



Short-Lived Hype or Lasting Loyalty

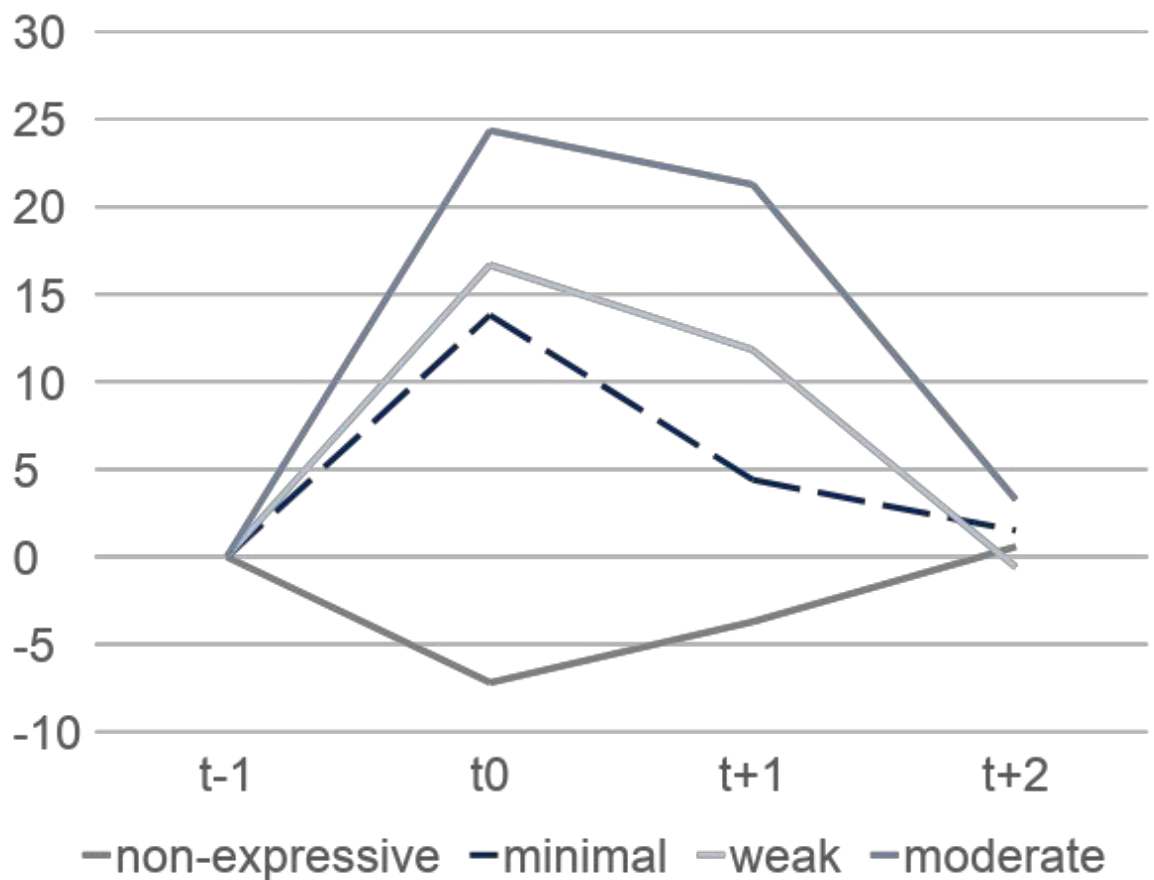
How peaks of mentions drive brand search and demand for it



Previous key findings

Having analyzed over 270 million of social media mentions and search activity of 39 global brands, we established a significant correlation between **brand media events** and the proxy metric of **purchasing demand**. To be specific, peak of mentions of a brand online in social media correlated with significant spikes in demand for its products represented by the general search frequency of a brand or its products.

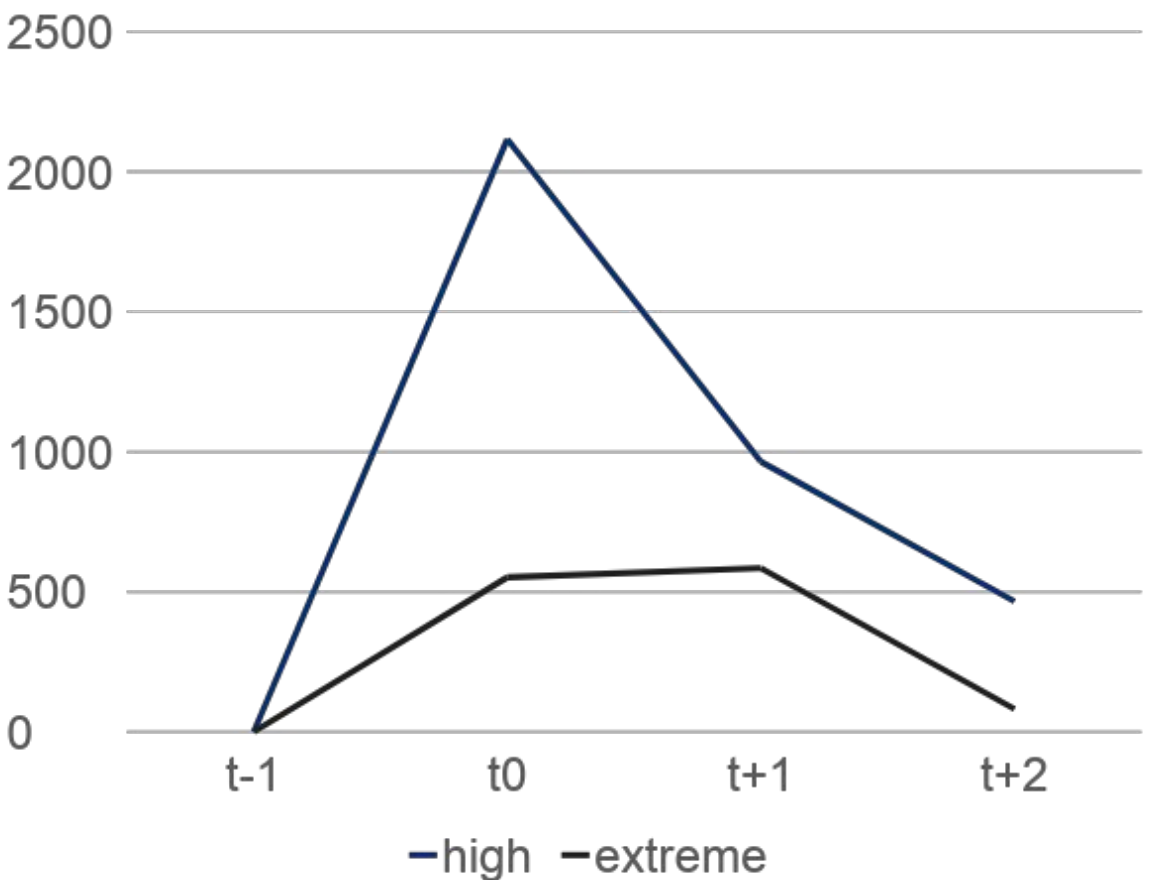
Non-Expressive to Moderate Expression Intensity segments decay curves



Absence of expression does not lead to brand demand

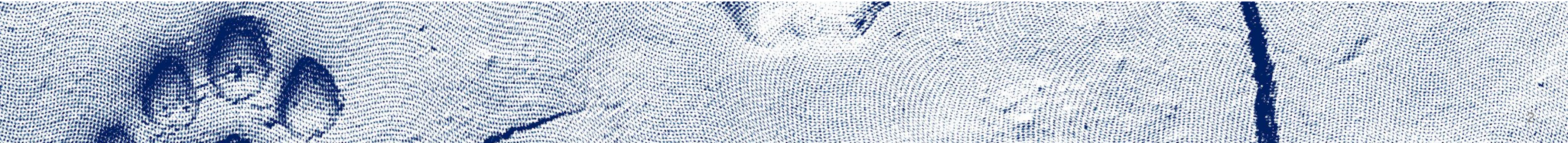
For lower intensities of expression, the higher the intensity of expression (x axis), the more prominent the search response demonstrated through the monthly search change is (y axis).

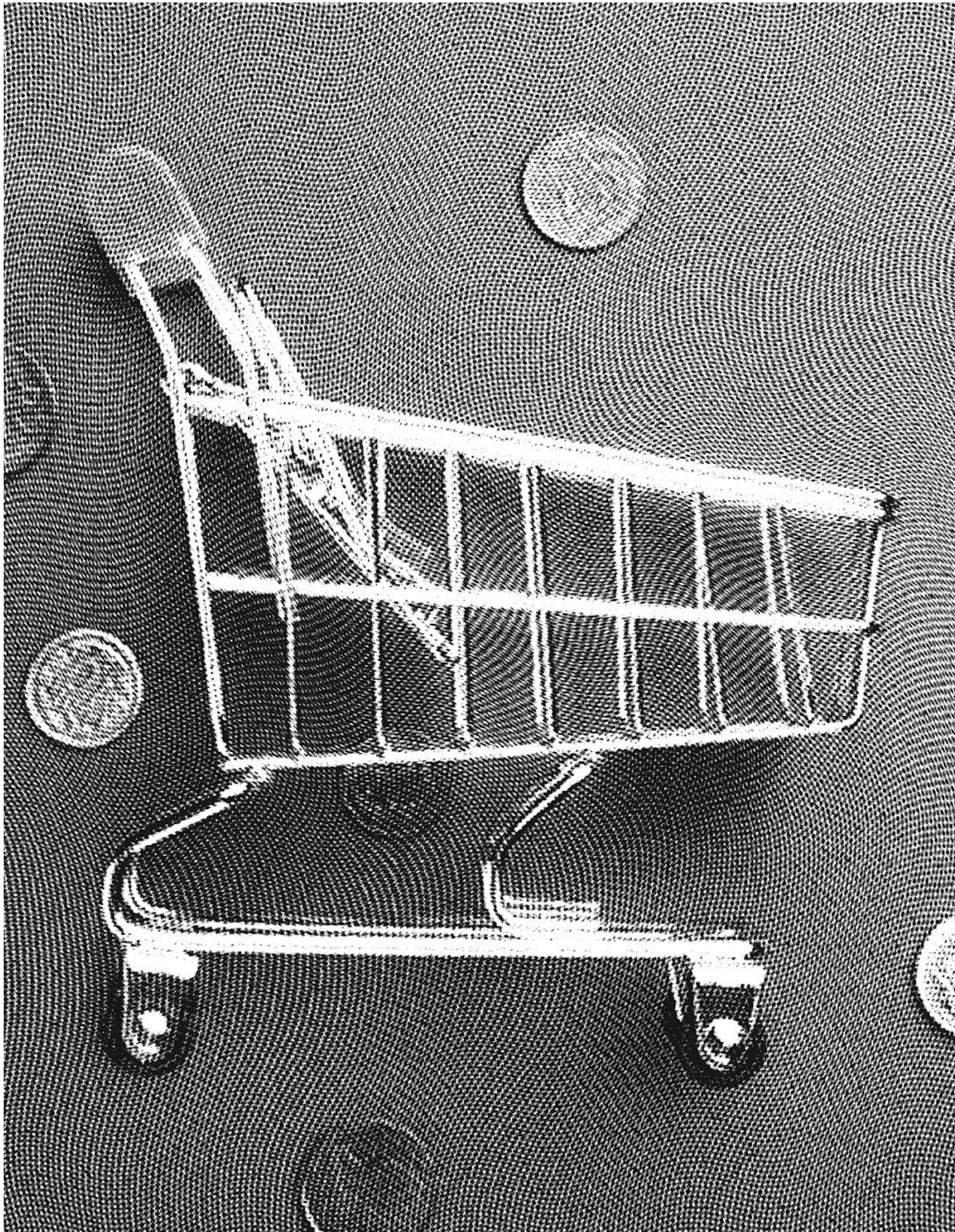
High and Extreme Expression Intensity segments decay curves



Overheated expressions produce unstable results

Extreme in intensity of expression social media activity may be interpreted as suspicious or simply sway the user away from informational curiosity or transactional activity.





Primary hypotheses of the 2nd phase of research

Search type

Peaks in brand mentions generate **heterogeneous responses across search query types (informational vs. transactional)**:

informational queries increase as users compensate for insufficient information within peak media exposure, while transactional queries exhibit delayed and more gradual dynamics, reflecting the need for brand attitude formation (integration of cognitive and emotional components).

Product category

The magnitude, duration and lag structure of the search responses to social media mentions peaks are **moderated by product category complexity and perceived purchase risk**:

higher complexity categories induce longer, more autonomous informational search phases and slower transitions to transactional intent but yield more persistent downstream effects.



Research design advancements

The first step in this phase of research was to segment search queries into 2 types, which could efficiently reflect the intent behind users' search activity overall.

We divided all the queries into **transactional** and **informational** ones, where the first type was equivalent to users' curiosity about the brand or the product in general (e.g., "what is SKIMS", "SKIMS products", "SKIMS reviews"), while the second was the transaction-driven behavior (e.g., "SKIMS buy", "SKIMS official store", "SKIMS Amazon").

To ensure that transactional queries took into consideration **varying business models** of sampled brands, unique queries such as "Spotify download", "Spotify install", "Jet2 book flight", "Jet2 tickets", etc. were added manually. In addition, due to the presence of US-based brands, queries containing words "Amazon" and "Ebay" were included as the two remain leading e-commerce platforms the commercial value of which cannot be overestimated.

The data for 2 types of search queries was normalized through the same framework as in Article Vol. 1.

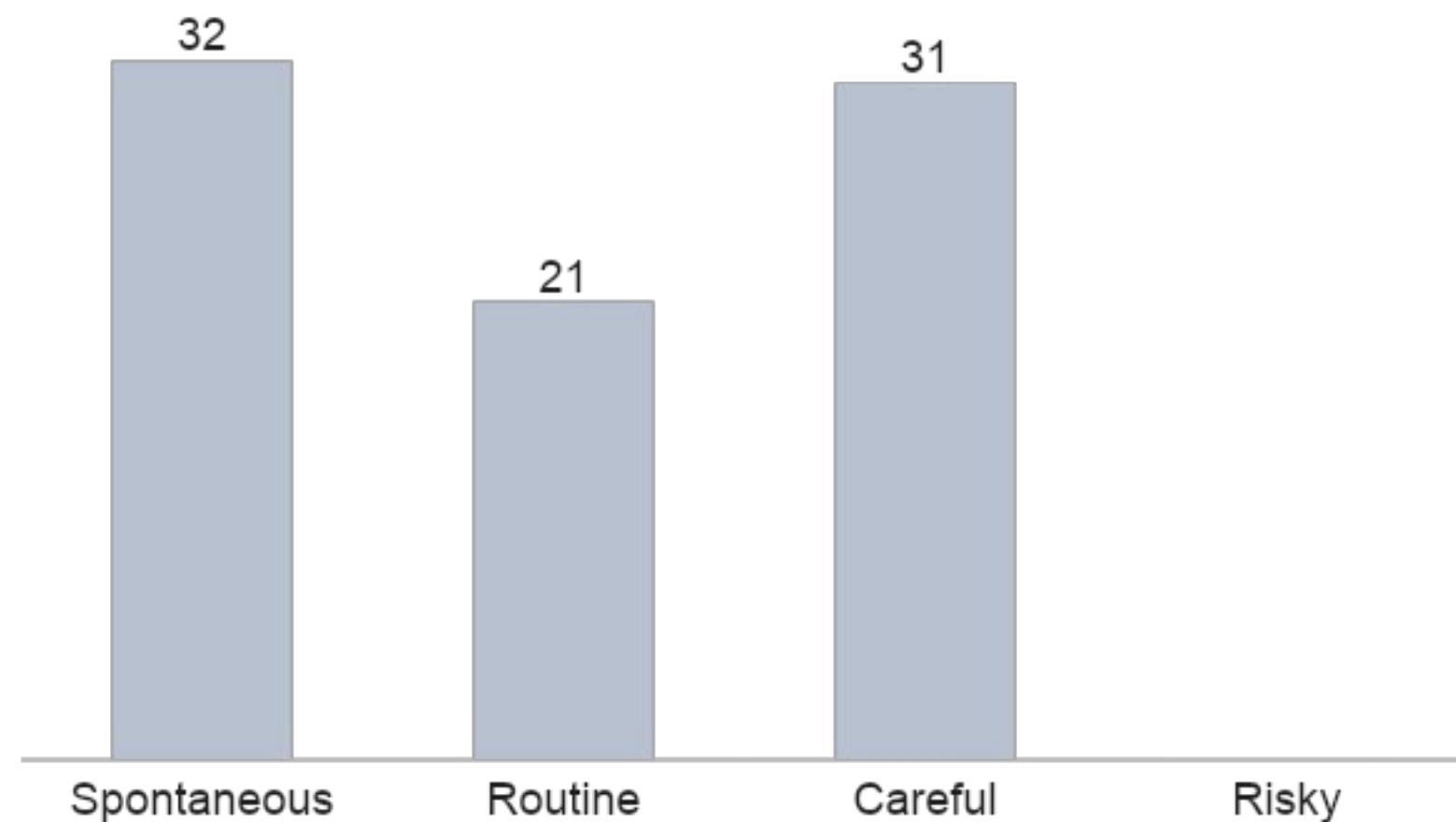
Volume of informational search queries was on average **> 57 times** larger than that of the transactional ones



Research design advancements

4 categories of goods and services were introduced based on the characteristics of the purchase decision-making process and the expected accompanying emotional responses. Within the sample collected, no Risky type of goods or services were identified.

Distribution of peaks of mentions according to the category of purchasing decision-making process:



Ascending order of the length of purchase decision-making cycle (Spontaneous to Risky)

Spontaneous

Temptation-driven or Mini-joys of life

1. Mostly low price
2. Can be bought on a whim without any practical need
3. Little to no social and psychological risk
4. Little to no substitution cost

“I will only know the value after I try it for myself”

E.g., fun snacks and drinks, accessories, free apps, makeup

Routine

Habitual purchases or Necessities

1. Mostly low price
2. Can be bought frequently but mostly when necessary (replenishment-based)
3. Slightly higher social or psychological risk
4. Slightly higher substitution cost

“I will see it for myself when I actually need it”

E.g., groceries, clothes, monthly subscriptions, skincare

Careful

Problem-solving or Valuables

1. Mid to higher price
2. Bought sometimes (once in a few months to a year)
3. High social or psychological risk
4. Higher but not overwhelming substitution cost

“I will try it for myself only if I know it is good and I need it”

E.g., electronics, hotels, airline tickets, concert tickets

Risky

High-stakes or Commitment

1. High price
2. Bought rarely (once a year or less)
3. Defining social or psychological risk
4. High substitution cost or irreversible in general

“I will try it for myself only if I actively need it and it is of the highest expected utility”

E.g., real estate, cars, medicine, education



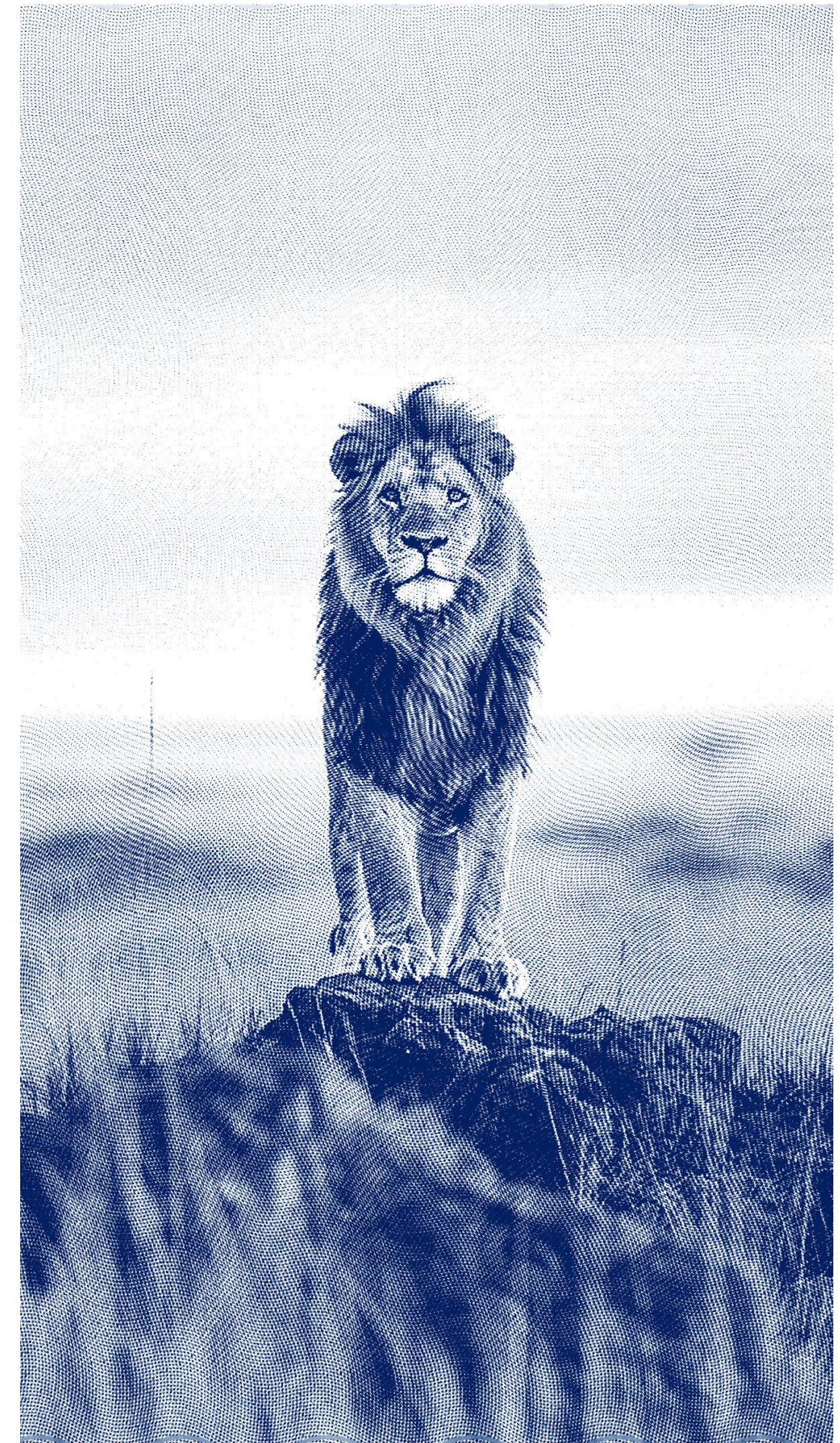
Key finding #1:

Media exposure achieves the highest effectiveness when it delivers strong expressive impact, followed by users supplementing it with utilitarian information through informational search queries.

Effectiveness depicted through transaction

Since transactional search queries can serve as a proxy metric for product demand, sales and transactions, we assume that media exposure (in turn estimated through peaks of social media mentions) can be considered successful or effective when transactional search queries go up significantly.

Lower intensities of expression are associated with mostly weak but immediate search responses, while higher intensities create lagged but stronger shift from informational search to transactional demand with specifically **High intensity level being the most effective**

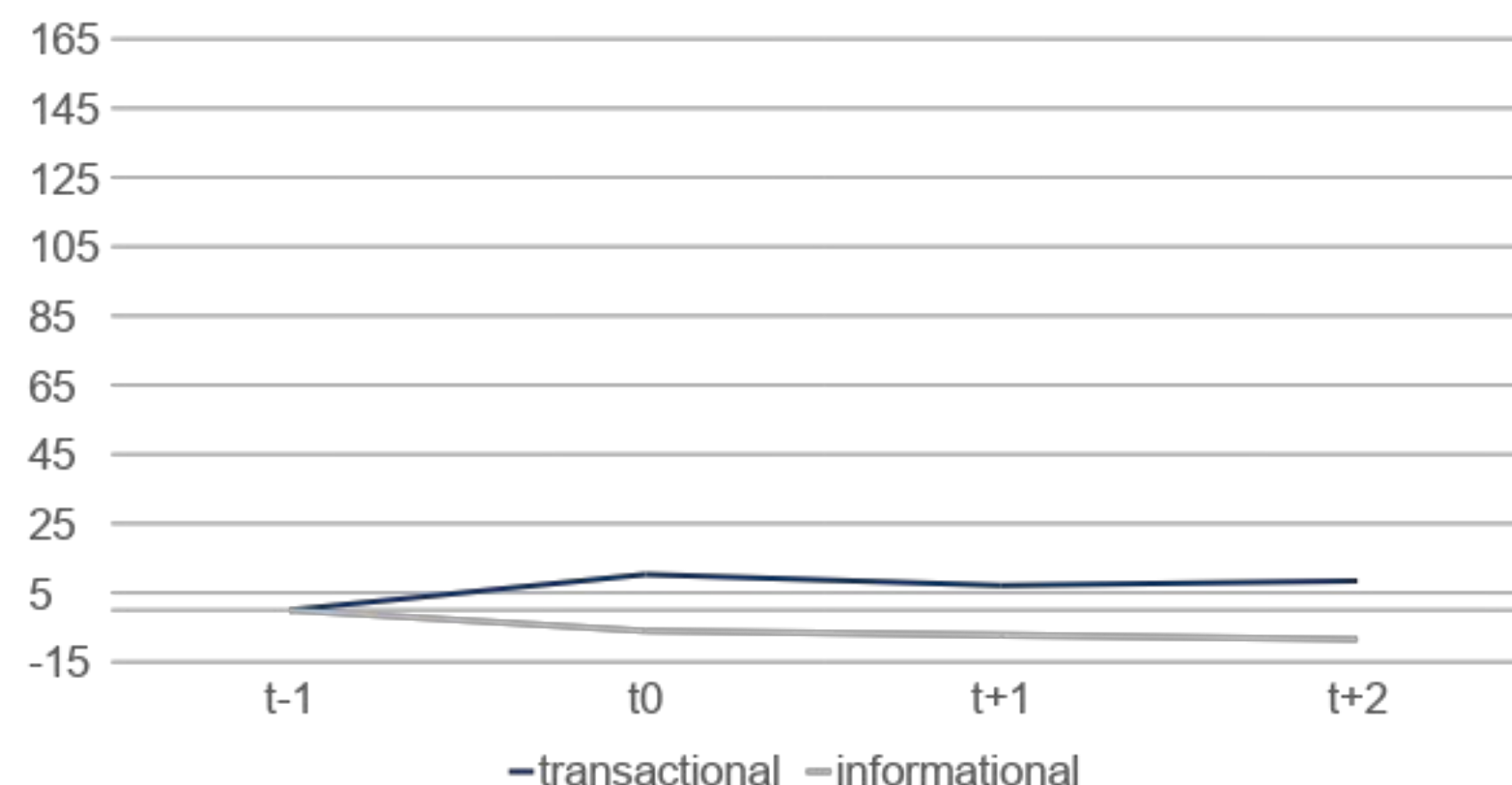


Non-expressive segment as the least effective one

In Vol. 1, we posited that non-expressive media content is typically informational and self-sufficient, thereby reducing users' need for additional search for the sake of depleting "curiosity". Indeed, we demonstrated empirically that the **curve of informational search volume triggered by peaks in non-expressive media exhibits a negative trend**.

At first glance, transactional search volumes appear to show a predominantly positive dynamic. However, this effect is relatively modest compared to peaks of mentions characterized by higher expressive intensity. This pattern reflects the outcome of purely rational influence on users: while it does generate a response, its potential impact remains limited in the absence of an expressive component.

Non-expressive transactional and informational monthly search change from the month prior to the peak of mentions (t-1) to 2 months after (t+2):

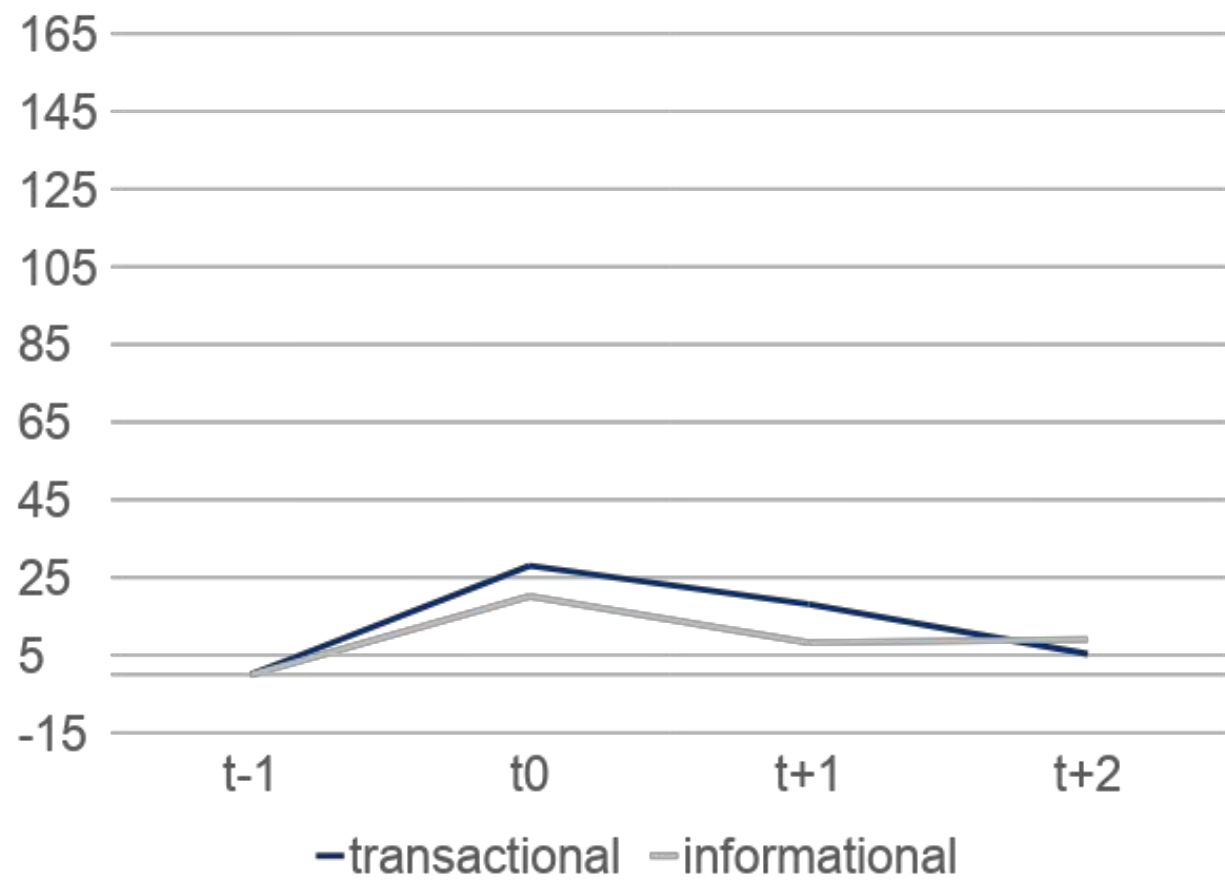


X axis depicts months starting from the month before the peak of mentions (t-1), month of the peak (t0), next month (t+1) and 2 months after (t+2)
Y axis is the % change of the search volume at each t1 comparative to the month prior to the peak of mentions (t-1) placed at 0

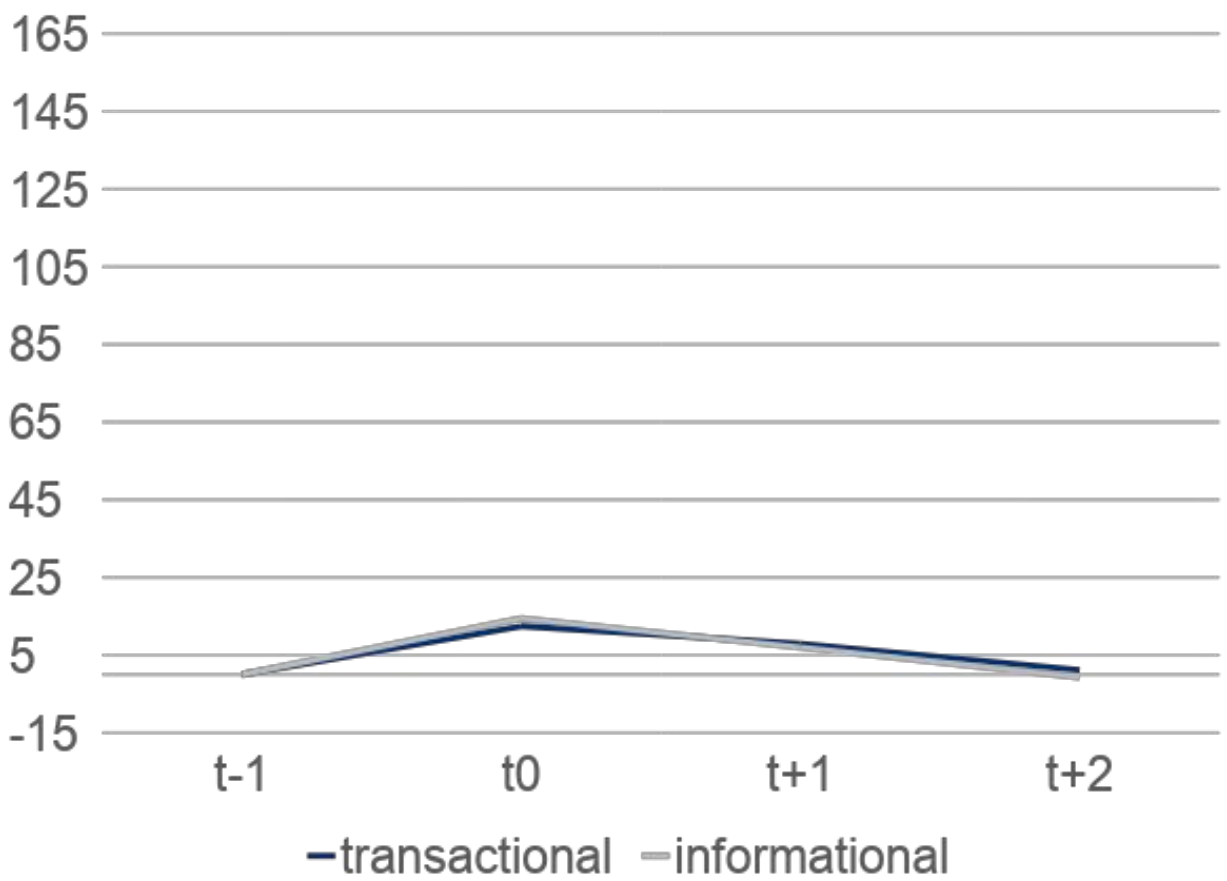
Minimal, Weak and Moderate intensity of expression

The Moderate intensity pattern contributes to identifying the conditions under which media events generate more **sustained longer-term effects**, enabling brands to enhance awareness and build equity.

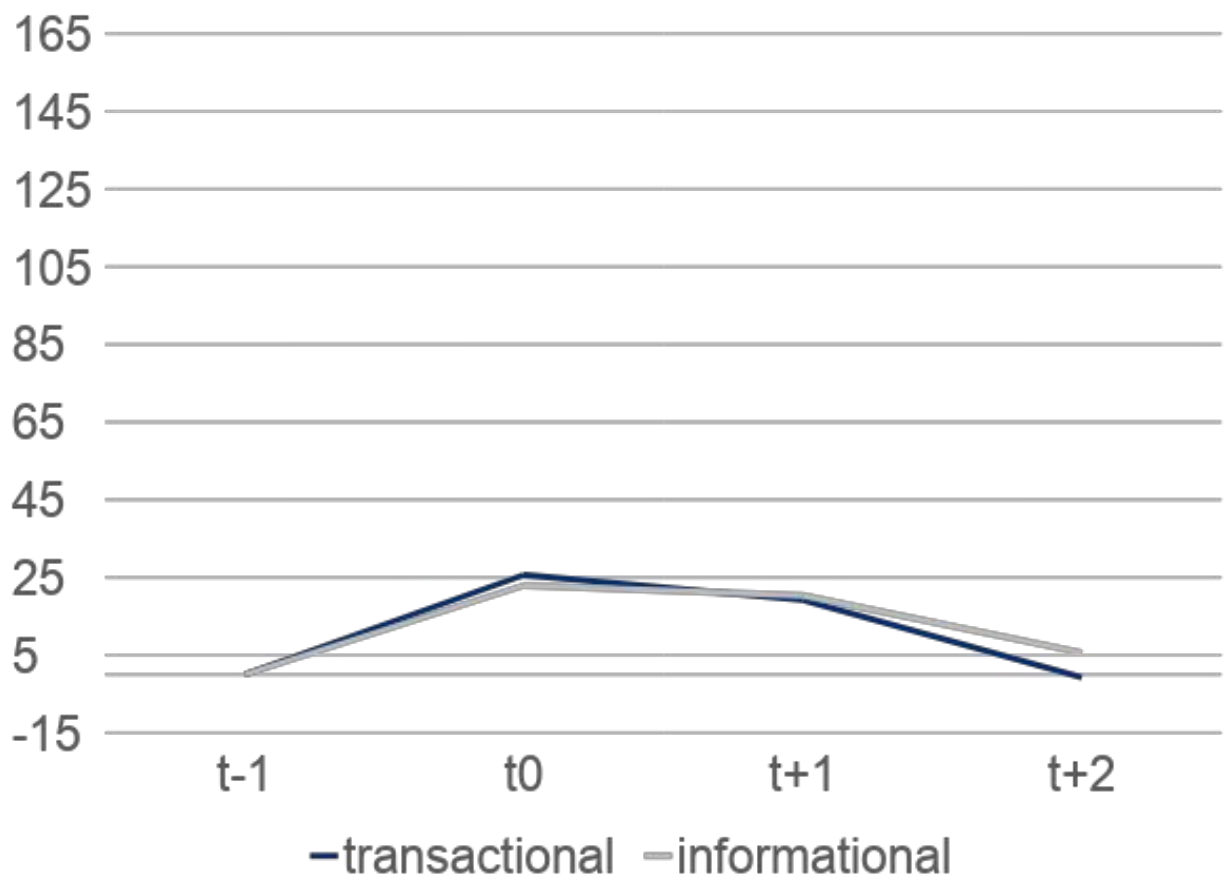
Minimal intensity of expression: transactional and informational monthly search change



Weak intensity of expression: transactional and informational monthly search change



Moderate intensity of expression: transactional and informational monthly search change



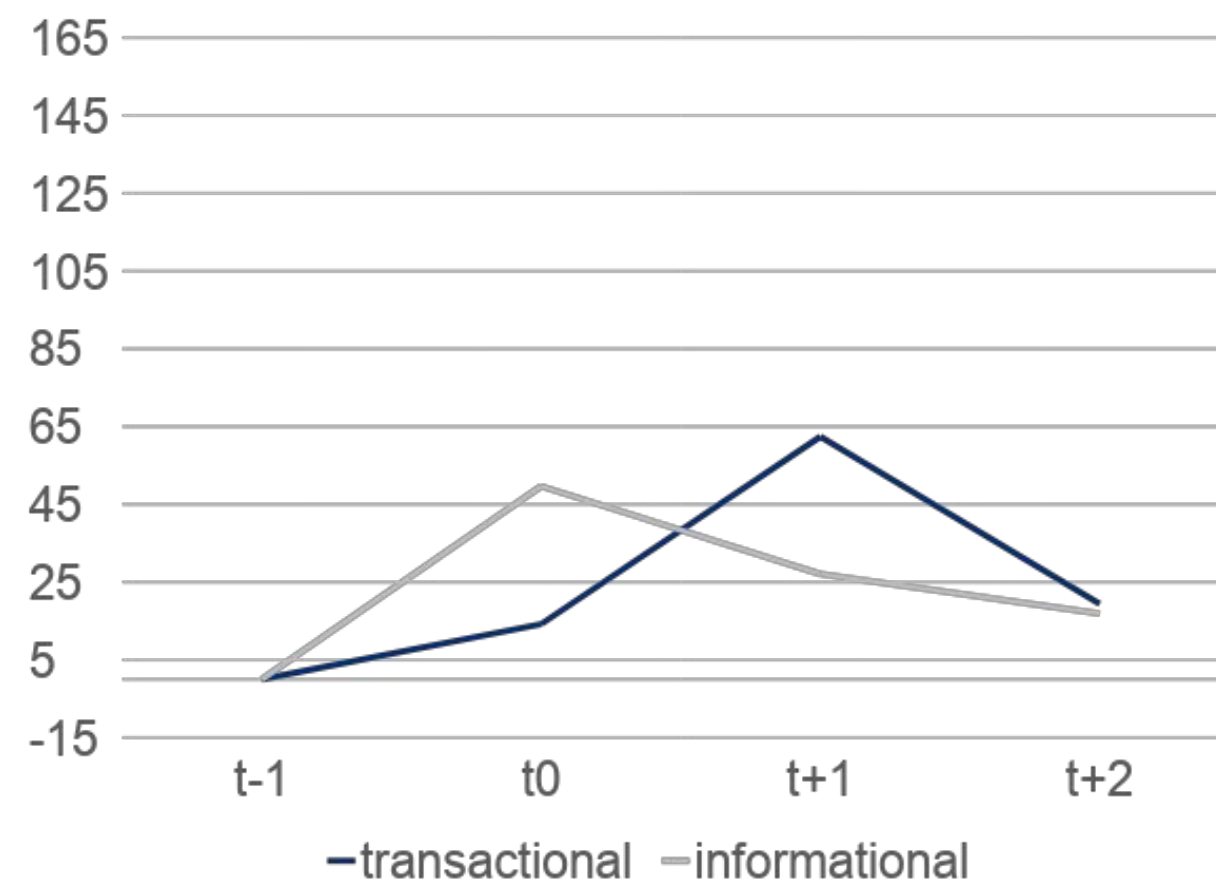
All three levels of expression intensity exhibit broadly similar dynamics across both search types, with a predominantly **immediate response at the month of the peak** of mentions (t0) for both informational and transactional queries, followed by a decline in subsequent months.

The Moderate intensity level is distinguishable in that the drop from t0 to t+1 is less pronounced, making its trajectory more comparable to the higher intensity levels.

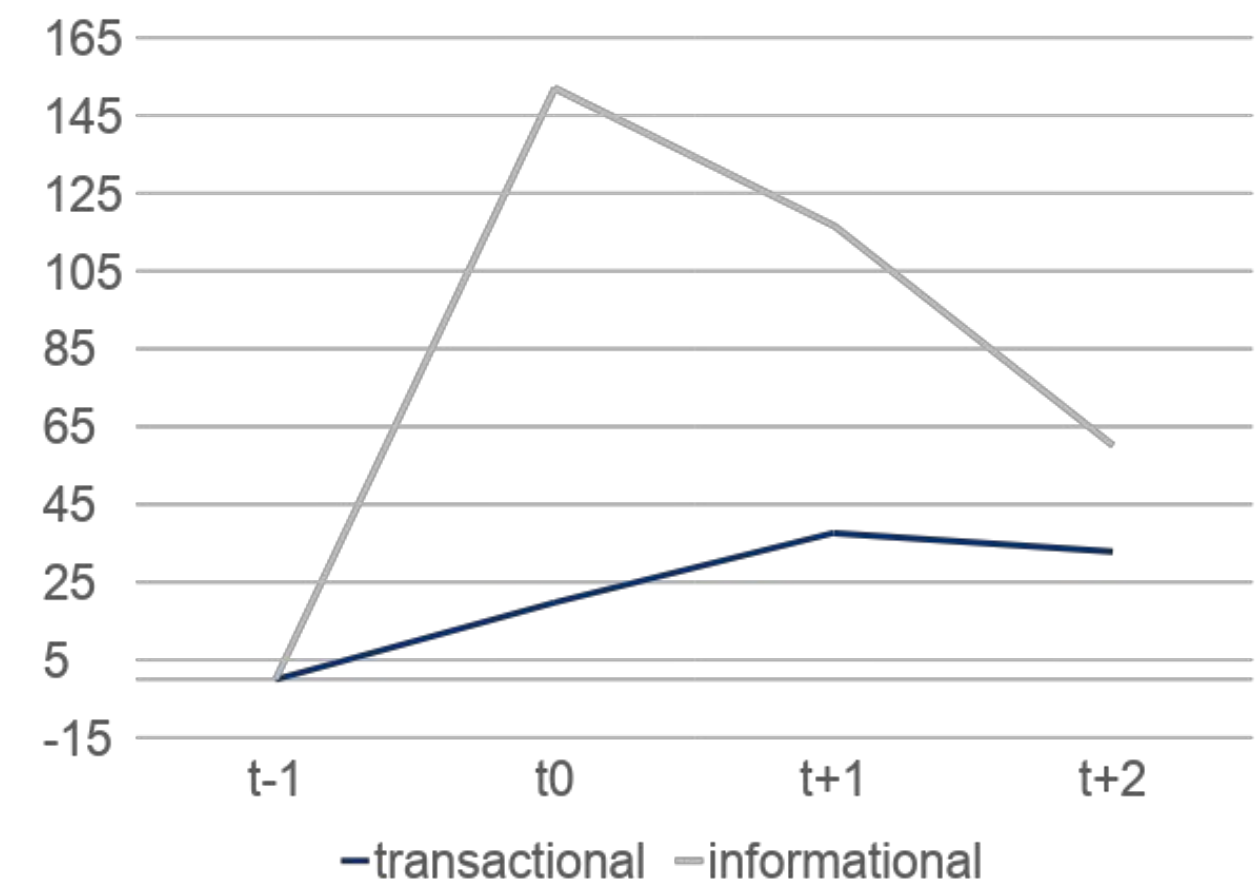


High and Extreme Intensity of Expression

High intensity of expression: transactional and informational monthly search change



Extreme intensity of expression: transactional and informational monthly search change



Lagged transactional response

When a high or extreme intensity of expression is present in brand mentions (20%+ of all mentions are either negative or positive), **transactional search growth is substantial but occurs with a lag of approximately 1 month.**

Notably, an extreme intensity of expression drives users to engage in significantly more intensive information search (up to 3 times higher) compared to cases where the expressive share is simply high (20-40%).

Patterns of decay

In cases of extreme intensity of expression, demand is exhausted within the 2nd and 3rd months, whereas **high intensity of expression satisfies demand more efficiently**, as it retains a sufficient share of factual content to establish a cognitive basis for decision-making.

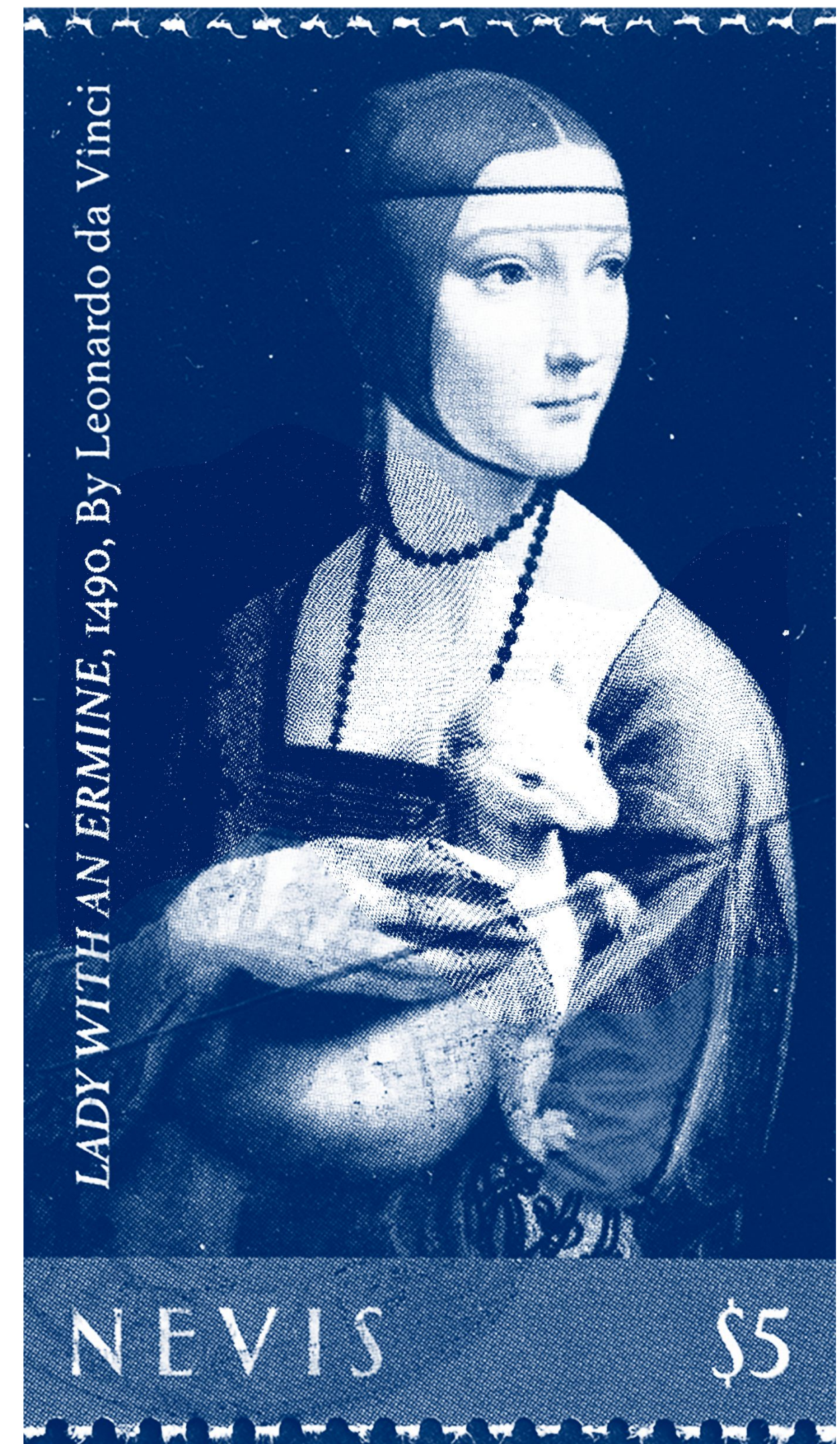
This dynamic is preceded by an increase in informational queries within the same month as the media peak. As a result, businesses, when measured through sales, may not yet observe the effects, despite the foundation for subsequent performance already being formed.



Key finding #2:

The effectiveness of media exposure, measured as conversion into informational search and transactions, increases with the importance, cost and perceived risk of the purchase.

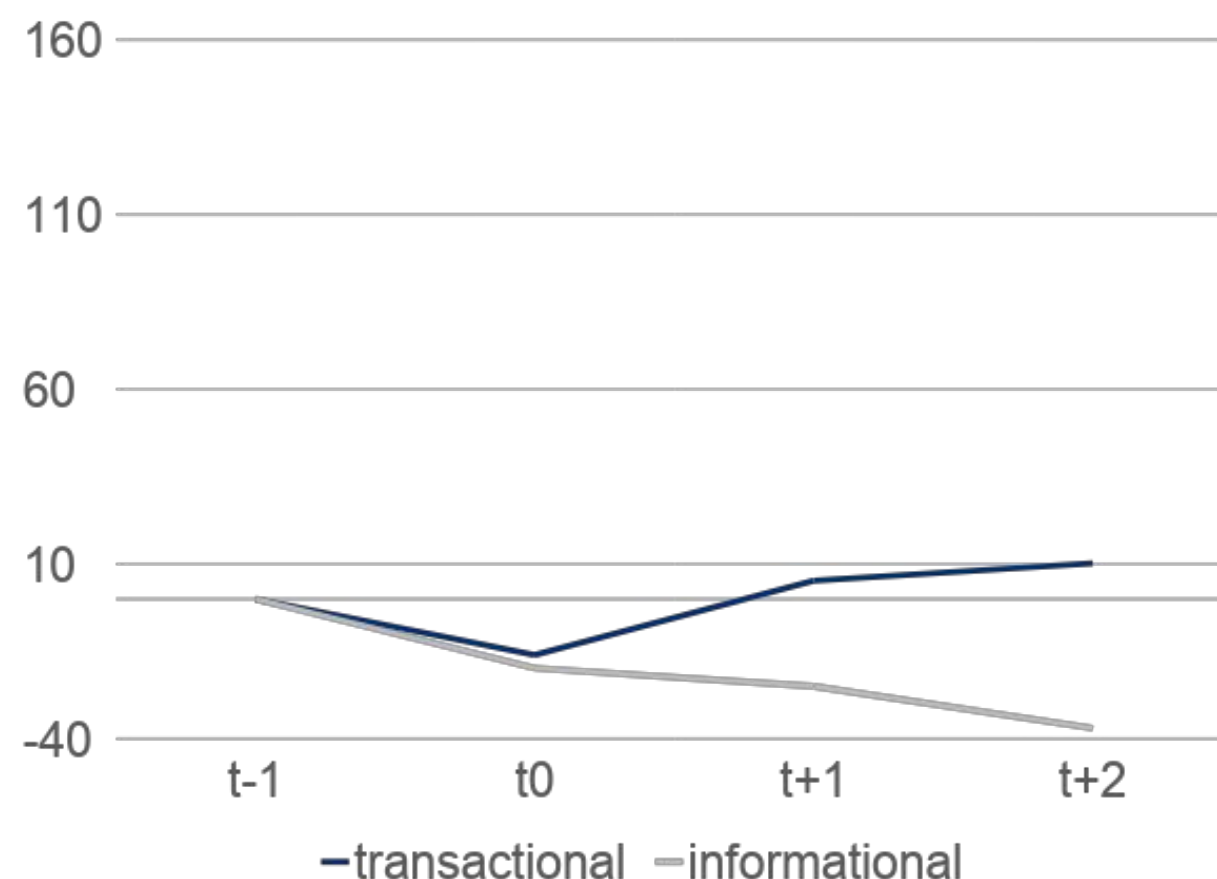
Peaks of mentions with a **higher share of expressive** content establish a **more sustained and elevated trajectory in both informational curiosity and purchasing behavior**, particularly for a more complex high-risk product category.



Categories of Purchases and High Intensity of Expression

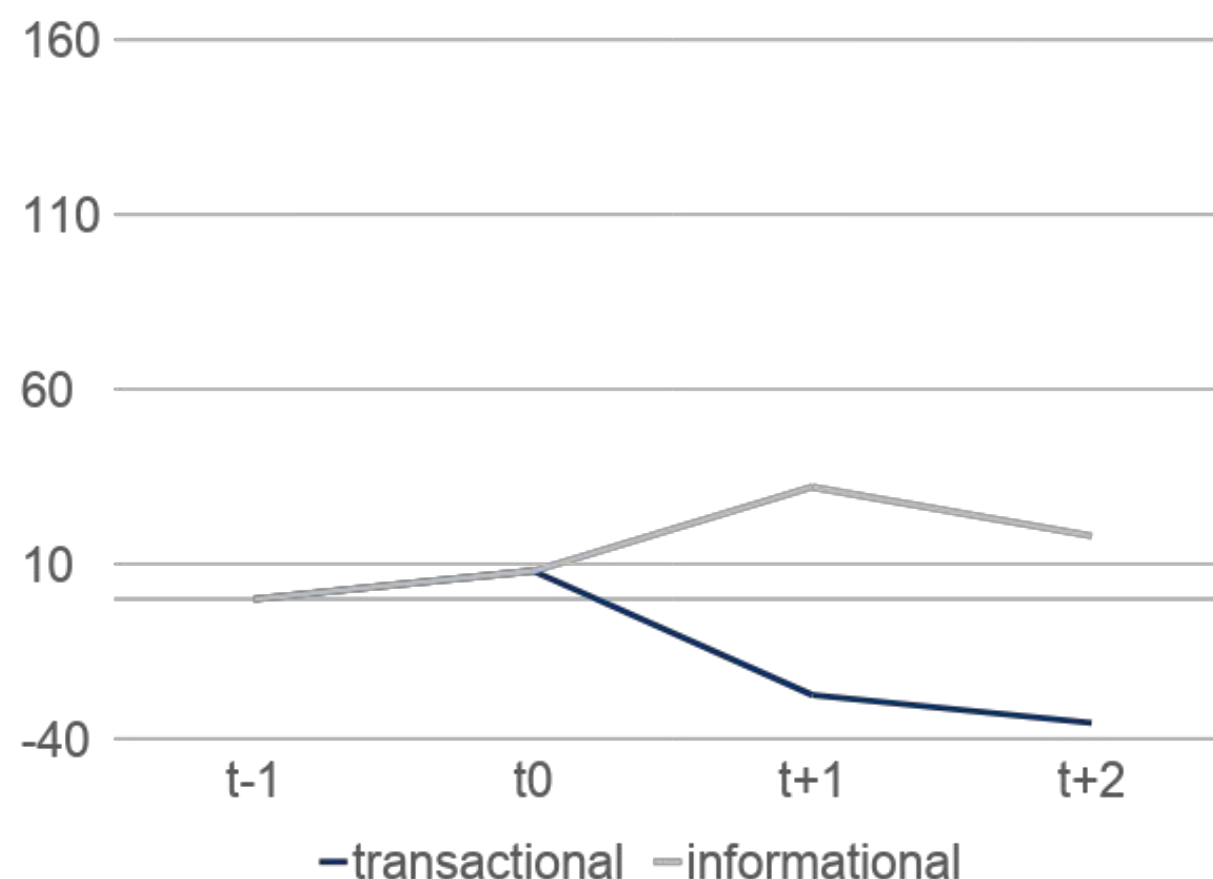
In the previous section, we observed that the most effective level of expressive intensity is High (20-39% either negative or positive mentions within the total volume of mentions).

Spontaneous category with High intensity of expression: transactional and informational monthly search change



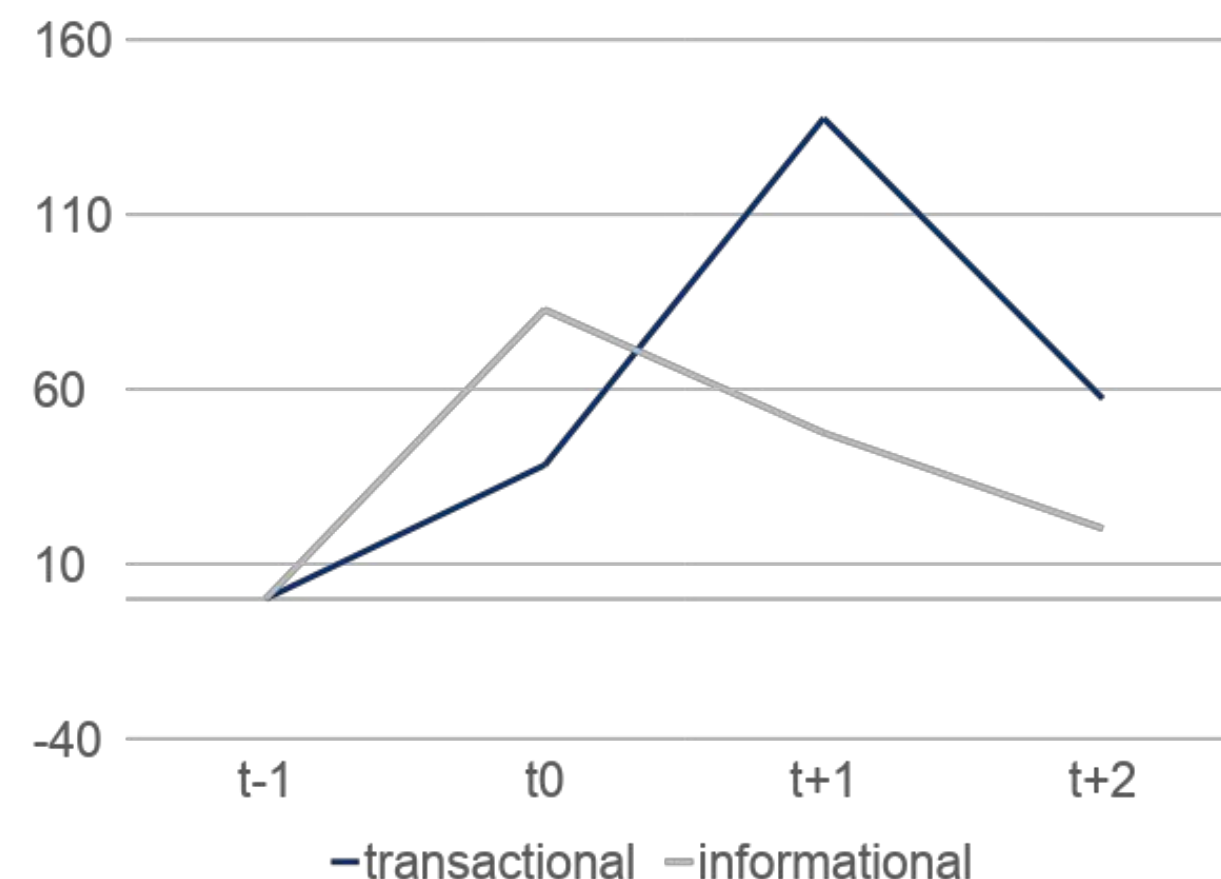
Spontaneous category shows not merely low conversion into search but an actual **decline relative to baseline levels**. Weak intensity of expression (4-9%) was instead revealed to be more effective in terms of transactional reaction for Spontaneous category.

Routine category with High intensity of expression: transactional and informational monthly search change



Routine category exhibits a **brief increase** in informational queries at t0 followed by a sharp decline into negative territory in the following month. Transactional search goes up simultaneously with the informational curiosity at t0.

Careful category with High intensity of expression: transactional and informational monthly search change



In contrast, Careful category demonstrates a strong initial rise in informational search with a more gradual decline that remains above baseline even in the second month. Transactional search demonstrates a **threefold increase at t+1** followed by a twofold decline.



Critical insights for decision-makers

Media impact can be managed as a two-stage conversion process

The most efficient conversion into transactions occurs when media exposure first delivers strong expression-driven impact and is then followed by users supplementing it with utilitarian information via search: effectiveness further increases with the purchase decision complexity

Factors of intensity of expression and category of purchase complexity can aid media strategy optimization

High intensity of expression (20-39% of all mentions are positive or negative) can be prioritized for complex, high-risk purchases to generate sustained informational and transactional demand





Studying key factors
of perception and trust