THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER MARKETING ON PURCHASE INTENTION FROM AN IRISH MALE MILLENNIAL'S PERCEPTION: A CASE STUDY OF IRISH FASHION INDUSTRY

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Abstract

In today's world, social media has been trending and as a source of advertising. Also, social media influencer marketing is not new to the system, rather, there is a recent development which is the main reason why there is decreasing of consumers in online marketing. Recent research shows that over eighty percent of a post made online is female millennials, and also, in Ireland, female millennials are more active on social media than the male millennials. So, the researcher thought it wise to investigate the Irish male millennials to find out the level of their engagement with the social media influencers and their purchase intention. More so, the Fashion industry was used as a case study.

The main objective of this study was to assess the extent to which physical attractiveness of the social media influencer can affect purchase intentions. In addition, to also evaluate the reaction of Irish male millennials towards a sponsored post on a social media platform. There were two different male millennials´ groups used for this study, eight focus group and eight in-depth interview participants. The researcher adopted an inductive method to understand the real feeling of male millennial´s and their perception toward social media influencer. Thematic coding was applied to interpret the data collected.

The key findings show that male millennials are not accustomed to traditional advertising. Instead, they live in an age where internet triumphs and they spend most of their time on social media. It reveals also that, for companies to reach the Irish male millennials through online advertising, they have to use influencer marketing. More so, it was confirmed that visual content appeal them on social media platforms and their preferred social media platform is Instagram. The physical appearance of a social media influencer is the significant factors that influence an Irish male millennials perception and behaviour towards a social media influencer. Also, there is a need for further exploration of this topic from different industry.

Keywords: Social Media, Influencer Marketing Irish Male Millennials, Fashion Industry, Marketing, Social Media Influencer, and Influencer Marketing.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Since the introduction of social media, marketing online has become almost inevitable, due to its extensive, real-time reach and real-time experience (Skinner, 2019). Social media platforms like Instagram have become the fastest growing social media platforms. Also, Instagram has become one of the major social media platforms for marketers. Perhaps because of its appeal to celebrities, user's experience and the use of influencer marketing as a strategy in marketing.

More so, since social media started, it has been apparent, the rise of social media influencers. Social media influencers are people with massive social media followers. They are mostly celebrities in music, movies or sports. Followers can also find social media influencers in politics and other aspects of leadership. The use of social media influencers in social media marketing is what is called social media influencer marketing. After much research, the researcher adopted the method of how social media influencers like Ayodeji Ibrahim Balogun (Wizkid), an African pop musician, is influencing the young people in Africa. Especially in Male Fashion and lifestyle, has been a huge success, which has landed him endorsements with Pepsi, Ciroc and Nike (Feshchuk, 2019).

Also, in 2018, Dolce and Gabbana, a top Milan international fashion company got Wizkid to model in one of their major fashion shows (Owoseje, 2019). In addition to that, he has succeeded in promoting the brand as the top fashion brand in Africa, especially to the male millennials, also he did a song in honour of the brand the same year. So, based on that, the researcher decided to research on the impact of social media influencers marketing on purchase intention from an Irish male millennia's perception.

Presently, Social media influencers in the Irish marketing industry has been gaining popularity in Ireland, more especially among the millennials (Boland, 2018). Academically there has not been much research on the male millennials. Though some academic studies have been done on the female millennials, no thorough academic assessment or analysis has been done on the Irish male millennials. So, on this note, this research seeks to understand how the fashion industry in Ireland can adopt the strategy of social media influencer marketing and also assess the perception of the male millennials in Ireland.

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1.1 The Rationale for this Study

The primary purpose of this study was to examine and understand the impact of social media influencer marketing on purchase decisions from an Irish male perspective. The Irish fashion industry was used as a case study and Instagram as a source of social media platform. More so, to gain an insight into how best the findings can be utilised as a source of social media marketing.

The main objective of this research is shown below, and it will present the analysis and discussion of the outcome of the focus group and in-depth interviews were conducted by the researcher for this report. To achieve this, the opinion, perception and feelings of the Irish male millennials were obtained for further improvement of the social media advertising.

a.   To evaluate the level of engagement between the Irish male millennials and social media influencer.

b.   To assess the extent to which physical attractiveness of the social media influencer can affect purchase intentions.

c.   To evaluate the reaction of Irish male millennials towards a sponsored post on a social media platform.

1.2 Organization of the Study

For the success of this dissertation, and to tackle the issues surrounding the objective of this research. There are some measures used, such as; the researcher applied a qualitative approach, which comprises of focus group and in-depth interviews. The focus group consisted of ten members, eight Irish male millennials, the moderator and observer. Also, the focus group participants were within the age group of twenty-seven to thirty-eight years old. The in-depth interviews were eight different young individuals within the age bracket of twenty-three to twenty-six. Both groups helped the researcher to gain a thorough knowledge of the participant's´ feelings and perception on the impact of social media influencer marketing, purchase decision and the Irish fashion industry. Thematic analysis was adopted by the researcher to analyse the results and findings of the entire study. The outcome derived from the research has thrown lighter and has gained an

understanding of the male millennials' perception of influencer marketing for the fashion industry in Ireland. The next part of this section will present interesting and useful information that will help the fashion industries to create more awareness and promote their brands among the millennials and also win their trust.

a. The perceptions from the Irish male millennials of this study suggest that the efficiency of a sponsored post determines if it can be considered beneficial, positive or productive, but not subject to Millennial interest.

b. The study suggests that producers, brands, and marketers should endeavour to work with influencers who have a significant influence, relationships and engagement with consumers. By so doing, the millennials will be convinced to view the sponsored message by influencers as reliable or trustworthy.

c. Irish male millennials look for entertainment online through visual content. The discussion shows that social media influencers are the most effective option for target market source of entertainment.

d. Also, the findings confirm that the target audience prefers digital marketing to traditional marketing. Because they believe traditional marketing is an outdated source of advertising while digital marketing is trending and also is visual content. Based on that, Instagram was a preferred social media platform for all the participants.

This research ended successfully and very educative. The researcher finds the need for further research, suggesting that future researchers should explore and concentrate more on this area of marketing. More so, the Irish fashion industry was used as a case study in this research. Therefore, future researchers could use other industries like drinks, food, and electronics as a case study. However, this study can be replicated in other countries, such as; South Africa, China, Malaysia and Malta. Since the research used millennials, future researchers can thoroughly assess the perception of Post-Millennials (Generation Z) towards the social media influencer and purchase intention. Furthermore, a prospective study could be done from the viewpoint of both male and female Irish millennial consumers, since both have been researched separately in Ireland.

This study would not have been successful if other literature were not reviewed, like academic journals, books, and past data from other reliable sources. However, the subsequent section will build insight into more excellent knowledge and understanding

of the vital themes of the objectives of this study. It includes the impact of social media Influencer Marketing on purchase intention from an Irish male Millennial's perception, using the Irish fashion industry as the brand focus.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This literature review aims to develop a deeper understanding of the existing body of literature related to the study. The study discusses social media platforms such as Instagram, blogs, YouTube, and Facebook. In addition, social media influencers and influencer marketing were discussed as well. Furthermore, the millennials, which are also known as Generation Y, were examined too. This chapter explains the themes of the study, such as social media influencers, source credibility, influencers physical attractiveness and influencers product match-up and other related studies, were adequately reviewed. The next part of this section will give a full insight into the Millennials, influential marketing and social media.

2.2 Generation Y/ Male Millennial´s

Bolton et al., (2013), Generation Y as the generation who are raised with the internet and are driven with limits online, through their desire to seek influences, involvements and useful connections (Bolton et al, 2013). Generation Y are endowed purchasers, who pursue a relationship when it comes to social media advertising (Goldgehn, 2004). They are active and do not desire direct interaction any longer by brands; instead, they pursue every-day treasured negotiations, in which they collaborate with brands. It is evident in the past literature review that generation Y dynamically looks for connection and distribute information with a significantly large number of liberal groups, than other generations (Weber 2017).

Figure one: Definition of generations by Pew Research Centre Dimock **(2018)**
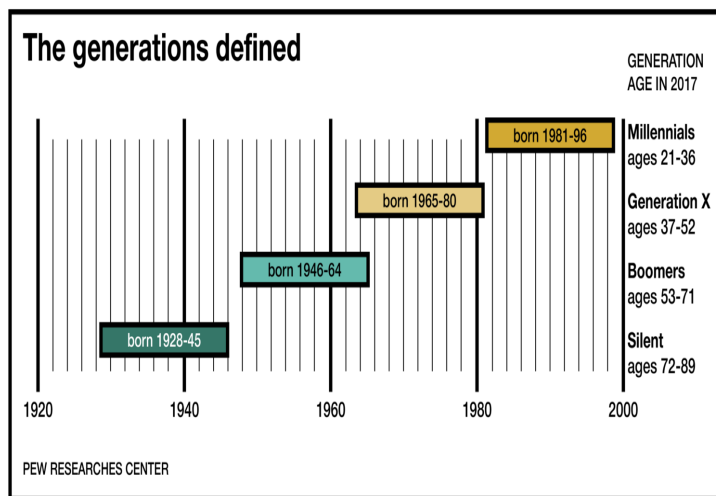
The figure one shows different categories of generations, and it was defined by Michael Dimock (2018) of the pew research centre´s president that Generation Y which are also known as Millennials are those groups that were born within the 1981 and 1996. As of 2017, the age bracket is between 21-36 years. Even though the study of Pendergast (2010) asserted that the millennial generation is also known as the Generation Y, but argued that millennials consist of people born between 1982 and 2002 and a larger percentage of this generation are technology savvy, influential, naïve and always active on any social media platform through content creation, sharing and contributions.

According to Shelley Emling (2019) research on millennials, confirms and defined the group of people born within 1981 to 1996 as Generation Y/Millennials. Twenge, *et al.,* (2010), also stated that Generation Y refers to a selected group of individuals that are fashioned by the same norms, values, beliefs, morals and characteristics such as technology savviness, flexibility and sociability because they were born in the same period Capcito (2016). Besides, Bennett (2014) views generation Y differently, stating that Millennials are usually influenced by their peer group, which is sometimes called the bandwagon effect; which means that this generation consists of influential personalities where another peer group often influences consumer behaviour and purchase decisions.

According to Jade (2018), These Generations were born at a time when technological innovations are at the peak of its introduction. Past research shows that social media influencers are mostly exposed to generation Y because of their frequent usage and interest on social media, especially when compared with other generation

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groups (Moore, 2012), and early exposure to the internet and social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, etc. Capcito (2016) reported that millennials are the exact target for social media marketing because they spend most of their time on social media, which allows them to afford anything they desire (Henrie and Taylor, 2009), and they also possess high purchasing power (Klear 2018), of fifty-eight per cent mobile shopper (Buxton, 2019). Valentine and Powers (2013) argue that Generation Y is very distinctive and a large group of consumers. In addition, most of this generation's purchases are done online (McGrath, 2016). Thau (2013) also adds that their shopping habits override that of the older generations because they have a high fashion taste and high purchasing power. Furthermore, Albiniak (2015) confirms that Generation Y is the most extensive set of people with the most powerful purchasing power while Urcelay (2016) reviewed that this generation is known to have adopted digital means of purchasing products, most notably when social media platforms have aired them. Also, the price of products or services is another factor they consider before making any purchase decisions, they usually compare prices and get reviews and recommendations before buying a product or service (Urcelay, 2016).

Regarding Roth, Wright and Handley, (2019) study, stated that the Chief Marketing Officer of Mastercard, Raja Rajamannar, established the fact that millennials decline advertisement online. In addition to that, he explained further that surprisingly, two hundred and twenty-five million web consumers use adverts-blockers to prevent advertising (Hirzianto, Yuliati and Kirbrandoko, 2019). It confirms that the study of Nosi et al. (2017) claimed that millennials did not accept the idea of online marketing of one-way dialogue. Contrary to that, Nora Barnes (2019) explained that Millennials' have well-built tactics measuring and filtering adverts, and it established an understanding of the fact that millennials are obsessed with influencer marketing

Figure Two: Analysis of millennials sponsored posts**.** Klear, (2019)

Millennials Posted Over 50% of Sponsored Posts

Millennials remain central to the influencer community, creating more than 50% of all sponsored feed posts
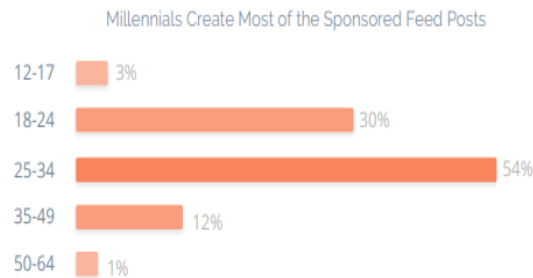
Furthermore, Figure two shows the analysis of 2019 statistics of feed post made in 2018 by Klear, (2019), confirmed that millennials are the highest number of sponsored posts online. In addition to that, he also stated that *"Millennials maintains the key to the influencer community to have created over fifty per cent of all sponsored feed post".* Cakim (2010) further explains that Generation Y always relies on their counterparts' advice on social media, and as such, their decisions are usually influenced by others' opinions. Various studies have shown that each generation has its own differences, core values, interests, desires, skills and expectations (Chatzigeorgiou, 2017).

In the same vein, Viswanathan and Jain (2013) explain that Generation Y is often influenced by western culture. They are conversant with new brands and always ready to adopt a new brand. However, some of the millennial generations are not loyal to any brand; instead, they follow trends, reviews, recommendations and endorsements from their peer groups. Also, this generation is less susceptible to traditional methods of marketing, and as such, they consider the perception of influencers to inform their purchase decisions and buying behaviour. Also, it is more reliable than traditional media when determining the worth of a product or service, because, on social media, they can see fashion trends (Valentine and Powers, 2013).

Furthermore, Albiniak (2015) reveals that Generation Y is the most extensive set of people with the most powerful purchasing power while Urcelay (2016) reviewed that this generation is known to have adopted digital means of purchasing products, most notably when social media platforms have aired them. Also, the price of products or

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services is another factor they consider before making any purchase decisions, they usually compare prices and get reviews and recommendations before buying a product or service (Urcelay, 2016). Subsequently, being able to establish a vast knowledge and understanding of millennials and their connection with marketing communication, it is essential to create an understanding of how marketing has changed within some time now. So, the next section will bring a clearer understanding of the evolution of marketing communication.

2.3 The Evolution of Communications in Marketing

Figure two displays a diagram of the evolution of marketing communications which was developed by Armano in 2009. It specifically revealed that there are changes in the web field of marketing since the introduction of Web 1.0 in 1991 (Bryant, 2011). Before the introduction of web 2.0, marketing has been characterised with passive, low-engagement marketing environment (Aghaei et al., 2012), and as such, the introduction of web 2.0 has afforded an interactive, hyper-connected and proactive marketing environment. In addition, the introduction of web 2.0 also enables a flow of connections between people, consumer, technology and brands through mutually created dialogues and networks (Armano, 2009), and as such, these developments have disrupted and rendered the traditional advertising strategies ineffective. In the work of Berthon et al. (2012), Web 2.0 can be referred to as technical infrastructure and platform that enables the social phenomenon of collective media and facilitates consumer-generated content. Thus, Web 2.0 enables the creation and distribution of content through social media. In addition, Web 2.0 paved the way for social media and users that can adapt, modify or transform its usage other than the purpose for which it was created (Berthon et al., 2012). Dinesh (2017) also argues that the increase in the use of social media has led to an increase in advert aversion among users and this menace has caused paid advertisements on social media to be ineffective in reaching out to many consumers.

Figure Three: Evolution of Marketing Communications (Armano 2009)
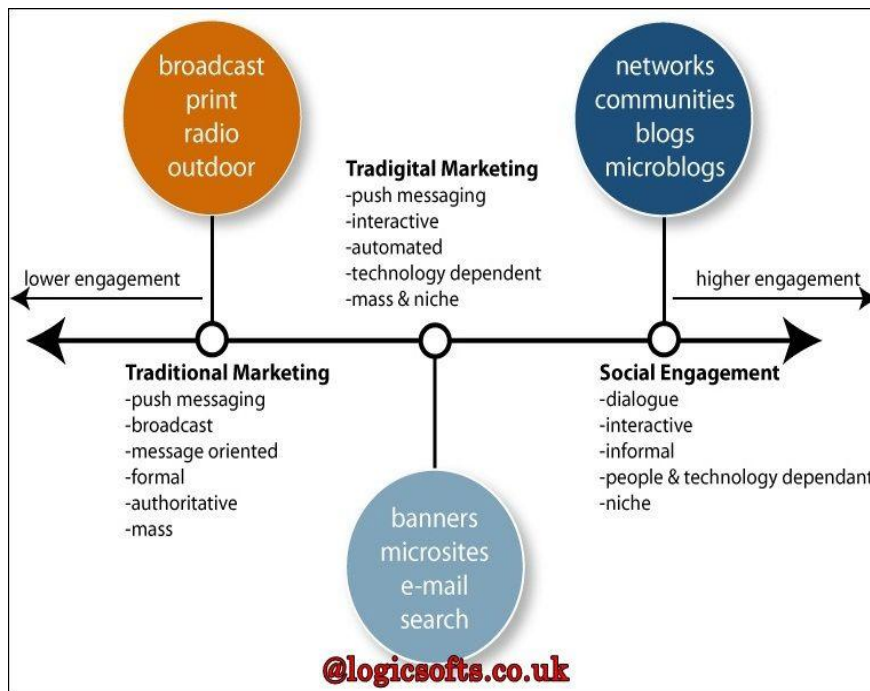
According to Daniel Newman (2015), emphasised that "traditional marketing has now been twisted by Millennials" and therefore, it is not applicable any longer with these young groups. The attempt of moving from web 1.0 to web 2.0, the digital means of communication among consumers and brands, has become a necessity. The evolution of the internet has also inspired these changes. Simon Kemp, (2019), study, revealed that the internet has increased and developed to the highest rate over the last ten years. With more than four billion population in the world, that consumes or use the internet in their homes (Kemp 2018). Also, the Central Statistics Office (2017), stated that Ireland is estimated at eighty-nine per cent of Irish households using an internet connection. Core's Outlook Study (2018) also discovered that radio advertising has drastically declined by fourteen per cent print and dropped by five per cent in 2017. In regard to this, it also confirms that in the nearer future, the top advertising channels for marketers in Ireland will have no choice but to invest in digital marketing (Mediacom 2018). This part has given a clearer picture and a better knowledge of the evolution of marketing communication in the modern age. With regards to that, it will be ideal for comparing and reviewing different studies to understand social media more as a communication and marketing source. The subsequent section will build insight into the social media platform.

2.4 Social Media As A Marketing Platform

According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media is defined as a group of internet-based platforms developed on the ideological and technical foundation which allows the creation and exchange of content and information between users. In addition, the study of Kim and Ko (2010), reported that businesses and various government institutions have been using social media platforms as part of their communications channels to engage their clients and citizens respectively. This implies that consumer purchase decisions are largely influenced by their network. Kohli, Suri and Kapoor (2014), also stated that social media can be defined as a channel through which numerous sources of internet-based information on diverse topics can be shared among users. According to the study of Muntinga, Moorman and Smit (2011), social media platforms are referred to as channels through which information is shared among users. It is also used to create product awareness and change the buying behaviour and purchase intentions of consumers. In the same vein, the study of Kozinets et al. (2010) asserted that social media affords an organization an opportunity to reach a larger audience.

Social media marketing can be performed in the following ways: weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, podcasts, pictures, videos, rating and social bookmarking (Kim and Ko, 2012). Tuten (2008) defined social media marketing as a platform in which social networks and virtual worlds are used in exchange content between users. Also, social media marketing can be viewed as internet-based marketing that replaces orthodox-based marketing (Tuten, 2008). Furthermore, De Veirman, Cauberghe and Hudders (2017), stated that influencer marketing usually endorses an individual who has generated many followers on a social media platform. Because of his/her influence, impacts or contributions to the world in which they are sometimes called brand ambassadors.

Similarly, Walters (2016) revealed that the emergence of social media platforms has changed the advertising strategies for brands because it allows the brand to reach many consumers. Considering the poll conducted by Harris in 2016, revealed that a good number of American youths, of about eighty-three percent of always use social media platforms (Walters, 2016).

In addition, Sterne (2010) asserted that social media is the channel that enhances communication between two or more people. It is comprised of the following categories - forums and message boards, review and opinion sites, social networks, blogging, micro-

blogging, bookmarking and media sharing. In the same vein, Godey et al. (2016) opined that social media platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, YouTube etc. are channels through which many users, consumers and clients can be reached.

The increase in the adoption and usage of social media platform has disrupted traditional marketing strategies, and as such, various organizations have adjusted their marketing strategies to internet-based marketing of their product to reach a larger number of consumers (Quelch and Jocz, 2008). The advancement of social media and other related components has undoubtedly been of immense help to brand owners/marketers in seeking innovative means of connecting with their target audience. Kemp (2018), revealed that over four billion of the world's population are using social media. According to the survey carried out by the Central Statistics Office (2017), a large percentage of Irish household, representing about eighty-nine per cent have an in-home internet connection. And as such, organizations can connect or reach out to their various customers and users through internet-based platforms or channels. (Chaffey, 2019). According to the report by Statista, (2019), the number of social network users worldwide have reached three-point seventy-two billion in 2019. Tuten and Solomon (2014) discovered that the reason for the increment is because social media provides an inexpensive way to interact and engage with these large numbers of potential customers and users.

Various studies such as Cortland (2017) and Phua et al. (2017) reveal that social media users are not comfortable with marketing adverts on their feeds since the platform was created for connections and not for marketing products. In addition, the number of advertising blockers are increasing at an alarming rate, for example; Ad-blocking is apparently increasing by forty per cent yearly, and precisely at the end of 2016, there were over six hundred million strategies that applied certain method of the advert blocking software (Miguel, 2017), and this menace makes it difficult for social media users to access various marketing content on their feeds (Cortland, 2017).

Kwak et al, (2010) used three factors such as the number of followers, the rank of the Instagram, and the number of retweets to measure the influence of the social media influencers on Twitter and it was discovered that the rank of the web-page is the most significant influencing factor on social media. The study of Cha et al. (2010) contradicts this finding by using three factors such as the number of followers, the number of mentions, and the number of retweets to measure the influence of the social media

influencers. The study revealed that the number of followers is the most significant influencing factor on social media.

2.4.1 Why Instagram Platform?

Instagram was launched in 2010 and it is the fastest growing social media platform that has the largest number of subscribers and engagement, and it is also an internet-based video and photo sharing platform (Instagram, 2019). Instagram uses an application that enables followership which is one of the features that influence marketing (Elliott, 2014). In addition, Kenny (2018) reported that Instagram is one of the fastest-growing social media marketing platforms that has the highest number of users, and as such, makes it easier for marketers to use the platform to advertise or market their goods and services with the help of social media influencer marketing. Instagram has suddenly become a trending platform for marketers, more especially influencer marketing. For example, there is no way a user can view through the Instagram feed without StumbleUpon social media influencer. Social media influencer has been in existence in Ireland for the past five years, and are recommended for marketers in society. According to Kenny (2018), during the 3XE seminar last year; in Dublin, he stated that Ireland has a small population and few celebrities. Also, social media influencers have more powerful control over Ireland than any other country. Based on the analysis of Klear, 20919, stated the four hundred million users view Instagram daily. the chart is shown in figure four.

Figure Four: Statics showing The Rise of Instagram Story Klear **(**2018).

The Rise of Instagram Stories
1 out of 3 posts was an Instagram Story

400 million people view Instagram Stories every day. The feature took instagram by storm and influencers adapted quickly.

Our data shows that in 2018, 1 out of 3 Instagram sponsored posts was an Instagram Story.

Instagram Stories 34%

Instagram Posts 66%

The study of Phua, Jin and Kim, (2017) has proven with some statistics, that Instagram has a high number of marketing influencers who have the highest level of interactions in the form of likes and comments on a feed (Phua, Jin and Kim, 2017). According to Nicola Cronin (2019), Instagram has active users of about eight hundred million and these have made this platform the preference of most influencer marketing. in reviews of the research, Cronin (2019), stated that seventy-two per cent of Instagram users have reviewed that after viewing something on the app or a post displaying some fashion or related styles, made purchases, establishing its competence or ability in the digital marketing environment in 2019.

2.4.2 Electronic Word of Mouth

Romero, Galuba, Asur and Huberman (2011), stated that one of the leading platforms for Word of Mouth (WOM) and influencer marketing is Instagram. Also, various studies have revealed that Instagram has been a significant and most used platform by social media marketers, among other social media platforms (Romero et al, 2010). Approximately seventy-five per cent of marketers at present are working with influencers to publicise word of mouth (WOM). Regarding their merchandise and trademarks on social media. Influencer marketing is most times, regarded as essential to increasing and improving online brand activities (Newberry 2019). Ernest Dichter (1966) was the first person to recognise the concept or idea of word of mouth (WOM). There are two means that purchasers use it, they are;

(1) To validate a purchase that has been made already and

(2) To help in choosing a prospective future purchase.

According to Traci Warrington, (2002), The evolution of the internet has drastically increased, to the extent that it generates online traffic to the highest level. The electronic word of mouth (e-WOM) E-WOM is an essential aspect of influencer marketing (Le and Luong, 2019) because it is merely subject on the sharing information online to different users (Yusuf et al. 2018). Huete-Alcocer, (2017). Explained that e-WOM is a form of information passed through an actual, potential or previous consumer negatively or positively regarding a brand, product or services, to many different people or organisation in an uncontrollable way, through online or social media platform (Hennig-Thurau et al. 2004: 39). Initially, purchasers prefer or rely on word of mouth from family and friends

to assist them in making decisions on purchasing goods and services (Richins, 1983). According to Prasanna Lohar, (2019), with the help of the social media platform, people now have access to three-point one hundred and ninety-six billion users to acquire information (Lohar, 2019).

The analysis of trust in marketing discovered that social media reviews were the third most reliable source of marketing in 2015. Sixty-six per cent of customers based on the review from the purchaser in sixty different republics stating on how social media platforms' reviews are the primary reasons why influencer marketing has increased dramatically over the years (Nielson, 2019).

2.5 Social Media Influencers

According to Dizon (2015), there are four categories of social media influencers, and they are celebrity influencer, micro-celebrity, industry expert, bloggers and content creators. Solomon (2013) opined that the fashion industry adopts celebrity influencers in four different ways such as promoting a product or services; product endorsement; acting strategies such that the influencer will be asked to perform a role with respect to a product and the last category of social media influencer entails influencing the purchase of a consumer by acting as a spokesperson for the brand. Social Media Influencers are also known as (SMIs), they are self-governing third-party endorsers, who through posts on Instagram, or other social media platforms, convey their message, knowledge and ideas (Freberg et al., 2011) to influence the communal attitude regarding brands, products and relevant related cases or topics (Muntinga et al., 2011). The study of Kotler and Keller (2009) argues that an influencer is an active individual that has a reasonable influence on their network and surroundings because of their intellectual capacity. Subsequently, Wong (2014) describes social media influencers as influential people who have been perceived to be an expert in a chosen field, and as such, they attract many followers. A social media influencer influences a follower's behaviour and attitudes through content creation, podcasts, pictures, videos etc. As such, they are used by companies for social media marketing. Influencer marketers most times, used as a marketing tool to pass messages to the target audience, conveying information and influencing the consumer's purchase intention (Burke, 2017). Chen, Fay and Wang (2011) explained that the purposes of using social media influencers are to promote branding, increase awareness, enhance customer service, and customer relationship management activities. Social

media influencers are also people with large social media followers who can influence or persuade others. They also have the power to affect the purchase decision of others. More so, the findings of Nandagiri and Philip (2018) revealed that brand endorsement by a social media influencer has a positive influence on their followers. Furthermore, the ability of the social media influencer to convey a brand message meaningfully to their consumer goes a long way in influencing consumer buying behaviour and purchase intention. Irrespective of the fact that consumer purchase decisions can be affected by their personality, their creativity and the ability to convey brand messages is also another vital determinant (Peetz, Parks and Spencer, 2004). Several

Cho, Wang and Lee (2012) argue that social media influencers do function as digital opinion leaders, and as such, they have been perceived to be mentors, members in an online community with the ability to influence other members due to expertise on the relevant topic. Studies such as Kapitan and Silvera (2016) view social media influencers as micro-celebrities who desire visibility and attention and are influential through their admirability and high social status. The study of Hamann, Williams Jr. and Omar (2007) explained that a social media influencer is a social leader who leads an online community and sets the standard with regards to the values and behaviour of its members through their large social capital.

However, Social media influencers are now using their influence and popularity as a means of marketing and attracting the young ones more especially the male millennials. Social Media Influencers are often popular and well connected on social media. Although high popularity and connectedness do not guarantee that a person has significant influence and vice-versa (Chen, Fay and Wang, 2011). For example, in 2016, Kim Kardashian featured on her Instagram page with the hashtag of a sponsored product about #SugarBearHair in 2016 and the post generated over sixteen million viewers and over fourteen thousand comments, as it is displayed below in figure three.

Figure Five: #SugarBearHair sponsored a post on Kim Kardashian Instagram (2016)

The study of Byrne, Kearney and MacEvilly (2017), explained that influencer marketing is one of the marketing strategies that marketers and brands use to promote products and services. For example, one of the marketing strategies is to use important and influential leaders or celebrities, with a strong and compelling brand image to pass on information about the excellent picture of a product to a larger target audience. According to the study of Till, Stanley and Priluck (2008), they discovered that brand or product endorsements by social media influencers such as celebrities, usually triggered or influenced followers' purchase intentions and behaviour. Also, according to Freberg et al. (2011), social media marketing is generally carried out by brand endorsers, who are typically known as social media influencers. However, Dada (2017) also argues that social media influencer must always be truthful in order not to lose their credibility.

According to the report of Kotler and Keller (2009), a larger percentage of consumers, usually rely on endorsement and recommendation of brands from influential people as a yardstick before making a purchase decision.

Figure four is a screenshot of David Beckham Instagram page a celebrity, footballer and a social media influential via Instagram. the image shows where Tudor Watch sponsoring a post on his Instagram page earlier this year, (2019). the post featured him showing off a Tudor watch he is wearing in the photo (Beckham, 2019).

Figure Six: #TudorWatch sponsored a post on David Beckham Instagram (2019)

The study of Laksamana (2018) revealed that even though most Irish male millennials are active users on social media, yet the majority are not appropriately engaged with the social media influencers to influence their mindset on products and services, more especially in Ireland. While Ahmad et al. (2015), discovered that social media influencer marketing helps in the growth of the fashion industry in Ireland. Besides, Peetz et al. (2004) in their investigated argued that impact of social media influencers on purchase intention and their mediation has an effect on customer attitude, by applying physical attractiveness, for discussion and the result revealed that source attractiveness, has a positive impact on purchase intention.

2.5.1 Source Credibility

Till and Busler (2000), stated that trustworthiness, attractiveness and the expertise of an influencer or endorser is the foundation of source credibility theory. Source credibility theory stipulates the extent to which the target audience views the source to gain expertise and knowledge in their understanding of the product or service (Till and Busler, 2000). The study also argues that the quality of the argument and persuasive strength of the influencer are one of the vital requirements to enhance the credibility of the source. Consumers often believe that information and knowledge passed from an influencer are credible because of their expertise, and this usually affects their consumer buying behaviour and possibility purchases intentions (Shimp, 2000).

Authors Computation, for the concept and the literature key focus of this research, is displayed in figure five. It helped the research as a guideline for this study. include the physical attraction, social media influencer, source credibility, brand match-up and purchase intention.

Figure Five: Author's Computation, (2019)
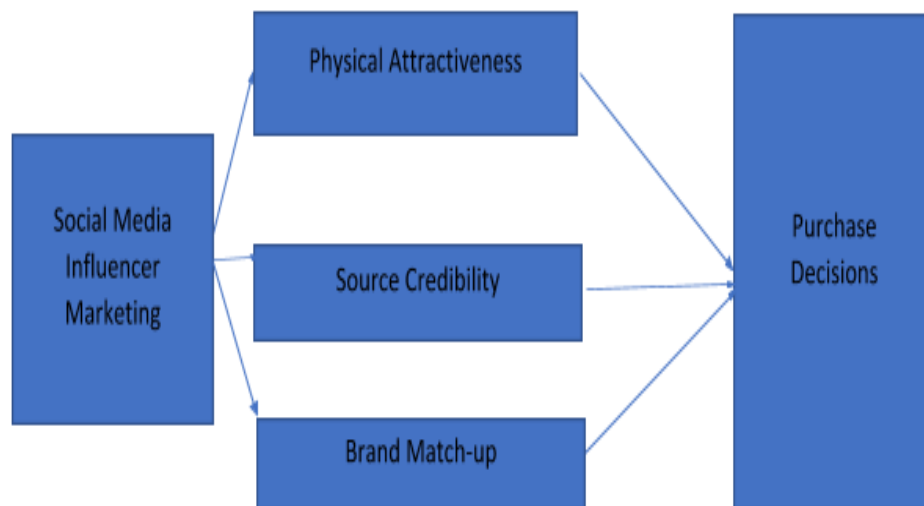
Spry, Pappu, and Cornwell (2011) argue that when reviews or recommendations related to products and services are credible, consumers develop a positive attitude towards the brand. However, when reports are unreal and mendacious, consumers develop a negative attitude towards both the brand and the endorser. This quality is validated in terms of the strength of public perception of the celebrity, and other evidence like relevance and timeliness (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017).

The work of Metzger, Flanagin, Eyal, Lemus and McCann (2003) opined that source credibility usually influences individuals' perception of the persuasiveness of the speaker. It can also be regarded as a receiver-based construct that message receivers bestow their perceived degree of credibility on the speaker (Gass and Seiter, 2011). In the same vein, Wathen and Burkell (2002) argue that source credibility usually affects information credibility, and as such, people are more likely to believe the content of a message if the information is provided by a credible source than a less credible one.

The study of Chakraborty and Bhat (2018) indicated that the best credible online reviews are involvements and experience. They suggest that consumers can directly relate to a reliable source within a period of study, and that means that consumers can have a

positive review of that brand. Harmonising to this concentration on experiences, Djafarova and Rushworth (2018), established the fact that even though personal experiences do increase credibility. That besides, specifically, that female influencers gain more credible influence online, because male millennials could interact with them. Relatability appears to also influence engagement, with Hanus, M. (2019) study shows that influencers with below five thousand followers believed to an actual engagement rate of eight per cent, compared to higher and greater influencers who thought to have just one point six per cent engagement rates. Analysing from the comparison of both rates shows the power of influencers' relatability and comparison of life experiences to the particular customers (Shan 2016).

2.6.2 Physical Attractiveness

Physical attractiveness is the level or degree to which a person's physical attributes are appealing or beautiful to others (Shimp, 2000). Tsai and Chang's (2007) reveals that previous studies have also confirmed that the physical attractiveness of an influencer is one of the characteristics and major factors that influence consumer buying behaviour; the more consumers are physically attracted to an influencer, the more it influences their purchase intentions. Erdogan (1999) explained the apparent reason why consumers only form or develop constructive and positive opinion towards influencers. It is because of their physical attractiveness. In affirmation of his study, Debovec and Kernan (1984) stated that attractive endorsers have a high potential to influence the attitude or perception of a purchaser. Based on that, the majority of the advertising companies portray and prefer to endorse an attractive celebrity (Bake and Churchill Jr, 1977). Following their opinion, it is now evident that advertisers have a double profit. These include the physical attractiveness of an influencer and the presence of a celebrity (Erdogan, 1999). Attractiveness most times is misunderstood. However, it does not necessarily mean physical attractiveness. Instead, it involves the way of life of social media influencer's personality and actions. In regard to the study of Munnukka et al. (2016), there have been some other findings that are similar and have complemented their opinion. These involve the relationship between the positive behaviour of a consumer and physical attractiveness of a social media influencer (Lim et al. 2017). Nevertheless, Till and Busler (2000), disclosed other findings from American research. It stated that other than attractiveness, there is a more compelling comparison between brands and celebrities. It is known as expertise. More so, the writers said attractiveness was not correctly measured or felt

during the time of the research. However, attractiveness is still commendable as an essential criterion for an influencer, brands, and product match-up (Till and Busler 2000). In addition, Using good-looking celebrity (attractiveness celebrity) is more successful in terms of gaining attention from audience to interest in the advertisement and the products (Till and Busler 2000). Sääksjärvi, Hellén and Balabanis (2016), argued that the theory of Till and Busler, (2000) is not a fact, and stated that using a negative attitude and bad looking influencer does have a positive effect on consumers' self-esteem and purchase intention as well. The study of Hakim (2010) used Erotic Capital to explain the relationship between attractiveness related products and attractive influencers. The Erotic Capital consists of six main elements such as; beauty, sexuality, sexual attractiveness, social skills, social presentation and liveliness. Following Hakim's findings, Green (2013), find fault with his concept, that it should not focus only on sex appeal and feels that it is as "overstretched". Also, stated that different women with a different view and some could not communicate their sexual desire by looks (Green, 2013p.138).

2.6.3 Product Match-up

The Product Match-Up Theory declared that there must be a flawless balance between brand attributes and celebrity behaviour or personality. The amount of an effective match-up can be measured by the degree of suitability between the influencer and the endorser (Erdogan 1999). Although, Kamins and Gupta's (1994) analysis discovered that if a celebrity match-up is well-suited or attractive to users, the celebrity instinctively developed extraordinary eye-catching contact towards the followers. It is establishing the impact of the exact match-up when it has something to do with influencer marketing. More so, there is a chance that the correct match-up will show that the users will find the endorser more attractive. Therefore, it will influence their behaviour regarding the product (Kamins, 1990). Also, bearing in mind that the current study revolves around the fashion industry.

Tingchi Liu, M., Huang, Y. and Minghua, J. (2007), revealed the findings of the research conducted on the association among attractiveness of an influencer, match-up and purchase intention and the outcome shows that whether the attractiveness is on the high level or not, the high brand-product match-up might generate a more significant purchase intention than the smaller sponsor-product match-up. Besides, the purchase intention made by the substantial-attractive sponsor with little match-up would be higher than that

produced by small-attractive endorsers with more significant match-up (Tingchi Liu, 2007). Till and Busler (2000) argues that fashion brands achieve an excellent result when there is a match-up between influencer and brands, and as such, it is expected that social media influencer should possess a reasonable match up with their brand to catch the attention of their consumers (Shimp, 2000). Ohanian (1991) disagrees and stated that only those celebrities should endorse whoever they come into consensus with and recognize.

2.6 Fashion Industry And Marketing

The fashion industry is evolving with various changes in the taste and mode of dressing, and these trends have attracted a lot of young generations. The changes usually influence the millennials in the fashion industry because of their high purchasing power. The industry is best regarded for its innovative and creative styles which are usually aimed at meeting with consumer's demand. Also, the industry uses social media platforms to influence the purchase intention and buying behaviour of consumers. Kilian, Hennigs and Langner (2012) reported that several fashion firms are deploying different strategies to attract this young generation and deliver value for money. One of those strategies is to use social media influencers to influence their purchasing attitudes, behaviours and buying decisions.

Sudha and Sheena (2017) argue that fashion industries on social media have a significant impact on influencing the purchasing decisions of women while, Helal, Ozuem and Lancaster (2018) revealed that social media platforms have a considerable influence on brand perceptions in the fashion apparel and accessories industries. Similarly, the study of Kim and Ko (2012) discovered that there exists a positive relationship between social media marketing and purchase intentions of the luxury fashion industry, thus, the more an organisation invest more in social media marketing, the more its influences purchase purposes of consumers. The study of Ahmad, Salman and Ashiq (2015) reveal that the influence of social media in the fashion industry cannot be underestimated as it serves as a link between the fashion industry and the consumers and it helps to influence the purchase intentions and buying behaviour of consumers. The study of Klaer, (2019) revealed that influencer marketing program had gained an increased rate of seventy-three per cent users of existing luxury fashion brands. Also, Instagram offers the fashion industry the opportunity to receive the feedback and experiences of customers with their services. However, studies such as Lim et al. (2017) reveal that some brands are still

struggling to break through despite the potential of social media influencer marketing for the fashion industry. Chatzigeorgiou (2017) reports that the trends and changes in the fashion industry are evolving, and as such, concrete marketing strategies should be deployed to capture and attracts the largest group with high purchasing power which happens to be the millennial generation because they have a bigger fashion taste.

2.7 Purchase Intentions

The ability of an influencer to convey brand message meaningfully to their consumer goes a long way in influencing consumer buying behaviour and purchase intention. Even though consumer purchase decisions are influenced by social media influencer, their creativity and the ability to convey brand messages is also another important determinant (Peetz et al, 2004). Goyal (2014) argues that consumer buying behaviour is usually influenced by purchase intention. Similarly, Vineyard (2014) asserts that purchase intentions are usually viewed as a powerful predictor of future purchase, which is the tendency that a consumer is likely to buy a product in the near future. According to Kotler and Armstrong (2012), a consumer usually makes purchasing decisions daily and it the goal of every marketer to confirm what usually influences their buying decisions. Furthermore, Rani (2014) asserted that purchase decisions of a consumer are usually influenced by some personal characteristics such as age, peer group, lifestyle and the fourth factor is the psychological influences such as motivation, perception, learning and beliefs of the consumer (Kotler and Armstrong, 2012).

Previous research studies revealed that influencers such as celebrities, brand community members and bloggers have a significant and positive relationship with consumers' brand attitudes and purchase intentions because they reach a large number of consumers within a short period and the cost of advertising through influencers is considerably lower compared to other marketing strategies (Djafarova and Rushworth, 2017; Phua et al., 2017; Lee and Watkins, 2016; Jin and Phua, 2014; Kim, Sung and Kang, 2014).

According to Reza (2016) and Rimayanti (2009), product variation has a positive effect on purchasing decisions. However, it was different for Clark and Horstman (2003), they explained that a product endorsed by a celebrity would make more sales by consumers at higher prices. In regard to that, Misra and Beatty, (1990), they argued that a spokesperson is more preferable for the brands to use than a celebrity because they possess better qualities, Rodriguez (2008: 97) like; experience, knowledge, reliability and qualification.

because he believes will be more persuasive. Also, it will succeed in impacting the purchase intention towards advertising and purpose of purchase intention. Nevertheless, the researcher reasons that based on the findings, the behaviour of the Irish Male Millennials are influenced by trends and their peer groups.

Furthermore, the researcher also believes that no loyalty comes from the millennials. Instead, they prefer to spend most of their time online on social media. Therefore, millennials like products from the fashion industry which are endorsed by social media influencers. Advertising to them has to be done through online, digital media. These adverts can be displayed through videos or pictures online. It will then result in brands adopting the use of Instagram as a social media platform for advertising.

The next part concludes the literature review section with a better understanding of comparison, descriptive and critique of other academic journals, book etc. for this study.

2.8 Conclusion for The Literature Review

An expectational and outstanding knowledge has been established in this study, and it was generally derived from the objectives of this dissertation, and it will now conclude this section for more understanding.

As mentioned earlier, Millennials demands for brands to have a two-way, co-created interaction with them, perhaps because marketing is generally advancing digitally. Also, with the progression of the internet and the advancement of marketing communications, social media has grown massively. As stated before also, the purchase intention of the millennials is driven or has a strong influence by the social media influencer. It is because they tend to spend most of their time on the social media platform, but has no intention to make a purchase online. Therefore, for millennials to attract or influence to purchase online, excellent communication needs to be adopted by brands (fashion Industries) to be able to win their attention and impact them positively. In addition to that, this study recommends that brands collaborate intensively with social media influencers to achieve this strategy. However, the next section will present with the main objective and the methodology adopted for the progress of this significant research.

3.0 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND OBJECTIVE

3.1 The Objective of This Research

The key focus of this study is to thoroughly examine the Irish male millennials' perception of the social media influencers, by evolving an understanding of the opinions, feelings and ideas of the millennials, involving the social media marketing. The main objective of this research was to establish an insight into the best way to employ social media influencers in promoting and marketing campaigns online.

The previous section presented and elaborated the foundation to the overall objectives of this research. The aim of this study addresses the issues surrounding The Impact of Social Media Influencer Marketing on Purchase Intention from An Irish Male Millennial's Perception: A Case Study Of Irish Fashion Industry. There are three main objectives designed concerning the area of focus within the literature review of this study. They include:

a.   To evaluate the importance of engagement between the Irish male millennial and social media influencer.

b.   To assess the extent to which physical attractiveness of the social media influencer can affect purchase intentions.

c.   To evaluate the impact of sponsored content from the Irish Millennials' perspective.

3.2 Introduction of Methodology

This chapter introduces the research methodology which consists of the six research onion layers adopted for this study, they include; research Philosophies, research Approaches, research Strategies, Choices, research Time horizons, Techniques and procedures. Also design data collection, data analysis and ethical considerations which have been adopted to maintain the confidentiality and anonymity of the respondents. A comprehensive justification of both the method and design will be provided. Other topics of discussion will include both the limitations and ethical considerations of the study.

This section will also elaborate in detail on the methodology that was applied to collect information for this research. This part will also present the basis for the preferred methods; it helps the investigator to implement the plan that was applied, to gather information for the analysation of the research. It also includes the research approach, data collection methods, recruitment of participants and sample size, data analysis, and research ethics. To achieve a successful review of this research, a qualitative methodology was being used to collect information, which includes; interviews, Focus group and observation. The focus of this study is to examine the impact of social media influencer marketing on purchase decisions from an Irish millennial's male perspective using the fashion industry as a case study.

3.3 Research Philosophy Perspective

The most important part of the methodology of any research is the research philosophy which is the first layer of the research onion approach, that is being applied. It consists of the necessary norms regarding the way on how the world is being viewed (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). The approaches will help in the research tactics and procedures chosen as part of the plan. However, The research perception or viewpoint of this study was adopted by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill's (2009), which is called the research onion. The research onion has been applied to explain in detail each step of the research methodology.

Figure Seven: Understanding the Research Onion by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, (2009).
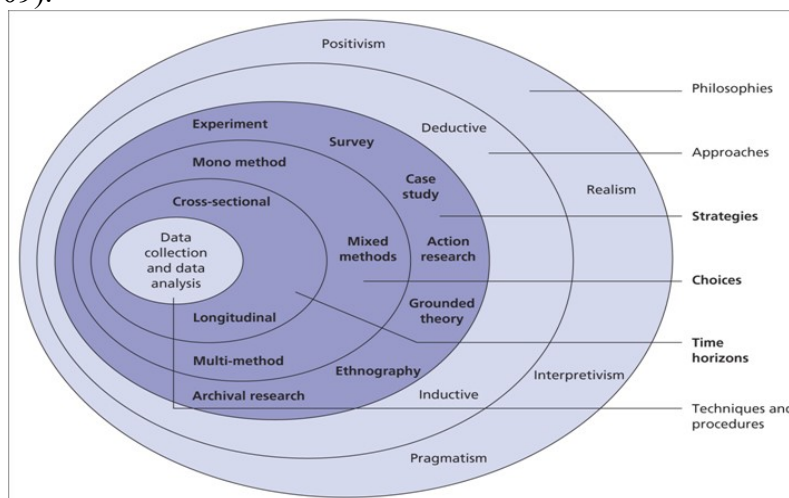
The research onion is shown in figure five, this procedure is very important because it helps to identify the research perspective, and as such, it brings validity to the research, which eventually strengthens the prospect of this study. Saunders et al., (2016) further explained that a research perspective, onion or paradigm is a set of common beliefs about how a research problem should be approached. Saunders *et al.,* (2016) introduce two types of paradigms such as ontological and epistemological. Ontology views the world and it is the study of nature and our ways of being in the world (Quinlan, 2011). Whereas epistemology represents scientific knowledge focused on different areas of thought, in order to appreciate the relevance of human beings (Mejías, 2018).

The study of Bryman and Bell (2011) stated that epistemology is paradigm and as such the research pursues to examine the impact of social media influencer marketing on purchase decisions from an Irish millennial's male perspective using the fashion industry as a case study. To achieve that there are two main approaches, Positivist and Interpretivist. Positivist is value-laden and usually follows a deductive stance, while, interpretivism takes an inductive perspective which should be value-free. The interpretivism will be the lead focus in this research because Interpretivist epistemology considers the distinctiveness of humans against the natural order (Bryman and Bell, 2011).

In view of Creswell (2007) explained that an interpretive perspective approaches the researcher works closely with participants to explore in deeper understanding their perception. The approach suite with this study perfectly because it also helps to understand the actual feelings and knowledge of their opinion of male Millennials concerning social media influencers. Based on this fact, interpretivism perspective/approach was the best approach for this research and has been selected as the research paradigm of this study. As explained by Saunders *et al*., (2009), there are four research perspectives, and they are Positivism, Realism, Interpretivism and Pragmatism. These research perspectives are crucial to research, as they underpin the focus and creation of knowledge for the study. However, Quinlan (2011) stated that there are extra nine methods which are; (1) Hermeneutics, (2) Functionalism, (3) Post-structuralism, (4) Structuralism, (5) Postmodernism, (6) Constructivism, (7) Critical Theory, (8) Feminism, and (9) Symbolic Interactionism.

According to the study of Saunders et al., (2016), interpretivism aims to delve deeper into understanding the social realities of humans and views people as subjective beings, who's own social worlds, feelings, opinions and viewpoints hold value and meaning. However, Mack (2010) and Dudovskiy (2016) outline the significant drawback of interpretive research is the fact that it is subjective and therefore, the findings cannot be generalised for a population or situation. The aim of this study was to examine the impact of social media influencer marketing on purchase decisions from an Irish male Millennial's perspective using the fashion industry as a case study, and as such, the interpretive approach is considered to be most suitable for this research because the plan helped the researcher to gather most appropriate information needed for this study.

3.4 Research Approaches

The study focuses more on the inductive methodology which will complete and draw a conclusion from confined exploration. Inductive is a procedure used to study qualitative information which includes the observation and search for topics for outlines happening within established statistics toward the final part of this analysis (Catterall, 2000). Adopting the inductive approach makes it easier and appropriate theory but the plan also pursues to create an innovative method through the understanding of the information gathered and of which, the hypothetical point is not refined. In conclusion, this study focused more on the inductive methodology, because it the researcher to gather the right information from the participants since it is linked with qualitative research (Zalaghi and Khazaei, 2016).

3.4.1 Research Strategies

The Research Strategy is the third layer of the research onion, this layer focuses more on how the researcher plans to gather information for this study (Saunders et al. 2016). This part of the research is an important part because it is carefully selected based on the fact that the strategy chosen will determine the outcome of the study. However, the qualitative approach is the strategy used to explore information for this study. In the opinion of Malhotra, (2010, p 58-61). The research strategy is a structure used to conduct marketing research projects. It is also a guideline that details the basic techniques in which the authentic information is being obtained.

Some of the research which emphasize on social media influencer are usually quantitative methods for example Booth and Matic (2011), clearly confirms it and also Libânio and Amaral, (2017) stated that research which mainly concentrated on relating or linking celebrity endorsements, brands and social media influencers are mostly quantitative research method. Nevertheless, the quantitative research method is very quiet different from qualitative research method in a very unique way. Newman and Newman, (2007) argued that both of these methods have the capacity to clearly respond to undeniable questions which the other party does not have the ability to answer.

Morris (2015) argue that with qualitative research, there can be difficulty representing the target group accurately due to small samples sizes. Although qualitative research has obvious disadvantages, which can as well affect the study, more especially recruiting respondents. The research on social media influencers marketing is sometimes expensive due to the nature of the influencer. Consequently, qualitative research permits for a preliminary investigation of the issue, to create a knowledge of Irish male millennial mindsets, views and perceptions. Focus group allows the participants within a group to discuss their opinions and beliefs on the subject, while an In-depth interview is a face-to-face interview with participants (Kitzinger, 1995).

In addition, Quinlan (2011) stated that In-depth interviews and focus group research can allow for understandings and perception within-group diminuendos, which the researcher felt was the best approach to this research because the approach permits the researcher to understand consumers' perception through the participants' own words, offering a description of their direct knowledge. also, it gives the researcher the ability to get detailed information about the actual mind of each of the participants. Participants for this method were selected based on the fact that they are the main target for this research. The participants are mainly Irish male millennials and they are also active on social media, especially on Instagram, and as such can relate to the subject to be discussed (Sim, 1998). The focus group was conducted by the researcher such that the necessary information was gathered while the discussion was taking place. To carry out the qualitative research, an assistant moderator was chosen to assist the researcher during the interview process to avoid disrupting the conversation or inadequate collection of useful data while multi-tasking. The in-depth interviews and focus groups were held within the premises of the National College of Ireland and it lasted for one hour and thirty minutes

as they deliberated on the subject and exploratory questions were discussed to enable the researcher to identify any missing discussion.

3.4.2 Sample Size and Procedure

The study Dowding (2013) explains that sample size is usually adopted when the researcher is unable to capture the entire population which can be used as a basis for the research study. Similarly, Bryman (2015) stated that challenges such as financial constraints, communication challenges and time constraints could make it impossible for the researchers to gather information from the entire population. Therefore, sampling methods give the researcher information concerning the study which can also be used as a generalization and basis for the whole population of the study (Sandelowski, 1995).

The snowballing sampling method were preferable for selecting the participants for the In-depth interview and Focus group (Davies and Hughes, 2014). Sampling is one of the most important aspects of research methodology; mostly when qualitative research involves (Saunders et al. 2016). The researcher gains more confident with the outcome of the complete analysis when the sampling is with a strong representation of the targeted audience (Graziano and Raulin, 2010). Thus, the selection of respondents/participants should have a mutual and closely related to the aim of the research and putting into consideration that the right time and study sample will apply. The snowballing sampling method is also a non-probability sampling method that was adopted for this study. It affords the study opportunities to select respondents or participants through referrals (Cohen et al., 2013). According to Saunders et al. (2016) define snowball sampling as "a process in which succeeding participants gained information from past interviews acquired from its participants" (Saunders et al. 2016). The researcher adopted snowball sampling not because that is the only available sample, but because it is the best sampling that is fit for the type of this research. Also, the method was commissioned to meet the exact standards of this study. It also helped the researcher to detect or figure out the network for the target social media audience (Riley et al. 2000). The participants were chosen based on the following criteria:

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1. **Age:**

To certify, the respondents were within the Generation Y age group (twenty-three to thirty-eight). The investigator equally ensured that the selection of the group was within the age range of the research.

2**.** **Gender:**

To guarantee that the respondents were male millennials and that they meet up with the right criteria for the chosen gender for the research purpose.

3. **Interest:**

To ensure the proper focus of research interest. Which is fashion and social media influencer; it aids the respondents to reflect rightly to the target generation of male millennials with the understating and importance of the research topic.

4. **Nationality:**

To make sure that all the target groups that participated were Irish purchasers and representatives.

3.4.3 Theoretical Saturation

Lowe et al. (2018), defined theoretical saturation as a point by which a researcher cannot generate more information by observing more data that are connected to the research topic. For example; the researcher maintained the actual size of the sampling and did not find more than the required data for this study. It is essential for the researcher to bear in mind that the research objectives and limitations are part of the tool needed for the study (Riley et al. 2000). More especially when deciding on the sample size to choose or when considering the exact size of the focus group or in-depth interview that will suit the study. Thus, in the review of this research, the investigator, ensured that adequate sample size was chosen for both sets of the research group and the data collected from the participants reached a satisfactory stage. That means that the theoretical saturation applied to this study (Saunders et al. 2016).

An inductive thematic saturation method was used by the researcher for this study and maintained a flow of discussion for the focus group and continuity of interview concerning the social media influencers with the participants (Saunders et al. 2018). Saunders (2012) criticises that the practice of theoretical saturation, based on the fact that

theoretical saturation has no specific number for a suitable sample size. Also, he recommended specific sample size for in-depth and semi-structured interviews, within the size range of five to ten participants. The theoretical saturation was observed for this research, as suggested by Saunders (2012), and the sample size for both focus group and in-depth interview were eight participants for each group. A display of the participant's table is shown in Appendix two.

3.5. Research Method

From the structure of the onion approach guideline for this study, this section is the fourth layer and as such it has to do with the research methods that were used for this research. The idea of choosing a method for this study involves selecting within the quantitative, qualitative method. With these approaches, has three main categories of research method, which includes; mix method, multi-method, and mono-method. The mono-method is more suitable for this research and the researcher selected it as a method for this investigation. (Saunders et al. 2016). Before making this decision about this layer of the research onion, the availability of time and resources was prudently considered (Bak, 2011).

Through the means of using qualitative research, it helps the researcher to obtain additional detailed and in-depth information needed for this research (Saunders et al. 2016). The study of Onwuegbuzie and Leech (2005) focused more on the demand for millennials and students to us the mixed-methods approach because it helps them to collect more data and reach out to more participants. Furthermore, believed that without gaining the knowledge of both methodologies, students their opportunity to become analytical, well-informed and knowledgeable researchers. Nevertheless, Edmondson and McManus (2007) argue that any approach to research whether it is qualitative or quantitative is subject to the study and the issues surrounding it or the purposes that occur from the research. Also, the study depends on the method or the strategy of the research. Consequently, Walshaw (2012) had the same opinion that the gathering of information and the response of the concept around the exploration is a ring-shaped procedure. Based on this study qualitative approach was a preferred method for this research. The reason for preferring the method was because it is the best method that can give the researcher a deeper knowledge of the respondents of view and also quality information involving feelings, explanation and individual details, it gives a more accurate result. Also, A mono-

method was the right method for this study because qualitative research collaborates wholly with this type of research method. these methods include In-depth interviews, focus groups, etc. (Saunders et al., 2016).

Past studies indicate that Focus groups and in-depth interviews have been used to know the opinions, mindsets and feelings of research participants. For instance, Anita Whiting and David Williams (2013) confirms that a topic can be investigated thoroughly in quite a successful degree using a method without combining or using mix-method. Thus, this study adopted a qualitative research method using a focus group and in-depth interviews as its research method, which consists of eight Irish male millennials from different colleges in Ireland within the age bracket of Twenty-three to Thirty-seven years.

3.6. The Research Time Horizon

This part of the report is the fifth layer of the research onion which is known as time horizon. It is the inmost layer of the research onion. It acts as a timeframe for the entire period of this research. There are two choices for the researcher to choose from, which involves longitudinal and cross-sectional. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, (2016) defined longitudinal as a type of research that analyses activities and conducts by means of concentrated examples over a prolonged period of time. While cross-sectional is an option that presents a glimpse view of a specific condition at a single point in time and it restrains the period of information gathered and study to a short duration (Saunders *et al.*, 2016). The primary options that a researcher should bear in mind when choosing or considering the particular time horizon is whether to consider a 'glimpse' of a population at a specific period of time, that is; either using cross-sectional time horizon or to collect information from a reasonable number of data at a period of time, by using a longitudinal (Bryman, 2012).

The time horizon method helped the researcher by adopting the cross-sectional timeframe and it was well utilised with the research time, structured for a period of eleven weeks. As it is shown in figure six, it presents with the activities and timing within the period this research was conducted. Why chose the cross-sectional approach? The choice was made because, it is the perfect approach for this study and due to the fact that the focus of the research is on the present situation, while the longitudinal approach needed the use of repeated research for a long period of time.

Figure Seven: The Research Time Horizon Table for this Study

Timeframe	Accomplishments
Week One	Received the proposal approval, met with the research supervisor for guideline and research structure, then kick-start the research.
Week Two to Three	Reviewed related literature for example; Conducted the secondary research
Week Three to Four	Reviewed the methodology, which involves the research method
Week Four to Five	Prepare for the primary research which includes Focus group and in-depth interviews
Week Five	Consulted the supervisor through email for an appointment and also met with the supervisor one on one
Week Six to Seven	Conducted the primary research, both focus group and in-depth interview
Week seven to Eight	Analysed the primary research outcomes and linked it with the findings of the secondary research
Week Eight to Nine	prepared the Abstract, Introduction, and Conclusion of the entire research document
Week Nine to Ten	Put together the entire dissertation with the introduction, Abstract and the findings of all the research conducted and sent to the supervisor for final review
Week Ten to Eleven	Summarised and finalised the concluded dissertation while incorporating the feedback
Week Eleven	Submitted the completed dissertation

3.7. Data Collection and the Analysis of the Data

This section is the sixth layer of the research onion method adopted for this study and it is also the last layer or the final layer. As stated in section 3.5.0, this dissertation applied qualitative research method and it involves two categories of qualitative research approach, these approaches were used to collect information during this study, which includes; in-depth interview, and focus groups. The researcher prepared a question and generated data from college student, specifically Irish male millennials who also frequent and active social media users are, also known as Generation Y. The data collected was analysed as well. The issues surrounding this research was generated from a previous study done on the related topic.

3.7.1 Techniques and Procedures- (Data collected)

3.7.2 In-depth Interview

This first part is a semi-structured one on one meeting which is also known as face to face interview. This type of interview can be conducted inappropriate place. For the success of this interview, the researcher booked a location, in the library private room of National college of Ireland for both of the interview. The duration of the in-depth interview took up to forty-five to one hour thirty minutes duration and the participants were mainly the Irish male millennials who are also active social media users. The age group was divided into two groups, the in-depth interview is within the age bracket of twenty-three to twenty-six years old. It helped the researcher to have a better understanding of the participant behaviour and explore more in detail on the research topic without feeling intimidated for the older group. The interview questions are an open-ended question. The entire interviews were organised at a time suitable for the participants. The interviews were prepared in week four and five and were conducted in week six and seven, approximately early and mid of July 2019. Fifteen Irish male participants were recruited for the interview but only eight participants showed up.

3.7.3 Focus Group

The second part is a structured interview, which is also known as a focus group. The focus group for this study consist of eight Irish male participants, excluding the moderator and observer. The focus group is the second group and the age bracket of twenty-seven to thirty-seven years old. The duration lasted about sixty minutes to hour minutes. Both

participants observed a short break within the period of the interview. The ideal use of this method for the research was to explore more on an in-depth group discussion of eight to ten participants including the moderator and observer. Moreover, to develop a great understanding of the reason why each participant reacts to social media influencer marketing on Instagram. It also helped allow the moderator to establish body reaction, eye contact and feelings of the respondents.

The questions presented intended to be clear, simple to understand and brief, to prevent any unfairness or misperception on the part of the participant. The questions were open-ended, to be able to delve more into the topic for better analysis and the right response from the respondents (Fuller et al., 2016). Mostly, questions prepared for an in-depth interview are originated from previous findings, studies or research related to the issue, to make sure that the topic and questions are indorsed and trustworthy. Sadly, the experience of social media influencers in Ireland is appropriately infantile (Jin and Muqaddam, 2019), and so, it was A bit difficult to execute. Nevertheless, the researcher had to prepare and create appropriate questions for the topic from another source, for example, previous research, academic journals and studies, and it is linked to social media influencers and male millennials (Towner and Lego Munoz, 2016).

The In-depth interviews and focus groups were conducted by the researcher such that the necessary data was gathered while the discussion was taking place. The participants' opinions were examined with respect to their perceptions on the impact of social media influencer marketing on purchase decisions using the fashion industry as a case study. In addition, an assistant moderator was chosen to assist the researcher during the interview process to avoid disrupting the conversation or inadequate collection of useful data while multi-tasking. Being able to create a good atmosphere for a better discussion pattern, a confined question guide was made, and it was in line with the topics for each particular section, for example, the literature review section, methodology, etc. Some of the topics covered were; millennials, Social Media, Social Media Influencers, Source Credibility, Trust and Attractiveness etc. After the preparation of the questions, three different academic leaders including the dissertation supervisor were chosen to ensure that the questions generated were understood for the right purpose and it was approved and fit in for the research. Also, all the data collected were suitable for the study. Subsequently, the response was adjusted by the researcher for minor modifications to the framework and

phrasing of the questions. More so, in the Appendix of this report, the sample of the question guide is shown.

In accordance to the research, and to guarantee eloquent rationality, which is essential for qualitative analysis, the researchers employed an observer that took notes all through the interviews, because every detail during the interview section is vital, this includes; any feelings or reactions could be acknowledged (Patterson, 2018). According to Huberman and Miles, (2009) explains that descriptive validity is a procedure that ensures that the response from the respondents are very true and are represented by the outcomes of the research (Huberman and Miles, 2009). Being able to emphasize descriptive validity, the entire interviews were audio-recorded by means of Otter voice recorder, It is a new app through a mobile application, created to automatically transcript, and it can as well recognize and capture a prolonged conversation that takes place between several people.

The availability of the audio recording explained earlier to all the participants before the start of the interview and also they were made known of its usage during the research and the participants approved to the recordings. The moderator assures all the participants that the recordings and information gathered from the interviews would be destroyed and deleted immediately after the research was accomplished and completed.

3.8 Data Analysis

Data analysis is one of the vital aspects of a research study as it enables the researcher to obtain useful information that could apply to the research and analyse it for a better understanding. In the same way, data analysis identifies the relationships and differences between variables through the process of forecasting outcomes, comparing variables, describing and summarising the data collected (Mertens, 2014). Therefore, the researcher ensured that the In-depth interview and focus group was carefully conducted and adequately responded to gather enough information for the research; the moderator and observer took response and notes.

Schofield, (1992) stated that for any data to be well analysed, a grounded approach has to be applied. In this study, the approach adopted is inductive because it is connected to the qualitative method. Chapman, Hadfield and Chapman, (2015) confirms that "inductive method is used to progress data collected by the development of grounded theory" (Chapman et al, 2015). In accordance with this research, the data analysis intends

to employ a theory for this study that corresponds with the data gathered from the research.

Thematic is a well-known approach to researchers, marketers and scholars because it is a grounded theory approach. It is suitable, and a useful tool for any philosophical method and does not mind if the analysis is deductive or inductive. In regard to this review, the researcher preferred the Thematic approach because it is a useful tool to analyse the data for this study. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, (2016) define Thematic approach as a stand-alone methodical technique. More so, is more valuable when there is a sizeable quantity of raw qualitative data, as such the analyst pursues to discover the connections between the response of one-to-one individuals (Saunders et al. 2016). Furthermore, the adoption of this method helped the researcher to transcribe all the interviews and made it possible to read and understand in detail, the essential phrases, viewpoints or ideas in the study. Saunders et al. (2016), went further to state that there are three ways codes can be significant. They are; the respondent comments, the information gathered and highlighted by the investigator or existing results in related literature and concept.

Even though, some scholars like Jennifer Fereday and Eimear Muir-Cochrane (2006), preferer combining both theory-driven data and data-driven, analysing from their point of view, the researcher believed that concentrating on developing theories through letting themes to progress from the data collection is better than focusing only on literature, and as such, the entire report was solely inductive (Fereday and Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Thus, Quinlan (2019) describes open coding as a means of collecting the data, and acknowledging the original codes, by placing them into groups or themes, which was also applied by the researcher in this study. Also following the development of theoretical saturation in this research, the researcher continued to increase the themes, until each of the groups were well established (Bell, Bryman and Harley, 2019). Again, the analyst applied another coding method to ascertain the connection or link between the codes and this approach is called axial coding method. Also, to generate and identify the complete themes of this research; the researcher applied selective coding because it helped to carefully select the entire codes in an adequately organised pattern (Saunders et al. 2016).

In conclusion, of the whole process of data analysis, the investigator clarified themes from the qualitative description of the interviews, so that the theory will be building the social media influencers. Lastly, there was a comparison between the selected themes and literature. Also, an extra layer was added to the analysis to generate understandable and relevant conversation within the topic.

3.7.2 Ethical Considerations

The researcher ensured that the personal information of each of the participants for the research was not requested. Prior to and during the day of the focus group, the selected participants were informed and prepared for the research procedure in which they were handed out the consent form that guaranteed their anonymity and confidentiality. It is necessary for researchers to inform the participants of the details of the research study and possible threats that could emerge in the participation of the study (Creswell and Tashakkori, 2007). Furthermore, the researcher guaranteed the participants' anonymity through the signature of the consent form and permission to withdraw during the research if necessary.

In addition, the researcher observed all the ethical guidelines and Practises of research relating to "Human Participants of The National College of Ireland" all through the research process. Also, the researcher summited the Ethical appraisal application form with the proposal for this study.

3.8.1 Confidentiality Voluntary Participation

On the day of the interview, before the meeting started, the researcher explained every necessary information that needed to be made known to the interviewee. Also, the audio recorder used for the discussion were all disclosed to candidates before the interview started. All the respondent confirmed that they understood all the procedure (Osburg et al., 2019). A consent form was given to every participant to read and also to fill out the form. Filling out the forms from the interviewee was an assurance that they all understood the point of interviewing them. Furthermore, all the research information and what the recorded data would be used for were disclosed to all the participants. (Collis and Hussey, 2014). Each participant was well informed that the data from the interview would only be used to achieve the aim of this dissertation; in addition to that, it allowed them to remain anonymous (Jankowicz 2000). Finally, none of the participants agreed to

be identified they all preferred to stay anonymous and for that reason, their consent was kept intact for the entire dissertation document

3.8.2 Research Limitation

Collis and Hussey (2014), defined limitation as a situation beyond a researcher´s or writer´s control, such conditions include; inability, limiting weakness, lack of capacity. Jeon, (2010), suggested different ways limitation can be avoided in the process of researching on a particular topic or issues. According to Ross and Call-Cummings (2018), they think differently. Going through their study explains that some limitations are Inevitable, for instance; Access, Longitudinal effects, Lack of accessibility or reliable information or data (Ross and Call-Cummings, 2018). However, based on these studies, the researcher agreed that some research limitations are unavoidable, and some can be avoidable, based on some experiences and issues that arise during the study. In this section, there are two parts of limitation the researcher experienced while on the review, such limitations include;

1. **Longitudinal:**

A Longitudinal method could have been the best approach adopted for this study, but due to the time restriction made it impossible for the researcher to use this approach. A longitudinal gives a researcher the privilege to delve into repeated research within a timeframe, to be able to identify the relationship between observations and variations regarding the outcomes of studies over some time duration (Bryman, 2012). Based on these limitations, the researcher finds it impossible to collect more pieces of information regarding male millennials. Another limitation is the lack of greater insight into social media influencer because it is still in its early phase in academic study. So, the researcher needed more time to research more on the topic. Also, it was not easy to build a greater understanding of male millennial consumers and their connections with social media influence

2. Lack of Accessibility or Reliable Information:

This type of limitation is one of the Unavoidable or Inevitable circumstances that occur during the research process. For example; a situation where a researcher's exploration depends on having access to reliable documents, a personality or group of people, bodies, or financial access. However, based on one reason or the other, access was deprived or

reduced in some way. Some of this access are; lack of access to get hold of some academical journals that are relevant to this study. For example, the researcher could not have access to some few academic books and journals needed for this study. It is due to the restrictions on the monetary level. The budget for the investigation could not allow the analyst to spend more than the budget.

3.9 The summary of Methodology

This chapter consists of the research objective and methodology implemented for the research. The method was designed to solve the issues surrounding the research objective and the question raised in the cause of the study. The mono method approach was employed for the study as the research philosophy involved the inductive approach. The researcher adopted the inductive method for this study because it is the only approach suitable for Qualitative research, which involves Focus group and in-depth interview. In this chapter, the researcher justifies the reason behind the chosen methods for the study by analysing the selected research design, research philosophy, instrumentation, sample size, targeted population and the ethical considerations.

4.0 Findings, Analysis and Discussions

This section presents with the findings, analysis and discussion from the In-depth interview and focus group, carried out as part of this research, and to achieve this. The researcher was able to discover and study the opinion of the target audience, which involves the Irish male millennials. Eight participants participated in the in-depth interview, while ten respondents, including the moderator and observer, were part of the focus group discussion. More so, mutual ideas were derived from most of the participants. This chapter will explain in detail the statistics and themes of all the vital pieces of information, quotes and experiences from the interviewee, to analyse it for a better understanding of this research. The idea was to understand the impact of social media influencer marketing, on purchase intention from Irish male millennial's perception. Involving the Irish fashion industry as a case study.

4.1 First Research Objective

    a. To evaluate the level of engagement between the Irish male millennials and social media influencer.

Discussion Themes:

1. Visual content and online experience

2. Online engagement and entertainment

4.1.1 Visual Content and Online Experience

The entire procedure started with a warm greeting and the interviewer engaging the participants with a discussion about digital marketing (web 2.0) and traditional marketing (web 1.0). The one on one interview was conducted differently, and during the conversation, all the participants on different occasions believed that web 1.0 is an outdated means of advertising for their kind. Moreover, they also stated that web 2.0 is preferable for them. Five out of eight respondent spends most of their life online, and the remaining three participants had a similar experience as well. Even though their point of view differs a bit, but they believed that they have control over their online engagement. Still, prefer web 2.0: also, all the participant are Instagram users and prefer it than other social media because they believe that the visual contents were their motivations for preferring Instagram.

Analysing from the responses by all the participants, it shows that the Irish male millennials are highly connected and are greatly engaged with the utmost part of their lives on social media (Evans, 2019). Marguerite Moore (2012), confirms as well that the millennials spend most of their lives online. The outcomes of the interviews from both in-depth interviews and focus group proves that Instagram is the leading social media platform among the Irish male millennials, because of the graphics (Clasen, 2019), videos and emotional visual contents as stated by (Silvia, 2019).

4.1.2 Online entertainment and engagement

As the discussion continued on the interviewer´s interest in graphics and their online life experience, the conversation progressed to next topic introduced by the moderator on social media influencers. The participants indicated that they follow social media

influencers within the circle of industries such as Fashion, Body type, Skin colour, Height, Grooming, Fashion sense and Fitness. The discussion became more interesting because of the participant's interest in social media influencers. They also revealed that Instagram is their preferred social media platform because the social media influencers connect to them more on Instagram than any other platform. The participant´s contributions also indicated that Irish male millennials are more interested in the engagement of social media influencers. Also, their interest in influencers has something to do with their personal life, features, and their level of entertainment, more especially on Instagram.

The study of Kilian, Hennigs and Langner, (2012) confirms the responses from interviewees because, following the analysis from the outcome from participant's contributions, it shows that Irish male millennials look for entertainment online through visual content. Also, their primary focus on social media is to be entertained (Kilian et al. 2012). The interviewee also emphasised that some social media influencer does not interact with their consumers, and in their opinion, it shows that influencers are a source of entertainment. As the focus group was progressing it was apparent that there was absolutely orderliness among the participants, and there was this kind of connection and bound with social media influencers, and can be related to the study of Islam, Hollebeek, Rahman, Khan, and Rasool, (2019). The response from the contestants corresponded with the findings of the Islam et al., (2019), which stated that "if a target audience has a passionate or emotional bond with an influencer, then engagement will be the next stage of their relationship". Furthermore, it was also confirmed during the discussion that three of the Interviewee has a reputable relationship with social media influencers, which even has graduated to an engagement stage (Islam et al., 2019).

4.2 Second research Objective

b.   To assess the extent to which physical attractiveness of the social media influencer can affect purchase intentions.

Discussion Themes:

1. Facial beauty
2. Body type
3. Fashion (Dress sense).

4.2.1. Facial beauty

In this part of the discussion, the process of data collection began by participants deliberating on Physical Attractiveness of the influencers and the general notions of social pressure was pointed out. Followed by the facial beauty of social media influencers as it relates to their physical attractiveness. From the one on one interview, each of the participants talked about the role of facial hair, lips size, lips colour, dentition and hairstyle on the total effect of physical beauty. Two of out of the interviewee had a mutual view, and preferred a male social media influencer, while the remaining six participants prefer female influencer. Seven out of the eight discussants in the focus group said that facial beauty is important in determining physical attractiveness. Just one person argued that facial beauty was not necessary as other great physical features can complement that, and the instances given was a good body build of any influencer (Bower, 1994).

From the discussion, the moderator noticed that both interviewees are also concerned with the physical attractiveness of the social media influencer. Given the analysis, the moderator tried to understand the participants′ concerned in physical attractiveness. Through the observation, it shows that Irish male Millennial participants of this research, considered an influencer's physical attractiveness′ point of focus to be facial beauty. They believed it as a focus because they think that it is the first attention or focus from viewers or consumers. The entire focus group and one on one interviewee believed that a level of facial beauty is required to attract Irish male millennial consumers.

Analysing from their point of view, marketers, brands, and organisations need to ensure that the target audience feels a proper level of facial beauty to a certain point. Also, Irish male millennials′ concern for physical attractiveness is profound because the outcome of the study relates to Sääksjarvi et al. 's (2016) study. It emphasises on the comparison of consumers and attractive celebrity influencers, which may be harmful to their self-confidence. Thus, this report suggests that brands or companies in the Irish fashion industries need to safeguard the detrimental brand-fit within the influencers, products or brands (Bower and Landreth, 2001).

4.2.2 Body Type

Moving in line with the discussion, both the participants from in-depth interviews and focus group had a similar response, judging from their point of view, the outcome shows

that body type is one of the major keys in determining physical attractiveness. They discussed that influencer who go to the gym regularly have more beautiful bodies. six out of the eight participants from the focus group said they prefer influencers with strong muscular bodies, while the remaining two prefer influencers with a slim, beautiful, healthy and smooth body structure.

As the interview went on and relating with the information given by the interviewee on the importance of attractiveness, there is a distinct similarity with (Pickett and Brison, 2019) analysis, which stated that attractiveness is important for millennial purchasers if the product is attractive.

All respondents spoke about the importance of skin colour in physical attractiveness. They all agreed that a radiant and healthy skin plays a major role in physical attractiveness. However, six out of eight preferred lighter skin and the remaining two preferred a tanned skin.

Discussants had mixed opinions about height and physical attractiveness. Five out of eight focus group participants said tall male influencers above six feet were more physically attractive. Three out of eight said that influencers with an average height of about five feet seven inches looked more physically attractive. While the remaining eight in-depth interview respondents said that a normal/average height influencer with other great beautiful features are also physically attractive too. Inarguably, all the participants in the group said that grooming is a major key in determining physical attractiveness. But they all had diverse opinions in terms of grooming style. For example, some liked male influencers with low hair, some liked full hair and others liked dreadlocks. Three out of eight in-depth interviews like low hair while others liked fuller hair. And six focus group participants do not mind long or short hair, while the remaining two prefer dreadlocks.

4.2.3. Fashion (Dress Sense)

All participants agreed that a great dress sense is important for physical attractiveness. And this has to do with knowing what to wear, when to wear and were to wear it to. Proper colour combinations are very important, according to the discussants. However, they had different opinions in the following areas. Three out of eight focus group liked the modest dressing, while the rest six liked casual dressing The remaining eight

respondents from the in-depth interview liked the flamboyant dressing and crazy/funny kind of look.

Chiosa, (2018) study has proven that attractive endorsers fit fashion/clothing products, it does not matter if they are models or celebrities. In addition, the more customers enjoy advertising, the more possible it builds a positive attitude toward the brand. The findings recommend that adverts using models or celebrities is more likely to increase the prospect of customers to purchase or recommend the product. A reliable report confirms that celebrities are seen as credible and assume fit to endorse luxury suit. A fashion brand can select a celebrity for an advertising campaign, as a result of its influence on purchase intention of customers'(Zhang and Lee, 2019).

4.3 Third research Objective

c.   To evaluate the reaction of Irish male millennials towards a sponsored post on a social media platform.

Discussion Themes:

1. **Efficiency**

4.3.1 Efficiency:

The study of Matthes et al. 's (2007) stated that efficiency determines how committed a purchaser relates to the product; this study shows a different view. The perceptions from the Irish male millennials of this study suggest that efficiency of a sponsored post determines if it can be considered beneficial, positive or productive, but not subject to Millennial interest (Enke and Borchers, 2019). However, it will be subject to the involvement of the social media influencer and their intake of the content. Besides, male millennials have uncertainty towards some sponsored post (Maxwell and Schulte, 2018). Attentiveness in the material by the influencer before their partnership with a brand ensures that target audience views the social media influencers endorsement as reliable (Djerf-Pierre and Shehata, 2017).

Stating the study of Atika, Kusumawati and Iqbal, (2017) indicates that a credibility source ensures that there is a reduction of disbelief by users. Moreover, it is recommended for brands to ensure credibility if not, it will become evident that male millennial purchasers are negotiated customers (Jain and Posavac, 2001). Who spend their time

assessing the message and the source before deciding on whether they will accept it or not based on specific measures, that is prior use (Nazaruddin, 2011).

In an overview of the outcomes from this chapter, it confirms that Irish male millennials prefer digital marketing to traditional marketing (Domegan and Fleming, 2007). Because they believe traditional marketing is an outdated source of advertising while digital marketing is trending and also is visual content. Based on that, Instagram was a preferred social media platform for all the participants. All the participants indicated that their interest in the social media platform is entertainment, which involves the social media influencer.

In review, the discussion shows that social media influencers are the most effective option for target market source of entertainment. Also, it was suggested for brands to put it into consideration when indulging in influencer marketing.

However, this study also indicates the demand for brands to be alert in how they partner with social media influencers. Encouraging producers and companies to only work with influencers who have a great influence, relationships and engagement with consumers. By so doing, the millennials will be convinced to view the sponsored message by influencers as reliable or trustworthy (Talitha, Yuliati and Kirbrandoko, 2019). The outcome from the discussion of this research has conveyed a greater understanding and recommendations for further studies, universities and marketers, and it will be summarised and displayed in the subsequent section.

5.0 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

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The purpose of this study was to understand the impact of social media influencer marketing on purchase intention from an Irish male millennial perception, using the Irish fashion industry as a case study. As this brought more understanding and give brand in the Irish fashion industry a better view on how to best leverage on social media influencer marketing to reach their target markets.

This study offers a clearer insight into the terrain of social media influencers marketing through the eyes of the Irish male millennial. The specific area of engagement was the extent to which the physical attractiveness of social media influencers affects consumer purchase intention.

5.1 Implication for Fashion Industries/Brands

5.1.1 Findings for Objective One:

    a. To evaluate the importance of engagement between the Irish male millennials and social media influencer.

1. The outcome of the analysis regarding the study shows that Irish male Millennial consumers differ in their opinion, ideas and interest in engaging with social media influencers. Even though engagement may imply a more profound rapport among the greatly-connected millennials and social media influencers. More so, they establish this fact, does not mean that millennials who desire or look forward to entertainment have no atom of interest or relationship with social media influencers. Furthermore, marketers and brands should bear in mind that engagement is an essential aspect of male millennials and influencers. However, this study reveals that whether the male millennial consumer connect or have a relationship with an influencer; if there is no engagement with the influencer's page, then the influence will not be valued compared to when there are engagements and connections, then the social media influencer will be more reliable to influence the purchase intention of the male millennials.

2. In addition to the findings, for this theme, regards to the fashion industries specifically, which is very vital and suggest that it should be put into consideration. Because of the perception of the Irish millennial concerning the way, they see some influencers online as unapproachable because they fail to engage or respond to their messages. In regard to their response, the findings also

indicate that engagement by consumers is a sign that a specific influencer is accessible and have a positive attitude towards the followers. So, it implies that the consumer will be willing to reach out and engage with that influencer (Pansari and Kumar 2017). Furthermore, it shows that engagement should be a step after connection or relationship has been formed and should be taken into consideration before endorsing any influencer. Also, the engagement increases the belief of a consumer to the influencer, making them feel that the influencer is interested in the follower's contribution on their page.

5.2 Findings for Objective Two:

b. To understand the extent to which physical attractiveness of social media influencers affect consumer purchase intention.

(1) From the study, the researcher was able to see that Irish male millennial is drawn to social media influencers with a high level of physical attractiveness.

5.3 Findings for Objective Three:

c.   To evaluate the impact of sponsored content from the Irish male Millennials' perspective.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

(1) In this particular research, the Irish fashion industry was used as a case study,

Therefore, future researches can use other industries like beauty products, drinks, food etc as a case study

(2)This study can be replicated in other countries so that the topic can be explored from their own point of view

(3) Furthermore, a future study could be done from the viewpoint of a female Irish millennial consumer, using the fashion industry as a case study.

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7.0 Appendices

7.1 Appendix One Thematic Question guide:

Marketing:

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 1. Do you prefer traditional advertising?

2. Does digital advertising attract you?

Social Media:

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3. Do you spend most of the time on the internet?

4. Do you go on Instagram daily?

Social Media Influencers:

5. Do you follow any social media influencer, particularly those involved in the fashion industry?

6. What do you gain in following these social media influencers?

Source Credibility:

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7. Do you interact with any of these social media influencers?

8. What is your opinion on social media influencers being sponsored by brands and collaborating with them to promote a new product of theirs?

Physical Attractiveness:

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9. Do you think it is important for social media influencers be attractive?

10. Do you feel there has to be a connection between the brand and the influencer in terms of the product being promoted to make sense?

Influence:

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11. Have you ever bought a product from a social media influencer who was in collaboration with a brand?

12. Have you been motivated by the reviews or advertisement to buy a product before?

Trustworthy:

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13. Do you deem the social media influencers you follow trustworthy?

14. In your opinion, what are the qualities an influencer must possess when promoting a product?

7.2 Table One- Table of participants (In-depth Interview)

Age	Gender	Nationality	Interest in Fashion	Interest in Social Media Influencer
26	Male	Irish	Modelling and photography.	Yes, around the areas of vintage and streetwear.
26	Male	Irish	Modelling.	Yes, around the areas of streetwear.
25	Male	Irish	clothing.	Yes, around the areas of
24	Male	Irish	photography.	Yes, around the areas of fitness and sport.
24	Male	Irish	Modelling and photography.	Yes, around the areas of streetwear.
23	Male	Irish	Clothing.	Yes, around the areas of sport.
23	Male	Irish	Clothing.	Yes, around the areas of sport.

7.3 Appendix Two - Table of Participants (Focus Group)

Age	Gender	Nationality	Interest In Fashion	Interest In Social Media Influencers
38	Male	Irish	Modelling	Yes, around the areas of cultural fashion.
36	Male	Irish	Modelling and clothing	Yes, around the areas of vintage fashion.
33	Male	Irish	Modelling	Yes, around the areas of fitness and sport.
29	Male	Irish	Photography and modelling.	Yes, around the areas of ethnic.
28	Male	Irish	Clothing.	Yes, around the areas of street wear.
28	Male	Irish	Clothing	Yes, around the areas fitness and sport.
27	Male	Irish	Photographer and clothing.	Yes, around the areas of sport.