
SOCIAL MEDIA & ENTERTAINMENT DISCOVERY

**HOW U.S. AUDIENCES FIND MUSIC,
MOVIES AND TV SHOWS ON
SHORT-FORM VIDEO PLATFORMS**

INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Audrey Schomer is a media analyst and research editor at Luminate Intelligence. She previously covered industry topics and trends in media, digital advertising and emerging technology as a research analyst at Barclays, eMarketer and Business Insider Intelligence.

Social Media Drives Entertainment Discovery — But for Whom, and Does It Convert?

Social media and short-form video (SFV) have become a substantial part of modern content consumption. With their algorithmic feeds, these platforms now compete for and capture consumer attention and share of finite time spent with media. Meanwhile, consumers are often engaging with movies, TV shows and music on social media as clips, memes and sounds.

Yet social/SFV platforms have also become zones of entertainment content discovery where audiences first encounter (or nostalgically rediscover) a movie, TV show, song or music artist. For some, that discovery inspires them to seek out and engage with the original, full-length content off-platform in addition to content and community in the app.

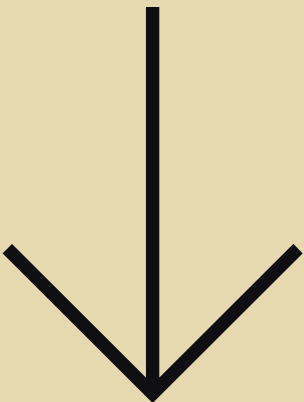
Taken together, social/SFV platforms are both destinations and gateways. While it’s true that they absorb some time as consumers engage with content in-app, they also have the power to initiate fandom — whether for an IP or an artist — guiding audiences down the funnel from discovery to intent to engagement.

This report evaluates the role of social media and short-form video in (re)shaping how U.S. entertainment audiences discover new content and artists, providing insights from the latest 2026 waves of Luminate’s U.S. consumer studies Entertainment 365 and Music 360.

Among the key findings:

- Streaming services still lead among consumers’ top content discovery sources overall. But for some fan audiences, social media and short-form video platforms aren’t far behind.
- Social/SFV platforms play a much stronger role in entertainment content discovery for young audiences, particularly Gen Z.
- Key entertainment fans discover at higher rates on social/SFV platforms, including paid subscribers to music streaming services and frequent spenders on physical music, live music events and movies in the theater — suggesting social media is a bigger discovery driver for the audiences who are most likely to convert into deeper or higher-value experiences with entertainment.

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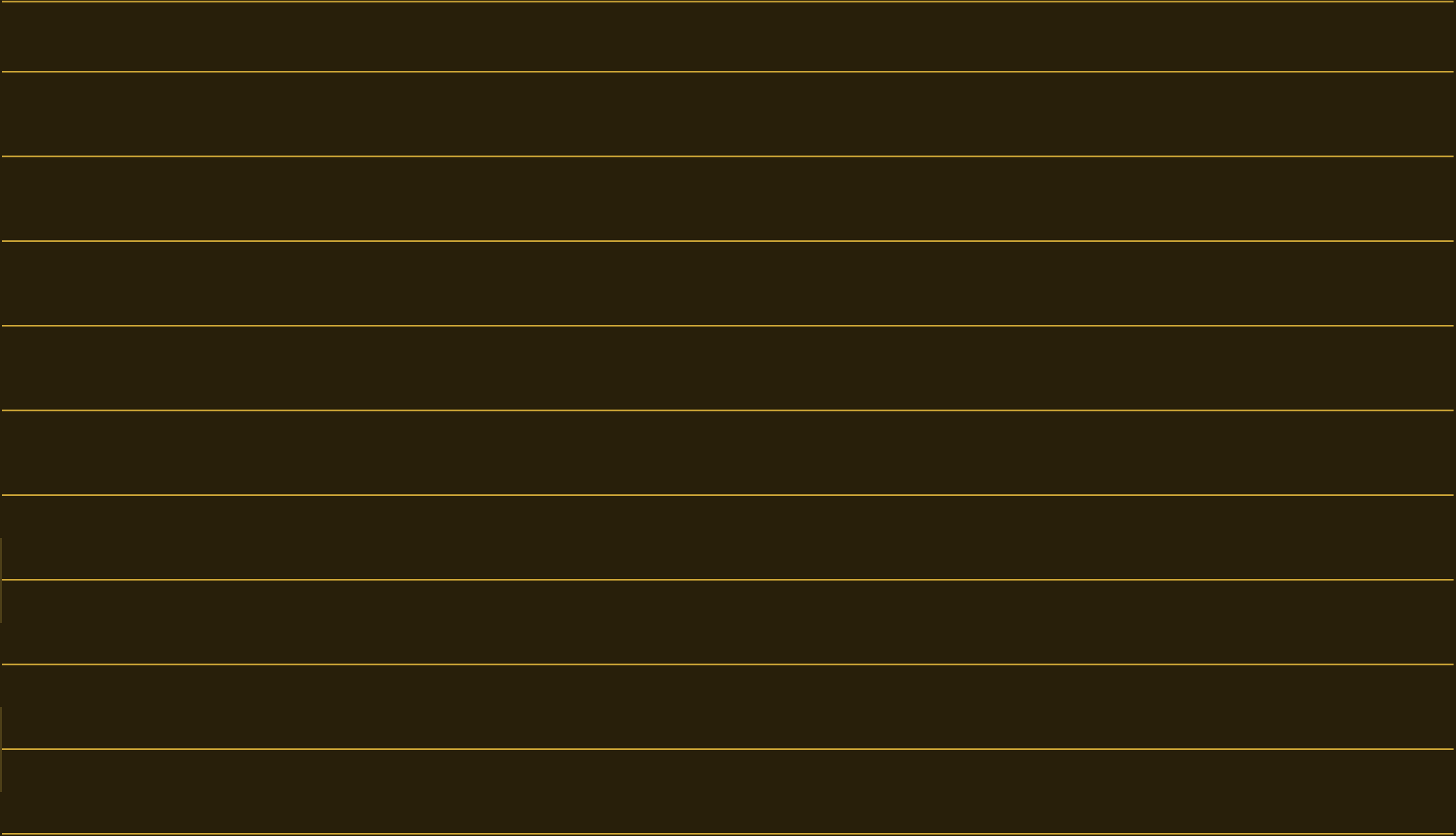
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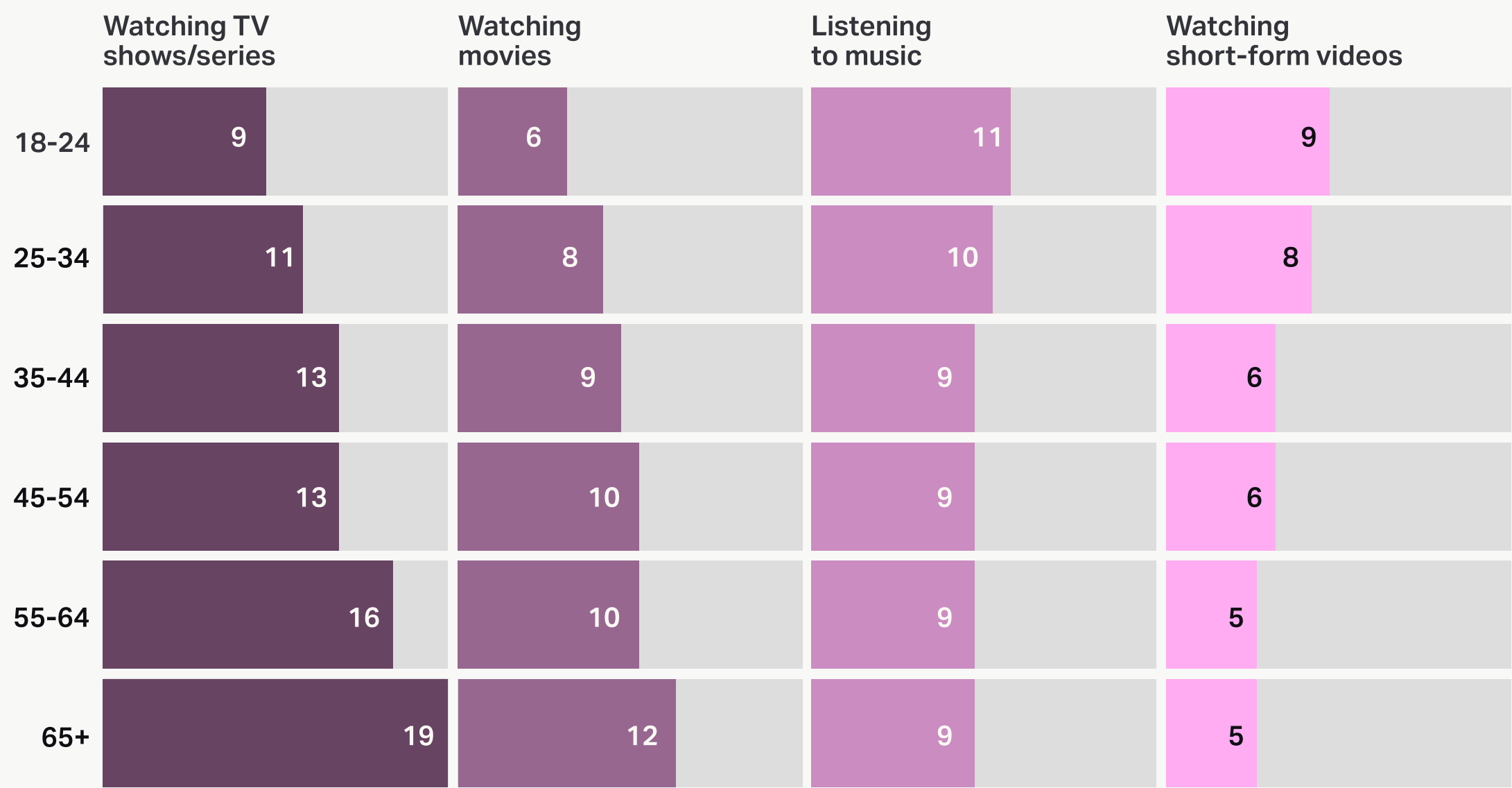
FILM & TV
DISCOVERY

Short-form video is competitive with entertainment content for consumer time, particularly among young people.

U.S. media consumers report spending several hours a week watching short-form video. But for young media consumers — Gen Zers ages 18-24 in particular — short-form video makes up a bigger part of their weekly media intake. Young people are spending more hours a week watching short-form video than older consumers, while older people are spending more hours watching TV shows and movies. Counting just the four entertainment activities below, short-form video accounts for 26% of weekly media time among the 18-24 cohort, compared with 12% for consumers 55 and over. Younger media consumers are also more likely to identify as “die-hard” (as opposed to casual) fans of short-form video and do so at similar rates to watching TV and movies.

TIME SPENT WITH MEDIA, BY AGE

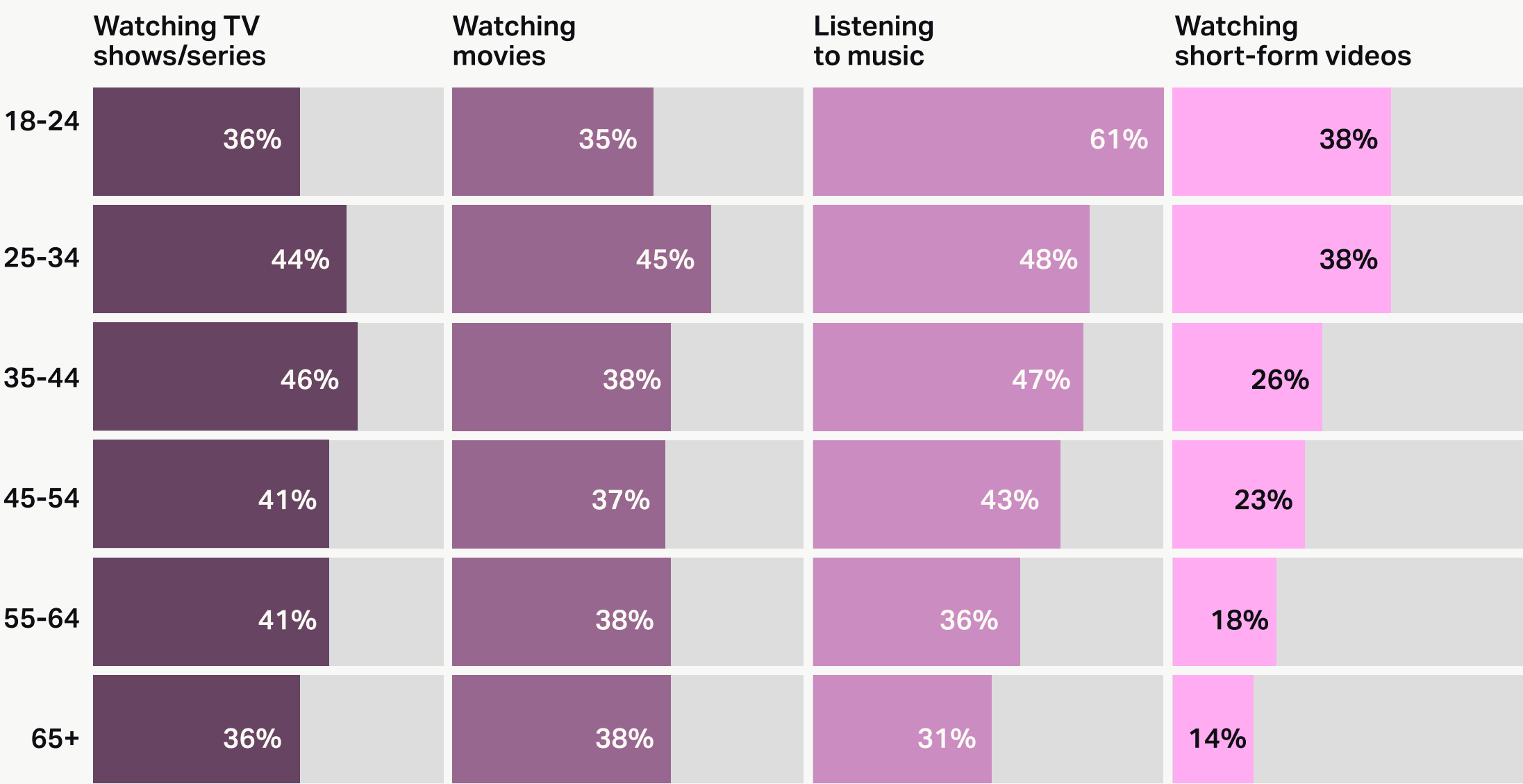
In hours per week



SOURCE: U.S. ENTERTAINMENT 365, WAVE 17; HOURS WITH EACH ACTIVITY APPROXIMATED AS A WHOLE NUMBER FOR A TYPICAL WEEK, INCLUDING WEEKENDS; WATCHING SHOWS/SERIES INCLUDES TV AND/OR STREAMING (E.G., NETFLIX, HULU, PRIME VIDEO); WATCHING MOVIES INCLUDES THEATERS, TV AND/OR STREAMING; WATCHING SHORT-FORM VIDEOS INCLUDES PLATFORMS SUCH AS TIKTOK, INSTAGRAM REELS, YOUTUBE SHORTS

MEDIA FANDOM, BY AGE

Share of U.S. media engagers who identify as die-hard* fans of each activity



SOURCE: U.S. ENTERTAINMENT 365, WAVE 17; *RESPONDENTS WHO ENGAGE IN EACH ACTIVITY RATE HOW BIG OF A FAN THEY ARE ON A SCALE OF 1 (CASUAL) TO 5 (DIE-HARD)



For young people, watching short-form video is more common than movies.

Among the 18-24 cohort, nearly six in 10 viewers watched short-form video in the past three months. That’s in line with U.S. gen pop but more common than the 65+ cohort at 49%.

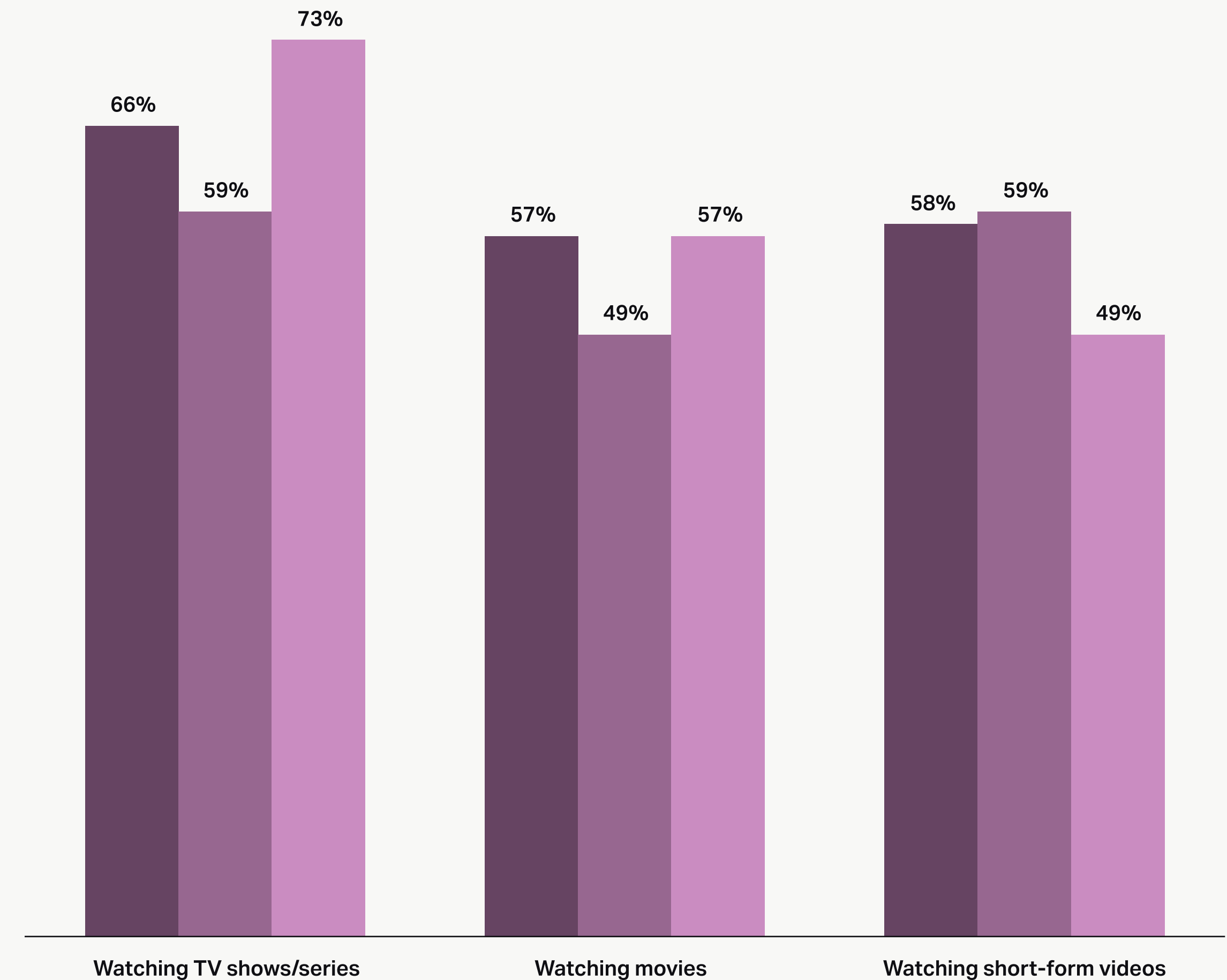
Yet the difference in engagement with TV shows and movies is more remarkable. Compared with those 65 and over, the 18-24 cohort is much less likely to watch either TV shows or movies. Moreover, they’re more likely to say they watch short-form video than movies.

Contrasting these two cohorts points to the state of video viewing. While longer-form, premium content continues to have an audience, it’s likely to have equal prominence to short-form video.

ENGAGEMENT WITH VIDEO CONTENT, BY AGE

Share of U.S. gen pop who engaged in the following activities in the past 3 months

● Gen pop ● 18-24 ● 65+

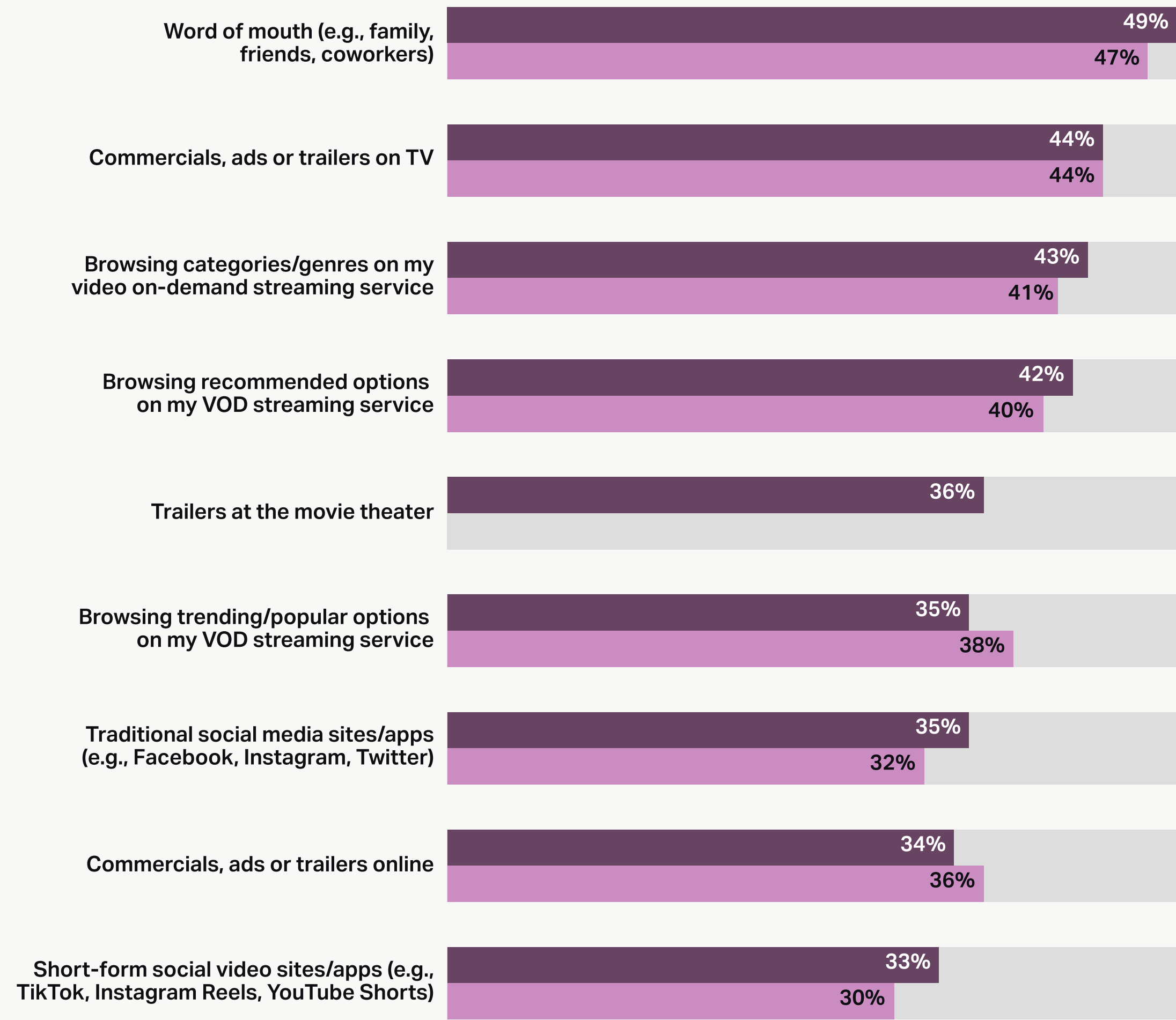


SOURCE: U.S. ENTERTAINMENT 365, WAVE 17; WATCHING TV SHOWS/SERIES INCLUDES TV AND/OR STREAMING (E.G., NETFLIX, HULU, PRIME VIDEO); WATCHING MOVIES INCLUDES THEATERS, TV AND/OR STREAMING; WATCHING SHORT-FORM VIDEOS INCLUDES PLATFORMS SUCH AS TIKTOK, INSTAGRAM REELS, YOUTUBE SHORTS

TOP MOVIE & TV SHOW DISCOVERY SOURCES

Share of U.S. viewers who typically find movies and shows to watch in the following ways

● Movies ● TV shows/series



SOURCE: U.S. ENTERTAINMENT 365, WAVE 17; AMONG U.S. GEN POP WHO WATCH MOVIES AND/OR TV SHOWS/SERIES; VIDEO ON-DEMAND (VOD) STREAMING SERVICES INCLUDE PLATFORMS SUCH AS NETFLIX AND DISNEY+



Social media and video clips are discovery sources for TV and movies.

Social media and short-form video have come to play a role in how TV and movie audiences find new content to watch. About a third of U.S. viewers say they typically discover both new movies and TV shows on social media and short-form video platforms. While other sources are still more common for discovery, social media and SFV are likely among the most frequently used, with many social media users engaging on these platforms daily.

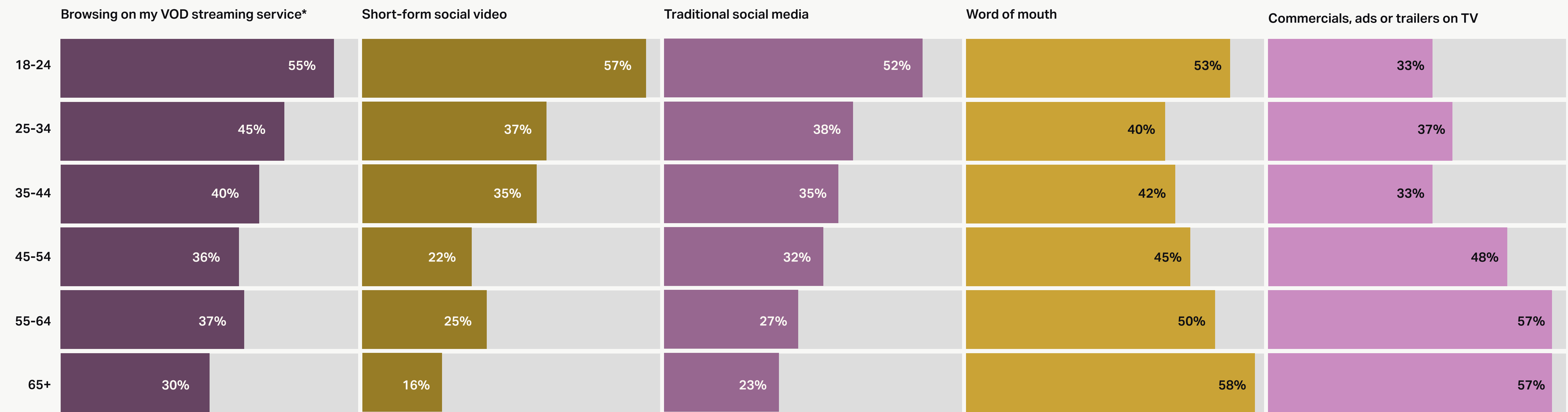
As content discovery continues to challenge the video streaming service user experience, it's worth noting that social media and short-form video only narrowly trail behind options related to browsing options on streaming services.

Young viewers are more likely to discover movies and TV shows via social media and short-form video.

Social media and short-form video platforms play a much larger role in TV and movie content discovery among younger viewers than for older audiences. That’s especially true of 18-to-24-year-olds, the only age cohort with over half who use both short-form video (57%) and social media (52%) to discover movies and shows. It’s also the only cohort where short-form video ranks as the top discovery source, narrowly surpassing browsing on streaming services (55%). For young audiences especially, social/SFV platforms are neck and neck with streaming video services to help consumers surface movies and TV shows they might be interested in watching, though their UX and mechanisms for discovery differ. In contrast to carousels of tiles on streaming services, on social media and short-form video platforms fans are scrolling algorithmic feeds where they encounter relevant or viral clips drawn from movies and TV shows or fan creator content.

MOVIE & TV SHOW DISCOVERY SOURCES, BY AGE

Share of U.S. viewers who find new movies and TV shows to watch in the following ways



SOURCE: U.S. ENTERTAINMENT 365; AMONG U.S. GEN POP WHO WATCH MOVIES AND/OR TV SHOWS; VIDEO ON-DEMAND (VOD) STREAMING SERVICES INCLUDE PLATFORMS SUCH AS NETFLIX, DISNEY+; *PERCENTAGES ARE AVERAGED FROM THREE RESPONSE OPTIONS RELATED TO BROWSING VOD STREAMING SERVICES, INCLUDING BROWSING RECOMMENDED OPTIONS, BROWSING CATEGORIES/GENRES AND BROWSING TRENDING/POPULAR OPTIONS

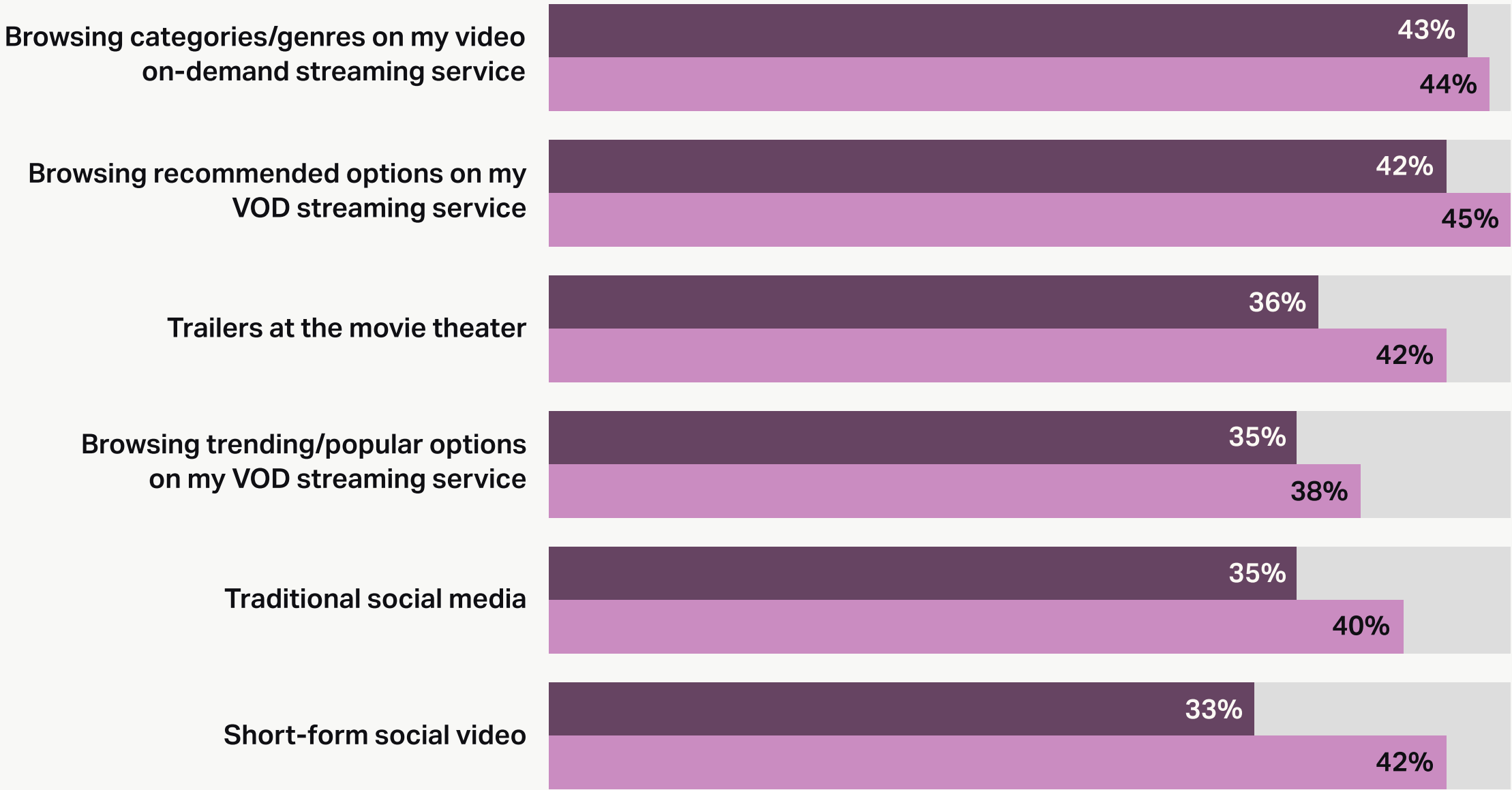
Frequent moviegoers discover movies on social media at higher rates than the average movie viewer.

Frequent moviegoers are more likely than the average movie viewer to discover movies across multiple different sources. But that difference is bigger when discovery occurs on social/SFV platforms, with wider point gaps compared with other common movie discovery sources. Most notably, 42% of frequent moviegoers discover movies on short-form video platforms versus 33% of U.S. movie viewers — a nine-point difference that makes discovery through short-form social video almost as likely as browsing titles on a streaming service. Drilling down by age — in addition to much higher discovery rates among the youngest moviegoing audience — there’s also some difference in platform preference where moviegoers more commonly discover movies. The strongest preferences appear among those ages 25-44 who favor short-form video, while those 45-64 lean toward traditional social media.

TOP MOVIE DISCOVERY SOURCES AMONG MOVIEGOERS

Share of U.S. movie viewers vs. frequent moviegoers who find movies in the following ways

● Movie viewers ● Frequent moviegoers

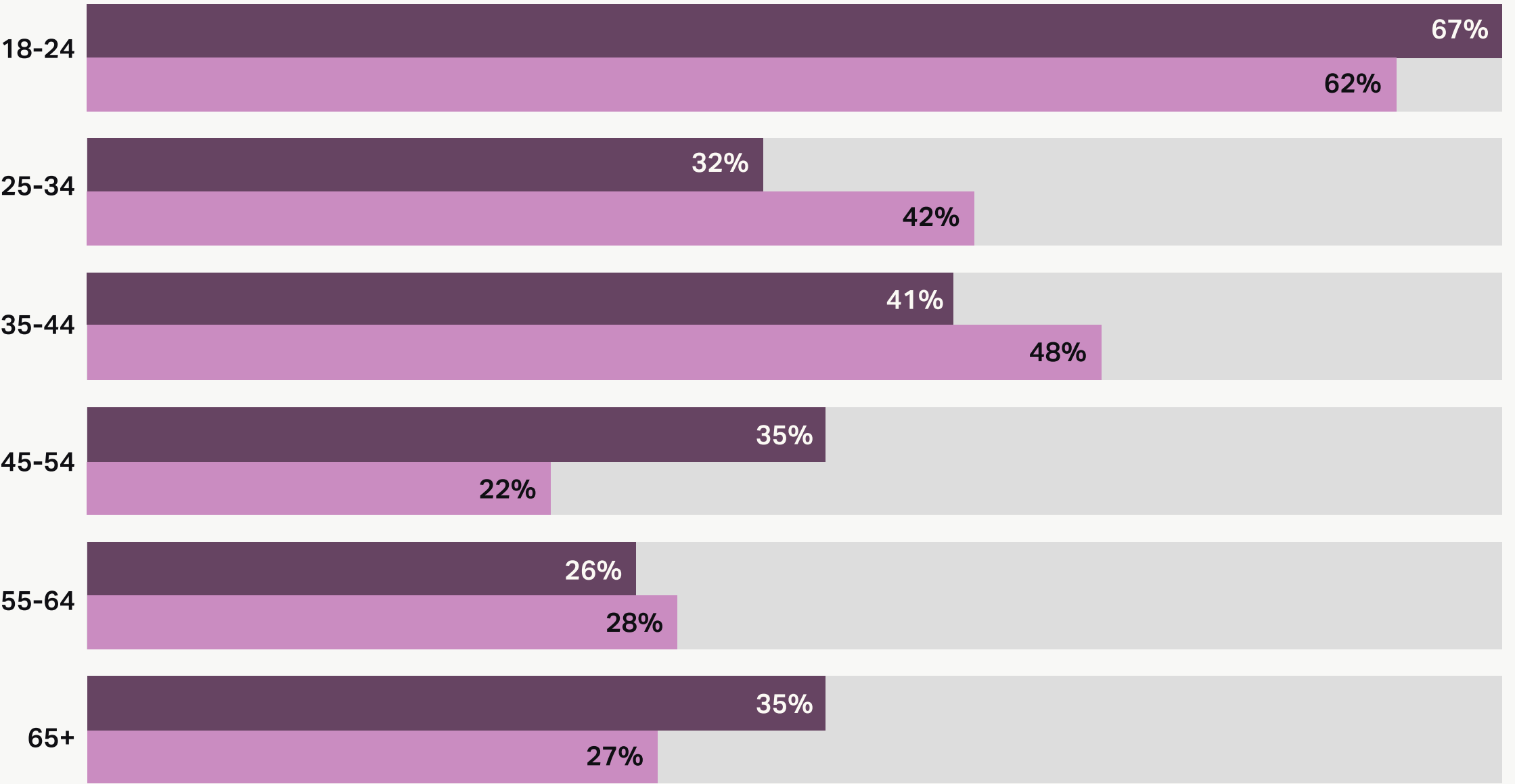


SOURCE: U.S. ENTERTAINMENT 365; AMONG U.S. GEN POP WHO WATCH MOVIES; FREQUENT MOVIEGOERS SAW 3+ MOVIES IN A THEATER IN THE PAST 3 MONTHS AND USE SOCIAL MEDIA AND/OR WATCH SHORT-FORM VIDEO

MOVIE DISCOVERY ON SOCIAL MEDIA AMONG MOVIEGOERS

Share of U.S. frequent moviegoers who typically find movies on social media or short-form video sites/apps

● Traditional social media ● Short-form social video



SOURCE: U.S. ENTERTAINMENT 365; AMONG U.S. GEN POP WHO WATCH MOVIES, SAW 3+ MOVIES IN A THEATER IN PAST 3 MONTHS AND USE SOCIAL MEDIA AND/OR WATCH SHORT-FORM VIDEO

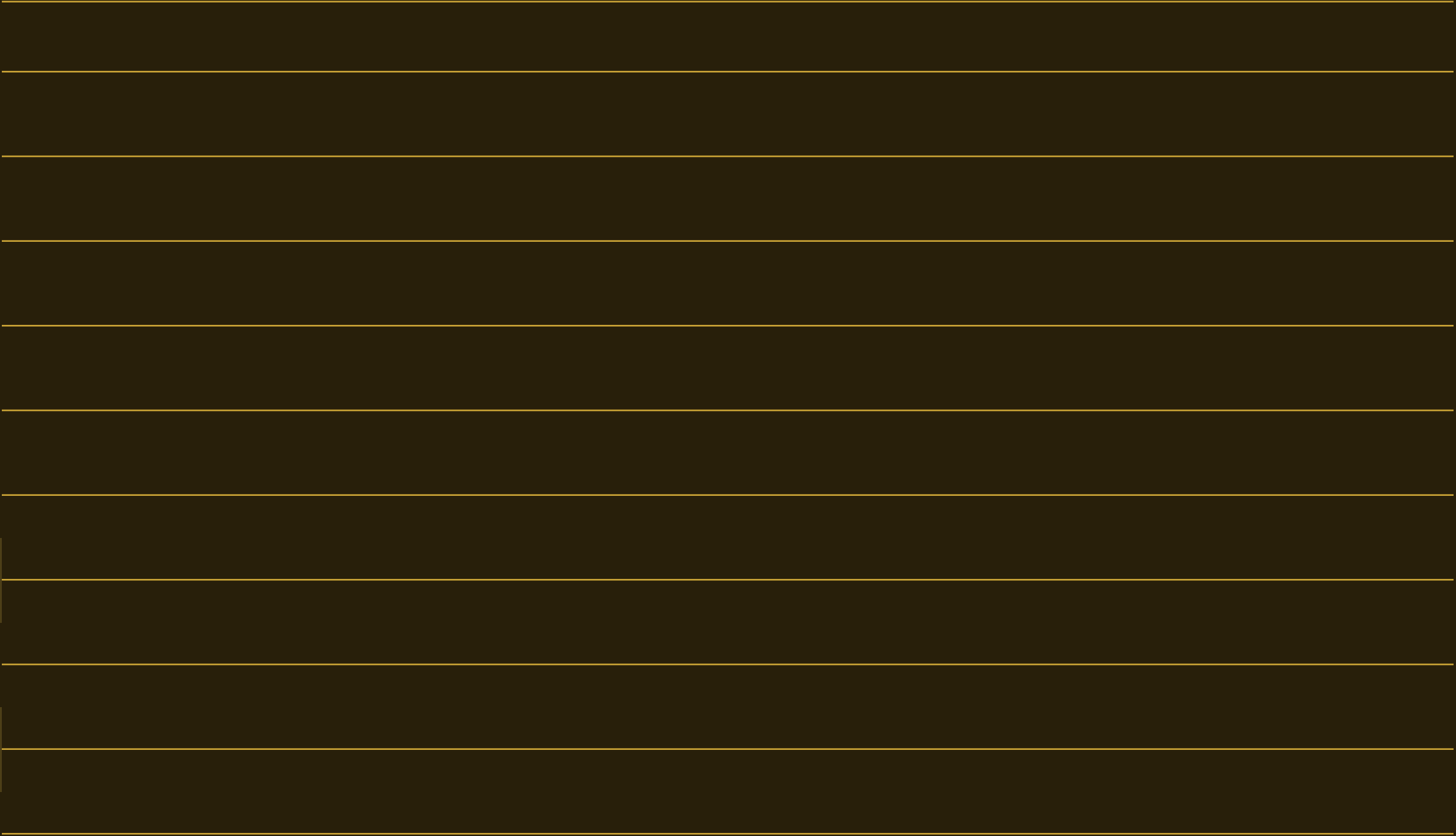
Discovery is the main rationale for vertical video feeds in studio streaming services.

Major streaming services are adapting their apps to tap into discovery behaviors developed on social platforms. Over the past year, nearly every major U.S. streaming video service has developed its own TikTok-style vertical video feed in its mobile app — each with the stated goal of improving content discovery natively. Each also has a similar UX: a scrollable, algorithmic video feed with short video clips from shows, movies, sports and news that allow users to start watching the full-length content, add the title to their watchlist or share it via messaging or social media. Studios may additionally enlist creators to diversify the videos offered in these feeds, such as fan-creator content evangelizing specific IPs. To that end, Disney struck a partnership with TikTok in August that will allow creators to feature Disney characters from Marvel, Pixar and *Star Wars* in videos hosted on both TikTok and the Disney+ video feed Verts.

SHORT-FORM VERTICAL VIDEO FEEDS ON VIDEO STREAMING SERVICE MOBILE APPS

STREAMING SERVICE	VIDEO FEED	INITIAL LAUNCH	CONTENT
Peacock	Vertical Feed	August 2026	- Clips of shows from the Peacock library - Launched “Your Bravoverse” content hub with original scripted and unscripted microdramas
HBO Max	HBO Max Shorts	July 2026	Trailers, clips and bonus content from the HBO Max library
Amazon Prime Video	Clips	May 2026	NBA highlights, clips of movies and shows
Netflix	Clips	April 2026	- Clips from series, films and specials - Expects to expand clips to include podcasts, live programming and genre-based collections
Paramount+	N/A	April 2026	- Sports highlights, CBS News segments, UFC clips and trailers for movies and shows - May introduce user-generated or creator content or microdramas
Disney+	Verts	March 2026	- Scenes and moments from movies and shows in the Disney+ library - May introduce creator content that reflects fandoms or other content formats
Tubi	Scenes	November 2024	Clips from movies and shows

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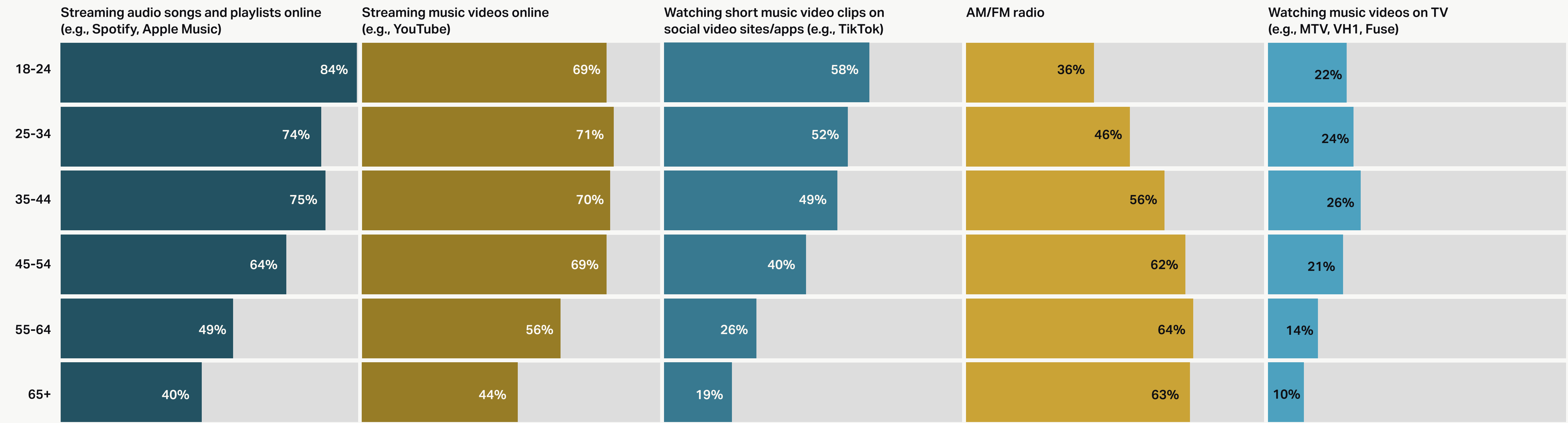
MUSIC
DISCOVERY

Over half of U.S. music listeners ages 18-34 engage with music content on short-form video platforms.

For most music listeners, streaming is dominant for music consumption, whether streaming tracks on DSPs or music videos on platforms such as YouTube. Unsurprisingly, preferences differ by age, with young listeners much more likely to prioritize streaming, while listeners over 55 favor radio. Yet most notably, for Gen Zers and Millennials ages 18-34, short-form social video platforms such as TikTok rank as their third most popular destination for engaging with music content, with a majority who say they watch short-form music clips on social video apps. That contrasts sharply with older listeners: 58% of 18-to-24-year-old music listeners engage with music content on short-form video apps versus just 19% in the 65+ cohort, a 39-point difference. While DSPs are the main destination for music listening, short-form video platforms have become true destinations where younger fans also commonly engage with music content.

MUSIC CONSUMPTION CHANNELS, BY AGE

Share of U.S. music listeners who listen to music in the following ways in a typical month





Social media is a key source of music discovery.

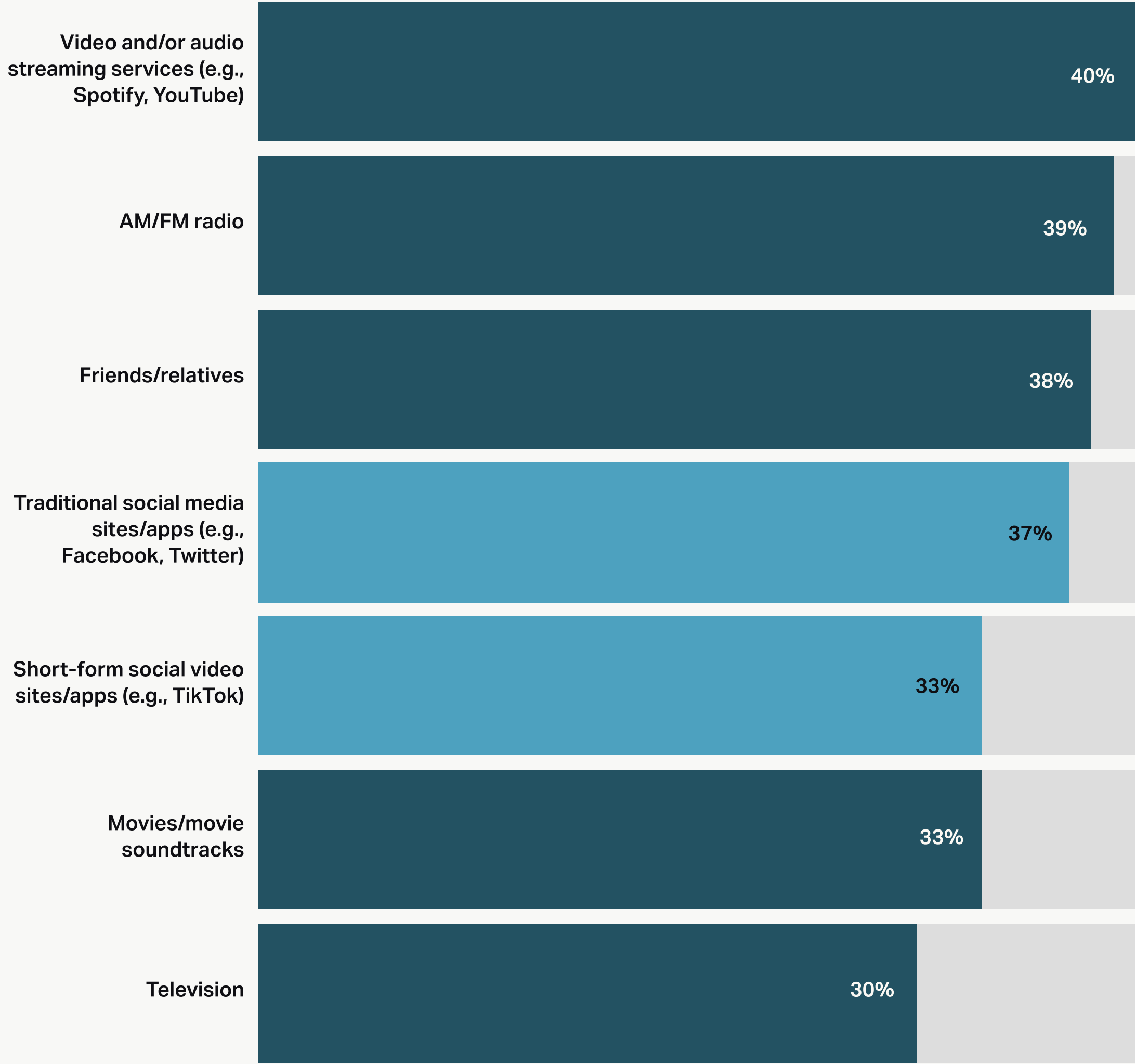
Social media and short-form video platforms are among the top music discovery sources, only narrowly trailing streaming services, radio and word of mouth. Over a third (37%) of U.S. music listeners say they discover new music and artists on traditional social platforms, while 33% do on strictly short-form video platforms.

Led first by TikTok, short-form video in particular has changed how audiences discover music and artists. Viral videos have made emerging artists famous overnight. Creator and fan-made trending videos have catapulted tracks to the top of the charts and repopularized decades-old songs.

Yet even as the industry focuses on the power of social media, it’s worth remembering that social media and short-form video platforms are still two among various paths consumers take to discover music.

TOP MUSIC DISCOVERY SOURCES

Share of U.S. music listeners who find new music and artists in the following ways



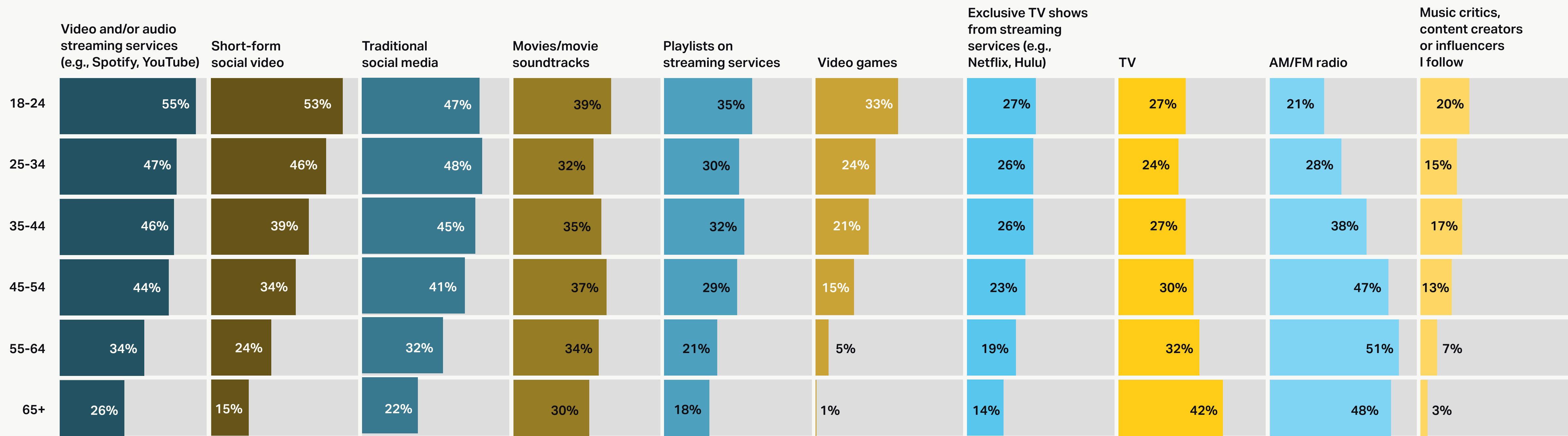
SOURCE: U.S. MUSIC 360; AMONG U.S. GEN POP WHO LISTEN TO MUSIC

Young music listeners are more likely to discover music on social media and short-form video platforms.

Music discovery on social is most common among Gen Zers ages 18-24, with 53% citing short-form video as a music discovery source — closely trailing streaming services — while 47% say traditional social media is. For young listeners, discovery on social media is neck and neck with music streaming. It’s also worth noting that young music listeners are more likely to discover new music and artists from all sources across the board, except for radio and television. That’s attributable in part to life stage, as young people are more likely to be actively discovering music. Media habits play a role as well. Naturally, the channels where consumers listen to music are where they will tend to discover it. Mirroring consumption, the top music discovery sources among Gen Zers and Millennials are music streaming services, social media and short-form video. Boomers still tend to discover music on radio, TV and movies.

MUSIC DISCOVERY SOURCES, BY AGE

Share of U.S. music listeners who find new music and artists from the following sources



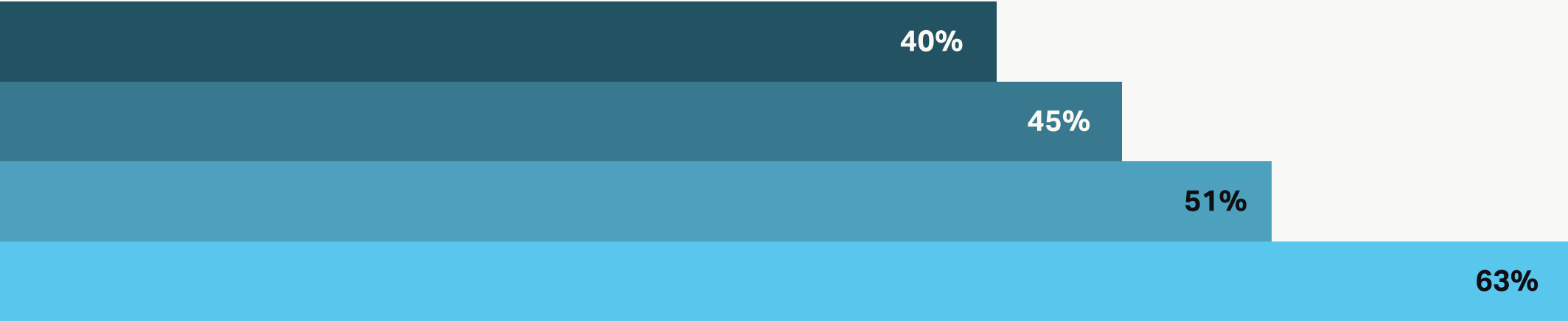
SOURCE: U.S. MUSIC 360; AMONG U.S. GEN POP WHO LISTEN TO MUSIC AND USE SOCIAL MEDIA AND/OR WATCH SHORT-FORM VIDEO

MUSIC DISCOVERY SOURCES, BY FAN AUDIENCE

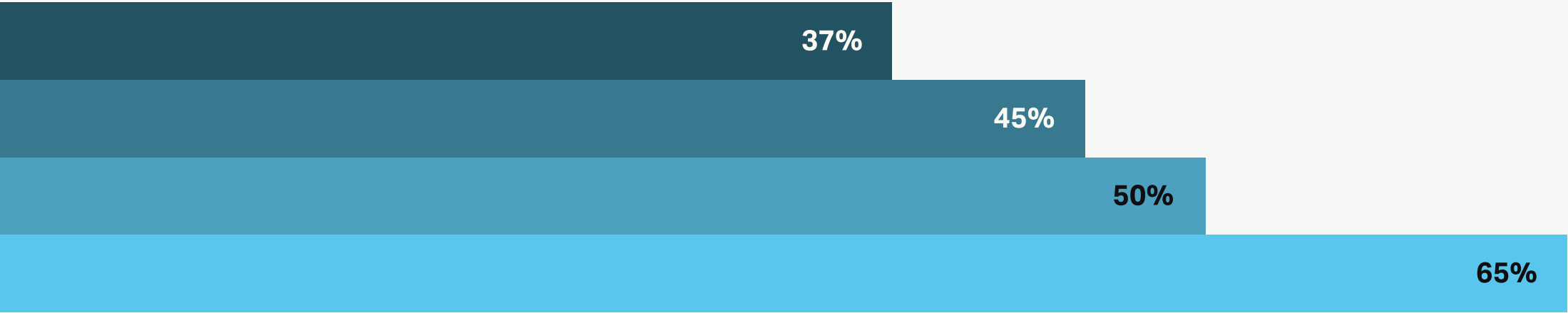
Share of U.S. music listeners who find new music and artists from the following sources

- Gen pop music listeners
- Paid music streaming subscribers*
- Physical music purchasers†
- Live music event attendees‡

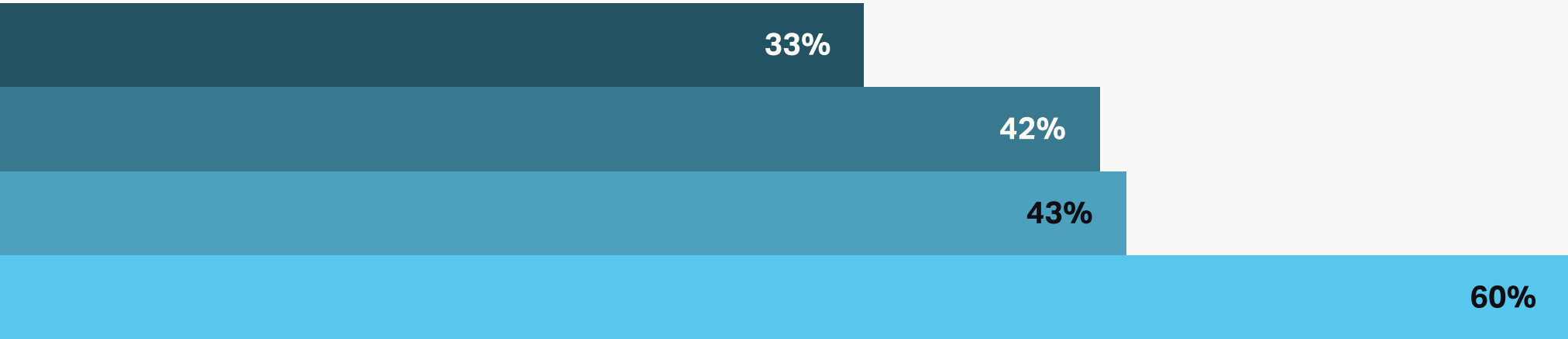
VIDEO AND/OR AUDIO STREAMING SERVICES



TRADITIONAL SOCIAL MEDIA



SHORT-FORM SOCIAL VIDEO



Social media is a bigger discovery source for high-value music audiences.

Music fans who have at least one music streaming subscription, buy multiple pieces of physical music or frequently attend live music events are more likely to discover new music and artists on social/SFV platforms compared with the average music listener.

This suggests that fan audiences who are more likely to convert — those who spend on music products, services or experiences — are more active music discoverers than the average music listener. That includes on streaming services. But discovery for these fans is meaningfully more likely to occur on social media and short-form video platforms. That’s particularly notable among frequent live event attendees, with the largest point gaps of any discovery source on social media (+28pp) and short-form video (+27pp).

Among these higher-value fan audiences, rates of music discovery on social/SFV platforms also notch increases that bring them more in line with discovery rates on streaming services. For live event attendees, social media even ekes out a higher rate of discovery at 65% versus music streaming (63%).

SOURCE: U.S. MUSIC 360; AMONG U.S. GEN POP WHO LISTEN TO MUSIC AND USE SOCIAL MEDIA AND/OR WATCH SHORT-FORM VIDEO; RESPECTIVE FAN AUDIENCES DO THE FOLLOWING: *USE 1+ PAID MUSIC STREAMING SERVICES (E.G., SPOTIFY PREMIUM); †PURCHASED 5+ PIECES OF PHYSICAL MUSIC (E.G., CDS, VINYL) IN PAST 12 MONTHS; ‡ATTENDED 4+ LIVE MUSIC EVENTS IN PAST 12 MONTHS

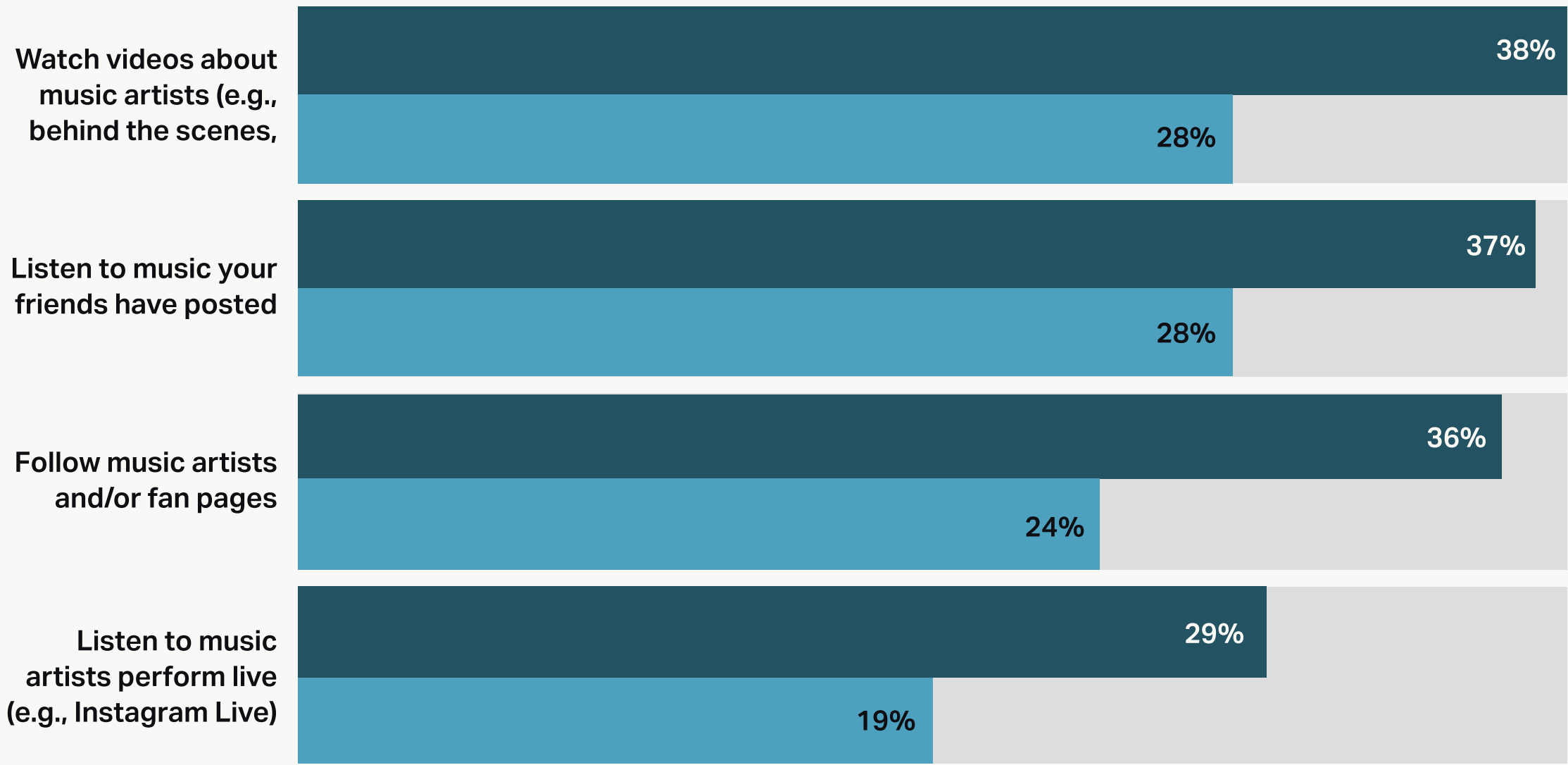
Young music fans are more likely to engage in music-related activities directly on social platforms.

Music listeners engage in many different music-related activities on social media and short-form video platforms, spanning content consumption, sharing, interaction and search. Unsurprisingly, engagement with music on social media is more common among Gen Z and Millennial music listeners. That engagement translates to a meaningful slice of young, highly engaged music fans on social media: Nearly three in 10 (29%) of the 18-24 cohort participate in four or more music-related activities on social/SFV platforms. Consuming music content ranks among the top activities on social media, such as videos about artists, music posted by their friends or live music performances — each of which creates opportunities for discovery. But the question remains: Even if this engagement fuels discovery, does discovery convert into off-platform listening? Our data suggests it does (see on following page).

TOP MUSIC-RELATED ACTIVITIES ON SOCIAL MEDIA, BY AGE

Share of U.S. music listeners who engage in the following music-related activities on social media and/or short-form video sites/apps

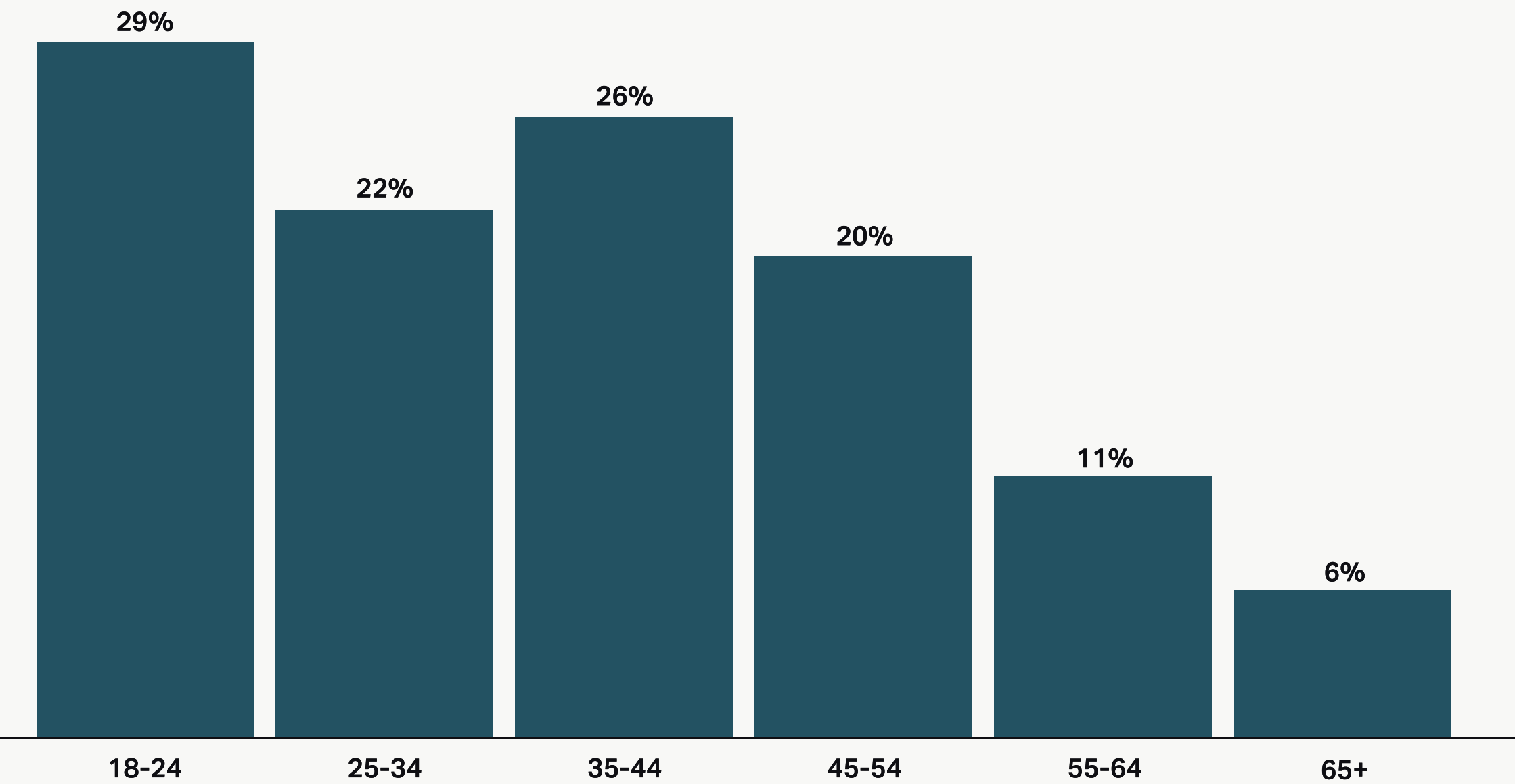
Net 18-44 Net 45-65+



SOURCE: U.S. MUSIC 360; AMONG U.S. GEN POP WHO LISTEN TO MUSIC AND USE SOCIAL MEDIA AND/OR SHORT-FORM VIDEO

MUSIC-RELATED ENGAGEMENT ON SOCIAL MEDIA, BY AGE

Share of U.S. social/short-form video users who engage in 4+ music-related activities on social media or short-form video sites/apps



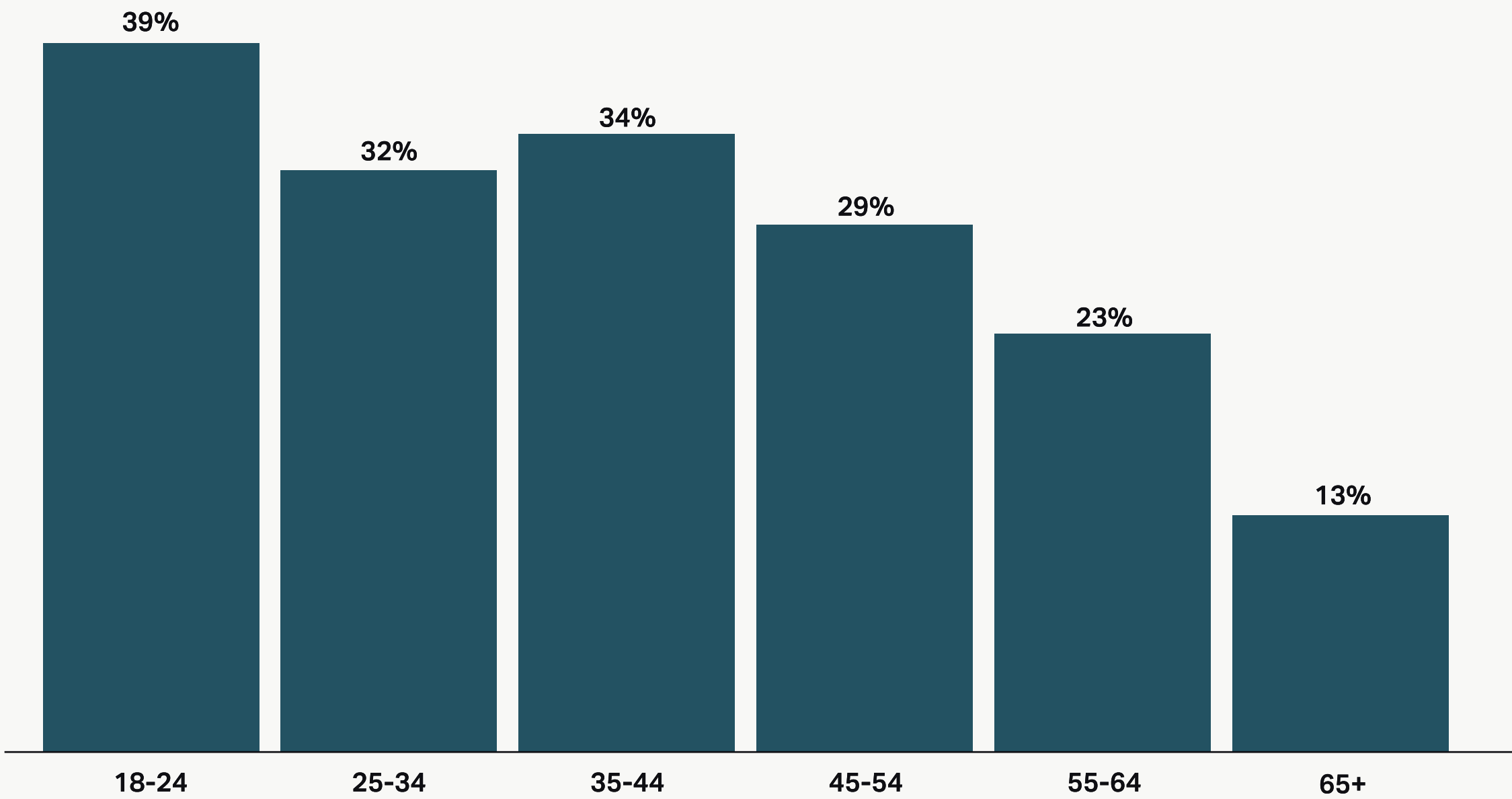
SOURCE: U.S. MUSIC 360; AMONG U.S. GEN POP WHO USE SOCIAL MEDIA AND/OR WATCH SHORT-FORM VIDEO CLIPS AND DO 4+ MUSIC-RELATED ACTIVITIES ON SOCIAL MEDIA OR SHORT-FORM VIDEO SITES/APPS

Social music discovery leads listeners to off-platform streaming, particularly engaged social/SFV users.

In an ideal fan journey, in-app social media engagement drives discovery, which inspires music or artist searches and listening off-platform. Seeking out music after discovering it on social media is a more common behavior among younger audiences. Nearly four in 10 (39%) of social/SFV users ages 18-24 and about a third of Millennials say they look up new music and artists on streaming services (e.g., Spotify) after discovering it on social. Among other post-discovery behaviors, the top three consist of off-platform engagement, including listening to the artist’s other music and adding music to playlists. Furthermore, each of these behaviors are more common among social media users who are highly engaged with music on the platforms versus the average music listener. This suggests that while social users engage heavily with music content directly in-app, music discovery on social platforms leads a majority of them to listen elsewhere.

MUSIC SEARCH AFTER DISCOVERING ON SOCIAL MEDIA, BY AGE

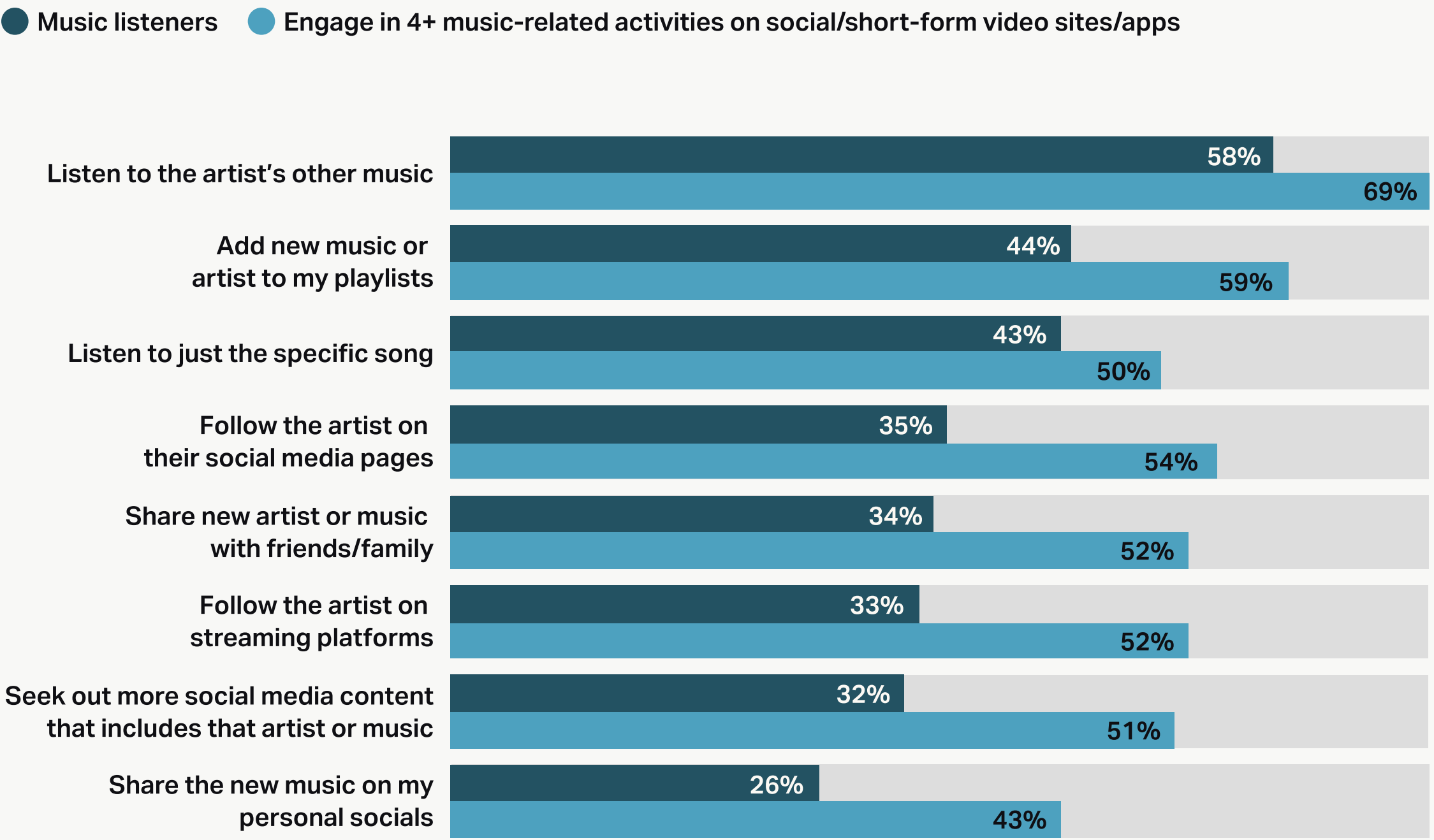
Share of social/short-form video users who look up new music and artists on streaming platforms after finding them on social media



SOURCE: U.S. MUSIC 360; AMONG U.S. GEN POP WHO USE SOCIAL MEDIA AND/OR WATCH SHORT-FORM VIDEO

BEHAVIORS AFTER DISCOVERING MUSIC ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Share of U.S. music listeners who engage in the following ways after they find new music or an artist they like on social media or short-form video sites/apps



SOURCE: U.S. MUSIC 360; AMONG U.S. GEN POP WHO LISTEN TO MUSIC AND DISCOVER MUSIC ON SOCIAL MEDIA OR SHORT-FORM VIDEO SITES/APPS

METHODOLOGY

U.S. Entertainment 365 is a Luminate survey conducted biannually online among U.S. respondents ages 13+ representative of the general population according to the U.S. Census for age, gender, ethnicity and region. This report features data from survey wave 17 fielded May 5-26, 2026, among 2,000 respondents.

U.S. Music 360 is a Luminate survey conducted quarterly online among U.S. consumers ages 13+ representative of the general population according to the U.S. Census for age, gender and region. This report features data averaged from two survey waves fielded in Q1 and Q2 2026 among 8,105 respondents total.

DIG DEEPER INTO ENTERTAINMENT DISCOVERY

Like what you've just read? This free report is an abridged take on Luminate Intelligence's data dive into how social media and short-form video play a pivotal role in U.S. entertainment audiences finding new content and artists.

CLICK HERE to become a Luminate Intelligence subscriber, and get lots more data in an expanded version of this analysis (as well as access to many other reports). Some of the additional insights covered:

- Discovering movies and TV shows on social media has led most consumers to engage in full-length viewing.
- Converting from discovery on social media into full-length experiences with entertainment content is most common among Gen Z and Millennial audiences.
- Young music fans favor short-form video for music discovery, whereas older fans tend to prefer traditional social media.

ABOUT LUMINATE INTELLIGENCE

Launched as an extension of the Variety brand in 2020, Variety Intelligence Platform (VIP+) was acquired by Luminate and rebranded as Luminate Intelligence in 2025.

Since that time, Intelligence has established itself as an authority in the entertainment industry, counting executives working at the highest levels of the biggest entertainment brands among its thousands of subscribers.

Luminate Intelligence produces high-quality market research that mixes forward-looking analysis and data on the issues and trends most important to the industry, from film, TV and music to streaming, video games and AI. In-depth white papers are released throughout the year, as are weekly commentaries accessed via email and the Luminate website.

As no Intelligence analysis big or small is complete without statistical charts and tables, we are replete with a combination of exclusive Luminate data and a highly curated blend of dozens of relevant third-party data sources, with an emphasis on gathering the most recent numbers.

Our analyses are written in a compelling, provocative style laser focused on putting findings in a prescriptive perspective that drives decision-making.

Intelligence is also available to collaborate with companies looking to create customized reports, either for private internal use or as sponsored marketing material.

