



BETWEEN SCREENS AND INFLUENCE: WHO SHAPES THE ONLINE EXPERIENCES OF YOUNG PEOPLE?

ATTITUDES OF YOUNG PEOPLE TOWARDS INFLUENCERS AND THEIR CONTENT

SOCIAL MEDIA, TIME SPENT AND TYPES OF CONTENT FOLLOWED BY YOUTH

The digital everyday life of young people in Bosnia and Herzegovina is characterized by **intensive use of social media and daily consumption of diverse online content.**

How long do young people watch influencers daily?



On average, young people spend **2 to 4 hours per day watching influencer content.**

Which social media platforms do young people use?

Instagram and TikTok are the most widely used platforms, while Snapchat and YouTube are used somewhat less, but still to a significant extent.

Girls use **TikTok and Snapchat** more often, while boys use **YouTube** more frequently.

	Boys	Girls
Instagram	93%	94%
TikTok	75%	87%
Youtube	74%	47%
Snapchat	44%	71%



What types of content do young people follow?

These are mostly contents related to everyday life, entertainment, and personal interests, with additional influence from algorithm-based recommendations.



55%
Lifestyle



51%
Beauty



51%
Comedy



39%
Educational

Lifestyle and beauty content are followed more often by girls, while boys more frequently follow **gaming, comedy, and educational content.**

TRUST IN INFLUENCERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON YOUTH



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The impact of influencers in the digital environment of young people is reflected not only in the popularity of the content they follow, but also in the way their messages shape **attitudes, habits, and everyday decisions.**

Impact on girls vs. boys



Girls:

Clothing style, self-care, nutrition, self-confidence



Boys:

Physical activity, training, discipline, practical advice

26% of young people report that they have **changed their opinion or certain behavioural patterns after following influencer content.**

Although differences between girls and boys exist, these patterns show that influencers shape not only trends but also the **everyday choices, habits, and ways of thinking of young people.**

What is the real impact of influencers?

79% of young people believe that influencers can negatively affect **self-confidence.**

78% of young people **partially trust information** which is shared by influencers

47% of young people **attach a certain level of importance** to influencer opinions

49% of young people report that they **purchased a product based** on an influencer recommendation



” *Influencers are today's merchants of attention. And attention is the most valuable resource of our time: once they direct it, they can **change someone's thoughts, desires, purchases, and even the way young people perceive themselves.** So the question of whether they should follow rules actually means:*

someone who influences the awareness of others have boundaries? ”

- Boy, 15-16 years old

EXPOSURE TO RISKY AND HARMFUL CONTENT



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Experts warn about a range of risks in influencer content related to **misinformation, hidden advertising and risky messages that may affect the well being of youth.**

Which harmful content do young people notice?

On average, young people recognize **5 different forms of harmful content in influencer posts.** They most commonly notice the following forms of harmful content:



64%
Smoking or alcohol

Boys more often report:

- smoking and alcohol
- drugs and violence
- risky behaviour (online betting) and challenges



58%
Unhealthy diet

Girls more often report:

- unrealistic appearance standards
- eating disorders
- discrimination and pressure related to appearance



51%
Hate speech



50%
Unrealistic beauty standards



“ I often find myself wondering how they manage to maintain such a **perfect routine, perfect appearance, healthy habits and similar things.** ”

- Girl, 17-18 years old.

Exposure and emotional effects of influencer content

93% of young people report that they have encountered extreme ideas, hate speech, conspiracy theories or violent content online. **At the same time, such exposure can also have emotional consequences.**



Nearly one in four young people report feeling bad or uncomfortable after watching influencer content, with girls reporting this experience more often than boys.

REPORTING POTENTIALLY HARMFUL CONTENT AND THE ROLE OF PLATFORMS



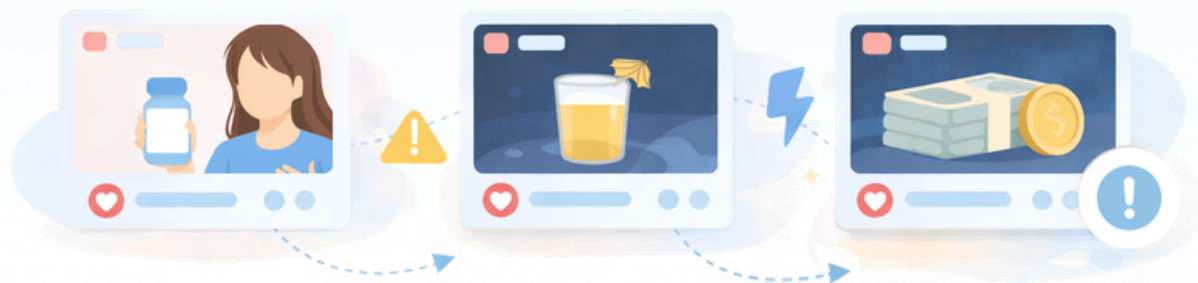
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When young people do not report or choose to ignore problematic content, it remains visible to other users. As a result, potentially harmful messages **continue to circulate in the digital space and may affect a larger number of young people.**



Level of knowledge and actual practices

62% of young people **report that they know where to report harmful content online.**

55% of young people report that they have **never reported harmful or problematic content on social media.**

The gap between knowledge and reaction shows that awareness of reporting mechanisms does not necessarily lead to their active use in practice.

How do young people react to the promotion of “medicines”?

Promotion of “medicines” or health products is a particularly important example, as such messages can **directly affect the health of young people therefore requiring a higher level of caution and verification of information.** When young people encounter this type of content, their reactions vary significantly.

55%
Ignores content



36%
Checks information



6%
Reports content



2%
Believes content



Youth recognize the potential risks of such messages, but active responses such as reporting remain rare, **partly due to the perception that platforms do not respond quickly to reports.**



GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR YOUTH SAFETY IN THE DIGITAL ENVIRONMENT



1. Strengthening media and information literacy

Introduce practical learning content in schools that **helps youth recognize advertising, verify information and critically assess online content.**



3. Make reporting mechanisms more visible

Develop clear guidance on **where and how to report harmful content and ensure support in schools when youth encounter problematic posts.**



5. Develop an effective regulatory framework

Establish clear rules for **transparent advertising, protection of minors and the removal of harmful content in cooperation with platforms, industry, schools and youth.**



2. Transparency of sponsored content

Ensure clear labeling of sponsored content and advertisements in influencer posts so that youth can distinguish between **promotion and personal recommendations.**



4. Clearer rules for content intended for children

Introduce clear guidelines for **labeling and limiting content that includes risky topics such as alcohol, violence or dangerous challenges.**



6. Connect the online environment and mental health

Develop programs that help youth **recognize online pressures, manage the content they follow and protect their mental health.**



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