

Hedonic and utilitarian gratification from ephemeral content on social media: A qualitative study of user engagement

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Abstract

This study explores the factors of hedonic and utilitarian gratification gained from ephemeral content on social media, and how these factors shape users' engagement with such content. Grounded in Uses and Gratifications Theory, the study adopts a qualitative approach involving semi structured interviews with 33 daily active social media users (16 male and 17 female) aged 18 to 40 years. Interview audio was transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis. Information availability emerged as the leading factor underlying both hedonic and utilitarian gratification, with the analysis revealing six overarching themes: entertainment, interactivity, information, new trend discovery, ease of use, and real time updates. In terms of social media engagement behaviour, contribution, including liking, sharing, and recommending content, emerged as the most preferred form of engagement among users. Theoretically, the study extends Uses and Gratifications Theory by identifying the specific gratification factors associated with ephemeral content consumption, and it introduces real time updates as a previously unidentified gratification factor. Practically, the findings offer social media advertisers and marketers actionable insight into the gratification factors that most effectively engage and attract users. While a substantial body of research has examined gratification derived from social media content in general, limited attention has been paid to ephemeral content specifically and its relationship with users' engagement behaviour, a gap this study addresses.

Keywords: Hedonic Gratification, Utilitarian Gratification, Ephemeral Content, Social Media Engagement, Uses And Gratifications Theory

JEL Classification: M31, L82, D91

1. Introduction

Social media has become one of the most important media channels. Users not only share information about themselves on social media but also stay informed about other users and brands. Social media has a significant impact on young adult consumers' frequent communication with reference groups because it eliminates time and location barriers in consumer connection through real-time sharing (Bilgin, 2020). With updating technologies, social media has become very much interactive and audio-visual presentation of products is more appealing for the users as compared to the traditional mass media (Belanche et al., 2019). Considering the fast-changing and busy lifestyle, consumers nowadays are more interested in crisp and quick information which has led to tremendous growth in use of ephemeral content. Ephemeral content refers to the audios, videos, messages and other communication that is available for certain period and automatically disappears after viewing (Chen & Cheung, 2019). Snapchat was the first social media platform to come up with the idea of stories format and now every leading Social Networking Sites (SNS) is following the trend. As per Snapchat's official data (2019), there are 190 million daily active users of Snapchat. On average, Snap chatters use app over 20 times a day, and spend an average of 30 minutes on the app, creating 3 billion Snaps daily. Instagram has captured a wide market with the trending and dynamic features it offers. Ephemeral social media has become the primary usage behavior on SNS (Yu & Chen, 2020). Numerous research has been conducted on finding out the reasons for increased social media engagement (SME) of new generation. According to (Malthouse et al., 2016) content design ought to prioritize creating value for specific consumers in order to enhance their degree of involvement. Recent literature that has examined consumer choices of online and social media has explored constructs based on the theoretical underpinnings of UGT, such as the need for social interaction, the need for entertainment, the need for information seeking and sharing, and the desire for reward or remuneration (Whiting & Williams, 2013)(Pletikosa Cvijikj & Michahelles, 2013)(Muntinga et al., 2011a). As a result, UGT offers a framework for comprehending why people browse particular kinds of material on social media.

Through the lens of Uses and Gratification Theory, researchers have focused on both hedonic and utilitarian gratifications perspectives of SME. This theory has been employed by many researchers to study the motives for a range of media types as traditional media, the internet and SNSs ((Alhabash & Ma, 2017), (Dolan et al., 2019), (Park et al., 2009) and (Whiting & Williams, 2013)). The theory is based on five main tenets: (1) that media use is goal-directed; (2) that audiences actively participate in the media they consume; (3) that media competes with other sources to meet needs; (4) that audience members are conscious of the reasons behind their media use; and (5) that only audience members are able to assess the value of media content and the satisfactions gained from media usage. However, the same in context of ephemeral content still need further investigation. Through this study, we aim to explore the factors of hedonic and utilitarian gratification gained from the ephemeral content on social media platforms which impacts their

SME. The motives of user engagement were determined using a qualitative analysis grounded in UGT. The specific research questions guiding this is the following:

Primary research question (RQ1): “What gratification factors encourage user to engage in ephemeral content on social media?”

Secondary research question (RQ2): “Which engaging activities users are involved in the ephemeral content on social media?”

2. Literature Review

2.1 Ephemeral Content on Social Media

The tremendous increase in social media usage has transformed our way of communication as it allows users to communicate beyond geographical boundaries and in much more interactive way (van Nimwegen & Bergman, 2019). Social media platforms were initially persistent, allowing users to revisit information, however in recent years, a new class of social media platforms has emerged: transient social media networks. With the updating technologies, a new concept in social media i.e. ephemerality has come up which aims to design a system of erasing communication artifacts (be it audio, visual, texts or a combination of all) after a certain period of time, primarily 24 hours (Ma et al., 2021). Use of ephemeral content in social media has become one of the prominent component of SNS (van Nimwegen & Bergman, 2019). Around 3 million advertisers are using Stories Ads to reach customers across Instagram, Facebook, and Messenger . 80 percent of accounts follow a business on Instagram and 1/3rd of the most viewed Instagram Stories is from businesses (Facebook, 2019) A study based on advertisement effectiveness on Facebook and Instagram suggests that using Instagram features to create more dynamic ads with stories, reels, tags and other animated features, is an effective advertising strategy as compared to the static and traditional content available on Facebook (Belanche et al., 2019). In addition, interactions on transient social media platforms like Snapchat and Facebook/Instagram Stories generate more positive emotions than other forms of media and rank second only to in-person interactions, according to a study by (Bayer et al., 2016).

2.2 Hedonic and Utilitarian Gratification

Hedonic motive is related to the consumption experience feelings, fantasies, pleasure, and the five senses, which affects a person's emotional experience (Sudiro et al., 2013). Hedonic motivation focuses on an individual's emotional needs. It takes into consideration the non-rational benefits like enjoyment, visual appeals, happiness, relaxation, pleasure and other socio-psychological needs (Xu et al., 2012)

Utilitarian motives are task-oriented, rational and non-emotional in nature. Users gaining utilitarian gratification seek convenience, market information, obtaining product/general

knowledge (Babin et al., 1994) Utilitarian users focus on browsing content that best suit their purposes (Zheng et al., 2019)

As gratification directly or indirectly impacts user's engagement in social media content, the study hence focuses on investigating the gratification factors that induce users to engage in ephemeral content on social media.

2.3 Social Media Engagement

The term "consumers' social media engagement behavior" (SMEB) refers to how users interact with social media marketing content, including peer- and brand-generated content, on websites like Facebook and YouTube. Social media users can communicate via a variety of media platforms, including creating original content, recommending and sharing current information, reviewing and rating goods and services, chatting about popular topics, pursuing interests, passions, and hobbies, and sharing knowledge and experience (Almousa et al., 2020). The emotional and rational feelings or perceptions that users have when consuming ephemeral content through specific medium at a specific moment are defined in this study as the factors of hedonic and utilitarian gratification that leads to social media engagement. Three categories of user-generated media engagement were distinguished by (Shao, 2009a) theoretical work: consumption (i.e., viewing, reading, and watching), participation (i.e., liking/disliking, sharing, commenting, and production (i.e., publishing, creating). Likewise, (Muntinga et al., 2011b) classified three types of brand-related social media usage, namely consuming, contributing, and creating. The degree of engagement varies from basic form of engagement i.e. liking content to higher form of engagement i.e. creating content. In this study, the engagement activities found were grouped under three categories based on above discussion i.e. consumption, contribution, and creation. Consumption shows basic level of engagement in which users passively consumes social media content e.g. watching or reading the content, listening the audios, viewing content. Contribution is a higher level of engagement which includes peer-to-peer and peer-to-content exchanges like sharing, commenting, recommending, liking the content with others. Lastly, creation is the highest level of engagement in which content is created and published on social media sites.

2.4 Theoretical background

The theory of U&G is an approach which states that individuals select and use media to get gratification (Dolan et al., 2019). It helps to understand why and how individuals use media to satisfy their needs. This theory says that a user's commitment increases towards the medium as they gain gratification from communication (Lopez et al., 2021). The rational and emotional needs of users lead to active and passive social media engagement behavior. Researchers have taken an interest in the UGT in the context of media study. According to Uses and Gratifications, some researchers have tried to explain social media use (e.g., (Gallego et al., 2016) (Hsu et al., 2015)(Gan & Li, 2015)). Because it emphasizes the relevance of digital media in the context of daily life, the range of needs it addresses, and the active engagement of the audience, U&G is very

much suited to study SNSs. By distinguishing three types of SNS use consuming, participating, and producing (Shao, 2009b) builds on the UGT. Passively viewing social media content is referred to as "consuming," while user and content interaction, such as liking, commenting, or sharing content, is referred to as "participating," and content creation and publication, including taking part in social media challenges, is referred to as "production."

(Dolan et al., 2019) and (Smock et al., 2011) have identified that in order to gratify their needs for entertainment, information sharing, escapism, and social connections, individuals use social media platforms. The short-lived content i.e. the ephemeral content provides users with enormous opportunities for information and interactions. "Sharing" "Contributing" and "Consuming and Searching" ephemeral content generates gratification among millennials and intensifies use of Snapchat which ultimately influences purchase motivations of users (Lopez et al., 2021). Much of the prior studies investigating the motivational factors of user engagement in social media focuses on social media as a whole. However, little is known about the gratification factors underlying usage of specifically the ephemeral content on social media platforms. Hence, to address this gap, the study focusses in identifying the factors of hedonic and utilitarian gratification which encourage users to engage in ephemeral social media content. Also, in order to understand the SMEB of users, engagement activities of users are studied.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research design

A qualitative methodology was employed as factors of hedonic and utilitarian gratification were need to be explored. As the focus of the study is to find out the factors of gratification that users get from the ephemeral content on social media, the research did not set out to test a theory through fixed design experiments, but instead used theory (User and Gratification) to understand the motivations behind user engagement in ephemeral content on social media. Based on the aims of the study, a mono-method qualitative research approach was applied to address both emotional and logical reasoning behind user engagement. Hence, the most appropriate choice of primary data collection method as per study was semi-structured interview, as used in other similar studies (Parker & Wang, 2016)

3.2 Research population and sampling

As most of the social media users are from the age group 18-25 followed by 26-35 years of age, our target population was active social media users of age 18-40 years in Delhi and Delhi-NCR(Richter, 2023). Participants from different backgrounds were targeted online to participate in the process in order to get wide range of responses. Research subjects were identified from the contacts of researchers (i.e. a convenience sample). However, the final selection of participants was based on purposive sampling i.e. selection on the basis of criteria and objectives of the study. A list of 60 potential participants was obtained from researchers' contact and they were contacted

online with a brief description about the research. In order to assess the eligibility, a few screening questions were asked to them which were drafted to gather information about their age, residential area, social media usage. Screening questions can be found in Appendix A. Finally, 33 participants were selected and shortlisted for the interview process based on the eligibility criteria (purposive sample) as mentioned above. Inclusion criteria were determined by researchers i.e. daily active users of at least one of the social media platforms i.e. (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, YouTube, WhatsApp or any other), Delhi/Delhi-NCR residents, age between 18-40 years, willing to participate in interview process.

3.3 Questionnaire design

In order to address the aims of the study, the interview questions were created to target variables based on theory (UGT) mentioned in literature review. The questionnaire so formed was sent to industry and educational experts and was further modified based on the feedback of experts in order to improve the understandability and clarity of the questionnaire. Finally, the modified questionnaire was used for conducting the semi-structured interviews of the final 33 participants. The list of questions can be found in Appendix B.

3.4 Data collection

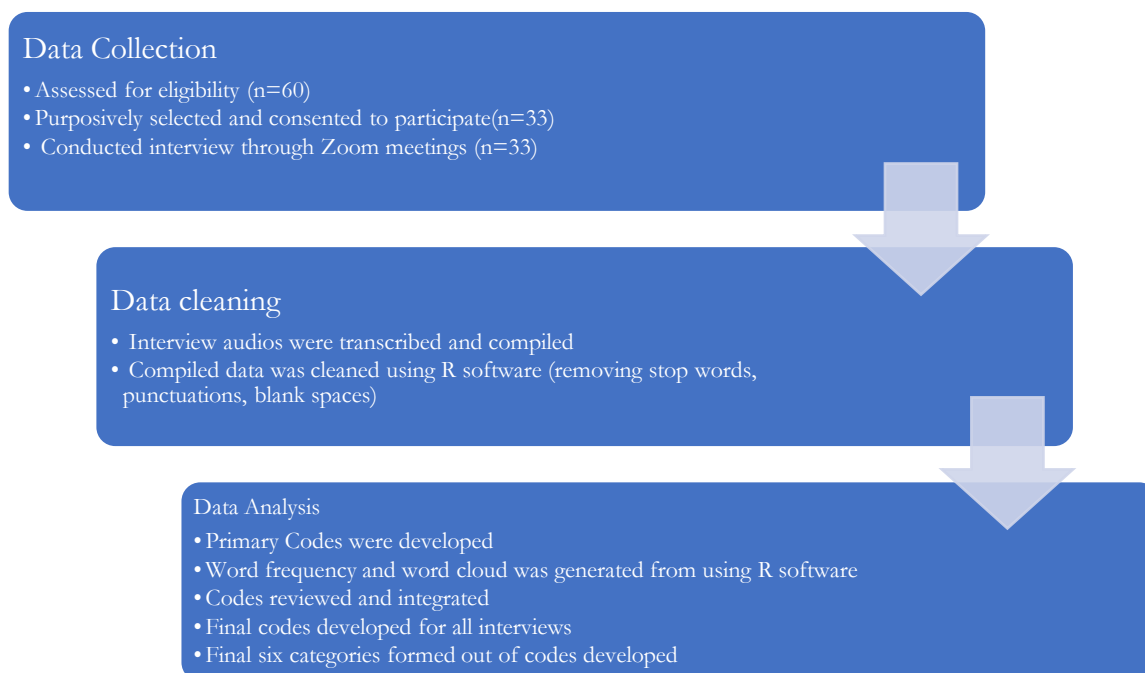
Before the start of interview, the participants were asked to provide their consent to record their interviews. Once the consent was received, demographic questions were asked about their age, gender, occupation and area along with time spent on social media. Before moving on to the next part of the questionnaire, a general overview was provided to the participants in order to make them familiar with the area of research and to ensure a better understanding from their end. The interview questions then asked about their engagement in ephemeral content, the motivating factors of engagement, level of engagement and finally their experience of engagement in ephemeral content on social media. The interviews lasted for 30-40 minutes and were conducted online through Zoom meeting app as per convenience of the participants. Out of 60 people contacted, 33 (16- male and 17- female) agreed for the interview process and were suitable as per the requirements of the study. All participants were assured their confidentiality would be protected and the data will only be used for this study. Even though the sample size is small, other studies have been carried out in qualitative motivation research with comparatively smaller sample sizes, hence proving the methodology's applicability (Babin et al., 1994).

3.5 Data analysis

R software was used in order to organize and analyze the data collected from the interviews. The audios generated from the interview process were verbatim transcribed and the transcripts were read and re-read carefully in order to gain more understanding of the data. The data was compiled in readable form in the R software. The compiled data was cleaned for analysis using commands in R software which included removing stop words, punctuations, blank spaces. Word frequencies

were extracted from the cleaned data, resulting in the most common terms and their synonyms being compiled focusing on identifying codes and patterns of participant responses, compared and contrasted by frequency of utterance, thematic coding was done following the grounded theory approach. Further, frequent words and their associations were seen and finally word cloud was generated for the pictorial presentation of the results. The primary codes were further reviewed to identify which could be combined and integrated. Cross-validation of identified codes was done by both the researchers in order to ensure there are no discrepancies or differences. This iterative process ensured accuracy of findings of the research. Final codes were grouped under six categories based on major variables found in UGT theory and prior research. Also, the final six categories found were further classified under two sub-heads i.e. hedonic and utilitarian on the basis of responses of participants and various past studies. *Figure 1* shows the entire process from data collection to data analysis.

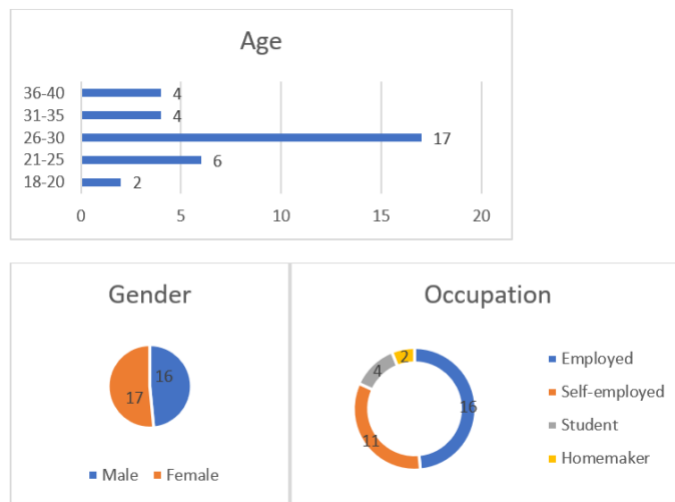
Figure 1. Data collection and analysis process



4. Findings

33 participants were sampled (Male, N=16 and Female, N=17), aged between 18-40 years, with average age of 28 years old. *Figure 2* provides the snapshot of demographic information of the participants.

Figure 2. Demographic Snapshot (Note: n=33)



As per literature review, Instagram being most popular and widely used app, the same can be interpreted by the study as 29 out of 33 participants confirmed they use Instagram on daily basis. On the basis of usage, Instagram is followed by WhatsApp and Facebook. All the participants agreed that ephemeral content is much more engaging than the traditional feed and they feel satisfied after checking the ephemeral updates which increases their engagement level.

4.1 Research Question One

The following findings are presented to address RQ1: Factors of hedonic and utilitarian gratification gained from ephemeral content on social media.

In relation to the combined hedonic and utilitarian motivations driving consumers to engage in ephemeral content on social media, *Figure 3* shows the most frequent words used by participants while describing the reasons or factors that make users to gain gratification from the ephemeral content present on social media. On the basis of word frequency and the context in which they are used by the participants these words formed the basis of developing codes and finally “information, entertainment, new trends discovery, real time updates, interactivity, ease of use” are the major categories for factors of user gratification that are found during the analysis of the data.

Further, *Figure 4* emphasizes the importance of “information” as the major factor of both hedonic as well as utilitarian gratification. All participants agreed that ephemeral content provides information (quick information availability) about the latest updates of brands and their friends.

Figure 3. Word frequency result from R software

	word	freq
inform	inform	57
quick	quick	25
entertain	entertain	25
avail	avail	24
new	new	21
time	time	18
trend	trend	17
updat	updat	16
eye	eye	15
interact	interact	15
real	real	15
catch	catch	14
discoveri	discoveri	13
reason	reason	10
eas	eas	9
use	use	9
content	content	9
first	first	7
effect	effect	6
provid	provid	6

Note: This figure represents the frequency of top 20s word used by the participants during interview in decreasing order

Figure 4. Word cloud result from R software



Note: This figure shows the combined output of both utilitarian and hedonic factors explored in the study

4.1.1 Utilitarian gratification

Interactivity: In the study, the participants expressed that they interact through the ephemeral content present on social media, for example: *‘there is direct interaction like if I find something very nice I just directly ask the price and size’, ‘due to interactivity, I get information quicker than feed posts’*. Hence, the direct link to interact in the stories shared on social media helps users to get more information they want in comparatively lesser time.

Information: The analysis showed that participants had the motivation to consume ephemeral content for the purpose of gaining information, as expressed by a participant *‘As I am not a newspaper person, I get information through insta stories’*. Other participant mentioned *‘I get much more information in less time like within seconds from the stories’*

So, the information provided in the ephemeral content, be it about the brands’ new product, upcoming and present offers or other general news is much more quick and easily accessible.

Ease of use: According to the responses of participants, it is easier to use and access content through ephemeral content. As expressed in the interviews *‘I prefer tapping on stories as its more easy for me to know what is going on in the environment’, ‘its quite convenient and basically it is easy to navigate around’, ‘the ease of access i.e. its easy to explore new things just on a click’*.

Hence, ephemeral content is easily accessible as compared to the traditional feed, users prefer tapping on stories first. As it provided the required information much easily and quickly, it gratifies the utilitarian needs of the users.

4.1.2 Hedonic Gratification

Entertainment: In the study, the participants found the ephemeral to be entertaining and eye-catching which makes it a strong factor to gain hedonic gratification as 24 out of 33 participants agreed to it. The participants commented that the content they see on stories is quite entertaining and the effects are eye-catching as shown in responses: *‘I am quite entertained after seeing what is going on around me and what my friends are doing’, ‘I feel tapping on stories is much more entertaining and you don’t get bored of it’, ‘for me entertainment would be the most relevant reason of getting hedonic gratification from the ephemeral content’*.

New trend discovery: Within the study, participants gave reference related to new trend updates/discovery that indicated the influence of this element on hedonic motivation. According to analysis, stories/ephemeral content enables users to discover what is going on currently around them and what are the ongoing or upcoming trends in market. The participants expressed the same with their responses such as: *‘the main purpose is to discover upcoming and the ongoing trends’, ‘you get to know what is going on as new fashion trends’, ‘stories give me the content what is trendy’, ‘as I am social media influencer, I get some trendy concepts from other people’s stories’*.

Real time updates: As per the data collected, the participants expressed that ephemeral content provides more real time updates as compared to tradition feed on social media which gives users

them pleasure and makes it a factor for gaining hedonic gratification. One of the participants said *'ephemeral content gives real time content so you feel that the content is much more authentic'*. Others said *'real time updates are there and you get to know the latest and first-hand information'*, *'stories provide real time updates of your near & dear ones and you feel a personal connect'*, *'the urge to get real time status of world is satisfied by the stories which becomes the main motivation to tap on stories first than on feed'*.

All of the above-mentioned statements indicates that the real time information/updates provided by the ephemeral content on social media is one of the strong factors of motivation to engage in stories. As ephemeral content gives opportunity to social media users to share their current status, real time sharing was found to be the relevant motivation factor in today's scenario.

4.1.3 Utilitarian and Hedonic gratification

As per the study, there are some factors that can be related to both utilitarian as well as hedonic gratification i.e. these factors lead to both kinds of gratification.

Information: As discussed above, is one of the major and strong factors for both the gratification. Participants expressed that ephemeral content gives quick and easy access to information about the brands they are following. It provides information about the new products the brand is going to launch, the discounts prevailing on various products, the upcoming events in which they are interested and more. When users get information which helps them to make rational decisions, they gain utilitarian gratification.

On the other hand, users also get information about what their near and dear ones are doing, what is going on in their friends' lives which gives them a sense of pleasure. Hence, when users get information which gives pleasure, happiness or fulfil their other non-rational needs, it leads to hedonic gratification.

Interactivity: Similar to information, participants agreed that ephemeral content provides a way to interact with brands and people around them providing both utilitarian and hedonic gratification. For reference, a participant commented that he feels satisfied when he sees his friend's story and interacts directly through the it. Other mentioned that the ephemeral content gives her option to directly ask for price or other information regarding the product she likes on social media.

New trend discovery: The process that customers go through to discover new styles, goods, and brands is referred to as "trend discovery." Customers are shown to be satisfied with this method (Arnold & Reynolds, 2003). One of the main incentives, has been shown to be perusing and learning about new styles and trends (Parsons, 2002).

As mentioned above, ephemeral content enabled participants to know the trends going in the market which helps them professionally or to take shopping decisions. Also, looking for new

trends gives participants pleasure, enjoyment and a sense of satisfaction of being aware of current trends going on.

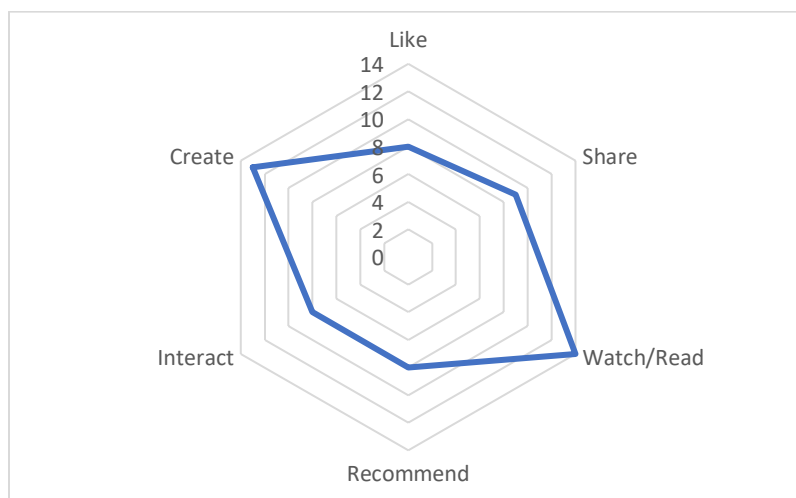
4.2 Research Question Two

The following findings are presented to address RQ2: Engaging activities users are involved in ephemeral content on social media to understand their engagement behavior.

Participants, when asked about their activities which they prefer on social media regarding ephemeral content, shared that they like to involve in various types of activities as per their emotional and rational needs.

As depicted in *Figure 5*, considering each activity as a separate, ‘watch/read’ ephemeral content (mentioned by 14 participants) was found to be the most engaging activity on social media, followed by ‘create’ (mentioned by 13 participants) and finally by ‘sharing’ (mentioned by 9 participants). ‘Like’, ‘recommend’, ‘interact’ (mentioned by 8 participants each) also highlighted users’ level of engagement in the content.

Figure 5. Engaging activities of users in ephemeral content on social media



Contribution, collectively was found to be the most preferred engagement behavior towards ephemeral content on social media. Contribution which includes like, share, recommend, interact was mentioned 33 times in total while **consumption** (including watch/read) was mentioned by 14 participants. **Creation (mentioned by 13 participants)** which is the highest level of engagement was found to be the least engaging activity of ephemeral social media content. This can be explained that once users start liking, sharing the content, they get similar kind of more updates which keep them ‘consuming’ the content. However, participants agreed that their engagement behaviors which includes various engagement activities do influence their purchase intention positively.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

Regarding UGT our study extended the literature on the factors of gratification of ephemeral content usage along with the level of user engagement in the content. This study explored the factors of utilitarian and hedonic gratification gained from the ephemeral content by the social media users which ultimately influence their engagement level in the content. A lot of studies have confirmed a positive relationship of above-mentioned factors of utilitarian and hedonic gratification with online shopping/purchase decision (Babin et al., 1994; Peng et al., 2019). However, there has been scant research in direction of factors of utilitarian and hedonic gratification influencing the users' engagement in ephemeral content. This study found the major factors that induces users to consume ephemeral content as they satisfy their utilitarian and hedonic needs.

Results of study shows information access is the key factor of both utilitarian and hedonic gratification. The rationale stems from the significance of information in making any kind of decision and a sense of satisfaction of having knowledge about market, getting updates about celebrities and kin and kith. Additionally, the quantity of information available on social media websites in stories format enables the customer to learn more specific details about goods or services. The analysis found interactivity in ephemeral content and new trend updates through the content both act as factors of utilitarian and hedonic gratification for users. Mikalef et al. (2012) discovered that the notions of trend discovery affected users' intentions to peruse merchandise. The strong positive correlation between trend discovery and product browsing can be explained by the constant updating of products on social media, which requires less work than traditional shopping and gives users access to the newest product trends and fashions. In this study new trend discovery was found to be a motivating factor for both utilitarian and hedonic gratification.

Further, real time updates as a factor of hedonic gratification is the new contribution to the current research. As ephemeral content provides alive updates about the ongoing events, current life updates of friends and family, it gives users pleasure and sense of belongingness and emotional connect which leads to hedonic gratification. As suggested by Mikalef et al. (2012), the ease of accessing social media and the variety of goods offered on these websites are shown to be the most significant utilitarian aspects in explaining why customers peruse product listings. In line with above stated research, this study also found ease of use as a factor of utilitarian gratification gained from the ephemeral content on social media.

Further, the study suggested that contribution which involves liking, sharing, recommending, interacting kind of activities on social media promotes positive brand involvement behaviors ultimately resulting in purchase motivation. The results of the study were in line with the previous study (Lopez et al., 2021), where contributing was found to be the most significant force in ephemeral content's use. Creating content and sharing it with others at real time basis is one of the unique and personalized way of connecting with ephemeral features provides to its users. Apart

from the factors of gratification and engagement behavior, the study also gave some notable findings contributing to the research area. It was found that social media users prefer short-lived content over traditional feed on the platforms. The reason behind the same can be associated with the advantage of getting real time updates through ephemeral content, short-life span of the content and crisp and quick information it provides. Due to short life span of the content, the users check their social media accounts frequently which increases the visits on brands' pages.

5.1 Implications

This research addresses users' motivations for using social media platforms in the context of ephemeral content. The findings identify important factors that strengthen users' ephemeral content usage. Information access, interactivity, new trend discovery and ease of use were found as factors of utilitarian gratification owing to ephemeral content. Further real time updates, entertainment, new trend discovery, interactivity and information access are the factors that can be associated with hedonic gratification. New trend discovery, information access and interactivity were found to be three common factors for both types of gratification. Theoretically, this study contributed to UGT with additional factor i.e. real time updates which is a factor of hedonic gratification regarding ephemeral content usage on social media. Previous studies have focused on other factors like convenience, visual appeal, social interaction, information accessibility. Numerous practical implications arise for marketing practitioners from the study results. According to Syrdal and Briggs (2018), over 92% of the participants in the 18 Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice believe that social media plays a significant role in their business. Firstly, the results of this study can be used as recommendations for using ephemeral content in social media marketing campaigns. Ephemeral content can be created to evoke and increase consumers' satisfaction and engagement by suitably matching their motives. Offering more additional interactive features like a "polling sticker" "live video" or "quiz" can be a better option than the typical social media "likes" and "comments", which are used to create interactions. In light of the aforementioned, companies need to create a more appealing user interface to entice customers to peruse and make purchases. In order to lure more users, the companies can focus on audio-visual effects while creating advertisements. They should create such content that users are willing to consume and share more which can build brand awareness and lead to indirect marketing. Secondly, the research suggests that marketers can provide more real-time updates through their social media accounts by using ephemeral features in order to give live and authentic content to the users. This will help brands to share latest updates with their customers and increase social media traffic. Thirdly, marketers should focus on creating content that induce engaging activities of the users. As contribution was found to be the most engagement behavior of users, marketers should create content that is more stimulating, intriguing yet useful which users feel like sharing with each other, re-share on their accounts or interact through. It will ultimately increase the visibility of the brand and increase further consumption of the content.

5.2 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

We have included the main limitations of this study here, considering that all studies have limitations that affect the results. Firstly, because of limited resources and time, the area of data collection was limited to Delhi and Delhi-NCR. The age range considered for data collection was confined to 18-40 years only. Users below 18 and above 40 years of age were not taken into consideration, following the notion that users belonging to young age group (18-40 years) are more active on social media. Other factors like time of the day, occupation, urgency or immediacy, privacy concerns were not considered while analyzing data that can impact utilitarian and hedonic gratification of a user. Different social media platforms have different features to offer and can impact users in one or other way. This study was more generic considering social media platforms as a whole and not separately. Future research can be conducted in large geographical area i.e. considering areas beyond Delhi and Delhi-NCR. Even while young individuals are thought to be frequent users of social media's fleeting material, elder demographics' usage patterns are clearly changing. Expanding the sample size and demographics in future studies would improve the generalizability of the results. In further research, other demographic and personal factors can be taken into consideration to get more accurate results. Also, an extended study can be done, comparing impact of different platforms on users' engagement level in short-lived content present on social media. As this study only focuses on exploring the factors of gratification owing to ephemeral content, ultimately leading to users' engagement in the content, a further detailed study can be conducted on finding out the impact of ephemeral content in social media marketing on consumers purchase intention through lens of Uses and Gratification theory, using the factors explored in this study.

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Appendix A

Screening Questions for selecting participants for interview process

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Occupation:
4. Gender:
5. Residential area:
6. Are you on social media?
7. How much time do you spend on social media?

Appendix B

Interview Questions for Finding Factors/Antecedents of Hedonic and Utilitarian Gratification from Ephemeral Content.

Brief introduction about the terms used in questions was provided beforehand.

Ephemeral content: It refers to any kind of communication (audio, video, text, others) on social media which is available for certain period of time i.e. From few seconds to 24 hours. Eg: social media stories

Hedonic gratification: It means the instant pleasure/experience/satisfaction you get from any activity. Eg: Checking social media for entertainment purposes

Utilitarian gratification: It refers to the satisfaction gained from any task accomplishment. Eg: Getting discount information for the product you want to buy.

Demographic questions:

1. Name:
2. Age:
3. Occupation:
4. Gender:
5. Where do you live?

Questions for finding factors:

1. On an average, how much time you spend on social media platforms on daily basis?

2. Which is the most preferred social media sites you visit?
3. Do you prefer tapping on stories first or scrolling for feed on social media platforms? Please mention the rationale behind the same.
4. Do you think ephemeral content is more engaging than posts on news feed? And why?
5. Do you feel satisfied after checking ephemeral updates on social media?
6. What kind of satisfaction is gained from ephemeral content?
 - Hedonic i.e. instant pleasure and enjoyment
 - Utilitarian i.e. task related (getting information about a product you want to buy)
 - Both
7. What is/are the reasons of getting pleasure (hedonic gratification) from ephemeral content*
8. What is/are the reasons of gaining task completion satisfaction (utilitarian gratification) from ephemeral content*
9. What do you like the most in ephemeral content as compared to traditional news feed?
10. Due to availability of content for short period of time, does your engagement level increases in the ephemeral content?
11. Do you feel like checking social media stories frequently so that you do not miss on any update?
12. What kind of engagement activities (like sharing, watching, reading, interacting or any other) you prefer more with the ephemeral content on your social media account
13. Have you ever been interested in buying the product after engaging in its ephemeral advertising?

**If answer to question 6 is Hedonic – Question 7 will be asked*

If answer to question 6 is Utilitarian – Question 8 will be asked

If answer to question 6 is Both – Question 7 and 8 both will be asked