National College of Ireland

"Intensification of Materialism among adolescents in the
Western World - The Digital Age"

Shannon Hogan

13339031

MSCMGMTD1

Submitted To The National College Of Ireland, August 2018

ABSTRACT

Over 80% of adolescents have mobile phones, this statement seems normal in the 21st century, (Hunt, 2017). However, the rate at which technology is advancing poses a threat to researchers identifying the benefits and drawbacks of using such devices. This research paper addresses the effects of digital media on adolescent's materialistic behaviours by examining behaviour when exposed to and separated from social media. According to a recent review of the digital age of consent, the minimum age was called to be reduced further. The purpose of this paper is to get a real understanding of digital marketing as an influencer on adolescents, it is easy to assume they are vulnerable to multinational marketing strategies with a focus on sales only. The consideration of Marxism and the industrial revolution is identified below as the first signs of materialism, it is believed that such a social transformation has encouraged a more capitalistic society than communistic.

This transformation has altered the way society functions and is believed to be a contributor of materialism; however, this paper aims to explore other sources. The decision to focus this research on a summer camp will allow access to over 100 participants of which all fall under the adolescent category. A mix of thorough observations along with surveys and a focus group will allow for a more complete understanding of the triggers and consequences of living in a materialistic world. It is expected that the younger adolescents are highly vulnerable to marketing strategies as well as social media influencers, while late adolescents are more conscious of such efforts, as legal restrictions indicate. This research will put to the test just how important it is to protect susceptible audiences online such as adolescents, with the intent of encouraging originality via the achievement of personal life goals rather than portraying someone else's lifestyle.

DECLARATION

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Student Number: 13339031

Degree for which thesis is submitted: MSCMGMTD1

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Signature of research student: Shannon Hogan

Date: August 28, 2018

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

IoT   Internet of Things

NFC   Near Field Communications

ITU   International Telecommunication Union

OECD Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development

AI   Artificial Intelligence

CSO   Central Statistics Office

CWB   Consumer well-being

CHAPTER I : INTRODUCTION

1.1   INTRODUCTION

The societal revolution from the 19th century to the 21st century is crucial to understanding the development of consumerism, this essentially aims to identify the beginning of materialism. The behaviour of adolescents has changed dramatically, as it can be assumed the developments in digital marketing and advertising are an influencer. It is easy to believe that these are contributory factors, although few studies have actually attempted to prove this. The available academic literature is somewhat underdeveloped with respect to combining all topics mentioned here such as digital marketing, materialism, adolescents and western society. The world of technology is constantly evolving, this puts a huge strain on academic literature being appropriate to modern day events.

Technology has become so integrated within our daily life, this can be seen through technological developments such as the 'Internet of Things' (IoT), 'Near Field Communications' (NFC) and the modernization of self-education to name a few. The fact that digital marketing among other contributory factors has become so integrated within our daily life is expressed as a potentially harmful impact on society by academics below. However, contrasting research shows these emerging digital marketing tools as powerful and effective without considering the possible harmful effects on adolescents. The opening chapter aims to give a brief overview of the areas this paper will discuss.

The impact of television and more importantly advertising as whole, is a contributing factor of materialism within the general public, as highlighted by (Ahuvia & Wong, 2002). In order to make sense of the current societal evolution of materialism, it is crucial to understand the meaning of the terms consumerism, materialism and adolescent psychology. The International Telecommunication Union (ITU) published statistics showing that fifteen to twenty four year olds represent two thirds of the population in underdeveloped countries, this shows their influence on

such regions preferences and reputation, (Byrne & Burton, 2017). The understanding of how children develop symbolic meaning associated with brands is important in explaining the value they place on material possessions, a long-term relationship that can impact on their well-being. Considering the youth of today are the future, identifying the cause of such materialistic behaviour will allow for a clearer understanding, to modify or eliminate such a dominant and potentially harmful trait.

1.2 BACKGROUND

The term 'adolescent' derives from a stage of transition in life which involves alterations in physical, cognitive, emotional, social and behavioural aspects (Curtis, 2015). This creates some uncertainty regarding adolescents planning for the future, while facing many life transitions. Russell Belk is one of many key authors in this area, a well-known researcher in the meanings of possessions, collecting, gift-giving, sharing, and materialism. (Belk, 1985) states the importance of first identifying and exploring consumer behaviour before gaining an understanding of possession attachment.

It is important to first understand the individual in order to label someone as a materialist, (Masoom & Sarker, 2017). Consumer well-being (CWB) is a term used to describe the psychological, physical, social or economic conditions that go beyond the general health of an individual, this has been of interest to academics in various disciplines such as psychology and marketing, (Pancer & Handelman, 2012). The fact that many of transactions occur daily makes everyone a consumer or an influencer on behalf of someone else's consumption, this presents the importance of broadening the study of adolescent consumption to their guardians as well as huge multinational corporations as a source of desire to purchase certain products.
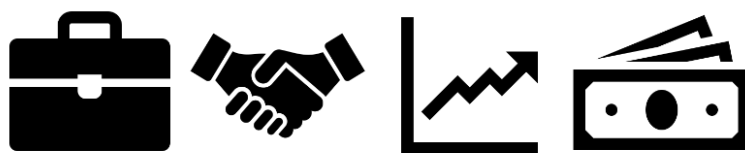
Figure 1 Multinational profits

Branding and advertising are as old as human society itself, originating from the prehistoric age (Starčević, 1991). The exact words "brand, advertising, promotion or public relations" were not used, however these activities existed in alternative forms. The birth of the Egyptian civilization (3300 BCE) is one of the oldest in the world, personal branding and self-promotion was a contributory factor toward the invention of papyrus in 3000 BCE, (Starčević, 2015). Although there was no such thing as brands, generic products were promoted via messaging on bags and wooden slabs. Other sources of advertising and branding originate from ancient Babylon, via text and pictures for royal propaganda where the first ever outdoor advertising was documented, (Starčević, 2015). Such evidence was the first sign of mass media communication in the Middle East, with early forms of advertising in Africa including town-crying and hawking and have still survived to date (Ezejideaku & Nkiruka Ugwu, 2010).

1.3   DIGITAL AGE

Referred to as the 'information age', this period is known to have occurred from the 1970's as personal computers allowed for the ability to transfer data freely and quickly. Almost 80% of adolescent's own a smartphone allowing them widespread availability of internet access (Hunt, 2017). According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) states that roughly 65% of adolescents today will have jobs that are not yet invented (Byrne & Burton, 2017). The rising presence of the digital age has become part of everyday life for users of such devices, with the potential to affect health, relationships etc.

Figure 2 Digital Age

"One concern that has arisen in the digital age is the overuse of the internet, especially by young people", (Romer, 2016). One of the most recent additions to the 'American Psychiatric Association' has identified such a predicament as a form of behavioural addiction which requires additional study. Interestingly, further studies have found that the youth who report these symptoms tend to have less parental supervision and poorer relationships with parents, (Bleakley, et al., 2016). Given the pervasive presence of these vulnerable online users, the opportunity for marketers to promote products online are widespread and largely unregulated with the promotion of sugar-sweetened beverages, tobacco, and alcohol, (Dunlop, et al., 2016). Our understanding of the digital age is still in its early stages, as unknown information is yet to be learned about continuous connectivity and digital communication affects the development of children to adults. It is an exciting, if not concerning time in history.

1.4 CLASSIFICATION OF ADOLESCENTS

Young people aged between 10 and 19 years are classified as adolescents (APA.org, 2002). However, (Silver, 2018) and further recent studies attempt to broaden this age range bracket to between ten and twenty four years old. Additional studies by (Lieu, 2018) solidify the concept of adolescence occurring at an earlier age of ten years old and prolonging to mid-twenties. This is seen as an outcome of improved health and nutrition in the developed world as well as legal privileges

occurring near 18 years old, therefore the adoption of adult roles and responsibilities generally occurs at a later stage. Adolescent groups can be broken down into early, middle and late stages. This suggests that alternative motivators, behaviours and influencers are expected at each pre-determined phase. For example, early adolescence typically occurs from the age of 10 - 13 years old (pre-teens) as suggested by (Silver, 2018) & (Lieu, 2018) with major influencers being peer groups, at the same time distance from family members becomes apparent. Middle adolescence then occurring at 13-16 years old, and late adolescents prolonging to early twenties.

1.5   RESEARCH FOCUS & SIGNIFICANCE

This paper is directed toward identifying the impact of digital media on adolescents with emphasis on prevailing materialistic signs. Also, to identify if late adolescents can differentiate between misleading marketing efforts and factual information, when comparing their current and past self. The parents/guardians of adolescents will be encouraged to discuss their children's behaviour patterns in comparison to their own childhood, a time when less signs of materialism emerged from society. The findings of this study will contribute to the impact on society, considering that the digital age plays an important role in the development of materialism among adolescents in developed countries.
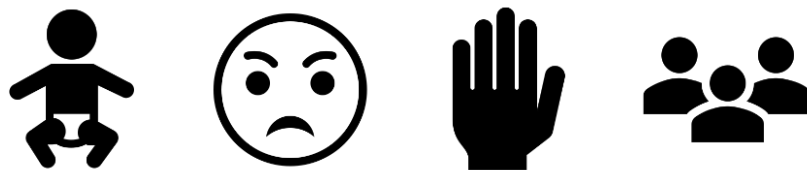
Figure 3 Materialistic traits

The greater the access to internet as well as few legal restrictions for minors will be considered as influencers of materialism. Thus, the greater access to internet

enabled devices encourages traits among adolescents that replicate materialistic values such as jealousy, greed and selfishness etc. The relevance of this topic to real world issues is the fact that adolescents will grow up to become parents and educators themselves. Many studies show the relationship between materialism and negative outcomes such as loneliness, self-mutilation and comparison, all of which are fostered by social communities such as Rich Kids of Instagram (Monbiot, 2013). A general social affliction loosely monitored by government policy, controlled by corporate strategy and a possible influence on the collapse of communities and civic life, isolating us from the inside out. Therefore, if the digital age can be identified as an influencer on this age group then measures can be put in place to rectify such outcomes.

1.6 OVERALL AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Considering the internet opens up a huge array of problem areas, the aim of this study is to focus mainly on social media, digital advertising and the implications this introduces to the lives of adolescents. These users are susceptible to many threats when it comes to the internet, this can be due to their lack of capacity to make informed decisions or simply their vulnerability to marketing efforts. It is important to identify the source of materialism before one can make judgements on the victims as a whole. Therefore, in order to formulate a solution to 'fix' or reverse the current state of materialistic values shown by adolescents, the root of the issue must be identified, and measures put in place to inhibit the continuation of such malicious behaviours.

The possibility to identify a linkage between social media usage and materialistic values is a prime focus to the outcome of this paper. If in fact social media is a key influence that encourages materialistic behaviours, further research is required to identify the responsible parties behind the online content. It is fair to assume that governing bodies, multinationals, the individual, parents and societal evolution all play a part in the development of materialism.

CHAPTER II: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This literature review will explore digital marketing, consumerism, adolescent psychology and government policy intervention. The following topics are the most crucial when investigating the concept of materialism progression among adolescents. The internet can be regarded as a given in most economies (Poushter, 2016) although of some 40 countries surveyed ranging from the U.S to Ethiopia, this was not the case as rates of access ranged from 94% to as low as 8%. It emerged from studies that North America and Europe had the highest internet access per capita. (Poushter, 2016) continues to make valid arguments including in many advanced economies such as mainland Europe, Australia and South Korea virtually all of the millennial generation in already an online user.

Figure 4 Lack of Communication

"The emergence of children as enthusiastic consumers in the last 15-20 years has raised alarms about the increase of materialism in children and adolescents", (Chaplin & John, 2007).The initial source of marketing as we know it cannot be identified, however (Hollander, et al., 2005) unifies the ideology of Dixon, Nevitt and Twede whom believe marketing roots existed in human civilizations before the Middle Ages. These theorists believe nothing worthy of being called marketing occurred before the Industrial Revolution as the surge in competition became immense.

2.2   RELEVANT THEORIES

The research of Bartels is recalled by (Shaw & Tamilia , 2001), placing the "origin of marketing between the years 1906-1911 in the United States among Universities".

Bartels further conceptualized the development of marketing as an evolvement through discrete time periods, as shown in Table 1. This suggests that most theorists disagree about the origin of marketing due to lexical semantics, creating controversy surrounding whether or not it deserves to be called marketing during each progressing time period. This information corresponds with the purpose of this paper, that available academic literature is somewhat underdeveloped in respect to the combination of all topics mentioned here such as digital marketing, materialism, adolescents and western society.

Year	Development
1900 - 1910	Period of Discovery
1910 - 1920	Period of Conceptualization
1920 - 1930	Period of Integration
1930 - 1940	Period of Development
1940 - 1950	Period of Reappraisal
1950 - 1960	Period of Reconceptualization
1960 - 1970	Period of Differentiation
1970+	Period of Socialization

Table 1 Bartels Proposed Development of Marketing

In order to further enhance the characterization of relevant and distinct time periods, Erik Erikson's 8 stages of psychological development are identified below. This is a simple yet broad range of personal development stages, covering the whole life span of humans in general. A worrying study from (Ward, 2013) revealed that children are using the internet from the age of three, scientists agreed that this amount of internet exposure may alter a child's cognitive development much similar to an experiment with children as the subject. Further discoveries from Ward's research shows that "almost 30 per cent of parents allow their children to access the internet

without any restrictions or supervision", while with one in eight allow toddlers under age two to go online.
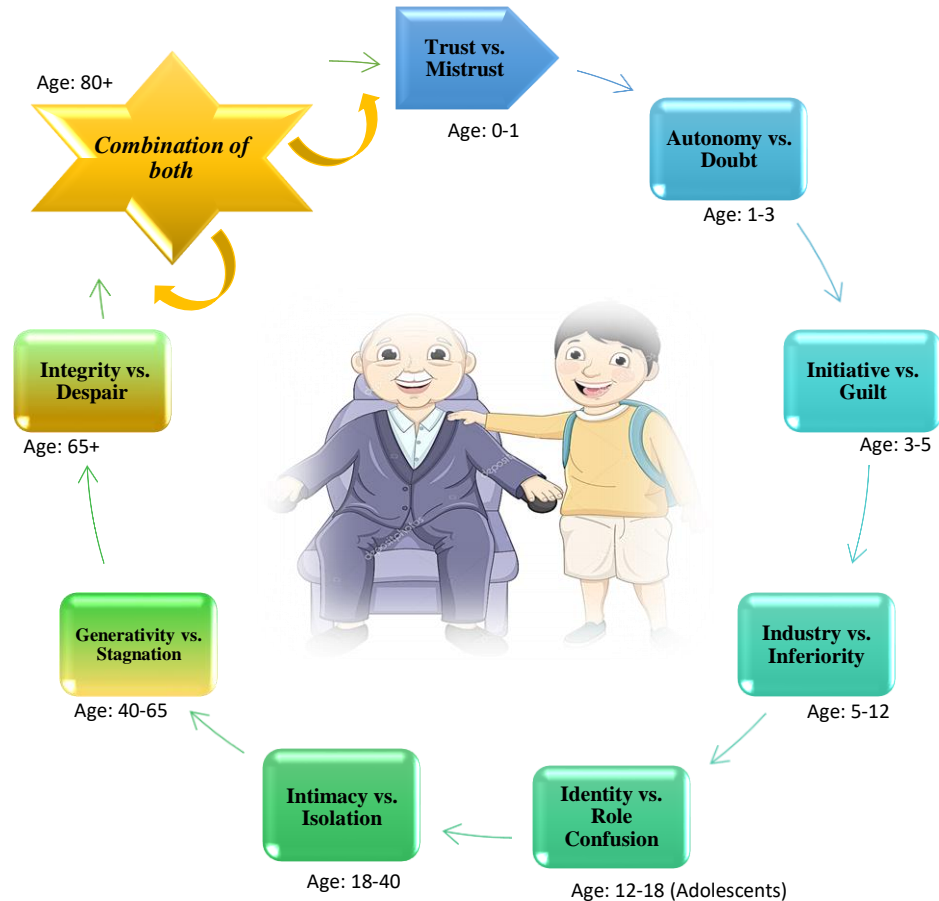
Figure 5 Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development extended to the 9th stage (Erikson, 1998)

As illustrated in the diagram above, the most relevant stage for this research paper occurs at adolescents which Erikson has labelled "Identity vs. Role Confusion". An interesting point to note is the addition of stage 9 consisting of a more intense stage 8 and a revisit to stage 1 (Erikson, 1998), the purpose of identifying this is to justify that multiple stages can apply to anyone at any time in their life cycle. To recall the words of (Starčević, 1991) and (Shaw & Tamilia , 2001), their research into the origin of marketing i.e. Bartel's proposed development of marketing, is very familiar to Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development.

Similarities include the gradual progression and development of the subject, starting from unchartered territory and gradually becoming environmentally aware, strategic and resilient as time progresses. The work of Maslow which is represented by a motivational theory in psychology often depicted as a hierarchy of needs, comprises of many similarities to Erik Erikson's psychological development stages as explained in the above diagram. Both theories highlight and illustrate the vulnerability which every individual experience as they progress through life. With the simplest yet vital needs representing the beginning and bottom level of each theory, it is fair to assume that an individual can only be the best version of their self when they fulfill self-actualization needs according to Maslow and at later stages of life according to Erikson.
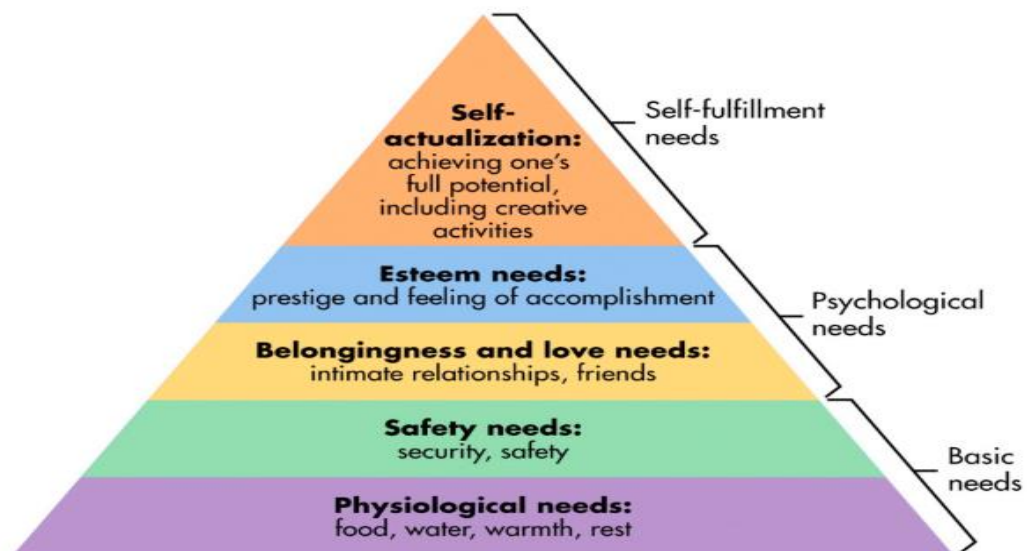
Figure 6 Maslow's 'Hierarchy of Needs' theory (McLeod, 2018)

The combination of both theories brings forth the dilemma of childhood being a difficult part of life, however the addition of social media can pose threat to the development of an individual by questioning their safety and belongingness needs. With respect to Erikson's discoveries almost every stage of life is a challenge, with the ages of 12-18 (adolescents) involving the most self-doubting time period. This observation portrays the focus on marketing advancements in today's 21st century, adolescents are vulnerable to corporate strategies during this stage of self-discovery.

Studies from Pollay and Colleagues 1996 showed that "brand-specific advertising expenditures had three times more influence on brand shares among adolescents than among adults", focusing on heavily advertised cigarette brands, (Pechmann, et al., 2005). In conclusion to comparing both theories it is clear that in order to be the best one can be i.e. self-actualization; only then can any individual be defenseless to negative external threats.

2.3 MATERIALISM

Materialism has been defined by (Belk, 1988) as "the importance a consumer attaches to worldly possessions", suggesting that humans create an extended self with a purpose of exposing our best self to the outer world, this is the broadest definition to date. Although marketing is seen as a powerful and effective tool driving corporate sales, the impact on vulnerable minds is underdeveloped, therefore it is difficult to predict what effects it will trigger for the future. According to (Schrum, et al., 2014) materialism can be broken down into the good, the bad and the ugly, this study suggests that materialism is not always a negative trait.

Few researchers have investigated the origin of materialistic behaviours and even fewer have identified social media as an influencer. Therefore, being able to minimize the levels of materialism at a young age will eliminate the influence of social media as shown in the image above, with a goal to return society to a more socially interactive and experience focused lifestyle, rather than possession focus.
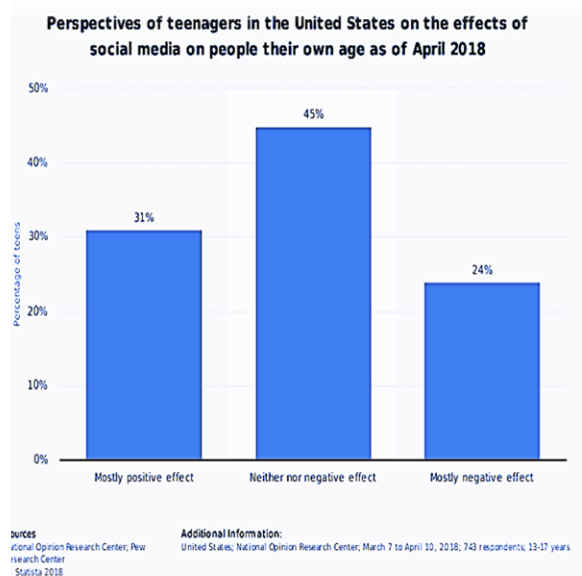
Graph 2 Social Media Effects (Statista.com, 2018)

A recent study by (Richins, 2013) shows the tendency for materialists to expect pleasure from purchases causes problems, as these emotions associated with acquisitions are not durable. Findings from these studies indicate the positive emotions gained by purchasing fade quickly for already materialistic consumers, this shows that as people become more materialistic they are less likely to recall and have rationale for purchasing certain items. Many authors are in agreement with the positive outlook on materialism, a recent publishing by (Taylor, 2018) mentioned that this new era of unprecedented human flourishing has the ability to kill capitalism. Factors such as saving for a lifestyle rather than retirement, decreased levels of home ownership and rating work-life balance over pay are shaping the future economy. This situation highlights the positive and negative aspects of materialism , which can have unforeseen impacts not just for the individual but economies.

Figure 7 Digital Media Encouraging Purchases

Deriving a general ideology of current literature gathered, it is fair to suggest that adolescents are increasingly likely to enter adulthood being susceptible and non-critical consumers due to the impact of digital media exposure. It is put forward by (Shrum, et al., 2014) that there has been a heavy concentration on the positive sides of materialism, which leaves the field of the negative aspects open for further investigation. It is important to recognize that many studies from (Chaplin & John, 2007) suggest that we know relatively little about how materialistic values develop in childhood and adolescence, "Many academics believe that children begin to exhibit materialistic orientations around middle to late childhood, often referred to as the tween years from 8 to 12 years of age". The most logical step is to identify the origin of materialistic values within the consumer decision-making process, this research aims to fill the gap between the impact of digital media on expressing materialistic values among the adolescent age range.

2.4   POWER OF MARKETING

The idea of individuals being manipulated into buying something sounds undesirable although marketing is a powerful tool encouraging purchases, humans still believe they are in control of perceptions and decisions, (Yarrow, 2016). Advertising has been defined as a "communication system and intended to influence and/or inform an unknown audience", (Ezejideaku & Nkiruka Ugwu, 2010).The teaching of marketing is suggested to be included in sociology, psychology, anthropology and mathematics, (Cox, 1961). The reasoning behind this was to highlight the idea that marketing is not a subject, it is a science with intent to influence consumer behaviour. The concept of empowerment marketing has been studied by (Sachs, 2012), this adheres to the ideology of authors above such as (Dunlop, et al., 2016) and (Hill, 2011). Empowerment marketing is providing consumers with options and resources to facilitate informed decision-making, by doing this marketers forfeit control over consumer brand interaction. Allowing the consumer to make choices results in the consumer being happier with their chosen brand/purchase, in turn engaging in a more positive way with the brand becoming brand evangelists.
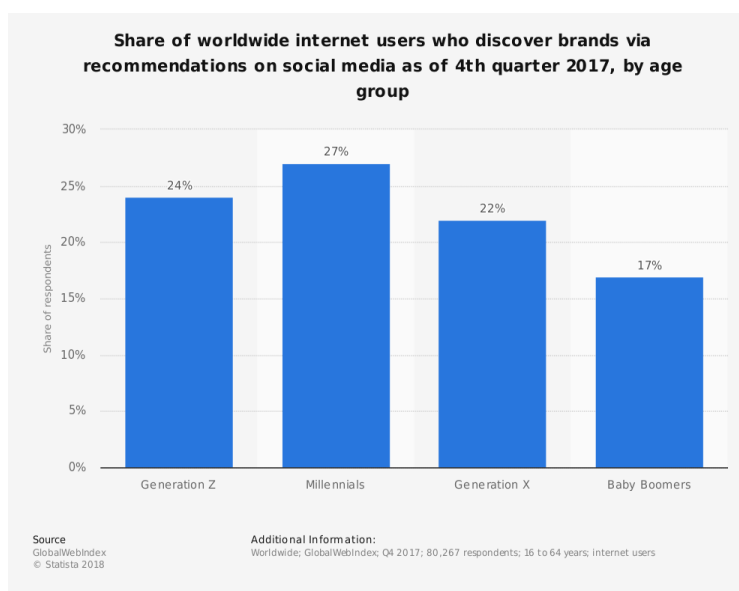
The fundamental purpose of marketing according to (Vajre, 2018) is to boost sales and drive customer retention through strategic methods. This suggests that the health, well-being and psychological mind frame of consumers is not a priority when a marketing strategy is formulated.

Graph 3 Recommendation impact by age group (Statista.com, 2018)

2.4.1 DIGITAL MARKETING

The impact of social media is less developed and understood in comparison to traditional media as an influencer of the youth in both positive and negative ways, (Dunlop, et al., 2016). Using America as an example, the U.S Department of Agriculture identified that the cost of raising a child in the 1980's was $199,000 whereas in 2013 it increased to $250,000. The interesting part of these findings is the allocation of the additional spending which is categorized as miscellaneous expenses, this includes spending on entertainment devices such as Televisions, computers and mobile devices, (Picchi, 2015). The explicit use of digital devices among adolescents leaves a huge opportunity for multinational corporate brands to target and engage with this audience through extraordinary measures.

2.4.2 TECHNOLOGICAL ADVANCES

The advancement of technologies has been occurring since the beginning of history from knifes and spears made from just rocks and sticks, however, it has been exceptionally fast during the 20th and 21st century, (Parker, 2015). Our daily life is highly dependent on technology that people have developed, it has disrupted the way in which we purchase products, communicate, travel and learn, (Ramey, 2012). The progression of the mobile phone and general technological innovations means devices produced in 1995 are no longer in demand. In terms of organizations, technological advancements can play a vital role in efficiency and competitiveness, this allows smaller firms to use advances in marketing tools to compete with huge multinationals. The future of marketing is expected to continue accelerating at a phenomenal rate, from the IoT to Airbnb consumers are renting instead of buying and when they do buy it will be online, pushing at retailer's profits (Webb, et al., 2015). Considering websites gain and store data from our digital footprint, our online presence is assumed to be a better judge of our personality and choices than others. The current challenge is living in a world where devices know us better than we know ourselves.
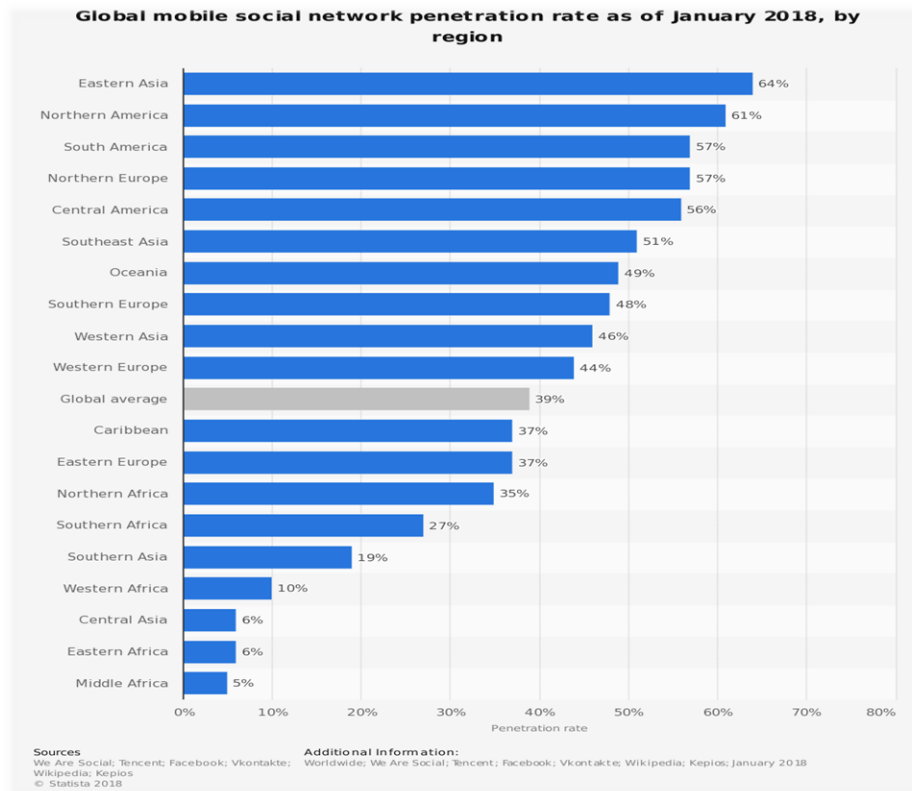
Graph 4 Social Media Penetration (Statista.com, 2018)

2.4.3 PRIVACY & DIGITALIZATION OF DATA

When it comes to digitalization of data (Lang, 2017) states that photos, finances, health information and conversations can be completely private. According to a study from 2016, only 12% of Americans and 9% of social media users in general reported being highly confident in government and technology companies retaining their personal information in a safe manner, (Lang, 2017). Recent concerns arise due to technological advances, enabling the huge decrease in the cost of collecting, maintaining, processing and utilizing data in mass quantities, (Jin, 2018). This ability can be made possible by the terms "big data" and "Artificial Intelligence (AI)", this involves the use of algorithms to understand, influence and predict consumer behaviour.

Share of Facebook's mobile advertising revenue from 2012 to 2017
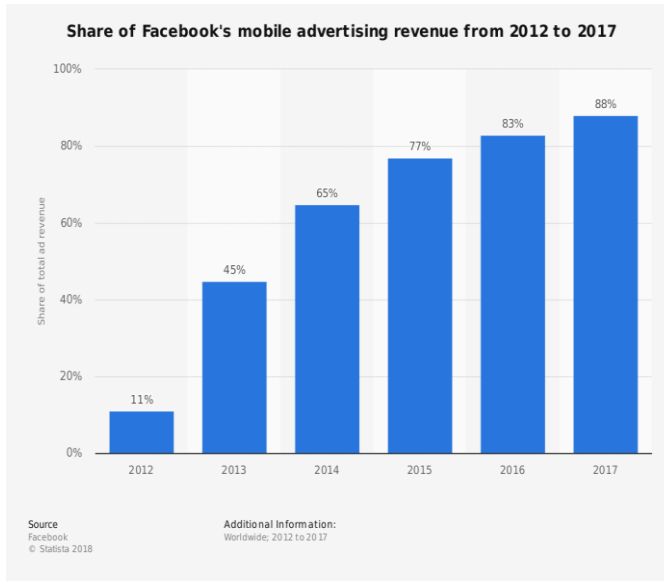
The use of such modern capabilities for legitimate reasons could improve efficiency, encourage innovations and better align demand and supply. However, in the wrong hands i.e. using the Global 500 as an example, mass production of fraud and deception is easily achievable to exploit this new technology, (Jin, 2018).

Graph 5 Social Media as a Revenue Stream (Statista.com, 2018)

Social media applications such as Snapchat, plan to stop retaining certain data about users under 16 years old within Europe, (Bradshaw, 2018). This move was in alignment with current requirements of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), without eliminating their younger users from using the application.

Leading reasons why teenagers in the United States feel that social media has a mostly negative effect on people their own age as of April 2018
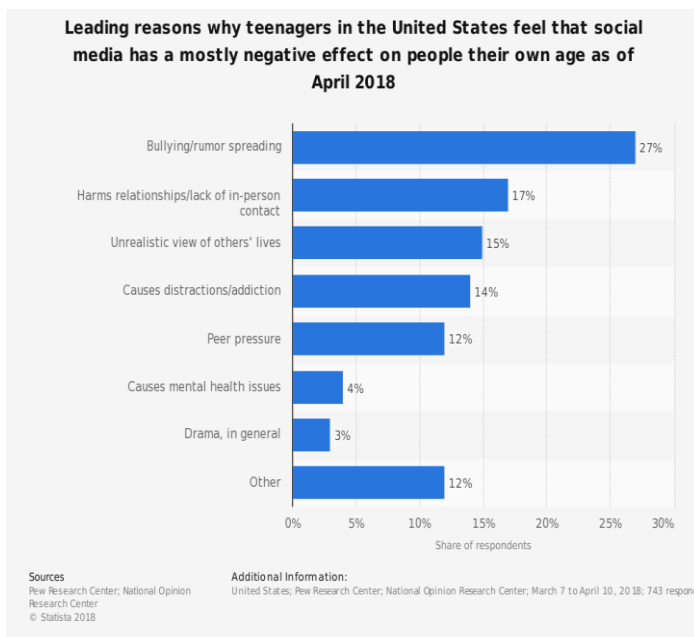
It is reported by (Castells, 2014) that the intense usage of the internet increases the risk of isolation and withdrawal from society, however evidence shows this to be inaccurate as it actually increases sociability, civil engagement, and enhances family and friendship relationships. This is a debate in constant questioning among theorists.

Graph 6 Impact of Social Media from Adolescent Perspective (Statista.com, 2018)

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The next stage of adoption for the EU will be ePrivacy regulations expected towards the end of 2018 or early 2019, implementations of this along with GDPR regulations will impact on European business operations which is already lagging behind Chinese and North American competitors, (Apostle , 2018). This is an attempt at a solution to restrict the power of such advertisers and multinationals, although it is well overdue it proves the reality that technology advances at a rate much faster than legal requirements can keep up with.

In disagreement (Thornhill, 2018) states that GDPR is a start, but simply not enough to protect privacy independently. Thornhill continues on to say that the adoption of the GDPR regulations across the EU's 28 member states has intended to give users increased control over the gathering, storage and usage of their personal data, however so far it has "triggered a flood of emails from organizations which has led to frustration among users". We live in a world where people are more concerned about notifications on their mobile devices than experiencing the outside world.

2.4.4 OVER-RELIANCE ON TECHNOLOGY

(Burkeman , 2009) reminisces the internet by stating that most people would agree the first sign of the internet emerging was in 1969 as Mr. Kleinrock a professor in Los Angeles stood beside an interface message processor (IMP). Considering that the internet is relatively new, the fact that it is so synonymous with our lives can be seen as discouraging to the way humans live. For example, (McGinley , 2016) states how difficult it is to believe there was once a time when natural memory was our only method of relaying past events to others, social media has emerged as the medium of connectivity between people, which McGinley believes is a similar addiction to alcohol, drugs and cigarettes. Gone are the days of going online by signing in and activating an internet connection, consumers are now in a constant state of connectivity from miles below and above ground, (Brown, 2017).

2.5 CONSUMERISM

As pointed out by (Starčević, 1991) branding and advertising are as old as human society itself. According to (Byrne & Burton, 2017) there are over 3.5 billion worldwide online users, of which one-third are children (Livingstone, et al., 2015) & (Kardefelt-Winther, et al., 2016). A major outcome of consumerism has been the significant erosion of childhood, whether it be measured in health trends, fashion trends or ease of access to adult culture (Hill, 2011). Many academics are concerned about the concept of childhood, at least as we know it, to be fading out altogether in western regions.

Figure 8 Child as a consumer (Borba, 2016)

2.5.1 ADOLESCENT ADVERTISING

According to the (American Academy of Pediatrics , 2006) few European countries forbid or restrict advertising to children, however in the United States selling to minors is just business as usual. With children viewing over 3,000 advertisements per day the opportunity for advertisers is phenomenal, younger and younger children are increasingly being targeted in order to create "brand name preference", a good example of this is McDonald's and the use of colour psychology in marketing, (American Academy of Pediatrics , 2006). "The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has a long history of protecting children from unfair and deceptive marketing practices", (Beales, 2004).

In doing this, the commission has recognized the special nature of the child as an audience. Based on the information above it is fair to assume multinationals are an extensive source of encouraging materialism among adolescents as (Calvert, 2008) points out, current marketing methods involve stealth and online marketing which can be referred to as undercover marketing embedding products in film, online and video game content.
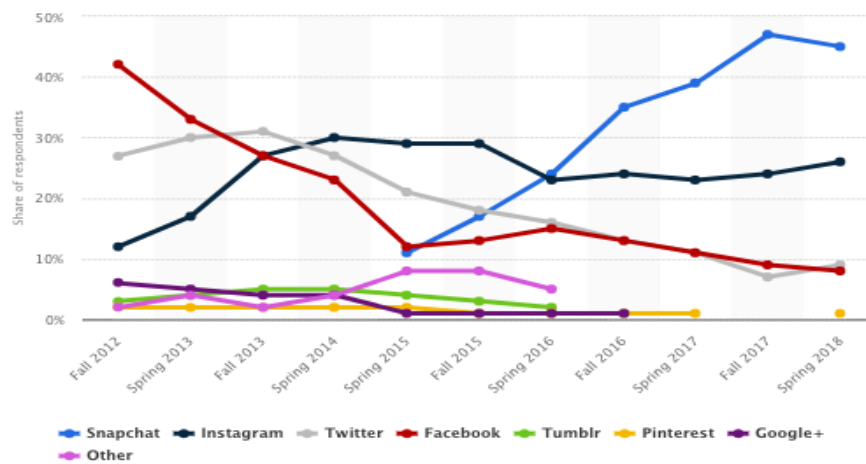
Graph 7 Fluctuation in media usage overall market 2012-2018 (Statista.com, 2018)

2.5.2 MATERIALISM DEVELOPMENT

Studies by (Goodman , 2014) aim to provide insight into gift-giving process, differentiating gratitude versus guilt and experiential versus material gifts. The hypothesis of Goodman's studies was that consumers believe giving material gifts rather than experiential gifts leads to greater happiness for the recipient. Therefore, it is easy for parents to express their love through the purchase of material possessions for their children, according to the Journal of Consumer Research (Picchi, 2015). This can ultimately lead to those same children growing to be materialistic adults, with self-worth dependent upon the accumulation of possessions. However, (Manzoor & Frostrup, 2011) agree with the above statement while making the point that children deserve the odd toy or gift while still avoiding materialistic outcomes.

The Material Parenting Pathway as pointed out by (Richins & Chaplin, 2015) shows a clear direction in which materialistic values can be formed. This graph illustrates that parents have little to no power over controlling the level of materialism their child possesses. To refer to the research of Manzoor & Frostrup above, parents have the ability to implement certain measures to control materialistic values developing among their children. Ultimately, the powers of materialism surpass the capabilities of parenting and are more of a societal issue. Although China's luxury spending it at its lowest, it is still classed as the most materialistic country in the world explains (Song, 2013).
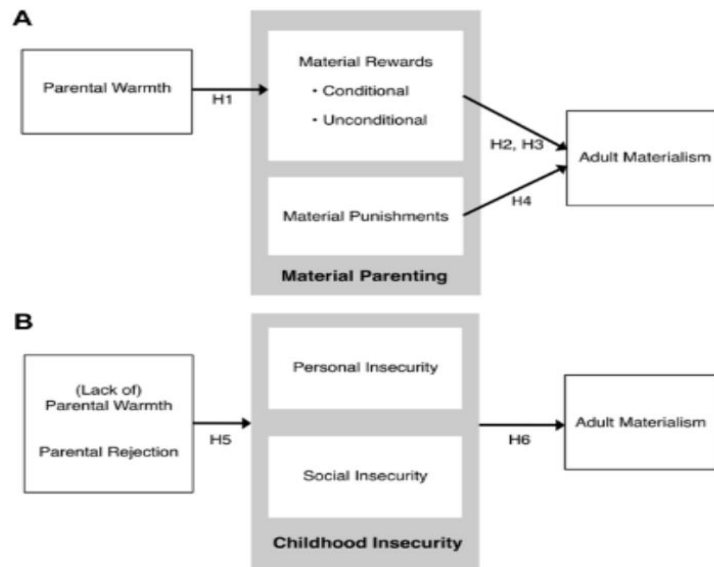
Figure 9 Parental relationship proves powerless (Richins & Chaplin, 2015)

This research was built upon by (Feng , 2013) who found an extremely high showcase of materialism in China by conducting surveys, highlighting that over 71% of Chinese respondents agreed with the statement that "I measure my success by the things I own". Whereas only 20% of Americans and 7% of Swedes agreed. Historical materialist researchers such as Karl Marx viewed the public as Marxists or Idealists, (Hoveman, 2018). An important point of this research expresses that when ideas and values are demonstrated by millions they can impact society, taking this into consideration allows for Western society to be less persuaded by individual materialistic regions, (D' Amato, 2011).

29

For example, (Statista.com, 2018) highlights the distribution of worldwide social media users as of 2017, as expected from the figures above East Asia proved to host the highest number of users at 33% while Western Europe followed behind at 8%. Regardless of the populations of each region, these results indicate the high possibility of these percentages rising as adolescents join social media at a younger age year on year.

2.5.3 ADOLESCENT PSYCHOLOGICAL VULNERABILITY

Advertising to young vulnerable minds is heavily debated and raises concern in light of technological changes including online devices, studies by (Clarke & Svanaes, 2012), suggest that discoveries in technological advancements expose idealistic lifestyles through media on digital devices. Brand personality is built by the manipulation of brand names and other features such as "symbols, signs, logos, music, type of endorsers, imagery, layout or use of provocation and humour", (Wee, 2004). The term "modern marketing" includes all 21st Century advertising, which is portrayed in a different style to that of traditional and simplistic marketing, which may be a leading contributor of the shift in consumer behaviour.

According to recent studies the average 8 to 10 year old's can spend almost 8 hours a day on a variety of media, with older adolescents spending over 11 hours a day, (American Academy of Pediatrics, 2013). Considering that device usage among children and adolescent can be positive in an educational manner, it is fair to assume that this much time spent on devices can be hazardous when negative content is being viewed. Materialism is a complex construct categorized as the good the bad and the ugly, although this is a vague statement is captures the huge array of factors which materialism involves, (Shrum, et al., 2014). The use of complex computer algorithms, data analytics and machine learning all contribute towards the profiling of each online user, (Sherlock, 2018). According to Article 8 of the GDPR, the "Digital Age of Consents" is the age at which any child possesses the power to allow websites, applications etc. to gather personal data.

The fact that most children are capable of bypassing verification mechanisms, this leaves the digital age of consent a minor step toward creating a safer online experience for minors under the Data Protection Bill, (Finlay, et al., 2018). This leads to the profiling of each user and immediately allows direct marketing and pop-ups to consume all digital devices, the GDPR sets this age at 16 years by default but allows member states to reduce this to 13 if they so wish. Although current legal requirements set the online age of consent to 16 years old, previous legislation set the minimum age to 13 years old as recent studies have shown that 75% of children aged 10 to 12 years old have social media accounts, (Jamieson, 2016). The current reality is that parents are often in the dark about the behaviour of their children, while commercial companies sell and exploit their digital footprint for profit, (Finlay, et al., 2018).

The current Irish Labour Party politician TD Sean Sherlock is an advocate for General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), with emphasis on the protection of vulnerable users such as adolescents in this case. Recent scandals by huge multinationals are made possible due to technological advancements including profiling, which is "a powerful tool used to undermine democracy and manipulate ordinary citizens", (Sherlock, 2018).
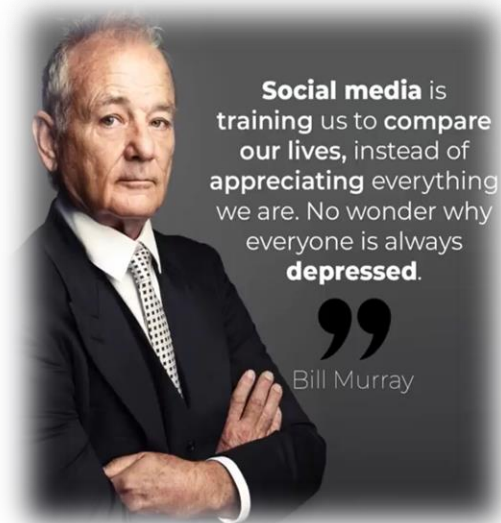
Figure 10 Bill Murray quote (DailyMail.com, 2018)

This information proves that legal requirements are being undermined by the user, young adolescents are giving consent to applications and websites that are designed to collect data and manipulate their cognitive development. A huge assumption by legal personnel is that at the age of 16 all adolescents are capable of understanding and differentiating the impact of social media and marketing. Such a dilemma will be

addressed in the methodology of this research paper, by observing the impact on early adolescents and interviewing late adolescents.

2.6   GOVERNMENT POLICY INTERVENTION

The most extensive framework for advancing minors human rights according to (Byrne & Burton, 2017), is offered by the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), this includes protection, provision and participation in relation to digital technologies. The adoption of ePrivacy regulations will outdate and replace past directives from 2002, more recent directives regulate the treatment of traffic and location data limiting direct marketing via cookies, (Apostle , 2018).

The fact that statistics show a heavy concentration on high-income countries is the fundamental bases for this research (Livingstone, et al., 2015). Expectations predict that Facebook is attracting more of an older consumer base as two million people under the age of 25 are predicted to stop using the social network this year, this leaves an older consumer base that favour Facebook's less complicated social network experience, (Sulleyman, 2018).

Figure 11 Legal regulations (Associates, 2018)

An international research initiative called 'Global Kids Online' aims to stimulate investigation concerning the methods in which children use media in Europe and Beyond, particularly focusing on conditions that shape risks and safety online. (Kardefelt-Winther, et al., 2016). One of the benefits of such a project is to understand how minor's rights are being influenced in the digital age, as to inform policy makers and stakeholders globally and nationally of how to implement a superior internet.

However, (Finlay, et al., 2018) states that there is currently no digital safety commissioner with the power to regulate the online world for the safety of children. This is an essential role in today's dynamic environment, as proposals to prohibit the commercial exploitation of children's data are coming to light. If such common law rules were to be unamended, the outcome would likely be that minors have the capacity at age 13 to consent to the processing of their personal data while still being unable to enter legally binding contracts deeming they are not for 'necessaries', (Sherlock, 2018).

Taking the United States as an example, a report from (Statista.com, 2018) showed the most frequently used social networking applications of adolescents, the most popular proved to be YouTube, Snapchat and Instagram. With only 10% share in the U.S adolescent user base, Facebook has suffered a decline due to competitors such as Instagram and Snapchat. As a response Facebook acquired both Instagram and WhatsApp since 2012 in order to broaden their online social market share.

During a hearing in the European Parliament, Mr. Zuckerberg was questioned about the responsibility of Facebook for the Cambridge Analytica data breach, compliance with recent EU privacy laws also co-operation with Brussels competition authorities concerning market dominance within Europe, (Khan & Kuchler, 2018).
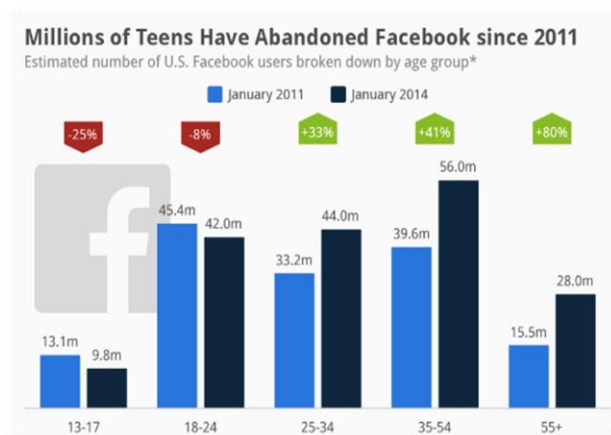
Figure 12 Facebook drop in user base (Richter, 2014)

Another social network drawing the attention of the European Union's Data regulator group is WhatsApp, the sharing of user data with their parent company Facebook has caused implications with EU law leading to fines of £94 million and privacy policy updates which are still ongoing, (Gibbs, 2017).

The information gathered within this literature review portrays the fact that the youthful mindset of children and teenagers are incapable of mentally processing social media from real life situations. The inclusion of both theorists Erikson and Maslow has assisted in the understanding of adolescent behaviours and life goals. However, as new legislation comes into effect, it is simply being overshadowed by the advancements in technology. From governmental regulations to consumerism, it is clear that adolescents make up a substantial part of many consumer bases, although the underlying behaviour of this target market is not thoroughly researched.

The following section will divide up the classifications of adolescents including their parents, with intentions to gain their opinion and actions of their own daily life. First hand, primary research is undertaken in order to increase the current knowledge of adolescents and materialism, with intent to stimulate further research within this area.

CHAPTER III: METHODOLOGY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to examine whether social media has an impact on vulnerable adolescent minds while participating in activities, ultimately encouraging a materialistic society. This research paper will identify the impact of materialism on adolescents, with a focus on contributing sources and progression. This chapter describes the research methods used to conduct the overall study. Based on the literature review it is clear that the Digital Age has certainly influenced the daily life of adolescents. Considering the work of (Schrum, et al., 2014) & (Richins, 2013), an assumption can be drawn that the effects of social media on adolescents, is highly dependent on their capabilities of understanding the efforts of multinationals. The prime focus of this section is the nature of the research, a full description of necessary procedures undertaken to complete this study as well as the compatibility of such methods to meet the demands of this hypothesis.

3.1.1 RESEARCH FRAMEWORK

This chapter presents the population, the sampling technique, data collection procedure and analysis. The following figure 13 describes the aims and objects of this section, from identifying the source of the underlying issue to testing hypothesis based upon these results.

Step 1 • Problem formation
Step 2 • Identify specific hypothesis
Step 3 • Location strategy
Step 4 • Rationale & procedure
Step 5 • Research & findings
Step 6 • Synthesis of results
Step 7 • Hypothesis testing
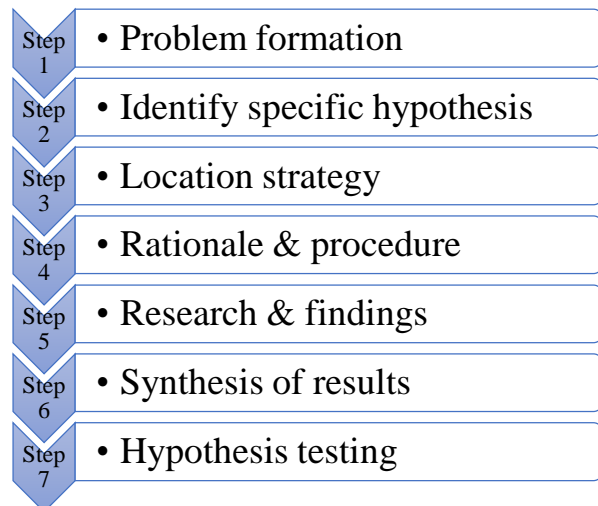
Figure 13 Research framework

At the end of the next two chapters, it will be evident if in fact social media has played a considerable role in the development of materialistic traits among adolescents. Based on the constant struggle to match legal requirements with technological advances, it is important to consider if the current laws in place are protecting the vulnerable. According to the first two chapters of this paper, a problem has been identified however it cannot be certain until some hypothesis are established and accepted. At the end of this section the hypothesis will be addressed as well as the methods chosen to test these hypothesis.

3.2 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The protection of participants involved is of high importance throughout this paper, the measures set in place ensure top privacy and non-harmful effects. To gain access to the grounds of the summer camp for such a long period, required the permission of the event organizer. As this section of the research involved no contact with the children, there were no difficulties in being granted access to the camp. To contact age 16 to 18 year old for the survey process meant that contacting the participants directly was inevitable, some participants were under the age of 18 and their protection was critical.

After being granted acceptance by the secondary schools, a brief speech was given to all participants ensuring that their name or other details would not be included in this survey, so they could be truthful and open with their responses. The parental focus group were able to give consent for themselves, however the recording of the discussion was an issue for some parents, meaning that notes were taken by a third party to ensure the participants felt comfortable and spoke openly. All participant material collected was destroyed after the acceptance and processing of this paper.

3.3 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND HYPOTHESIS

Data protection compliance is as pervasive an issue in modern society as tax compliance and the code is becoming as complex, (Sherlock, 2018).
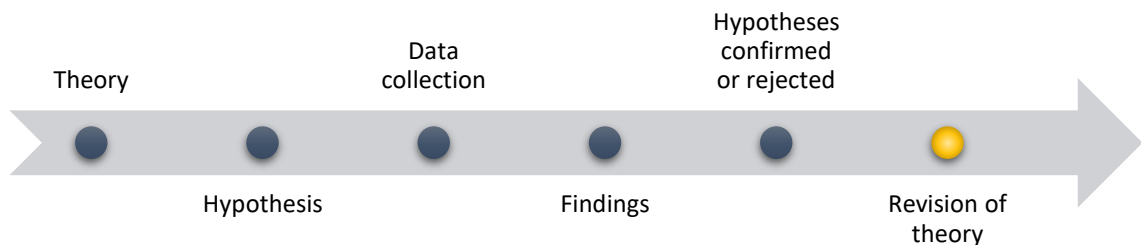
Figure 14 Methodology structure (Bryman, 2012)

This statement along with authors contributions above solidify the fact that the internet can be a dangerous place, with special attention placed on adolescents. The work of O' Sullivan is of high importance as it recognizes the Internet was primarily designed as a democratic environment allowing all users to be treated equally, (Sherlock, 2018). A consequence of this is that no special allowance is made for the protection of children online, although they require special attention. As mentioned above, the Bill set the Irish digital age of consent at the lowest possible age of 13 years old, surely a child of this age cannot understand the power of algorithmic profiling. As of recently, Ireland has aligned the digital age of consent to 16 years old along with the efforts of Germany, the Netherlands, France and others.

However, all accounts must be authorised by a parent if the user is under this age limit, the fact that a child can authorise their own account if they are technologically sound defeats the purpose of passing laws to protect these users. This research paper assumes that restricting the consumption of social media by early adolescents, will affect their tendency to replicate materialistic behaviours such as self-consciousness, competitiveness and conspicuous consumption. This makes it difficult to identify the cause of materialism: is it children themselves for bypassing legal implementations for their own protection? is it a governmental issue for not being

stricter with consequences of such actions? is it a lack of parental control? Or is it societal disorientation due to the advancements of technology and globalization?

- H1: A prolonged time spent on internet enabled devices inhibits adolescent's communication with others, increasing traits such as selfishness, isolation and materialism.

- H2: Late adolescents are not capable of differentiating between media and real life.

- H3: Parents have noticed a significant surge in materialistic behaviours since the introduction of social media, with noticeable behaviour shifts apparent at younger ages year on year.
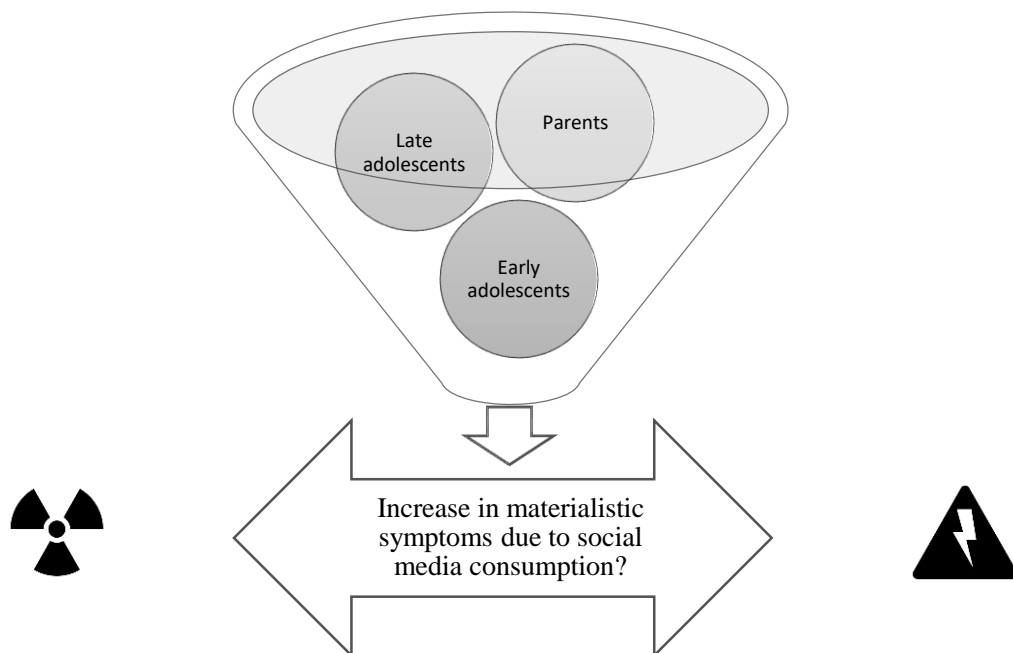
Figure 15 Participant equal contribution

3.4   LOCATION STRATEGY

This research will be conducted in Lusk, a small rural town within North Co. Dublin which is becoming increasingly urbanized. The County of Fingal was established in 1933 as a result of the Local Government Act, it includes the North of Co. Dublin stretching from the coastline of Portmarnock all the way to Balbriggan, Garristown and Naul (Fingal Leader Partnership Board, 2017). Figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) are illustrated below in order to justify the rationale behind choosing this location. According to (Ward & McDermott, 2017), findings concluded from the 2016 Census showed that the County of 'Fingal' (in which Lusk is a member of) has grown by 8% since the 2011 Census. The area of Fingal is also home to the largest youth population in comparison to surrounding counties across Leinster, (Ward & McDermott, 2017) & (Manning, 2017). A population of 296,214 makes Fingal the third most populous local authority in Ireland according to the recent 2016 Census, (Fingal.ie, 2018). To conclude the facts above, local towns within Fingal have proven to represent the general population of Ireland, this can be assumed to further represent West Europe.

Figures from the Census 2011 show that the Town of Lusk is home to over 7,000 people with roughly 3,000 people under the age of 18 (Central Statistics Office, 2011). Therefore, almost one third of the population is classified as an adolescent also couples with children represent 45% of the total household composition of Lusk, (Central Statistics Office, 2011). This is the reasoning behind choosing Lusk to represent Western Europe.

Figure 16 Fingal area (Fingal Leader Partnership Board, 2017)

3.5   RATIONALE & PROCEDURE

The three common approaches to conducting research are quantitative, qualitative, and mixed methods, (Williams , 2007). In order to test the hypothesis, the mixed research method including both qualitative and quantitative research methods was used in this research paper to gain a richer understanding of such a complex subject area. Many scholars believe consumer materialism brings serious problems at both an individual and social level (Larsen, et al., 1999) & (Wang, et al., 2016). Qualitative research was chosen for two of the three research methods of this research study, due to the model occurring in "a natural setting allowing the building of detail from high participation in the actual experiences", (Williams , 2007). Additionally, the use of quantitative research was appropriate for one of the three sections of this research as it "involves the collection of data so that information can be quantified and subjected to statistical treatment in order to support or refute claims/hypothesis", (Creswell, 2003).
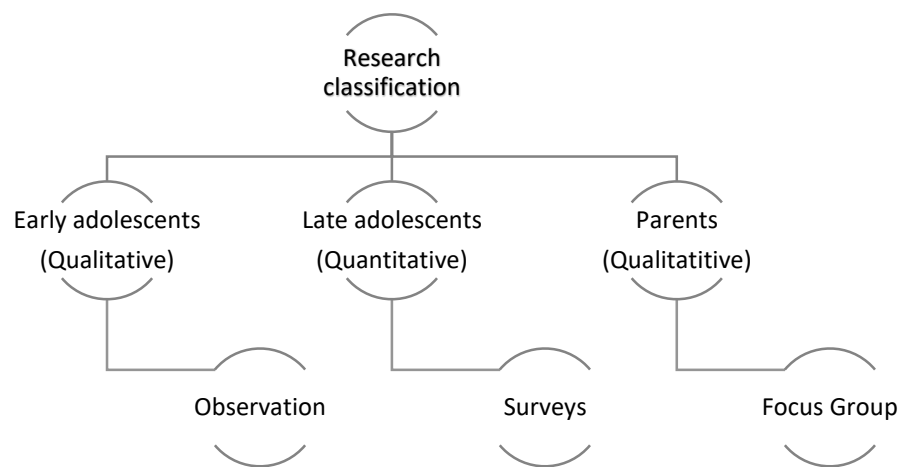

Figure 17 Research breakdown

Deductive theory represents the reasoning behind this paper, the literature review section has demonstrated what is already known while this section deduces hypotheses subjected to empirical scrutiny, (Bryman, 2012). As a social science enthusiast, (Merton, 1967) believed that along with the justification of Marxism, ideas can only

become actualised and embodied in cultural developments when they are associated with interests, impulses, emotions as well as incorporations with institutional structures. To observe the outcomes of materialistic values is vital to identifying the extent to which it has already progressed as a norm in society. It is further stated by (Merton, 1967) that originally the human economic system factors consisted of race, kinship, power structures, factors of production and geographical location. This statement is of importance to this study as participants might feel threatened if they do not match these criteria and use the consumption of items to showcase their power. This will be put to the test in the following pages.

By observing the youth in their natural state with friends and parents, they will portray the most accurate representation of themselves. Following on from this surveys are carried out and targeted at the older generation of teenagers, to narrow down their mindset as they have progressed through their teens. Their priorities will showcase their vulnerability and susceptibility to the marketing efforts of huge multinationals, in addition to proving whether the law is justifying the age of consent in correspondence to the actual cognitive abilities of this age group. The focus group is merely a means of connecting with the parents of those under the ages of 23, as the literature review suggests still classifies as adolescents.

The methods chosen for each of the following research methods are catered directly towards the participants, for example the observation was chosen to represent the mindset of early adolescents as they are not capable of completing a survey to the standards required for the purpose of this paper. However, the older age groups have the skills to complete surveys as they have the ability to provide key information via writing skills and are more intellectually receptive. In order to gain an insight into the mind frame of the parents of these teenagers, interviews or a focus group was appropriate. To simulate more conversation and suggestions it was clear that a focus group could provide a richer discussion and in turn allow for a more in-depth analysis of the findings.

3.5.1 OBSERVATION

An activity based upon psychology, consumerism, digital influences as well as purchasing power will be the prime focus in order to gain the most valuable data from minors. Qualitative observational research is the most appropriate method of communicating with this age group incorporating fun gameplay, with the strategic intent of identifying digital media influences on behaviour. Upon gaining permission to access the grounds of summer camps as well as parental acceptance, the observation process will involve monitoring and attempting to tap into each child's psychological mindset. During the week of 23rd July to the 27th July, Kellogg's GAA camps take place in Lusk.

This camp includes a standard age 6 to 12 year old football academy as well as an advanced 13-16 year old teenager camp. Participants of these camps fit the requirements of this research audience. Written notes were taken as the first day of camp commenced with over 175 children attending. Although the camp started at 10am daily, as the observer it was important to be there early to gain further knowledge of the life of these early adolescents. It became apparent that most children were driven to and from camp by a family member or carpooling with a friend. The apparel consisted of top branded clothing including Nike, The North Face, Adidas and Gym King.

Accessories displayed included gold and silver watches, headphones both branded and non-branded. Most children knew each other and kept within their circle of friends, eliminating any opportunity to socialize with others. Although it was not obvious what age each child was, the breakdown of activity timetables indicated a narrow age bracket, for example ages 6-9 and 10-12 following 13-16 year old's being allocated different time slots.

3.5.1.1 AGE 6 TO 9 YEAR OLD'S

This age group consisted of roughly 90 children, of which the majority of children were driven to the camp. When the children arrived at the camp most parents waited a few minutes ensuring their child was safe while other parents stayed the entire day, involving siblings of the participant in the day out. As the children began to gather they were dressed in sporting gear such as GAA sport attire of their favourite team (mostly Dublin), every single child had a packed bag of lunch for the day. During activities on the field, they were open to meeting new people and learning new skills. Over the span of a week it was a rare sight to see a mobile device being used, during break times children were keen to engage with others resulting in learning new sporting skills and making new friends. At the beginning of the week, they stuck to their original friend group, however as time went on it began to look like the whole group was friends with laughter and fun felt by all.

3.5.1.2 AGE 10 TO 12 YEAR OLD'S

Roughly 50 early adolescents arrived throughout the week, this age group were both driven to and from camp as well as arriving independently with friends. The majority had a mobile device in their possession, from tablets to smartwatches and smartphones the internet was accessible by all. Branded clothing was of high importance here with prevalent brands being Nike and Adidas as well as many children representing Dublin sports teams, from crested jerseys to equipment. There was a constant urge to check such devices, even if it was for a few seconds most children could not resist being apart from technology for the duration of the day. Those who brought extra belongings not required for sport i.e. headphones, tablets etc. stored them in bag packs which they carefully monitored throughout the day. During break times children were less likely to engage with other children or initiate a conversation, instead they checked for notifications or used their mobile devices for other purposes.

3.5.1.3 AGE 13 TO 16 YEAR OLD'S

Still classified as middle adolescents by (Silver, 2018) & (Lieu, 2018), this age group participated in activities later in the day, compared to the minors mentioned above. Roughly 35 children showed up to take part, most arriving by themselves or in groups of friends. There was a clear dominance of each person's personalities, for example those with branded clothing were more aggressive compared to those who were less social. Technology was also a huge factor with smartphones being the device of choice for most, along with headphones, watches and branded attire such as Nike, Adidas, Gym King and Bee. However, in saying that it was noticeable that few wore sporting attire and brought only the bare minimum to camp including a water bottle and football boots. There was a sense of showcasing ones worth as well as those showing a lack of interest in brands, an interesting outcome for this age group.

3.5.2 SURVEYS

The lack of catering for over 16 year olds meant that alternative measures were required outside of the summer camp to gain insight into their lifestyle, the appropriate measures were taken below in the form of surveys. As (Lieu, 2018) has suggested above, late adolescence can progress into early twenties in today's society. Using this insight, it makes sense to survey this age group as they have the ability to answer potentially detailed questions in comparison to early adolescents. This quantitative research method was chosen to gain insight into the mindset of 16 to 21 year old's, a deductive approach to the relationship between theory and research continuing from the observation, (Bryman, 2012). It is expected that late adolescents have a greater understanding of communicating with others who possess different values, beliefs or aesthetics. Their understanding will allow them to utilize technology as early adolescents, without portraying such negative traits as expected. The law is currently adapting toward this mindset; however, it may not be the case that all late adolescence has the ability to differentiate technology advertisements or celebrity life from reality.

The findings will prove whether legal restrictions are correct in assuming those over 16 years old are mature enough to know that multinational corporations are using data profiling to manipulate their spending behaviour. The work of Belk and Richins is praised by (Sweeting, et al., 2012) as they use a similar method in their own research developing a 'youth materialism scale' reflecting upon the benefits and negative outcomes of a materialistic society.

Other authors such as (Ahuvia & Wong, 2002) utilize the materialism scale of Richins and Dawson, categorizing three subscales into centrality, happiness and success. The quantitative methods chosen by the authors mentioned throughout this paper is the reasoning behind surveying late adolescents in this paper. It is expected that late adolescents will be less centralized and more socially aware. It was vital to target over 16 year olds for this survey, therefore access to a local secondary school was required to survey Year 5 and Year 6 students (ranging from age 16-18). A sample size of 35 students took part in this survey.

3.5.3 FOCUS GROUP

The third and final section of this research will involve the assistance of parents and guardians of adolescent children. It is highlighted by (Dervishi & Ibrahimi , 2018) that a positive relationship between parent and child creates a climate of support, trust and open communication. However, as children enter the stage of adolescence as referred to in figure 5 of Erik Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development, this relationship can take a transition also. This lack of relationship has been proven by (Dervishi & Ibrahimi , 2018) to increase levels of insecurity by both parties, which calls for a solution to be implemented. Behaviour shifts in the development of children will be of primary importance during this particular research also the concept of growing up in the 70s versus growing up in the 21st century, gaining first hand insight from parents themselves. The idea to include a parent of a visually impaired adolescent was to stimulate additional insight into the thought process this age group undertake, while being subject to vast amounts of advertisements as the supporting theory

indicates. Gathering parents from the summer camp in the first section of this research made sense as, they were intrigued already by this study and were willing to co-operate. Booking the focus group meeting in the local GAA club meant that the location was the same as the summer camp. All 5 parents arrived for the allocated time of 12pm on a Saturday morning. Appetizers along with adequate seating arrangements allowed for ease of communication among participants and the stimulation of conversation. The following topics were addressed:

Topic	Question
Monitoring	• Is it important to manage children's online usage?
Monetary	• How does your child make money?
Consumption	• What does your child mostly spend their money on?
Influencer	• Has your child influenced you to buy something you were unsure of?
Influenced	• Do you feel your child is highly influenced by peers?
Gift giving	• What do you gift your child on special occasions?
Regulation	• Is current legal regulations sufficient in protecting adolescents online?
Grant access	• At what age did you allow your child to use a smart device?

Figure 18 Focus group structure

CHAPTER IV: RESULT ANALYSIS

3.6 INTRODUCTION

This section combines both the literature and methodology together, an attempt to make sense of findings from the three research methods undertaken with reference to pre-existing literature. An in-depth discussion of each research method will allow all findings to be explored and formulated further. The analysis techniques mentioned below will attempt to eliminate calculations errors, however data entry errors are subject to due diligence when inputting raw primary research. Each item submitted by hand is evaluated twice for accuracy of submission. In addition, each survey question is already predestined to be related to a specific research question. The analysis and finding will contribute towards the hypothesis testing later in this paper.
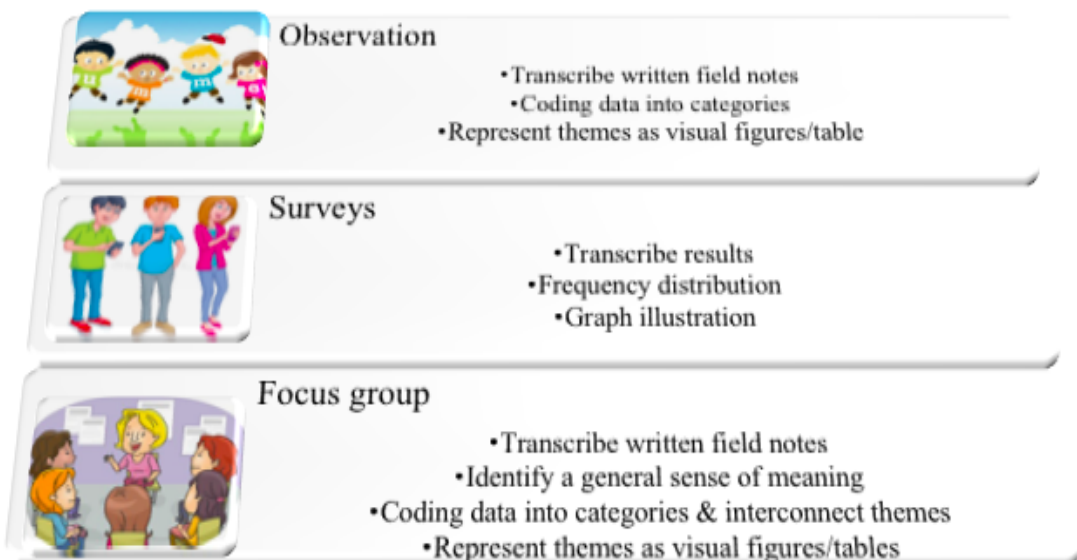
Figure 19 Structure of data analysis

3.7 DATA PROCESSING

All research methods results are transcribed, categorized and illustrated using field notes and Microsoft excel software. Firstly, the raw data is transferred into a document and further analyzed until a common theme is established. Categories are then formed, and the results are filtered into its corresponding location, analysis is then drawn from the findings. Illustrations are drawn from the frequency/popularity of each option selected by the participants, making it more efficient to analyse the data. Grounded theory is the best fit to describe the methodology reasoning behind this paper.
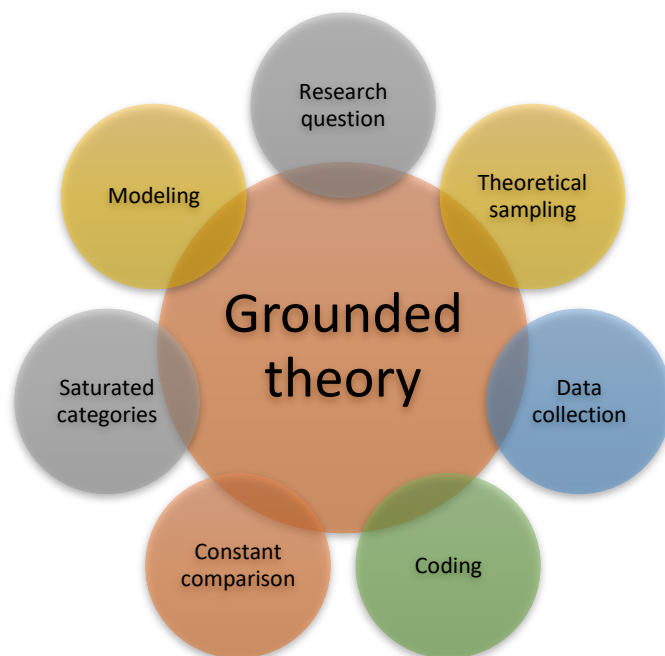
Figure 20 Grounded theory methodology

As shown in the above figure, all information gathered from the analysis will be used to formulate a set of theories based on current literature and analysis with a focus on the qualitative research provided by observations and a focus group. Concepts are derived from the coding, categories formed by constant comparison and theoretical models derived as a result of the entire process.

3.8   FINDINGS FROM OBSERVATION

This graph represents the 90 participants on average that attended the summer camp, ranging from the ages of 6 to 16. All percentages are very close estimates of the majority behaviour and decision making, based on key observations made throughout the span of the week.
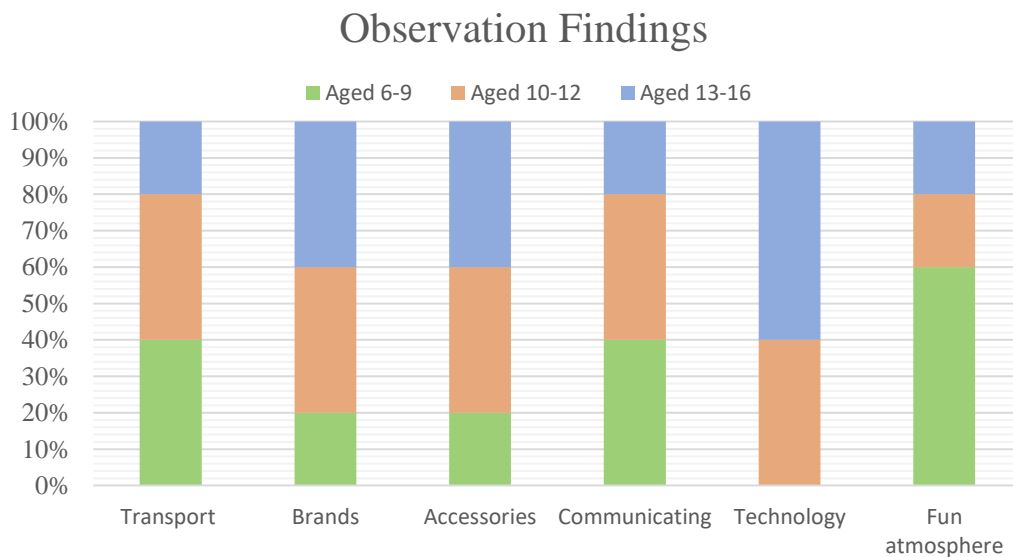
Graph 8 Observation results

3.8.1 PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT & COMMUNICATION

In a family context, parental involvement and communication can be defined as the ability to exchange needs, desires and feelings with one another in a positive manner, (Bireda & Pillay, 2018). The attachment of teenagers to family members is considered secure when it positively influences the way the adolescent gives meaning to their existence, also reflecting social skills in various contexts, (Dervishi & Ibrahimi, 2018). Early installation of communication and social skills are shown to ensure more stability in the development of the adolescent. Therefore, clear communication with parents solidifies the position and rules of each party over time with the intent of avoiding adolescent aggressiveness and isolation behaviours,

(Dervishi & Ibrahimi, 2018). The results of this observation showed a clear bond with parents/guardians, their presence was very noticeable for the aged 6 to 9 group. Children this age wanted their parents to watch them and be involved with every aspect of the summer camp journey. This could be a factor of them feeling isolated themselves as they do not have many friends or the fact that they are accustomed to spending all day with family as they have only started school. Therefore, it is fair to assume at this age children are needier and require the praise and acceptance of a parental figure.

Additionally, this age group are vulnerable in a sense that they require transportation and monitoring to ensure their safety. Interestingly the same amount of 6 to 9 year old were transported to and from camp as the 10 to 12 year old group. Although the 10 to 12 age group are likely to have a wider pool of friends, their bond with their parent or guardian has overcome their tendency to isolate themselves. The potential reasoning behind this is that the parent-child relationship has continued throughout the years which is a positive influence already stated by Dervishi & Ibrahimi above. This open parent–child communication is acknowledged by (Guilamo-Ramos, et al., 2006) as an important protective measure among all youths at risk of psychological and behavioural issues.

Therefore, if this parental relationship between the age groups of 6-9 and 10-12 years old can be preserved into late adolescents, the likelihood of either the parent or child having substantial difficulties is minimized. This relationship bond is easily identifiable within the younger age groups, however as the day progressed the over 13 year olds entered the camp and changed the scene dramatically. Consuming only 20% of the total weighting, the over 13 age group were less likely to be transported to and from camp. Very few children were driven by a parent or guardian, most walked alone or with a group of friends. This situation was expected, as somewhere along the line of adolescent development a communication barrier exists either on behalf of the child or the parent.

As described in the literature review of this paper 'Erikson's Stages of Psychosocial Development' this age group undergo most uncertainty and life developments, this puts extra strain on the parent-child relationship which was very evident in the observation.

3.8.2 TECHNOLOGY VS. ATMOSPHERE

As expected the findings from the observation aligned accordingly with pre-established theories. This graph represents the over-reliance on technology and eventual materialism development as priority shifts from people to products. The sense of communication and fun was very low for the oldest age group with both categories representing only 20% each of the total weighting among all groups. As shown in the graph below, as technology was reduced or even non-existent the atmosphere was the highest. However, as the technology levels increased by each age group the atmosphere levels suffered a huge drop. The graph illustrates a ratio of technology to fun atmosphere at 0:60 and 60:20, this illustrates the effects of technology on the behaviour and overall mood of an event. As the younger age groups enjoyed a fun atmosphere the reasoning behind this as suggested here was the lack of technology.
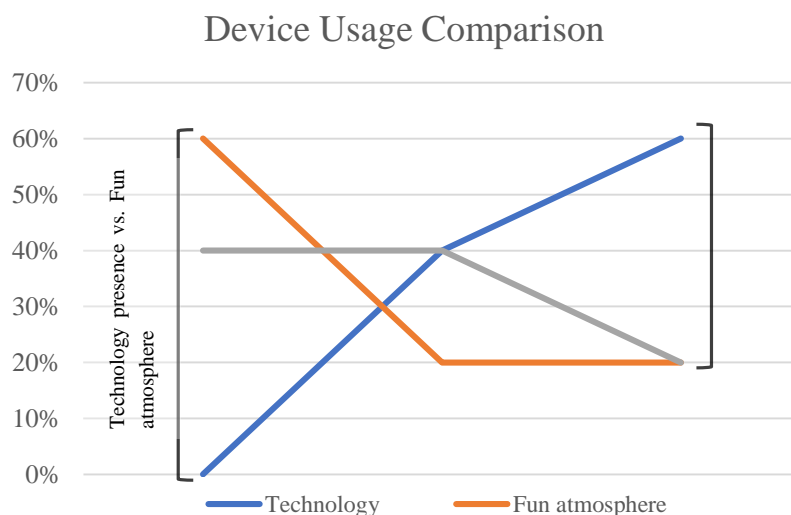
Graph 9 Observation comparison

3.8.3 BRANDING AND ACCESSORIES

The importance participants placed on brands and accessories steadily increased by age group. The youngest age group showed a 20% weighting, whereas both the other groups had a 40% stake each overall. Branding was of little to no importance to the youngest age group, presumably because they lacked the constant advertisements and celebrity endorsements of popular brands. The older age groups in comparison placed huge importance on the effects of the brands they exposed to others, expecting others to view them with a certain level of respect. Both these vast differences in perspectives showcases the extreme outcomes of advertising and internet exposure to young vulnerable mindsets. This suggests that early signs of the development of materialistic values begins around the age of 10 years old according to this observation. The possibility of this age being reduced year on year is very possible as the access to technology is available in most households especially with older siblings, however parents and legal restrictions have the ability to control this situation from progressing.

3.9 FINDINGS FROM SURVEY
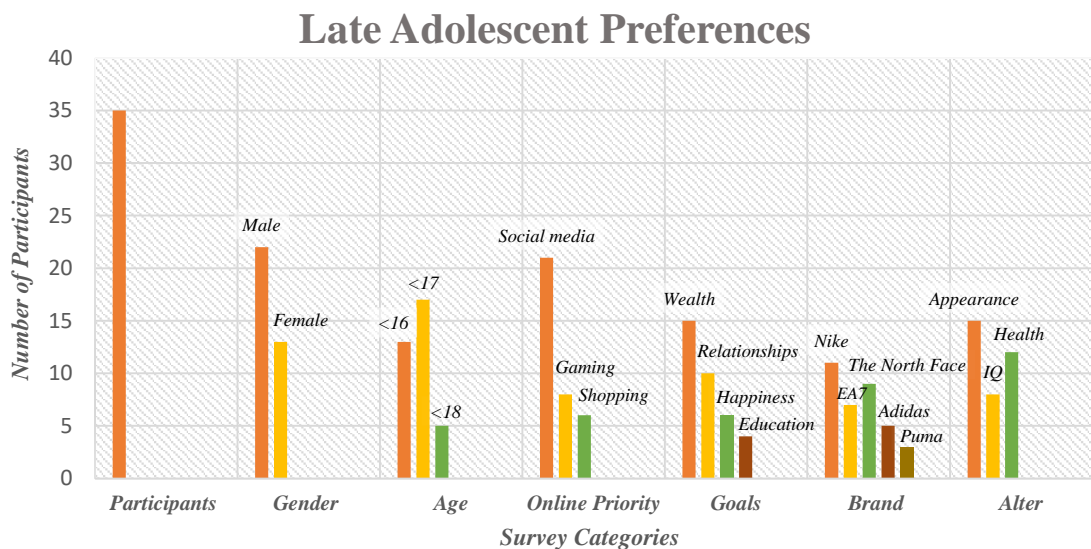
Graph 10 Survey results

This graph represents the 35 participants on average that took part in the survey, ranging from the ages of 16 to 18. All percentages are the results of participants responses, based on 6 key questions which contribute toward the theory described above.

3.9.1 ONLINE PRIORITIES & FUTURE GOALS

The most evident response was social media with 60% (21 out of 35) of total participants favouring this option, with gaming and shopping coming in second place. The fact that most adolescents over 16 years old use social media the most online, shows their susceptibility to the dangers of the internet including profiling. As mentioned multiple times throughout this paper, (Sherlock, 2018) states the importance of setting the bill to as high an age as possible to protect the vulnerability of adolescents online. This survey clearly indicates that due to the high usage of mobile devices, late adolescents are susceptible to online threats. This is also illustrated below as the use of brands for identity expression, the impact of social media on future goals and the desire to alter their appearance.

Late Adolescent Goals
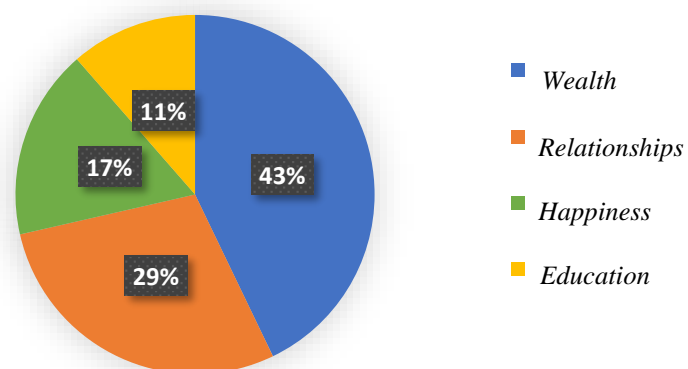
Graph 11 Most common late adolescent goals

The most disheartening result of this survey was the life goals of the late adolescents. The desire for wealth weighted in at 43% compared to happiness at only 17%, therefore the desire for wealth was 2.5 times greater than happiness. This statistic is both worrying as well as being a positive motivator for adolescents, only when controlled correctly. A focus solely on wealth with the combination of adolescent developments can cause the individual uncertainty, however it is important to note the high weighting on health alterations with 34% of participants (12/35) placing this as a priority. This adheres with the ideology that the strive for 'perfection' is impacting the mental and physical health of adolescents, which they assume they are fully aware of. Additionally, fitness and self-maintenance is also a component of this category which must be considered.

3.9.2 MOST PREVALENT PROFILE
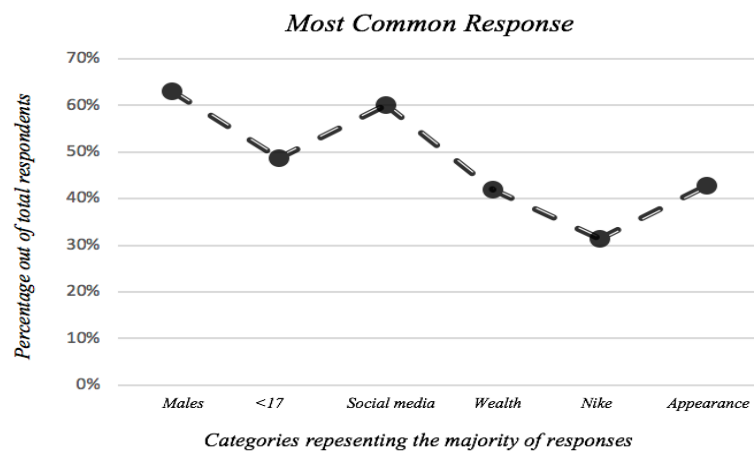
Graph 12 Most common survey results

The combination of all categories of this graph shows the most common response. There were more males than females with a 62% to 38% average. The most common age was 17 or below, with social media being the most common online application. Wealth was a shared goal of most respondents, as well as the Nike brand. The main life alteration of choice was appearance followed closely by health.

According to (Spellings, 2005) there is no guarantee that young adolescents will one day become responsible young adults, however parental influence is enormous. The key is to stay involved in their life, the media is highly regarded by (Spellings, 2005) as a positive influencer when treated right, from education to therapeutic music and movies for the comfort of adolescents. The exposure of children to the internet is as high as ever with most classrooms connected, it is important to teach the difference between the good and the bad.
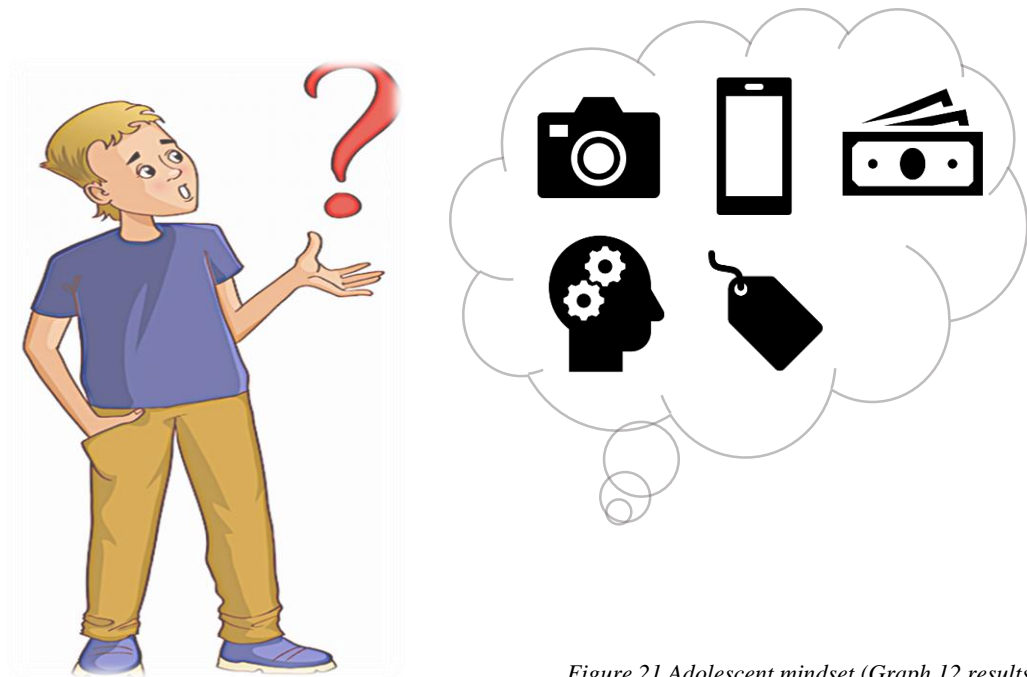
Figure 21 Adolescent mindset (Graph 12 results)

This survey has proved the stereotype of the typical adolescent between the ages of 16-18 years old. Whether this way of life is expressed by these late adolescents as they become adults will depict their entire future, from working solely for monetary benefits, a constant urge for acceptance from outsiders as well as many other self-conscious factors. Furthermore, the root of the issue is not solely social media, other influencers such as teachers, parents, peers and family all hold the power to guide vulnerable adolescents into confident, self-accepting, content young individuals.

3.10   FINDINGS FROM FOCUS GROUP

This graph represents the 5 participants that took part in the parent focus group, with adolescents ranging from the ages of 15 to early 20s. All percentages are the results of participants responses, based on 8 key questions which contribute toward the theory described in the literature review. A common trend among all parents showed a clear indication of confusion, as pre-determined rules and theories are not well established to cater for the governance of adolescents online.
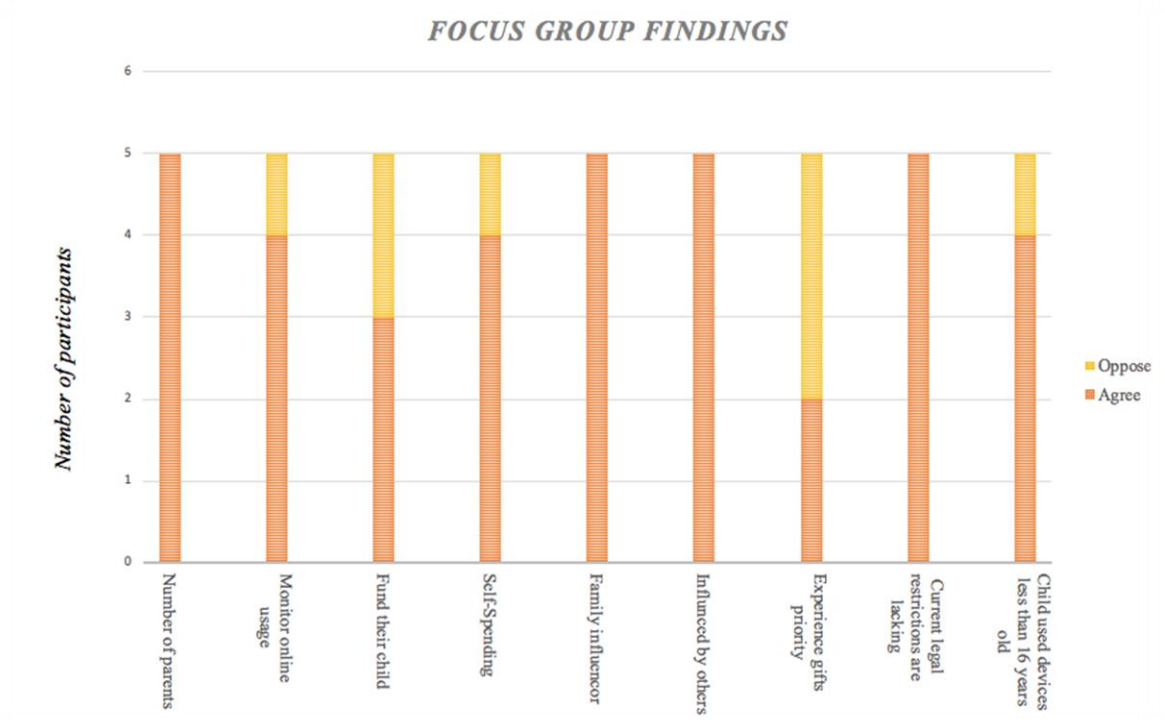
Graph 13 Focus group results

Considering that 80% of the parents that participated are generation X, they have not grown up with technologies that exist for generation Z and beyond. Therefore, this puts a parental figure in a state of confusion, they have not experienced this themselves and possibly lack the confidence in rearing children under such circumstances.

3.10.1 MONITORING MINORS

A positive outcome of this focus group was that 80% (4 out of 5) parents agreed that monitoring their child online was important. The fact that parents place importance on the behaviour of their child online is in accordance with current GDPR requirements, governing the data protection of minors. However, the extent to which parents consider 'monitoring' their child can differ greatly from password protected application restrictions to casually checking browser history (which can be deleted). The outcome of this focus group shows that parents are aware of their child's vulnerability online, but some are more educated on the power of the child to conceal their actions while other parents are being overpowered by adolescent technological know-how.

3.10.2 INCOME & EXPENDITURE

Roughly 80% (4 out of 5) of the participants in this focus group were parents of adolescents of legal employment age i.e. over the age of 16, furthermore 60% (3 out of 5) of these parents will hand their child money for themselves 'free money' in the eyes of the child. This shows a clear indicator that there is no motivation for these adolescents to get a job to fund themselves, as they have the extra support of parents to fund their purchases. However, much controversy surrounds the concept of adolescent paid work, (Mortimer, 2010). A longitude Youth Developmental Study from middle adolescents through early adulthood has attempted to come to a conclusion.

Noteworthy claims from this research state that employment can have both positive and negative aspects for adolescents of age, (Mortimer, 2010). One of the most important aspects was work intensity, evidence showed that work experience can encourage and promote healthy development and time management skills. Alternatively, a negative outcome of adolescent employment can include the use of earnings to purchase alcohol, drugs and supporting activities.

To sum up the statements made here, the behaviour of teens is highly dependent on themselves, their morals and responsibilities developed throughout their life. Giving money to an adolescent without them understanding the value of it can encourage impulsive spending, as 80% of the adolescents have shown from the graph above. A study by (Tuggle, 2012) has shown that almost 44% of teens reported getting money from a job outside of home, while 30% get an allowance provided by parents. These results differ greatly from responses of the parent focus group, this showcases the variance in location as one of many factors influencing the environment of adolescents.

3.10.3   INFLUENCER AND INFLUENCED

This category was the most outstanding with agreement from 100% of parents that their child is both an influencer on family decision making while also being heavily influenced themselves by external factors.

Ability to persuade
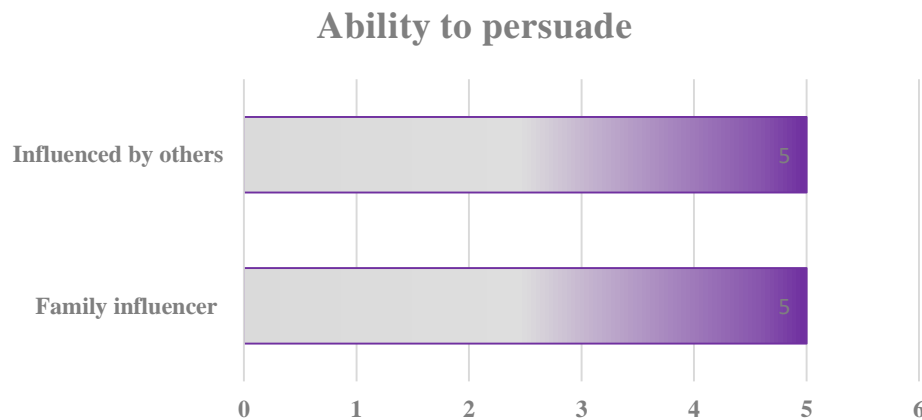
Graph 14 Ability to persuade

Studies have suggested that peer-related stimuli may refine the reward system to react to the reward system value of risky behaviour, (Albert, et al., 2013). However, as the cognitive control system matures over time adolescent gain increased capacity to coordinate self-regulation and resist peer influence.

With participating age groups ranging from 15 to early 20s, it is clear that the average adolescent does not have the cognitive control or capability to make their own decisions and therefore are considered vulnerable to the power of social media.

3.10.4   GIFT GIVING

The average millennial born between 1981 and 1996 has an alternative view of ownership to that of previous generations, placing a car and home as major commitments rather than of high value, (Saiidi, 2016). Social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat are regarded as visual applications designed to showcase what people are doing rather than what they are wearing or driving. It can be said that the mindset of the average adolescent is susceptible to thinking they must showcase their best self on these platforms by wearing expensive clothing, possessing up to date technology, etc.

A recent survey by Harris Group has found that over 72% of millennials would rather spend more money on experiences than material things, (Saiidi, 2016). Considering that adolescents are only one generation behind millennials, the possibility of them becoming aware of this shift in consumption might catch on depending on their openness to educating themselves on the effects of their behaviour. Based on this survey, only 40% of parents gift their child experience based gifts compared to the other 60% of parents gifting money and allowing the child to decide what they purchase.

Stricter parental discipline on the consumption of their child along with more emphasis on gifting experiences, determines the conversion of their mindset from self-obsession to encouraging adventurous, open-minded and content young adults. For example, the visually impaired child represented here proved an important point that experiences outweigh material objects when visual appeal is disregarded. Therefore, the outcome of this focus group showed a clear indication of physical appearance dominating adolescent originality, which can prove consequential for years to come.

3.10.5   LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

An Irish digital age of consent being as low as 13 years and further amended to the age of 16 years, surfaces many arguments against the understanding of adolescents already mentioned by (Sherlock, 2018) in the literature review section. As 100% of adolescent parents would agree that legal restrictions lack the ability to protect the vulnerable. However, roughly 80% of the same group of parents have allowed their child access to internet enabled devices under the age of 16.

CURRENT LEGAL RESTRICTIONS ARE LACKING

Disagre
e
0%

Agree
100%

ADOLESCENT GRANTED ACCESS TO DEVICES UNDER PARENTAL CONSENT

Aged 16+
20%

Aged
<16
80%
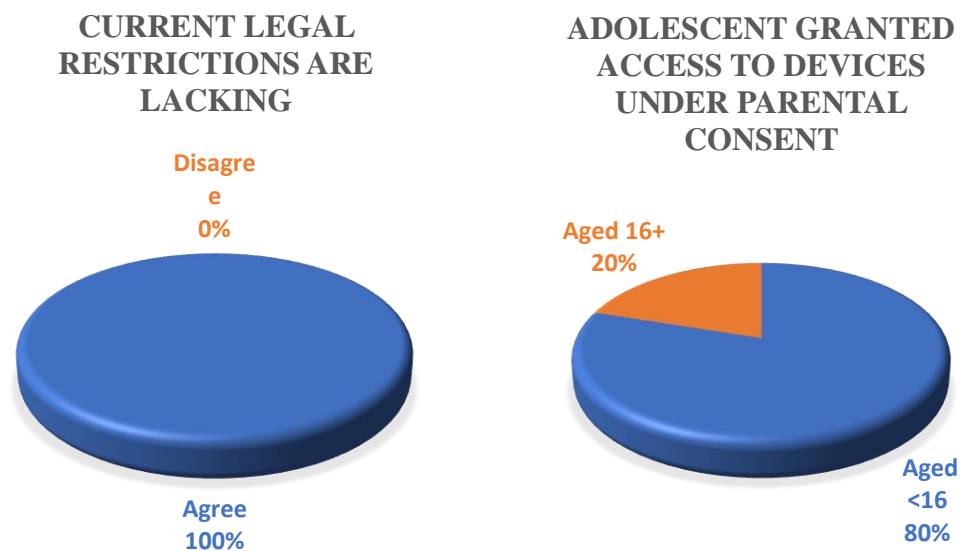
Graph 15 Parental conflicting beliefs

This contradiction is a result of both parties not pulling their weight and combining to solve such a worldwide issue. According to (Sherlock, 2018), the Seanad amendment allows for a review of this age limit after 3 years, but for now we will have 16 year olds with the capacity to sign away their personal data, even though through the eyes of the law, they are still children and require special protection. It is simply a contradiction in terms.

3.11 HYPOTHESIS TESTING

The hypothesis is re-instated below and are either accepted or rejected based on the results from the analysis:

➢ H0: A prolonged time spent on internet enabled devices has no effect on adolescent's communication with others, increasing traits such as selfishness, isolation and materialism.

➢ H1: A prolonged time spent on internet enabled devices inhibits adolescent's communication with others, increasing traits such as selfishness, isolation and materialism.

The first hypothesis is primarily based on the results from the observation analysis, the results showed that technology had a direct influence on the behaviour and activity of these children. A focus on the late adolescents proved a stronger correlation between technology and materialism, the alternative hypothesis is therefore accepted in this case.

➢ H0: Late adolescents are capable of differentiating between media and real life.

➢ H2: Late adolescents are not capable of differentiating between media and real

The second hypothesis is primarily based on the results of the surveys and focus group combined. Current legal regulations assume that 16 year old's (initially 13 year old's until recently) are capable of differentiating between social media and real life situations. This analysis proved that these late adolescents are not in fact cognitively developed to be capable of such skills. However, in saying this millennials are changing the game and proving to be more mature in this sense. It remains to be seen if late adolescents can evolve into the mindset of older generations and educate themselves on the power of social media and the internet in general.

- H0: Parents have not noticed a significant surge in materialistic behaviours since the introduction of social media.
- H3: Parents have noticed a significant surge in materialistic behaviours since the introduction of social media, with noticeable behaviour shifts apparent at younger ages year on year.

The final hypothesis 3 is concerned mainly with the parental focus group. The participants made it clear that it was important to monitor children online, while they collectively agreed that flaws in child protection legislation is a contributory factor in the development of materialistic traits. Therefore, parents have seen a huge increase in the development of materialistic traits among their children due to lenient account set ups from social media platforms and other online applications.

3.12 LIMITATIONS

With every piece of research comes limitations, this section discloses the inevitable factors which this paper is subject to.

- Location

The ease of access to the local community made the methodology section of this research paper more seamless, however the chosen location might not have been the best representation of the average civilian opinion. This community could have been of a high social class or vice versa which can heavily hinder the end result.

- Sample size

Choosing Lusk as a representative of adolescents was a fair and truthful representation of the youth of today as they comprise a majority of the population in that area. However, the chosen sample could be both biased or unrepresentative of the actual truth.

➢ Data collection process & statistical software

The fact that the focus group could not be recorded for intense analysis meant that the note taking was the core source of data. To rely on a third party to note all discussions and to interpret the perception of these opinions involved a lot of trust and concentration. However, the note taking was sufficient in providing the information required to make an informed analysis although audio would have been a key resource.

➢ Access to literature

Most articles and journals which mention materialism in any respect are dated back to the 1990's. As stated already in this paper, there is a clear lack of literature which already combines each component of the internet and materialism development. Many sources within this paper are a mixture of both backdated or very recent publications.

CHAPTER V: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This paper the emphasized importance of the intensification of materialism among adolescents in the western world with a focus on 'The Digital Age'. The beginning of this paper was unjust regarding the effects of materialism on adolescents, however as this paper progressed the ideology behind this research took an unexpected turn. When introducing the concept of materialism, social media and consumerism the impact of each on adolescents became clear and the question of their vulnerability became a priority. Classifying adolescents into early, middle and late stages brought a whole new meaning to the research focus and significance. The aims and objectives opened up a huge array of problem areas, focusing mainly social media, digital advertising and the implications this introduces to the lives of adolescents. Identifying a linkage between social media usage and materialistic values expressed was a prime objective.

Both qualitative and quantitative measures were involved in the research of this paper, to collect as much data from both parties giving a fuller understanding of the impact of the digital age. The literature review section brought a vast array of academic viewpoints, from relevant theories such as Bartels proposed development of marketing, Erikson's stages of psychosocial development and Maslow's 'hierarchy of needs'. These theories provided standards to base assumptions for the behaviours of adolescents, for example Erikson's stages of psychosocial development express the vulnerability of this age group during a period of self-identity uncertainty and role confusion.

It became apparent to first understand the mindset of this age group to further explore their susceptibility to the world around them. The power of marketing, from technological advancements to a lack of privacy online has been a key issue in this paper and has led to the inclusion of legal amendments such as GDPR. Governmental policies were of significant importance to this paper as online regulations are a barrier which have the ability to implement stricter laws to assist the protection of vulnerable users. The methodology chapter was split into three categories to cater for each of the parties identified in the literature review, including early adolescents, late adolescents

as well as their parents. Observation, surveys and a focus group provided sufficient data to draw results and conclusions from. As expected, the most welcoming environment was portrayed by the youngest of participants as technology played no role in their daily life. In comparison, the oldest group hosted the least favourable atmosphere consisting of branding, cliques and a lack of communication among participants. An interesting proposal formed by the focus group indicated the lack of technological knowledge by generation X and previous generations, a distinctive source of confusion among the implementation of appropriate parental governance over online activity. Findings from this research showed that adolescents are merely brainwashed by social media regarding appearance and expectations, however this is a stage in life which is inevitable, (Erikson, 1998).

Applying this evidence to psychological and physical alterations would prove the impact on the well-being of these adolescents in comparison to more mature age groups such as millennials. Both Russell W. Belk and Marsha L. Richins provided distinct contrasting approaches to materialism. Belk's view is the belief that materialism is a personality trait, composing of three character traits: "possessiveness, non-generosity and envy", (Belk, 1988). However, Richins and Dawson suggest that materialism is different than a personality trait because it is rooted in societal conditions and may change with age, (Richins, 2013). It is clear by the time period of these theorists that Richins work is more modern, as it adheres to the findings of this paper. To restate the survey by Harris Group, "over 72% of millennials would rather spend more money on experiences than material things", (Saiidi, 2016), this statement corresponds directly with the ideology of Richins.

Furthermore, it is assumed that both adequate education and the enforcement of increasingly protective regulations will equip adolescents with the mindset of older generations such as millennials, in addition to defeating the efforts of social media marketing. Further research would benefit from investigations that examine these relations, as stated research linking actual consumption to well-being is required. Thus, future research that focuses on prolonged aspects of motivations will be more valuable. Therefore, family and educational institutions are the privileged places of

intervention in the development of children, in general. This has potential to promote the changes and developmental protection factors for the welfare of the vulnerable. As stated within this paper, parental support is a vital influence in the growth of children. As demonstrated by James J Heckmann, the investment in early childhood ensures a greater return in terms of overall health, education and productivity, (Mangeli & Toraldo, 2015). The quality of family relationships, in turn, reflects the quality and scope of social relations and the entire society.

The huge advertising budgets of global commercial brands allow for experimentation to entice the youth to consider, share information and try products which can be detrimental to their health. With the current absence of effective regulations, young people and parents must become increasingly educated about the extent of marketing on social media in order to develop into media-literate consumers. (Dunlop, et al., 2016). In conclusion, the work of the theorists mentioned above helps to elucidate the significance of teaching within educational institutions and at home, as being the right road to rational, effective and emotive behaviours, (Mangeli & Toraldo, 2015).

As the exact source of materialism cannot be narrowed down to one specific party, the implementation of control measures is essential to ensuring more adamant and wise generations to come. The onus is on educational institutions and family relations to support and encourage the positive development from childhood to adolescents and their progression throughout life. "The internet has been called the biggest social experiment in history. We owe it to our children to make sure that they are not unwitting, involuntary guinea pigs". (Finlay, et al., 2018).

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<div align="center">APPENDICES</div>

Observation of early adolescents

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key criteria to note:

- The use of digital devices on premise.

- Dress code outside of activity hours i.e. to and from camp.

- The use of accessories unrelated to sport i.e. watches, headphones etc.

- Most prevalent brands and their aggressive digital presence i.e. Nike vs. The North Face vs. non branded clothing.

- Presuming not all participants know each other, reactions received from strangers based on physical appearance including hair style, clothing and conversation.

Survey of late adolescents

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1. Gender?
   - Male
   - Female

2. What is your age?
   - 16-18
   - 18+

3. What do you use these devices for mostly?
   - News
   - Education
   - Applications
   - Gaming
   - Shopping
   - Other

4. Does any of the following make you feel happy or satisfied?
   Grade each option from 1 to 5, with 1 being least and 5 being most
   - Excel in academic areas
   - Branded items
   - Non branded items
   - Money
   - Sports

- ➢ Family/relatives
- ➢ New gadgets/products
- ➢ Parent relationship
- ➢ Music
- ➢ Health
- ➢ Purchasing
- ➢ Doing good deeds
- ➢ Friends
- ➢ Saving money

5. When shopping, what makes you purchase a certain brand and why?

6. If you could change one thing about your life, what would you most like to change?
Outward appearance
Relationships with others
Wealth
Health
IQ level
Other

Survey of late adolescents Result

Participants	Gender	Freq	Age	Freq2	Online priority	Freq3	Goals	Freq4	Brand	Freq5	Alter	Freq6
35	Male	22	<16	13	Social media	21	Wealth	15	Nike	11	Appearance	15
	Female	13	<17	17	Gaming	8	Relationships	10	EA7	7	IQ	8
			<18	5	Shopping	6	Happiness	6	The North Face	9	Health	12
							Education	4	Adidas	5		
									Puma	3		

Parent/guardian focus group results

Parent 1 aged 36 - Child aged 13 and 17
1. Is it important to manage children's online usage? ➢ Yes, it is difficult to monitor closely on mobile devices 2. How does your child make money? ➢ Small part time job but give money as needed 3. What does your child mostly spend their money on? ➢ Clothing, appearance and hobbies (music and sport) 4. Has your child influenced you to do or buy something you were unsure of? ➢ Holidays, devices, appliances and clothing

5. Do you feel your child is highly influenced by peers?
   ➢ Yes. They emphasize apparel, new technologies and popular brands

6. What do you gift your child on special occasions?
   ➢ Requested products or monetary gifts

7. Are current legal regulations sufficient in protecting adolescents online?
   ➢ Absolutely not, they are too tech savvy and bypass the current barriers in place

8. At what age did you allow your child to use a smart device?
   ➢ The house rule was originally set to 15 but as time went on our children were on such devices by the age of 10 using tablets and laptops.

Parent 2 aged 45 - Child aged 18

1. Is it important to manage children's online usage?
   ➢ I have brought my child into this world to respect themselves and others, they know right from wrong and can protect themselves from negative content. However, it is not them that is the problem and close monitoring of their exposure to content is important.

2. How does your child make money?
   ➢ They have done the leaving cert this year and just got a full time job which covers their expenses as they live at home.

3. What does your child mostly spend their money on?
   ➢ I am unaware of how exactly the money is spent, but they are saving for a new car and college fees.

4. Has your child influenced you to do or buy something you were unsure of?
   ➢ My child has contributed toward family vacations in the past and encouraged purchases of new household items, but the final decision has always been on myself.

5. Do you feel your child is highly influenced by peers?
   ➢ Friends are in our house often and have a clear impact on my child's behaviour, surrounding yourself with positive and good people is the most important thing.

6. What do you gift your child on special occasions?
   ➢ To give my child the best life experiences we try to give trips away, event tickets and other ways to experience life rather than something that can be lost or stolen.

7. Are current legal regulations sufficient in protecting adolescents online?
   ➢ Legal restrictions are far too lenient considering the technological know-how of children today.

8. At what age did you allow your child to use a smart device?
   ➢ When they started school a tablet was required, also having their own mobile phone gave me a sense of security.

Parent 3 aged 52 – child 22 and 25

1. Is it important to manage children's online usage?
   - In today's world the internet can be a dangerous place, so monitoring anyone online is more beneficial than not. The ways which some content can affect one person from another can vary greatly, so it is crucial to force restrictions on minor's online capabilities.

2. How does your child make money?
   - My children are all grown up with jobs, mortgages and children of their own.

3. What does your child mostly spend their money on?
   - My children are very open and communicate with me about their needs so if they fall behind in bills I will assist them in any way I can, they rarely spend money on themselves and are trying to build a life for their families.

4. Has your child influenced you to do or buy something you were unsure of?
   - Children have a huge effect on the decision making of families, from a short trip to the store to yearly trips abroad. Children have great power over persuading parents to reconsider many things and possibly agree with them for peace and quiet.

5. Do you feel your child is highly influenced by peers?
   - Friends are always influencers of our behaviour, it is hard to maintain control over your child's friends but when any changes in their behaviour are noticeable then action must be taken to solve problems or situations they are susceptible to.

6. What do you gift your child on special occasions?
   - Our children mostly got toys and items they were looking for, they never wanted much growing up so on birthdays and life events they got money or something they either needed or were looking for a long time.

7. Are current legal regulations sufficient in protecting adolescents online?
   - The law has proved to always be one pace behind technology in every respect, adolescents are too aware of their environment to worry about legal restraints even if it is for their own protection.

8. At what age did you allow your child to use a smart device?
   - We strictly implemented that no internet enabled devices were given until the age of 16, both our children were of this age when they got access. However, looking at their children now at the age of 4 years old they are using tablets and smartphones with no idea of how to control them, but they have the access.

Parent 4 aged 38 – Child aged 17 and 20

1. Is it important to manage children's online usage?
   - Nowadays children are so up to date with technology they are well able to tell apart positive from negative content. I have reared my children to always be open and honest with me, they tell me any problems they have, and I trust them.

2. How does your child make money?
   - Both my children are in full time education and are looking for part-time work. I assist them when they need money for anything.

3. What does your child mostly spend their money on?
   - They go out with friends most evenings also ordering online.

4. Has your child influenced you to do or buy something you were unsure of?
   - Children are huge influencers in our family, we include them in all household situations and they give their opinion, however when they were younger they were corrected for negative behaviour looking to get their own way about things.

5. Do you feel your child is highly influenced by peers?
   - Yes. I am always hearing the life of their friends from new clothing to games.

6. What do you gift your child on special occasions?
   - They get money and gift cards from family, as they are always changing their mind about what they want.

7. Are current legal regulations sufficient in protecting adolescents online?
   - No, it never will unless there are actual barriers to gaining access to social media accounts etc. the use of PPS or passport serial code for increased assurance but again not 100% effective guaranteed

8. At what age did you allow your child to use a smart device?
   - The house rule was originally set to 15 or 16 but as time went on our children were on such devices by the age of 10 using tablets and laptops.

Parent 5 aged 40 – child aged 15 and visually impaired (has other children)

1. Is it important to manage children's online usage?
   - It is important, although my child has her own privacy with assistance applications she is not allowed on social media. We take responsibility of ensuring the safety and well-being of her mental and physical health, the internet is not a safe place for anyone of any age.

2. How does your child make money?
   - My child has saving of her own which we contribute toward weekly, giving her a sense of achievement as she saves more each week.

3. What does your child mostly spend their money on?
   - My child doesn't ask for much, we buy clothing and gifts for her as needed.

4. Has your child influenced you to do or buy something you were unsure of?
   - Being very independent, our child gives valuable advice on purchases from things she read online with the assistance of talk back technologies.

5. Do you feel your child is highly influenced by peers?
   - Yes, my child does tell us about things she is interested in buying based on what her friends have.

6. What do you gift your child on special occasions?
   - Concert tickets and events are what our child finds most happiness in receiving, clothing and games are less of a priority.

7. Are current legal regulations sufficient in protecting adolescents online?
   - No. The amount of advertisements that pop-up and targeted marketing is impacting the purpose of browsing online. Profiles are built on people without their knowledge or permission, as of recently legal restraints are being amended, however my child has already bypassed them using alternative measures.

8. At what age did you allow your child to use a smart device?
   - The requirements for technological assistance was required when our child first started going to school since then she had access to the internet via multiple devices for learning purposes.

     Technology is a big part of our household with most devices being smart devices.

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