine Own Self Be Good, to Thine Own Self Be Sure, to Thine Own Self Be True, and to Thine Own Self Be Better," in Advances in Experimental Social Psychology, Mark P. Zanna, ed., vol. 29, Cambridge, MA: Academic Press, 209–69

Shao, G (2009). Understanding the Appeal of User-Generated Media: A Uses and Gratification Perspective. Internet Research, 19(1):7-25.

Sheldon, P., Rauschnabel, P., Antony, M., and Car, S., (2017). A cross-cultural comparison of Croatian and American social network sites: Exploring cultural differences in motives for Instagram use. Computers in Human Behavior.

Sinclair, G., Tinson, J., (2017). Psychological ownership and music streaming consumption. Journal of Business Research

Sloboda, J. A., Oneill, S. A., and Ivaldi, A. (2001). Functions of music in everyday life: An exploratory study using the experience sampling method. Musicae Scientiae.

Smith, A. N., Fischer, E., and Yongjian, C. (2012). How does brand-related user-generated content differ across YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter?. Journal of Interactive Marketing, 26(2), 102-113.

Sonboli, N., Smith, J. J., Cabral Berenfus, F., Burke, R., and Fiesler, C. (2021). "Fairness and transparency in recommendation: the users' perspective," in Proceedings of the 29th ACM Conference on User Modeling, Adaptation and Personalization, UMAP '21 (New York, NY: Association for Computing Machinery), 274–279.

Spotify, 2023. Spotify Reports Fourth Quarter 2022 Earnings. Downloaded March 19, 2023, from newsroom.spotify.com website: https://s29.q4cdn.com/175625835/files/doc_financials/2022/q4/Shareholder-Deck-Q4-2022-FINAL.pdf

Stackla (2021). Post-Pandemic Shifts in Consumer Shopping Habits: Authenticity, Personalization and the Power of UGC. Downloaded February 3, 2023, from: https://www.nosto.com/blog/report-post-pandemic-shifts-in-consumer-shopping-habits-authenticity-personalization-and-the-power-of-ugc

Stafford, T. F., Stafford, M. R., and Schkade, L. L. (2004). Determining uses and gratifications for the Internet. Decision Sciences, 35(2), 259-288.

Steele, J. R., and Brown, J. D. (1995). Adolescent room culture: Studying media in the context of everyday life. Journal of Youth and Adolescence, 24, 551-576.

Stets, J. E., and Burke, P. J. (2000). Identity theory and social identity theory. Social psychology quarterly, 63(3), 224-237.

Stöckl, R., Rohrmeier, P. and Hess, T. (2008), Why Customers Produce User Generated Content. In Web 2.0 (pp. 271-287). Springer Berlin Heidelberg.

Straub, D. and Limayen, M. (1995), "Measuring system usage: implications for IS theory testing", Management Science, Vol. 41 No. 8, pp. 1328-1343.

Sun, T., and Wu, G. (2012). Traits, predictors, and consequences of Facebook self-presentation. Social Science Computer Review, 30(4), 419–433.

Tajfel, H., and Turner, J. C. (1979). An integrative theory of intergroup conflict. In W. G. Austin, and S. Worchel (Eds.), The social psychology of intergroup relations (pp. 33-37). Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole.

Tarrant, M., North, A. C., and Hargreaves, D. J. (2001). Social categorization, self-esteem, and the estimated musical preference of male adolescents. The Journal of Social Psychology, 141, 565-581.

Taruffi, L., and Koelsch, S. (2014). The paradox of music-evoked sadness: An online survey. PLoS ONE.

Tashakkori, A., and Teddlie, C. (1998). Mixed Methodology: Combining Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches (Vol. 46). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Taylor, D.G., Strutton, D., and Thompson K. (2012), Self-Enhancement As a Motivation for Sharing Online Advertising. Journal of Interactive Advertising.

The McKinsey Podcast, (2020). Meet Generation Z: Shaping the future of shopping. Downloaded March 24, 2023, from https://www.mckinsey.com/industries/consumer-packaged-goods/our-insights/meet-generation-z-shaping-the-future-of-shopping

Trammell, K. D., and Keshelashvili, A. (2005). Examining the new influencers: A self-presentation study of a-list blogs. Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly, 82 (4), 968–982.

Tuan, Y. F. (1980). The significance of the artifact. Geographical Review, 462-472.

Van Dijck J (2007) Mediated Memories in the Digital Age. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Van Dijck, J. (2013) The Culture of Connectivity. A Critical History of Social Media. New York: Oxford University Press.

Vock, M., Dolen, W. Van, Ruyter, K. De., 2013. Understanding willingness to pay for social network sites,

Vonderau, P., (2017). The Spotify Effect: Digital Distribution and Financial Growth. Televis. N. Media 20 (1), 3–19.

Wagner, T.M., Hess, T., (2013). What drives users to pay for freemium services? Examining people's willingness to pay for music services. In: 19th Americas Conference on Information Systems, AMCIS 2013 - Hyperconnected World: Anything, Anywhere, Anytime.

Wang, S. S. (2013). "I share, therefore I am": Personality traits, life satisfaction, and Facebook check-ins. Cyberpsychology, Behavior, and Social Networking 16(12), 870-877.

Ward, J. (2017). What are you doing on Tinder? Impression management on a matchmaking mobile app. Information, Communication & Society, 20(11), 1644–1659.

Wayne, S. J., and Kacmar, K. M. (1991). The effects of impression management on the performance appraisal process. Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 48(1), 70–88.

Weiss, H. (2018). Why people love Spotify's annual wrap-ups. Downloaded March 23, 2023, from: https://www.theatlantic.com/technology/archive/2018/12/spotify-wrapped-and-data-collection/577930/

Wilson, J. (2022). The Age Of Digital; Music Executive Reacts To The Impact Of Digitalization In The Music Industry. Downloaded January 18, 2023. From: https://www.forbes.com/sites/joshwilson/2022/09/14/the-age-of-digital-music-executive-reacts-to-the-impact-of-digitalization-in-the-music-industry/?sh=6356cdb2537b

Woods, K. (2022). Spotify Wrapped: What marketers can learn from the viral campaign. Downloaded March 23, 2023, from https://sproutsocial.com/insights/spotify-wrapped/

Yu, J., Hu, P.J. and Cheng, T. (2015), "Role of affect in self-disclosure on social network websites: a test of two competing models", Journal of Management Information Systems,

Zentner, M., Grandjean, D., and Scherer, K. R. (2008). Emotions evoked by the sound of music: Characterization, classification, and measurement. Emotion.

Zywica, J., and Danowski, J. (2008). The Faces of Facebookers: Investigating Social Enhancement and Social Compensation Hypotheses; Predicting FacebookTM and Offline Popularity from Sociability and Self-Esteem, and Mapping the Meanings of Popularity with Semantic Networks. Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication, 14(1), 1-34.