People trust in people.

How Instagram has changed the way in which women

from the Millennial generation in Ireland are influenced

by beauty brands for purchasing decision.

Eduardo Cesar Voltolini

MSc in Marketing

National College of Ireland

Abstract

Considered as digital immigrants and digital natives, Millennials spend long hours on social media networks, this online interaction with other users and consideration of online reviews and e-WOM influences their purchasing decision. Corresponding with that behaviour, beauty brands are increasingly investing in partnerships with social media influencers in order to catch a natural migration of Millennials from traditional mass media marketing towards social engagement. However, that relationship of "sponsored or paid content" is not always clear, with the ethical issues of Stealth Marketing related to trust and credibility, becoming more apparent.

The main objective of this study, therefore, is to assess and understand how the relationship of beauty brands and social media influencers on Instagram affect purchase decisions of Millennial women living in Ireland. Within this context, filling a gap found in the literature review, the researcher expects to contribute for better practices in marketing communication strategies. The study follows the methodology of interpretivism in epistemology, underpinned by an inductive approach based on a qualitative method of collecting data using semi-structured interviews conducted with nine women living in Ireland from the Millennial generation, customers of beauty products (cosmetics) and with an active Instagram account. Analysis to produce reliable and valid findings were made by applying thematic coding.

The findings of this research suggest that social media influencers have a huge impact on purchasing decisions of beauty products by female Millennial users of Instagram living in Ireland, such as it happens in other countries. The relationship of credibility and trust built over time between social media influencers and their audience is what drives purchase decision. As Instagram is still updating new forms of interaction among brands, customers and influencers, further studies in the phenomena can be carried out related with the topic.

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland
Research Students Declaration Form
(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

Name: Eduardo Cesar Voltolini

Student Number: x18159460

Degree for which thesis is submitted: MSc in Marketing

Material submitted for award

(a) I declare that the work has been composed by myself.

(b) I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.

(c) My thesis will be included in electronic format in the College

Institutional Repository TRAP (thesis reports and projects)

(d) *Either* *I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

Or *I declare that the following material contained in the thesis formed part of a submission for the award of MSc in Marketing.

_____

Signature of research student: _____

Date: _____

Submission of Thesis to Norma Smurfit Library, National College of Ireland

Student name: Eduardo Cesar Voltolini

Student number: x18159460

School: School of Business   **Course:** MSc in Marketing

Degree to be awarded: MSc in Marketing

Title of Thesis:

People trust in people. How Instagram has changed the way in which women from the Millennial generation in Ireland are influenced by beauty brands for purchasing decision.

One hard bound copy of your thesis will be lodged in the Norma Smurfit Library and will be available for consultation. The electronic copy will be accessible in TRAP (http://trap.ncirl.ie/), the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository. In accordance with normal academic library practice all theses lodged in the National College of Ireland Institutional Repository (TRAP) are made available on open access.

I agree to a hard-bound copy of my thesis being available for consultation in the library. I also agree to an electronic copy of my thesis being made publicly available on the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository TRAP.

Signature of Candidate:

_____

For completion by the School:

The aforementioned thesis was received by_____

Date:_____

Acknowledgments

It has been a hard journey until here, miles away from home, homesick for my family, friends, food, language and culture, working part-time hours and trying to keep a balance among all of these to successfully conclude this study. However, it was my choice and it also has been a wonderful journey that has helped me to grow, improve my skills and develop me as a human being.

During that journey and with Gods willing I was able to progress and so, I'm grateful for that. Furthermore, I'm thankful for the support of my mom, Irma, along with my family, my partner Einstein and my friends both here in Ireland and in Brazil that gave me their affection, understanding of my absence and motivation to keep going. This journey would have been impossible without such a strong and supportive network around me and this research is an achievement to all of us. Thank you very much to all of you that are not cited in the names here, you know who you are.

In supporting me during the research process, I'd like also to give recognition and thanks to Michael Bane, my brilliant and patient supervisor, you taught me a lot. Furthermore, I want to extend further thanks to the National College of Ireland – NCI, along with their fabulous staff in the School of Business and lectures that, piece by piece taught me so many valuable lessons to bring with me in my personal and professional journey.

Table of contents

1.   Introduction

Born in a context of advancements in technology are the Millennial generation that are cited by the literature review as "digital immigrants" and "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001). By using social media networks, this group is characterised by creating, sharing and consuming online content with other users (Ellison *et al.,* 2007). Through this interaction, this generation is more willing to seek another consumer's feedback in online platforms through online reviews and e-WOM (Electronic Word of Mouth), in order to diminish risks while making a purchasing decision (Park and Cho, 2012), altering their consumer behaviour influenced by people within their social media networks (Euromonitor, 2015; Heinonen, 2011; Goldsmith *et al.,* 2000). For Millennials, once communications are free of market interference, it is seemed more "reliable" and "persuasive" than traditional marketing strategies (Chen *et al.,* 2013).

Aware of that trend, beauty brands are increasingly investing in social media presence to target this generation, especially on Instagram. With regard to Ireland, Chaffey (2019), recorded that it has reached 1.80 million users or 46% of the population, in which 57% are female. As a result of that movement, according to Alston (2018), global customers of beauty brands have spent around $445 billion on purchasing products in 2017. For beauty industries, Instagram has allowed customers to build communities around their own beauty interests, sharing content and reviews about the products, representing a channel to build a relationship oriented to increase the customers experience, attending different shopping attitudes and behaviours, forging a "one-to-one relationship" (Barbalova and Rolland, 2018, p. 4).

Within this context, social media influencers have been partnered with beauty brands to communicate more directly with customers, influencing Millennials in their purchasing decisions. As stated by Byron Donics, from HTI Collection - a marketing agency for beauty and health brands in New York: "We've seen a major shift in the statistics we get from retailers about the percentage of consumers who walk in,

having consulted that product through someone online. It's over 80 percent" (Alston, 2018, p. 32). It is interesting to note that these partnerships among social media influencers and brands have caused issues to arise in relation to trust and credibility; which are directly connected with the concept of Stealth Marketing. The lack of transparency in posts indicating "paid partnership" or "sponsored content" have aroused issues of authorities and consumers all around the world (Warc, 2019). Furthermore, the popularisation of Instagram, as suggested by Armano (2009), is part of the evolution of marketing communications, in which Millennials are involved, migrating from traditional mass media advertising tools to social engagement. This larger environment of interaction with brands and consumers was brought by the developments of Internet towards Web 2.0 platforms (Ellison *et al.,* 2007).

Following the narrative of this study, the following chapter will dive deep into the relevant topics related with the proposed research. To access the main objective of this study, analysis in the following topics were made: Millennial Generation and their online behaviour, the resultant Evolution of Marketing Communications, the subsequent changes in online Beauty Industry marketing strategies, the proliferation of Social Media Networks, the allure of Social Media Influencers using Online reviews and e-WOM as a tool to influence Millennials purchase decisions and the issues of Stealth Marketing, Trust and Credibility (Tsang *et al.*, 2004; Swanepoel, Lye and Rugimbana, 2009; Warc, 2019), providing a gap in the literature review to understand how this context works in Ireland.

"Gen Y attitudes towards this emerging and alternative marketing method (Stealth Marketing) are of significant value to the marketing industry and organisations seeking to penetrate this highly lucrative market" (Swanepoel, Lye and Rugimbana, 2009). Therefore, the rationale for this study was developed in order to assess and understand how social media influencers on Instagram have been used by beauty brands to influence and promote purchasing decisions of Millennials women living in Ireland.

1.   *To assess whether Millennial women living in Ireland feel their purchasing decision of beauty products are influenced by social media influencers on Instagram;*

2.   *To assess whether the lack of transparency of "paid partnership" or "sponsored content" on Instagram by social media influencers used by beauty brands influences, negatively or not, purchasing decision of Millennial women living in Ireland;*

3.   *To assess whether trust in online reviews or e-WOM of a social media influencer used by beauty brands on Instagram, influences Millennial women's purchasing decision living in Ireland;*

4.   *To assess whether credibility in online reviews or e-WOM of a social media influencer used by beauty brands on Instagram, influences Millennial women's purchasing decision living in Ireland;*

5.   *To contribute with marketers working on beauty industries to implement good marketing communication practices in order to influence Millennial's purchasing decision living in Ireland, through the use of social media influencers on Instagram.*

The study conducted follows in its nature, the methodology of interpretivism epistemological, underpinned by an inductive approach to research based on a qualitative method of collecting data using semi-structured interviews conducted with nine women living in Ireland from the Millennial generation, customers of beauty products (cosmetics) and with an Instagram account. That were conditionals of participation to ensure that participants were understanding the phenomena in research. Through this methodology, it was possible to understand and evaluate participants thoughts and opinions about the topics, creating valuable material for the study. In order to analyze and produce reliable and valid findings, thematic coding

was used to interpret the data collected and so, be able to write the conclusions. The findings presented brought rich insights to contribute with marketers of beauty brands in developing better marketing communication strategies as highlighted below:

a) Brands are seen as trying to manipulate people to buy products, so consumers are even more aware about tricks to catch their attention. Photoshop in well-designed pieces of beauty advertising dictating ideals of beauty are considered old fashioned and do not influence the Millennial generation on purchasing decisions. Therefore, these kinds of marketing communication strategies, are interpreted by Millennials in Ireland as a 'silly way' to catch their attention, thus, a lack of trust and credibility arises because people don't like to feel they are being manipulated. Furthermore, even more customers have access to information to search and evaluate what is better for themselves personally in terms of beauty products.

b) Rarely, beauty brands are followed on Instagram. People trust other people for opinions in order to purchase products. For that reason, social media influencers and their power of e-WOM and online reviews are considered more reliable than brands; Family and friends also have a heavy influence on customers' purchasing decision;

c) Followers of social media influencers don't really care that they mix up endorsement of products if they inform its audience about "paid partnership" or "sponsored content". Consumers are aware that a social media influencer lives only for their job and needs to earn money to survive, as any other professional. By being transparent with their audience, social media influencers and brands can build a relationship of trust and credibility with followers that drives purchase intention and purchase decision.

According to Bolton *et al.,* (2013), there are two different ways in which Millennials interact with social media networks, thus, further studies could be

focused on the first or second Millennial generation in order to get a deeper insight about the differences of motivation when making a purchasing decision within the same generation. The same study could be applied to other cultures or countries to understand how it's their native relation with the topics covered in this study. In addition, other social media networks or even other types of marketing communication strategy channels, such as advertising on TV, could be evaluated. Subsequently, following a trend where even more men are using beauty products (Souiden and Diagne, 2009), further research could analyse whether this gender is influenced or not by social media influencers, used by beauty brands on Instagram to drive the purchasing decision of products and how that relation of trust and credibility works among them.

2.   Literature Review

Sustained by the research purpose of understanding what influences purchasing decision of beauty products from Millennial women users of Instagram, in the following topics the relevant literature review was designed to identify the Millennial generation and its parallel evolution to marketing communication strategies to social engagement in social media networks. Based on these features, a landscape of beauty industries and the use of social media influencers promoting beauty products through online reviews and e-WOM on Instagram, is discussed and also covers issues related to the concept of Stealth marketing, trust and credibility and ending in a conclusion of how it affects purchase decision.

2.0   Millennial Generation and their online behaviour

Millennials or Generation Y are referred to those born between 1980 to 1996 (Bergh, 2018). According to Vogel (2015), in 1991 the world was introduced to the World Wide Web, that evolved until it reached the concept of Web 2.0 - the platform of interactions that online users experience today. Naturally growing involved within this context, Millennials are referred to as "digital natives" and "digital immigrants" (Prensky, 2001). These differentiations occur because the early generation, those born in 1991 and referred as digital immigrants, adopted this technological evolution later on in their lives (Vogel, 2015) and so, they interact in a different way with social media networks, when compared with the post born Millennials. In accordance with Bolton *et al.,* (2013), the first generation of Millennials are more willing to use social networks for business contacts, set up professional pages for career proposal and engage with contacts and keep updated with relevant information. In addition, Bolton *et al.,* (2013) added that the second generation of Millennials - digital natives, use these channels as a way for leisure and pleasure, communicating and socializing with others. The digital natives were born in the context of the digital world and so, that is an important part of their own lives (Eastman and Liu, 2012). Therefore, Vogel

(2015) and Prensky (2001) noted that it is important to understand that differentiation, because it changes the way that the different groups in the same generation utilise Web 2.0 platforms and so, influence how marketing communications strategies need to be well aligned to target the desired audience. Furthermore, understanding what motivates their behaviour and purchasing decision is a key criterion for effectively tailoring strategies and successfully approaching this generation.

Venkatesh *et al.,* (2012), suggested that Millennials suffer social influence from other online users that believe they should use online platforms. It can be related to users that feel they are pressured by family and groups of friends to be "connected online" influencing their decision to use Facebook or Instagram, for example. These features are also responsible for altering consumer behaviour and as suggested by Burkhardt and Brass (1990), users might find in their online environment, answers from social influencers for their insecurities. Likes, shares or comments - whether positive or negative, made by people within their social network will influence consumer behaviour. Therefore, Millennials are likely to actively communicate themselves with other members in their social communities through the use of "text-messages, images, videos, email and any other kind of user content generator" (Ellison *et al.,* 2007).

In a study carried out by Nadeem *et al.,* (2017), the authors collected data from 309 participants in order to identify the segment of consumers in the online context, classifying their behaviour into categories. The platform chosen to conduct the study was Facebook and the authors described, among other things, that especially because Facebook displays likes and comments from other users within the same group of users, it influences and alters purchase decisions of these consumers making social media a strong influence platform. In support of the latter, Martin and Turley (2004), found that Millennials pay attention to the technological features of online experiences to drive their decision making and purchase process. Furthermore, for Dabija *et al.,* (2018, p. 191), the results found in their studies concluded that

whenever Millennials choose products and services based on indications and information from social media, "their purchasing behaviour depends on their own personal desire to become informed, and the characteristics they expect from a piece of information and from the Internet as a general source of information".

Millennials represent a huge global population, around 7.7 billion in 2019 based on analysis by Miller and Lu (2018), of United Nations data; with power for purchase (Viswanathan and Jain, 2013) globally estimated over $170 billion per year (Young, 2015); they are highly influential to other peoples purchase decisions (Euromonitor, 2015) and they differ from previous generations because they are considered the "first-high tech generation" (Norum, 2003), or "tech savvy" (Lester *et al.,* 2006); referred as "consumption-oriented and sophisticated, motivated shoppers" (Jackson et al., 2011; Wolburg and Pokrywczynski, 2001; Martin and Turley, 2004). Furthermore, because they are exposed for long hours on social media platforms, according to Ashraf *et al.,* (2014) they are considered as "a promising and attractive market segment".

With regard to this, the next section will explain the concept of evolution of marketing communications, demonstrating how over the years these strategies have evolved from traditional mass marketing communications until social media engagement in order to catch Millennials attention.

2.1   The resultant Evolution of Marketing Communications

According to Armano (2009), marketing strategies of communication to catch attention and engage with customers has changed and evolved over the years from traditional mass media to digital marketing and so, resulting in social engagement. These evolutions can be naturally associated with the advancement of Internet to Web 2.0 platforms, such as social media networks, that started allowing customers and brands to be able to interact within the same environment. In order to be relevant to

the Millennial generation, brands continue to strive to change and adapt their marketing communication strategies towards online platforms, "developing effective communication campaigns and personalized offers" (Bellman *et al.,* 2009).

Indeed, the traditional mass media is not enough to catch Millennials attention anymore, "armed with a variety of electronic technology, they have grown up in an age of instant global communication, media saturation and material excess" (Valentine and Powers, 2013, p. 598). These features as suggested by Loda and Coleman (2010) and Cone (2006), have made Millennials "sceptical of traditional advertising" for the attempt of companies trying to sell products to them. To illustrate that, according to the Haymarket Media (2016), "77% of Millennials actively tune out ads, more than three in four avoid ads and 75% think that ads are disruptive". After all, their attention has also been disputed by "social media and online campaigns" (Dabija & Grant, 2016), as they spend a long time online, they trust that the information provided on these platforms are more reliable and more safe (Young, 2015). Furthermore, when online, Millennials can create content, share and seek opinions leading to a connection with other users in online communities or social media networks regarding their choice of brands, helping them in the decision-making process of products and services, diminishing risks while making a purchasing decision (Park and Cho, 2012). It means that the Millennial generation has evolved and interacts with brands in a different way than the previous generation (Valentine and Powers, 2013).

The traditional marketing, such as a first mix of marketing communication strategy for advertising, has been used to communicate brands with customers through mass media, broadcast and some form of PR over the years, however, it has resulted in low engagement (Armano, 2009). Some authors discuss that this kind of advertising is almost dead (Rust and Oliver, 1994), due to the movement towards online forms of advertising (Forrester Research Inc., 2005) that are most efficient in terms of "versatility and superiority targeting customers" (Mohammed *et al.,* 2002). Television is one of the highest investments made by brands in traditional mass

media, although, in 2017, investments in digital advertising overtook it (Woods, 2016). Millennials in their turn, are watching even less television and are less influenced by the mainstream media and so, are more resilient to advertising approaches because they grew up in this atmosphere of "media-saturation" making them more "brand-conscious" and thus, harder to achieve (Ciminillo, 2005; Engebretson, 2004; Pesquera, 2005; Valentine and Powers, 2013). "A recent study has revealed that the number of television advertisements needed to reach 80% of females aged between 18 and 49, this increased from 3 commercials in 1995 to 97 commercials in 2000" (Boyle, 2003).

Therefore, following the trends of evolution, the digital marketing dropped a more efficient tool of advertising to reach the Millennial target audience, even having its activities based on traditional marketing communications roots. Digital marketing allowed brands to enrich users experience through Web sites, blogs, forums and email, and started building a timing and closer conversation with brands and consumers. "Over the past 15 years, digital media platforms have revolutionized marketing, offering new ways to reach, inform, engage, sell to, learn about, and provide service to customers" (Lamberton and Stephen, 2016). Additionally, as a characteristic of Millennials, this generation prefers to find advertising while searching and browsing than to feel like a target audience of traditional media (Valentine and Powers, 2013). Thus, it has contributed to more companies moving their investments towards digital media (Ciminillo, 2005).

The next step in the evolution of marketing communications is the social engagement that allows users to participate, interact and engage closer with brands and vice-versa. It is important to note that human interaction is an important factor to consider in order to reach engagement with customers at this level. These definitions perfectly match to understand Millennials in this context, as suggested by Fromm and Garton, (2013, p. 8) where it was stated that "not willing to be passive consumers any longer, this generation wants to actively participate, cocreate, and most importantly, be included as partners in the brands they love" and so, different marketing

communication approaches need to be made by brands to engage with this generation. On the other hand, for brands, it also is beneficial in terms of receiving valuable feedback that if used, can improve company's performances. To illustrate this advancement of marketing communications, a scheme from Armano (2009), is presented below.
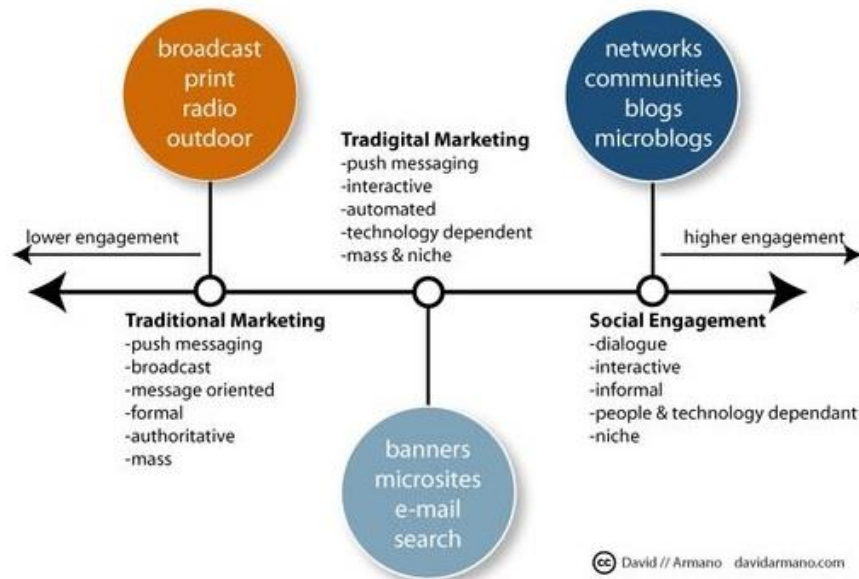
Image 1 – Evolution of Marketing Communications (Armano 2009).

Aware of this movement of Millennials towards social engagement, beauty brands are proliferating on social media (Alston, 2018) and the next topics are related with the use of that trend by the industry to engage with Millennials.

2.2   Online Beauty Industry marketing strategies

In a report of "World Market for Beauty and Personal Care" made by Barbalova and Rolland (2018) for *Euromonitor International,* it verifies that the interaction of beauty brands and consumers in the online environment is increasing even further, enabling "conversations and experiences" (Barbalova and Rolland, 2018, p. 4). Those interactions are allowed on social media networks, such as

Instagram, where brands can communicate directly on-time with customers through swapping messages, creating tailored content with photos and videos, collecting feedback through monitoring social media and efficiently managing the campaigns to engage with customers through analytic tools.

Moreover, social media influencers have been used by beauty brands to represent the company and set up conversations building a "one-to-one relationship" with connected customers. In this context, according to Klear's report (2018), beauty and cosmetic brands were found at second place in a ranking with top 10 industries that partnered with social media influencers on Instagram in 2017. The beauty brand 'Mac Cosmetics' picked up "10 influencers from around the world, each one with an Instagram following between 800,000 and 4.3 million" (Alston, 2018, p. 32) to promote their products. The report from Barbalova and Rolland (2018, p. 28) also showed that beauty brands are aware of customers relying on "peer-to-peer recommendations over traditional media", thus the "investments in online, mobile and social media presence are helping to drive brand-to-consumer conversations", representing an opportunity of digital engagement with the targeted audience.

For Millennials, this has given to them the feeling of being connected with features that they like more, instead of feeling directly manipulated by brands to purchase products. For beauty brands, that interaction has allowed to build tailored strategies of communication to increase customers experience attending different shopping attitudes and behaviours. Therefore, all these strategic movements from beauty brands described here, have intelligently packed the characteristics of online Millennials to attend their purchase behaviour. In the graphic below (image 2), is a representation of Beauty Purchase Influencers in 2017 that can gauge these statements:
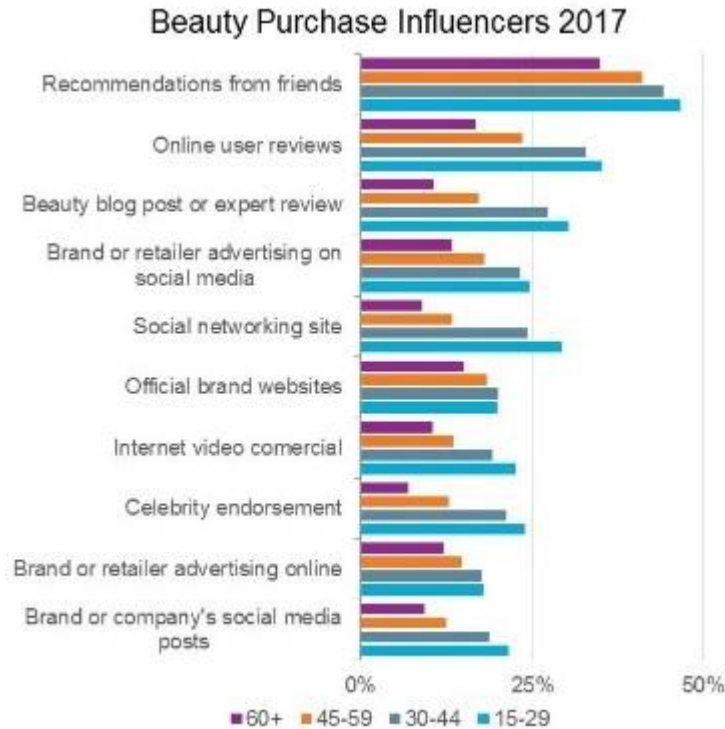
Image 2– Beauty Purchase Influencers

(Barbalova and Rolland for *Euromonitor International*, 2017, p. 28).

In order to enlighten the statements about social media influence and recommendations sought by Millennials for purchasing decision and how it drives their intentions, the follow sections will cover a better explanation of the topics.

2.3   Proliferation of Social Media Networks

Darwish and Lakhtaria (2011) and Nadeem *et al.,* (2017), suggested that the concept of Web 2.0 can be explained as a "consumer technology" tool, where even more online users are encouraged to actively participate on social media networks. Therefore, social media is defined as "Internet-based applications and websites that promote the sharing of user-generated content, communication, and participation on a large scale" (Cooper, 2018). Social media is also linked with the term of "viral marketing" that as suggested by Subramani and Rajagopalan (2003), is defined as a

process where online users influence each other. In terms of use, "social media usage represents actions taken by digital natives (Millennials) related to maintaining a social networking site profile, blogging/online discussion forums, online videos, photo sharing and holding personal discussions with others" (Dahl *et al.,* p. 7, 2018). According to Bernhardt *et al.,* (2012), it represents a channel for social interaction among users that allows for a deeper building of connections for "sharing", thus, as suggested by Manser *et al.,* (2017), social media has the benefit of promoting "consumer engagement".

The data presented by Chaffey (2019) from the "Global Digital Report 2019", can demonstrate the proportion of these audience platforms. In 2019, the worldwide number of social media users is 3.484 billion. In Ireland, YouTube (83%), Facebook (77%), WhatsApp (65%) and Instagram (50%) are the most active social media platforms, representing 66% of the population as active social media users. It equates to 3.20 million of people. These figures represent the large penetration of social media networks through populations, configurating important channels of communication and social engagement with customers that can be used by brands.

Such as other social media networks, Instagram plays a similar role of an enjoyable online environment where users can experience a pleasurable feeling of being connected online. It is seen as something that occurs due to the engagement of consuming and producing content through shares and likes with other users, and so, generates a favourable atmosphere for consuming products. "Social networks have brought about a shift in individuals' behaviour, preferences, values, identity, expectations about product performance and satisfaction with a product or service, which often evolves from an intangible and abstract process to a unique, dynamic and fun experience" (Dabija *et al.,* 2018), hence their engagement with brands can be influenced easier by companies using social media (Bolton *et al.,* 2013).

Based on a study carried out by Warc (2019), Instagram has grown following a cultural symptomatic effect of generations shifting towards visual communications.

It has been influenced over the years by social media networks and smartphones through content of photos and videos. "The human brain processes images 60,000 times faster than words, and in an age characterised by the exponential production of information, coupled with less time to consume text, people are relying more and more on visual communication. In this context, Instagram is a particularly appealing platform" (Warc, 2009). In support of this, Bergh (2018), stated that companies have just eight seconds to communicate their message to customers and so, that is one more reason why Instagram has been flooded by brands which aim to catch the consumers attention more efficiently, using visual content (photos, videos).

For brands, Instagram also allows companies to manage their contents and engage with customers according to chosen demographic characteristics and with lower costs - when compared with traditional mass media. Therefore, Instagram is becoming even more popular with both brands and customers because the Millennial generation are keen to create, share and consume content in the platform, allowing them to connect with their social groups. In Ireland, according to Chaffey (2019), Instagram's penetration reaches 1.80 million users, or 46% of the population, where 57% are female. Over 30% of the sponsored posts were created by Millennials, in which "83.9% were female". For this to give context and be relatable, Instagram - as a social media network, female Millennials, and beauty brands that have been partnered with social media influencers were selected to build the knowledge sought by this study.

2.4   The Allure of Social Media Influencers

Sammis *et al.,* (2016) describes social media influence as "the art and science of engaging people who are influential online to share brand messaging with their audiences in the form of sponsored content". For Freberg *et al.,* (2011, p. 90), "social media influencers (SMIs) represent a new type of independent third-party endorser

who shape audience attitudes through blogs, tweets, and the use of other social media".

According to Chatzigeorgiou (2017), social media influencers influence Millennials trust through the number of followers that they have, and the personality and activities exhibited on text comments, videos or tutorials have a huge impact on Millennials purchase decision; and consequently, consumer behaviour. "Millennials tend to accept meanings from social media influencers whom they admire or consider as a resemblance to themselves" (Chatzigeorgiou, 2017, p. 26). As suggested by Christou (2015), social media influencers, such as individuals, are trusted based on their reputation (Zucker, 1986), predictability (Remple *et al.,* 1985), competence (Andaleep and Anwar, 1996), expertise (Erdogan, 1999) and trustworthiness (Chao *et al.,* 2005).

By using and demonstrating products, social media influencers earn an endorsement by the public making them, in many cases, social media stars. With their influence, they became even more powerful than celebrities' endorsements. Alston (2018) found that 92% of participants of a survey were shown to have more trust in a social media influencer than in a celebrity endorsement. As a result, the member of the Kardashian-Jenner family, Kylie - a social media influencer, sold more than "US$ 630 million worth of makeup since launching her Kylie Cosmetics beauty brand" (Alston, 2018, p. 32), even without physical stores and managing its marketing and distribution online.

As suggested by the literature review in the topics covered previously, social media influencers have been used as a tool of advertising for beauty brands to influence purchase decision of women from the Millennial generation. For this reason, the next section will give a brief about how word-of-mouth - WOM, made advancements to the Internet, conjecturing the term e-WOM, and how online reviews are used, both to address these influences.

2.4.1 Online reviews and e-WOM tools of influence

The concept of Word of Mouth has been studied over decades (Weiss *et al,* 2008). In the authors research about word-of-mouth (WOM) and social connections, Brown and Reingen (1987) stated that information shared with close friends and family are a relevant influence for consumer decision-making. Hogan *et al.* (2004) stated that WOM is three times more effective than advertising to influence purchase decision-making and is even claimed to be one of the most effective ways to attract and keep customers over time (Trusov *et al.,* 2009, Lo, 2012)

Millennials, as a generation, are highly influenced by WOM (Strategic Direction, 2015). Within the context of social media networks, the same pattern is presented through electronic word-of-mouth (e-WOM) by sharing information among users. This feature is really important for Millennials that can evaluate unknown alternative products and services by other peoples opinions through blogs, chats, or social media networks. This sharing information is important because it allows consumers to diminish risks while making a purchase decision (Park and Cho, 2012). Once communications are free of market interferences, it is seemed more "reliable" and "persuasive" than traditional marketing strategies (Chen *et al.,* 2013). Dabholkar and Sheng (2012) and Dabija *et al.,* (2018), both found that consumers are more willing to trust in other people's information rather than on information given by brands. However, relying on someone else's review or e-WOM can be dangerous, as there is a strong chance to be manipulated. For that reason, Stealth marketing, trust and credibility are topics that will be covered ahead to further understand that relationship and the issues that stem from social media influencers and brands.

2.5 The issues: Stealth marketing, Trust and Credibility

As suggested by the literature review, social media influencers are powerful in influencing purchase decision through e-WOM and online reviews and so, are a great

tool to be used by brands to help engage with Millennial customers. However, over time, many issues have emerged relating directly to credibility and trust involving social media influencers. How much can people trust them? Have they been used by brands to manipulate consumer purchase intention - without giving customers the right to be informed about that paid partnership? The lack of transparency in posts indicating sponsored content has aroused issues from authorities and consumers all around the world (Warc, 2019).

According to statistics presented by Warc (2019), in 2020, the "global influence marketing investment" made by brands, is expected to reach up to $10 billion, "with Instagram influencer marketing alone worth $2.28bn in 2019". In another article from Warc (2018), the government of Australia was found spending A$600.000 partnering with social media stars to promote a health campaign encouraging young people to get active habits (Warc, 2018). The initiative could be a successful campaign, if after the posts were uploaded, the audience hadn't found evidence of those social media influencers relating to "alcohol abuse and use of extreme dieting products". Another campaign from the same government presenting social media influencers promoting the ingress on the air force army in the country was banned, because the influencers were later found writing comments about women and rape. These shameful situations resulted in the government deciding to ban any kind of association with social media influencers in future campaigns. In order to solve these issues, Instagram has included a label describing "paid partnership" or "sponsored content" on commercial content featured by social media influencers. However, another issue of social media influencers using fake endorsements of brands to bring credibility to them in the industry was found. So, it raises the question, are social media influencers a source of credibility and trust?

These real-life situations cited above can be connected with the concept found in the literature review of Stealth Marketing. Relatively new and with limited articles, it understands its concept leads to comprehend the relation of trust and credibility with social media influencers. "Stealth marketing uses surreptitious practices that fail

to disclose or reveal the true relationship with the company producing or sponsoring the marketing message" (Martin and Smith, 2008). According to Balter and Butman (2006) and Petty and Andrews (2008), stealth marketing refers to a "shill", "undercover" and "masked marketing". That practice is justified by the authors as "an attempt to dribble the cynic and ignorance that customers have to traditional marketing communications" (Sprague and Wells 2010) as a response within a competitive marketing environment (Swanepoel, Lye and Rugimbana, 2009). In this scenario, Stealth Marketing relates with the negative behaviour of social media influencers and brands in not being honest, transparent and ethical, informing their audience of paid or sponsored content to promote products "on a more personal level to influence Millennials buying behaviour" (Swanepoel, Lye and Rugimbana, 2009). Therefore, as suggested by Swanepoel, Lye and Rugimbana (2009), future research to understand the issues related with stealth marketing, trust and credibility are encouraged and so, followed by this research.

Related with that concept is the trust that "is built on person-to-person relationships" (Christou, 2014) and that is allowed on Instagram through social media influencers and their audience. Trust is defined by one person relying on others opinion or thoughts assuming the risks of that behaviour (Boon and Holmes, 2001). It is also involved with the expectations created by the individual over others and positive expectations (Christou, 2014) that might involve risks. Bringing that discussion to light in a study can contribute to marketers partnering with social media influencers, encouraging them to be true with their consumers which avoids people feeling manipulated.

Practicing transparency would bring the credibility that the social media industry constantly seeks for the advertised content. Advertisement content credibility or message credibility is "the extent to which the consumer perceives claims made about the brand in the advertising to be truthful and believable" (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989), "of which the underlying process is the comparison between what is said and what is done" (Herbig and Milewicz, 1995). That perceived credibility results in

a positive impact in consumer behaviour driving purchase intention (Tsang *et al.*, 2004). In contrast, the negative feeling of credibility also diminishes purchase intention. The distrust built over time for customers by promoting Stealth Marketing can create "irreversible distrust for future marketing initiatives" and so, future research developing the concepts above to align ethical practices in marketing communications in order to protect and preserve customers is both suggested and followed by Martin and Smith (2008). These features of stealth marketing, trust and credibility are directly connected with the WOM and e-WOM topic covered before. As cited in previous studies, WOM is one of the most popular and powerful forms of advertising for brands, because people rely on information from others, influencing on their purchasing decision, so, the importance of applying and understanding these concepts for business.

The findings presented ahead in this study will discuss in the conclusion how the research found female Millennial consumers/users of Instagram living in Ireland felt about the relation among beauty brands and social media influencers in order to influence their purchase decision.

2.6   Conclusion

The Millennial generation was born with the advancement of technology and naturally became "digital immigrants" and "digital natives". With the advancement of Internet to Web 2.0 platforms of interaction, including social media networks, such as Instagram, this generation is more willing to create, share and consume online content than previous generations, spending longer amounts of time connected online. For that reason, in order to target Millennials more efficiently, marketing communication strategies have also migrated from traditional mass media towards social engagement.

Once online, Millennials seek feedback and opinions from other users (e-WOM) while making decisions for products and services, these features influence

their purchase decision. Moreover, these characteristics have allowed a surge of social media influencers to share their knowledge about products online, creating a bond among Millennials "consumers" and "brands". Aware of this trend, beauty companies are increasingly investing in Instagram in order to forge a one-on-one closer relationship with Millennials by using social media influencers. These partnerships among brands and social media influencers have caused issues relating to the lack of transparency informing customers about "paid or sponsored content", bringing to light, a discussion about credibility and trust that is encompassed in the concept of Stealth Marketing.

After building a thorough understanding and knowledge through the research in the literature review, some gaps were identified allowing the sequence of this study to be applied to the Millennial women in an Irish context, as shown below for the conclusion of this chapter. Deriving from studies of Tsang *et al.*, (2004); Swanepoel, Lye and Rugimbana (2009); McGrath (2013); Euromonitor (2015) and Warc (2019) came the motivation to understand what influences purchasing decisions of beauty products from women and how Instagram, as a social media network, has been used by beauty brands to influence and promote that purchase decision through online reviews and e-WOM of social media influencers. Other articles as cited below were helpful to refine the research questions and create a structure for the study.

1.   Based on articles linking the investments of beauty brands towards social media networks through the use of social media influencers to drive Millennial's purchase decision, the first question was designed *to assess whether Millennial women living in Ireland felt their purchasing decision of beauty products was influenced by social media influencers on Instagram.* According to Euromonitor (2015); Heinonen (2011) and Goldsmith *et al.,* (2000), Millennials are influenced by people within their social media networks altering their purchasing decision, however, as a literal generalization, the researcher wishes to confirm these statements in the Irish context.

2	The second question was defined in order *to assess whether the lack of transparency of "paid partnership" or "sponsored content" on Instagram by social media influencers used by beauty brands, negatively influences or not purchasing decisions of Millennial women, living in Ireland.* The article of Warc (2019) discussed this issue and the researcher aims to assess how that relation of transparency among brands and social media influencers, influences purchase decisions of Millennial women in the Irish context.

3.	The third question was defined *to assess whether trust in online reviews or e-WOM of a social media influencer used by beauty brands on Instagram, influences Millennial women's purchasing decisions living in Ireland*. Based on article of Swanepoel, Lye and Rugimbana, (2009) the statement to drive that research was extracted: "Does Gen Y perceive their peers as untrustworthy if they discover that they have been paid to have promoted a brand, product or service to them?"

4.	The penultimate question is *to assess whether credibility in online reviews or e-WOM of a social media influencer used by beauty brands on Instagram, influences Millennial women's purchasing decisions living in Ireland.* Extracted from Tsang *et al.,* (2004) "Does credibility impact on consumer behaviour driving purchase decision?"

5.	The last question relates to Millennials scepticism for the attempt of companies trying to sell products to them (Loda and Coleman, 2010) and according to the Haymarket Media (2016) "77% of Millennials actively tune out ads, more than three in four avoid ads; 75% think that ads are disruptive". Moreover, marketers should consider the demographics and psychographics characteristics of the targeted audience to communicate their brands message (Mills, 2015), in order to model consumer behaviour. Therefore, the final research question based on the literature review is *to contribute with*

marketers working on beauty industries to implement good marketing communication practices in order to influence Millennials purchasing decisions living in Ireland, through the use of social media influencers on Instagram.

By bringing together the knowledge achieved through the literature review with the real perspective of women from the Millennial generation living in Ireland, the aim objective of this study is to contribute for more assertive practices of marketing communication strategies in order to benefit marketers working in the beauty industry. Moreover, to benefit consumers with ethical strategies of communication that are aligned with their expectations with regard to advertising and therefore, contributing for future research in a field that it is still quite unexplored, as social media influences will undergo several changes in the near future with new advancements in technology and social media networks.

3. Research Objectives and Methodology

3.0 Research Objectives

As defined by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), research is a "systematic" process (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2010) taken on by people to enrich their knowledge and "to find out things" (Becker, 1998). A "systematic" process will bring credibility to the research, meaning that the research is based on a logical approach and not only based on beliefs, while, "finding out things" indicates a purpose that includes "describing, explaining, understanding, criticizing and analysing" (Ghauri and Gronhaug, 2010). Therefore, this study will be carried out based on a research methodology process.

The objective of this study is to understand the consumer behaviour behind purchase decisions of beauty products from Millennial users of Instagram. For marketers, understanding this perspective can enrich the way that certain brands communicate themselves with customers, especially in this era, when an explosion of advertising on social media networks have been seen as a very important platform for marketing. This was the reason and motivation behind the current research.

Within this context, the research on secondary data while producing the literature review, as was the first step of this project, was helpful in defining the problem. During the research process, it was noted that there was a lack of evident information in academic journals and articles addressed specifically to the demographic of women living in Ireland - opening a gap in the research. Therefore, the five objectives aligned with the gaps found in the literature review and area of interest were defined as below:

1. *To assess whether Millennial women living in Ireland feel their purchasing decision of beauty products are influenced by social media influencers on Instagram;*

2. *To assess whether the lack of transparency of "paid partnership" or "sponsored content" on Instagram by social media influencers used by beauty brands influences, negatively or not, purchasing decision of Millennial women living in Ireland;*

3. *To assess whether trust in online reviews or e-WOM of a social media influencer used by beauty brands on Instagram, influences Millennial women's purchasing decision living in Ireland;*

4. *To assess whether credibility in online reviews or e-WOM of a social media influencer used by beauty brands on Instagram, influences Millennial women's purchasing decision living in Ireland;*

5. *To contribute with marketers working on beauty industries to implement good marketing communication practices in order to influence Millennial's purchasing decision living in Ireland, through the use of social media influencers on Instagram.*

3.1   Methodology Introduction

According to Collis and Hussey (2003), the research methodology process represents a journey through the investigation that results in knowledge. The framework for a research process might vary in stages, but it usually includes "formulating and clarifying a topic, reviewing the literature, designing the research, collecting data, analysing data and writing up findings" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012, p. 12). In addition, the methodology permeates the philosophical approach undertaken, according with the study intended to be developed, the strategy used for research and the method decided to collect and analyse data. These steps are

essential to ensure a credible and reliable piece of work, as the proper method of research for each kind of project is fundamental to the quality of its results.

For these reasons, the research process of this study will be based upon "The Research Onion" developed by Saunders *et al.,* (2019) as presented below in the image 3. Following the objective of this study, this chapter will present the methodology chosen to gather and analyse data, including the justification for the choices that structured this study.
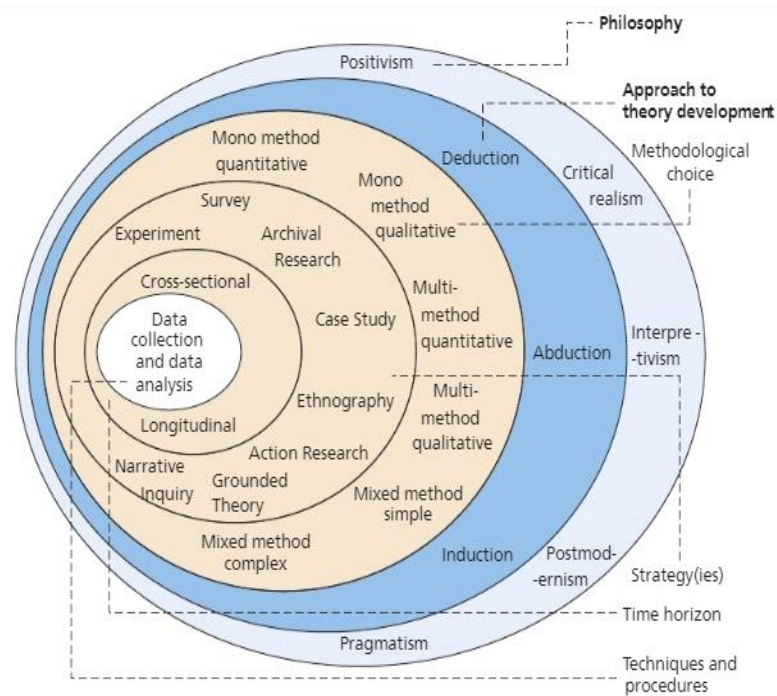
Image 3: "The Research Onion" by Saunders *et al.,* (2019, p. 130).

3.2   Layer One: Philosophical Stances

Based upon the methodology of research proposed by Saunders *et al.,* (2019) this study will follow through "The Research Onion" process. According with Saunders *et al.,* (2019), while developing a study, researchers are in a process of producing new knowledge about a specific topic. During the process, different types of "hypotheses" and "assumptions" are built (Burrell and Morgan, 2016), over

researcher personal beliefs, enriching the production of knowledge. These hypotheses will influence the way in which the research methods are chosen, findings are interpreted, and the conclusions are written (Crotty, 1998). It means that every researcher during the process of study is naturally influenced by socio-cultural backgrounds and previous experiences that can influence in the interpretation of findings and conclusions of the project. Therefore, assuming that each researcher has a different interpretation or philosophical positioning by the assumptions of how the world works, it is important to consider what different philosophies are acceptable knowledge and the role of its "own values and research paradigms" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012, p. 129).

Furthermore, in order to avoid bias in the studies, researchers are advised to follow a philosophical stance that will permeate all the research structure. In the philosophical stance or research philosophy, there are three main types of hypotheses or assumptions: ontology, axiology and epistemology. In order to keep a structure of relevant concepts for this study, the following topics will cover the paradigm of ontology and epistemology.

3.2.1 Ontology

The definition of ontology is related with the nature of reality. Quinlan (2011, p. 95) stated that it "relates to the study of being, the nature of being and our ways of being in the world". This paradigm explains the differences among the concept of reality, the human comprehension of reality and how it impacts on our behaviour. In the case of the qualitative research methodology of this study, reality is contextualized as "subjective and multiple as seen by participants in a study" (Collis and Hussey, 2003, p. 15).

3.2.2 Epistemology

This study is based on the epistemological underpinning nature, where the term epistemology is described by "what is" or "should be" determined as an acceptable knowledge with regard to a discipline or a field of study and how it is communicated to others. In accordance with Bryman's definition (2008, p. 13), epistemology is "the question of whether the social world can and should be studied according to the same principles, procedures and ethos as the natural sciences." Based on that research philosophy, there are two following frameworks, positivism and interpretivism and this study relies on the latter. The epistemology of this study is justified by the attempt of building "acceptable knowledge" (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 15), gained by interpretivism of one-to-one qualitative interviews, in order to understand how social media influencers used beauty brands as a source of advertising on Instagram and how they influence Millennials' purchase decision.

3.2.3 Interpretivism

Following the structure of research philosophy, the theoretical perspective of interpretivism has been considered because it is important that researchers understand the different roles played by an individual while a social actor. "Interpretivism holds that social reality is a subjective construction based on interpretation and interaction" (Quinlan *et al.,* 2012, p. 57). Moreover, such as an individual, the researcher interprets the others role based on its own "set of meanings" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012, p. 137).

According to Fisher (2007), contrasting the epistemology of positivism, interpretivism refers to "the belief that reality is socially constructed" through the meanings created by individuals. In this approach, human actions are a result of its own meanings and not a result of external forces - such as described in the positivism, where the society holds influence on its members. Interpretivism means subjective interpretation, not only based on scientific articles, but also on the recognition of the

differences between people and their social interactions. Within this context, the challenging aspect for researchers using this philosophy is to go in the social world of the participants and understand their meaning from their own point of view.

These definitions of interpretivism are linked with the qualitative approach chosen for this study. This is based on semi-structured in-depth interviews, from a small sample of participants, designed to understand their purchase decisions of beauty brands that might be influenced by social media influencers on Instagram. As suggested by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), in face of these perspectives, interpretivism is highly recommended for marketing or behaviour studies to deliver significant understanding of the complex interaction between individuals and brands.

3.3   Layer Two: Inductive research approach

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) state that there are two different research approaches, deductive and inductive. In order to follow a logical explanation of the methods used in this study, the reason for inductive research approach will be explained.

Inductive approach to research is a theory that moves from the "observation of empirical reality" (Collis and Hussey, 2003, p. 15), to data collecting, to findings and so, coming up with a new theory or even can fit in with existing ones (Bryman and Bell, 2011). It's perfectly suitable with qualitative data collection because it allows a close understanding of the meaning for human behaviour in relation with the events which is the case of this study. Through interviews about a specific topic, the data collected and then the analyses made, these features will drive the researcher into a pattern between the participants (Flick, 2011).

In order to meet best practices of research in qualitative theory studies, Glaser and Strauss (1967) developed the "Grounded Theory" to help build trustworthy

theories that illuminate the area under investigation. Therefore, it was "developed as a process to analyse, interpret and explain the meanings that social actors construct to make sense of their everyday experiences in specific situations" (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012, p. 185).

Grounded Theory uses "a systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon. The findings of the research constitute a theoretical formulation of the reality under investigation, rather than consisting of a set of numbers, or a group of loosely related themes" (Strauss and Corbin, 1990, p. 24). As stated by Silverman (1993, p. 46), Grounded Theory can be described in three stages: "an initial attempt to develop categories which illuminate the data; an attempt to saturate these categories with many appropriate cases in order to demonstrate their importance; and developing these categories into more general analytic frameworks with relevance outside the setting".

As suggested by Collis and Hussey (2003), such as an analysis of qualitative data, Grounded Theory can be seen as unreliable due to generalisation of the findings and the difficulty of treating all the data collected. However, the theory is still the most frequently used method for qualitative theory-building in order of bringing "methodological legitimacy" to the studies, according to Sato (2019).

3.4   Layer Three: Research Strategies

3.4.1 Qualitative research approach

According with Collis and Hussey (2003) the research project is influenced by the nature of the study and philosophical preferences of the researcher. Within this context, this study is based on its nature of interpretivism in epistemological underpinning by an inductive approach to research conducted through a qualitative method using in-depth interviews.

Qualitative research is a rich method associated with an "interpretative philosophy" (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005), in which people are observed by using ethnography or netnography research (Kozinets, 2010) or through collecting verbal data through in-depth interviews or in a focus group (Hair *et al.,* 2010). Usually made using small samples, it allows researchers to get deep insights from a person's point of view and in the case of marketing - develops an understanding of how social culture, lifestyles and trends can influence customers purchase decisions or behaviours.

Qualitative research using in-depth interviews, such as the case of this study, allows participants to talk about a topic freely, they are often useful to obtain detailed information regarding thoughts, opinions and feelings and allow for more detailed questions by the interviewer. Additionally, another advantage of in-depth interviews is to allow interviewers to understand deeper with the participant because when people talk a lot about a subject it always come up with feelings, behaviours, motivations and attitudes related (Hair *et al.,* 2010).

"When the aim of the research is to develop an understanding of some phenomena in great detail and in much depth, qualitative research is the most appropriated tool" (Quinlan *et al.,* 2018, p. 128). Furthermore, as suggested by Brenner, Brown and Canter (1985), interviews allow dual exploration, where participants and researcher explore a topic together, bringing rich and detailed information that can be accurate on-time in the case of misunderstandings contributing for the quality of study. The results of qualitative methods usually can present a new theory or even fit with existing ones (Bryman and Bell, 2011) and are not looking through standardization of findings. The method can be combined with other methods of collecting data to ensure the reliability of conclusions.

On the other hand, there are some disadvantages - the nature of the research must to made out in the field, it can become costly and time consuming (Quinlan *et*

al, 2015). Moreover, researchers need to understand their roles during the process of collecting data, avoiding personal involvement with participants or even, allowing manipulations or bias (Quinlan *et al,* 2015; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012) when writing/recording the findings and conclusions (Hair *et al.,* 2010). Furthermore, there are always discussions of preferences by quantitative methods instead of qualitative and as suggested by Quinlan *et al.,* (2018), those are superfluous arguments. This is because, the choice is not made by a preference of the researcher itself, it happens depending on the nature of the study, for example, if it's the most appropriate way to collect numerical data in order to understand the phenomena or in-depth interviews. Both methods are shown to be equally useful.

Within this scope, a set of semi-structured questions have been designed to be used during the in-depth interviews of participants selected in accordance with the target audience of this project. "How", "What" and "Why" style of questions has been used to allow participants to explain their personal opinions and thoughts about their perception of beauty brands using social media influencers on Instagram and perhaps influencing purchase decision. "In such instances, the researcher does not have control over behavioural events and needs to conduct the study in a real-life setting" (Malalgoda *et al.*, p. 905, 2018). Diving deep to catch the real meaning of the answers, getting deeper insights of the phenomena being studied.

3.4.2 In-depth interviews structure

As outlined before, this study has been conducted by a qualitative approach using a method of in-depth, one-to-one interviews. Although the disadvantages were considered, as explained in the topic before, the researcher decided to follow the philosophy in order to get a more real and deep meaning of consumer behaviour in regard to purchase decisions related with the topic in study. Furthermore, that structure was chosen in accordance with Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) where

it was stated that research interviews are useful to gather valid and reliable data for the proposed study.

A set of semi-structured "probing questions" (Hair *et. al.,* 2010; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012) were prepared to be used during the interviews and the order was followed accordingly as the participants' thoughts were emerging. At the beginning of interviews, conditional questions were asked to participants in order to ensure validity of participation according to the study criteria. These criteria were important for the purpose of the study to be conducted with female residents in Ireland; participants age within the Millennial generation age range; consumers of beauty products (cosmetics) and with the condition of having and accessing an Instagram account to ensure that participants understood the phenomena in the research. All the nine participants attended the criterion for the study. In order to elucidate the topic in study, three selected pieces of advertising on Instagram from beauty brands featuring social media influencers promoting beauty brands were presented to the participants with a briefing related with the study. This technique assured that participants were aware about the topic, where participants showed rich empathy with the study, creating a good atmosphere for catching thoughts and opinions that contributed to the research.

3.4.3 Sample

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012, p. 186), in qualitative approach "the purpose of sampling is to pursue theoretical lines of enquiry rather than to achieve representativeness". For this reason, a small sample of nine women from Millennial generation were the target audience to conduct this study. As cited before in the literature review, in Ireland, 57% of users of Instagram are women (Chaffey, 2019), dominating almost 83.9% of sponsored posts created, where over 30% were from Millennials generation (Klear, 2018). Related with this audience, beauty brands were founded partnering with social media influencers (Klear, 2018), promoting

beauty ideals (Pounders, 2018) to influence purchase decision (Strubel *et al.*, 2018) of beauty products through Instagram. Therefore, gender, age, active Instagram user and living in Ireland were the conditions to participate in the study.

3.4.4 Theoretical Saturation

The concept of theoretical saturation is originally cited by Glaser and Strauss (1967) on the back of the Grounded Theory. Specifically used within the context of qualitative methods, theoretical saturation is defined by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012, p. 186), as occurring "when data collection ceases to reveal any new properties that are relevant to a category, where categories have become well developed and understood and relationships between categories have been verified" (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). Starks and Trinidad (2007, p. 1375), offer a slightly different interpretation referring to the data collected. For the authors, "theoretical saturation occurs when the complete range of constructs that make up the theory is fully represented by the data". Independently of conceptualisations, both definitions emphasise the importance of the use of theoretical saturation in research to extract the deepest meaning related with the topic.

Fusch and Ness (2015, p. 1408) referred to the importance of saturation developments in research, such as, "failure to reach saturation has an impact on the quality of the research conducted" while Morse (2015), refers to saturation as a rule to guarantee rigor in qualitative research. The concept of saturation is involved in both stages of research and is important for sampling of participants and then coding, according with the Grounded Theory. Bryman (2012, p. 18), stated that saturation occurs to the researcher to "combine sampling, data collection and data analysis, rather than treating them as separate stages in a linear process".

In order to achieve the standards, set up by the authors cited previously, in the case of this study, interviews were made adding valuable content for the study, until there weren't more themes or topics to be explored related with the research.

3.5   Layer Four: Research Method

Saunders *et al.,* (2019), described in the "Research Onion" model two types of methods and corresponding analysis to collect data: mono method and multi method. As suggested, the mono method is characterized by a choice of a singular source of data (mono) and analysis is based on quantitative or qualitative research design, while the multi method, in its nature, collects and analyses data from variable sources.

Though a multi method might be more complex - allowing the researcher to explore the topic of study from different approaches and in doing so, reaching possibilities of interpretation and analyses - it wasn't suitable in the case of this study by the timeframe and the limited resources concerning with the chosen topic. Therefore, this study is based upon a mono method of qualitative research and data collection through in-depth interviews.

3.6   Layer Five: Time Horizons

In the "research onion" it is possible to find two different time horizons and its qualification differs in the nature of each study developed. With reference to Saunders *et al.,* (2019), the nature of this study is cross-sectional due to it being time-limited for a dissertation conclusion, or a limited framework. However, if the study was designed to be extended or repeated over time to examine changes in the landscape of previous studies (Goddard and Melville, 2004), it would be characterized by a longitudinal time horizon.

3.7 Layer Six: Data Collection and data Analyses

The final layer of "The Research Onion" proposed by Saunders *et. al,* (2019), debuts in the interrelated and interactive nature of qualitative data collection and analysis.

3.7.1 Data Collection

For the proposal of this project, the primary source of data using a qualitative method of research has been chosen through the tool of in-depth interviews. A set of semi-structured open-ended questions and related topics were designed in order to follow the main objective of the study and to allow participants to bring their own thoughts and opinions.

Interviewees were randomly chosen in the city centre of Dublin during two weeks from the end of June and the first week of July 2019. When meeting the participants, the topic was introduced and the permissions for recording data were taken and so, interviews were started by using the recording and transcribing app "Otter". While recording, some notes were taken to help in the next step of analysing collected data and then writing down the report with findings and conclusions.

Based on the previous literature review and the refined topic of study, during the interviews themes related with advertising, social media influencers, e-WOM, Instagram, beauty products and trust were covered. Before conducting the interview on the target demographic, the questions were tested with students in class to ensure that the purpose of the study could be achieved through the answers.

3.7.2 Data Analyses

Qualitative data collected is non-standardised, not numerical and so, becomes challenging through the analysis of a large and complex volume of words. This is due to each participant having their own unique opinions, for each sentence offered, different interpretations are allowed. Therefore, to start the process of analysing data collected, the interviews with voluntary participants were voice recorded and then transcribed to Word files and saved individually.

Following a more rigorous approach of analysis, relying on rules and on the inductive process of this study, the Grounded Theory, as explained previously, was considered in order to meet best practices in research and as a result, brings credibility to the study. The first stage of the Grounded Theory defined by Charmaz (2006), is known by "initial coding" that consists in disaggregating the data collected into conceptual units providing it with a label. These units can represent word(s) or a number of sentence(s) or even paragraph(s), driving the researcher in a more manageable and focused research project.

The next step in the process is based on focused coding and as suggested by Charmaz (2006), it involves reanalysing the initial data, comparing units with the initial codes to test which of the them would be used to categorise these large units of data. The Grounded Theory, as defined by Strauss and Corbin (1998), also includes the axial coding that refers to the process of rearranging, looking for relationships between the data that emerged during the initial coding and the selective coding that refers to the development of a number of principal categories and related subcategories created over the time that the research has conducted.

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), the Grounded Theory, as defined by Charmaz (2006), is more flexible and constructivist because it trusts in the interaction between researchers' and participants' interpretations to construct their social context, while by the others it is more rigid and prescriptive. For this reason, the approach undertaken by this research was underpinned in the Grounded Theory as defined by Charmaz (2006), until the saturation of coding possibilities.

3.7.3 Ethical Considerations

While conducting a study, researchers can come up against various difficulties with regard to gaining access to people or organisations, for that reason, ethical issues need to be considered while designing the research. It is noted by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), that research taking risks of "embarrassment, pain, harm or any other kind of disadvantage" for participants must be reconsidered. Furthermore, it is reserved to participants the right of privacy, confidentiality, anonymity and voluntary nature of participation with the right to withdraw at any time. These features are also aligned with regulations of GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation in Europe, where the researcher must have consent of participants to collect and store personal data.

In the case of this study, following the National College of Ireland's 'Ethical Guidelines and Procedures for Research Involving Human Participants', the individuals who participated in the interviews were presented with an "information sheet" related to the topic of study and a "participant consent form" where they were asked to sign and date as written consent for the interview to be conducted.

3.7.4 Limitations

This study is limited due to the research design - a cross-sectional research, featured by a limited timeframe and a qualitative mono method of research, that brings with it the downside of being time consuming. For this reason, it wasn't possible to conduct multiple methods research, for example, using a focus group, that in the case of qualitative studies is helpful to deliver a lot more "reliability and validity" to the findings (Yin, 2009). The time invested to collect data during interviews, along with the analysis and coding, represents a large amount of time spent for the project. Therefore, a longitudinal study based on the same topic would contribute greatly, giving much better insights into the study.

Furthermore, as the study of influence of social media on purchase decisions through Instagram are lacking in articles and journals related to the field, a possible lack of a stronger and consistent criticism can be apparent. However, by the findings and conclusions, it is a possible leverage for the importance of the study from a marketing perspective, and so, it's a topic that is worth researching and needs to be more developed in the future.

3.8   Conclusion

The study conducted followed in its nature, the interpretivism epistemological underpinning by an inductive approach to research based on a qualitative mono method. The aims and objectives of this project were to develop an understanding of the consumer behaviour behind purchase decision of beauty products from Millennial users of Instagram. For this reason, a qualitative method of collecting data based on semi-structured in-depth interviews, were chosen. In order to analyse and produce reliable and valid findings, thematic coding was used to interpret and write down conclusions in accordance with the Grounded Theory, defined by Charmaz (2006). To get the most rigorous and high-quality level of the study, the researcher considered the theoretical saturation defined by Glaser and Strauss (1967), to use during the coding process and to establish the sample of participants. Following the "research onion" process designed by Saunders *et al.,* (2019), the methodology presented intended to bring light into the research process and credibility to the study that have respected each important step of the methodological process.

4. Findings, Analysis and Discussion

As described in the chapter of methodology, after the interviews were concluded the data collected was analysed to identify similarities among participants answers and build on the knowledge sought by the research. In this chapter the common themes that emerged during the interviews will be presented and brought together with the literature and statements of participants to enrich the comprehension of findings according to each topic and objectives of the study.

4.0 Research Objective 1

> 1. *To assess whether Millennial women living in Ireland feel their purchasing decision of beauty products are influenced by social media influencers on Instagram;*
> Interview themes emerged: online behaviour; social media influencers; beauty brands; motivation of purchase decision: relationship, peoples feedback.

The first finding at the beginning of interviews was related with the time spent using Instagram. As cited in the literature review, Millennials can spend long amounts of time online on social media networks (Ashraf *et al.,* 2014 and Young, 2015) and the average hours spent on Instagram by this group of nine interviewees was around 2h/daily or almost 14h/per week. Furthermore, participants opinions were in support of the literature review presented before, where Ellison *et al.,* (2007), stated that Millennials have an active behaviour of communication between themselves and other members in their social communities.

"You can see a lot of people are on Instagram now, using it, it's free. You can see and follow a lot of people. Many people use it to sell and buy things making money and I guess for these reasons that is the best app now to interact with our friends and be updated of trends."

P5, 30 years old, from Brazil, living in Ireland more than 4 years.

Answering the first proposed question for this research, all the nine participants stated that they feel their purchase decisions were influenced by social media influencers on Instagram when purchasing beauty products.

"I do feel influenced by them, especially with social media. If I wear the same shoes, if I wear the same make-up and if I buy the same products that she is buying, my life will be more like hers, in some way. The way they influence people - it just aspires me to be like them, and it makes me feel close to them".
P6, 23 years old, from Ireland and living in Ireland.

"Like, they (customers) want to buy that brand influenced by someone (influencer) that they know, instead of someone that they don't know, and that relationship has been dropped to the market by social media influencers."
P6, 23 years old, from Ireland and living in Ireland.

"I don't buy because they said (brands advertising), I buy because I see people on Instagram saying that it worked. If someone says that they saw an advertisement they test the product, and if the product was good, then I'll be inclined to buy. That's the way I follow influencers".
P1, 37 years old, from Brazil, living in Ireland more than 4 years.

"Yes, if I see an influencer using the new Maybelline palette eyeshadow, obviously, if it's within my budget then I might buy it".
P3, 25 years old, from India, living in Ireland in her first year.

4.1   Research Objective 2

The findings from the research indicated that followers of social media influencers don't really care that they mix up endorsement of products if they inform its audience of paid or sponsored content. Customers want to see transparency in order to not distrust both brands and social media influencers, and feel manipulated by them.

"I know that sometimes the influencers are trying to sell products as well, but at least they are showing the results and I like this option, because they have a different approach to brands that can be tricking you. If they show a balance of content, including sponsored ones, but they are honest saying that is sponsored, and they keep giving me advices, opinions and entertaining me, I keep trusting on them".

P8, 35 years old, from Brazil, living in Ireland more than 2 years.

"So now I can know that the influencers are paid by brands and all of that. And, still, it's interesting to see how they style a particular product that I don't always know how to use it, increasing my education about that product".

P3, 25 years old, from India, living in Ireland in her first year.

"It's all aimed at you, I think just to make money off people's insecurities and how they feel about themselves, they want to follow a trend. And whatever trend is on Instagram or Facebook, they want to follow that. And I think there's something going on behind the advertisings and for that reason its fair enough that people know if it is sponsored or not in order to not be manipulated. If I don't have that information, obviously, I will feel myself negatively influenced to purchase that brand".

P4, 30 years old, from Dublin and living in Dublin.

Consumers are aware that a social media influencer that lives only for that job, needs to earn money to survive, as any other professional. Therefore, if the consumer is aware of paid partnership or sponsored content, it doesn't negatively influence purchasing decision, otherwise, the feeling of being manipulated or without transparency in the content, leads to distrust and lack of credibility.

4.2   Research Objective 3

3.	*To assess whether trust in online reviews or e-WOM of a social media influencer used by beauty brands on Instagram, influences Millennial women's purchasing decision living in Ireland;* Interview themes emerged: Brands are not trustworthy, people are. Beauty standards.

Trust "is built on person-to-person relationships" (Christou, 2014) and that is allowed on Instagram through the relationship of social media influencers and their audience - that concept its connected by one person relying on another person's opinions or thoughts assuming the risks of that behaviour (Boon and Holmes, 2001). According to Chatzigeorgiou (2017), social media influencers influence Millennials trust through the number of followers that they have, and the personality and activities exhibited on text comments, videos or tutorials having a huge impact on Millennials purchasing decision.

"I just have bought my makeup and things like that influenced by them (influencers), because when I follow them, I can see how the products work, it is easier to know about the quality, how it will be or feel on my skin."
P9, 31 years old, from Brazil, living in Ireland more than 2 years.

"I like to see that kind of beauty content on YouTube, I google reviews, or if I see somebody, something on Instagram, I might pay attention to it"

P7, 23 years old, from Ireland and living in Ireland.

"On Instagram, I can see videos, pictures and the very nice colours, it's not just about text content". "I think Instagram in this moment is the most impacting advertising platform that we have".

P5, 30 years old, from Brazil, living in Ireland more than 4 years.

In going with the theme of "trust", these statements above also refer to Warc's article (2019), describing the natural movement from generations towards visual communications, such as photographic content and videos, because people are even more busy, and images are faster than words to communicate with that generation.

Moreover, as suggested by Christou (2015), competence, reputation and expertise are synonymous of trust for Millennials on social media influencers.

"I follow influencers that endorse that kind of eco-conscious stuff, engaged with climate change, zero plastic, so, their reputation and competence to deal with those issues make me trust them".

P6, 23 years old, from Ireland and living in Ireland.

By being transparent and honest with their audience, social media influencers build a much closer relationship with followers that delivers trust. It seems that people, trust in people.

"When I see someone (influencer) who I appreciate using some products, I want to use this, because I trust them".

P9, 31 years old, from Brazil, living in Ireland more than 2 years.

Beauty companies have a background that still resonates with the customer's mind, making marketing communications to seem unreliable. The use of campaigns over the past with skinny models dictating a beauty standard, such as manipulating people to purchase products and so, fitting into a standard that is not suitable for the group referred to as the Millennial generation anymore. Dabholkar and Sheng (2012) and Dabija *et al.,* (2018), found that consumers are more willing to trust in other people's information rather than the information provided by the brands themselves. In support of this, Alston (2018), found that 92% of participants of a survey were shown to have more trust in a social media influencer than in a celebrity endorsement that was related to a brand and it can be further supported by the statements below from the research participants.

"Brands are targeting you to trying to sell to you, so they might be tricking you by showing photoshopped images of a young woman that supposedly got younger after using a beauty product, so they are trying to convince and manipulate you by saying that product is the best".
P8, 35 years old, from Brazil, living in Ireland more than 2 years.

"I said this is bullshit. This is not going to work, because that person is beautiful already. So, this is not going to influence me."
P1, 37 years old, from Brazil, living in Ireland more than 4 years.

Social media influencers are at present, according with this research, allowed to speak with customers on behalf of brands, because they are not related exclusively with promoting a brand's content. They are also creating, sharing, promoting, interacting and engaging in other contents of interest with their audience. The research found that participants enjoy influencers testing, using and talking about products through reviews and e-WOM, therefore, it can be one way for brands to engage with customers. It is that link between social media influencers and their audience that builds the reliability of marketing communication of products on Instagram sought by beauty brands, resulting in the consequent purchase decision.

Furthermore, as cited previously, Millennials spend long periods online on social media networks and so, they trust that the information provided on these platforms are reliable and safe (Young, 2015), diminishing risks while making a purchasing decision (Park and Cho, 2012).

4.3   Research Objective 4

4.   *To assess whether credibility in online reviews or e-WOM of a social media influencer used by beauty brands on Instagram, influences Millennial women's purchasing decision living in Ireland;*
Interview themes emerged: credibility; trustworthy; influence; purchase decision.

Credibility is in the following sequence of trust for customers; when followers perceive a social media influencer trustworthy, honest and transparent, it leads to credibility resulting in a positive impact in consumer behaviour driving purchase intention (Tsang et al., 2004). Credibility is "the extent to which the consumer perceives claims made about the brand in the advertising to be truthful and believable" (MacKenzie and Lutz, 1989), "of which the underlying process is the comparison between what is said and what is done" (Herbig and Milewicz, 1995). On the contrary, social media influencers promoting healthy life-style habits were discovered using alcohol and strong diet products, such as what was reported to have happened in Australia (Warc, 2018), resulting in a negative impact diminishing purchase intention and credibility of them and the associated brands. That is a motivation as to why many organisations, such as Unilever and governments, as in Australia, broke up marketing partnerships with social media influencers (Warc, 2019).

Furthermore, credibility can be built over the activity exercised by the influencer and the specialisation in specific fields, driving a sense of credibility over

their audience to endorse products. For example, a makeup artist or a hairdresser that had a previous background in that career and or had studied to become a professional, has more credibility to sponsor beauty products and so, promoting L'Oréal beauty products for example, also still extends that credibility to the brands.

"I love sports and this kind of active life, so, if I see someone that I really like endorsing a deodorant or something sport related, and they're sports influencers, I'd be much more likely to buy it, because I follow them, and I want their lifestyle".
P6, 23 years old, from Ireland and living in Ireland.

"I started following that influencer because of the fashionable things, and because, as an artist, I'm more attracted to the fashionable things."
P2, 28 years old, from Italy, living in Ireland more than 2 years.

When a social media influencer becomes famous, such as a celebrity, it is also seemed as a source of credibility to try products.

"That influencer that is a celebrity now, she has a beautiful hair, I love her hair. So, I try to do the same with my hair, using the same products, the same colours..."
P5, 30 years old, from Brazil, living in Ireland more than 4 years.

"Following them (famous social media influencer) is almost like cultural, if you don't know what's going on with them, you don't know what's happening in life, they're newsworthy, it's like following the journal. If you don't know about, you feel like you're separated from society".
P6, 23 years old, from Ireland and living in Ireland.

Supplementary to a source of credibility, the statement above can also be linked with an article presented in the literature review from Venkatesh *et al.,* (2012), relating to the idea that Millennials suffer social influence from other online users and

believe that they should use online platforms and be "connected online" to know what is going on online.

4.4   Research Objective 5

> 5.   *To contribute with marketers working on beauty industries to implement good marketing communication practices in order to influence Millennials purchasing decision living in Ireland, through the use of social media influencers on Instagram.*
>
> Interview themes emerged: beauty brands manipulation and commercial stuff on Instagram.

Beauty companies have directed their attention to social media networks through marketing communication strategies, especially producing content for Instagram, in order to forge a "one-to-one relationship" with customers (Barbalova and Rolland, 2018) in order to catch their attention and drive them to the purchase decision. However, considering all these efforts to stick in the customers mind, this research found during the interviews that brands are not being followed by the most part of the participants. Furthermore, when asked to name some of the brands of beauty companies on Instagram, the most part of participants referred to well-known brands that are known by the common sense and not specifically seen as brands on Instagram. Sometimes, it was found to be hard for participants to name some options. These findings can represent an alert to the industry, where the investments in marketing communications on Instagram must be better understood in order to produce more efficacy in terms of engagement with customers.

"Not from their direct account on Instagram, but from influencers, they always mentioned it (brands) in the caption, or they have the brands tagged. So, that's how I know (about brands) and that's why I follow them".

P3, 25 years old, from India, living in Ireland in her first year.

The association of brands manipulating purchasing decision, or the feeling related with commercial products are the most frequent issues raised by users on Instagram and stated below is such a reason to not follow a beauty brand on Instagram.

"I know what is good for me, so, I don't really need a brand that all the time tells me buy this or that. No, I really know what I need. So, most of the time like, I think is more commercial stuff than what you really need".
P2, 28 years old, from Italy, living in Ireland more than 2 years.

With regards to engagement, the marketing communications of beauty brands on Instagram are felt to be more aimed towards driving awareness about the brand and its products, and so, it doesn't really influence purchase decisions. Participants of this study often shared the opinion that what really drives purchasing decision is the feedback from a third person - meaning that social media influencers that present, test and talk about the results of products; family, friends or even comments of other users on posts made by brands, are considered.

"I'm always looking for feedbacks first and then like, if I see some ad, I will look for the comments below and see what people say first and then buy".
P1, 37 years old, from Brazil, living in Ireland more than 4 years.

"I'd said that family and friends are the most influential in my purchase decision, because, I can speak with them. So, I really know if it works or not, I will have a better feedback, let's say".
P2, 28 years old, from Italy, living in Ireland more than 2 years.

These findings are directly connected with the literature review which refers to the idea that Millennials are influenced by others when making a purchase decision (Euromonitor, 2015; Heinonen, 2011 and Goldsmith *et al.,* 2000).

Instagram is seen as a revolutionary way of allowing customers to engage with brands. From the nine participants spoken to in this research, all of them were assumed to have bought products after having seen a promotional appeal on social media, of which five were related with online reviews and e-WOM of social media influencers. Therefore, it represents a channel that must be explored, and its attributes better understood by brands.

"I think that Instagram has become really important for the beauty industry. Half of the new companies don't even advertise anywhere else anymore, they use their Instagram pages and that is how they influence people".
P7, 23 years old, from Ireland and living in Ireland.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The rationale of this research was to assess and understand how that relationship of beauty brands and social media influencers on Instagram affect purchase decisions of Millennial women living in Ireland. The research found, through in-depth interviews of participants, that beauty products are bought by Millennials motivated basically for their personal care, self-esteem and to fit into the social pressure of looking well. For this reason, this online connected generation seek other people's opinions online and so, reviews and e-WOM has a huge impact on their purchase decision. Matching with that behaviour, it was found that social media influencers on Instagram are the most trustworthy and credible source of information when Millennials are seeking for opinions about which products to purchase.

The way in which social media interacts and behaves with its audience by producing content, videos, images or text comments, is appreciated by Millennials, especially by demonstrating, giving advice and testing the quality of the beauty products. By following a social media influencer, it seems that over time, Millennials identify themselves with the influencer, building a relationship of trust and credibility with them that drives purchase decisions. Therefore, the first objective of this study; *to assess whether Millennial women living in Ireland feel their purchasing decision of beauty products is influenced by social media influencers on Instagram,* concluded through the analysis of participants feedback that (as seen in other countries) Millennial women in Ireland are directly influenced by social media influencers to purchase beauty products through that interaction among them on Instagram.

In an even more competitive market environment with busy customers giving less attention to traditional mass media marketing communication, the potential solution for brands to engage with customers and drive purchase decision might be through partnering or sponsoring content with social media influencers to produce content and build that connection with brands and customers. However, it was found that to bring transparency and keep a relationship of credibility and trust among social

media influencers and their audience, that relationship must be informed through "sponsored or paid content" labels, to avoid people feeling manipulated or giving rise to ethical issues of Stealth Marketing for both that badly influences purchasing decision.

For that reason, the second objective of this study that was *to assess whether the lack of transparency of "paid partnership" or "sponsored content" on Instagram by social media influencers used by beauty brands influences, negatively or not, purchasing decision of Millennial women living in Ireland.* It was concluded that social media influencers have conquered a rich space of interaction with Millennials on Instagram. In its turn, that audience is now aware about commercial partnerships that give financial benefits to the influencers. When that paid or sponsored content is exposed, it doesn't negatively influence purchase decisions. Stealth Marketing is what breaks that relationship among Millennials and influencers, badly affecting purchasing decision. Furthermore, that audience expect a balance of paid or sponsored content with the traditional content developed by their influencers. The partnership of the social media influencer, in an affordable way to their audience, can benefit the three elements of that circle; customers, brands and influencers. For the influencer, the challenge is to understand at what limit its audience can deal with that paid or sponsored content, which kind of content (videos, photos, text message) is accepted and how to promote that to them without losing followers.

For the participants of this research, the main benefit for using Instagram and following a social media influencer is that social media network has brought that relationship of interaction within this universe, creating more enriching experiences. Such as a natural characteristic of Millennials, they spend long periods online, they trust that information shared by others are trustworthy, diminishing their risk while making purchasing decisions. Furthermore, beauty brands that still have a negative background (as touched on previously with the example of skinny models) dictate beauty standards in many ways, such as manipulating people to purchase products

and so, fitting into a photoshopped pattern. These associations don't make any sense to the Millennial generation that have even more access to information. Over that, social media influencers build, over time, a relationship of trust with their audience and this is related with the performance of them (number of followers) and content production and personality (competence, reputation and expertise). It represents for customers, the possibility of finding inspiration for the use of products, or the possibility of seeing the social media influencer testing, using, giving personal advice and educating about products that are relevant for the followers. Moreover, that engagement creates a bond of trust with their audience, playing a similar role to that of friends and family giving advice about products, and consequently, that socialisation aspect is really important for Millennials following the context of social engagement, previously described in the Evolution of Marketing Communication strategies by Armano (2009).

From all these characteristics it is possible to conclude the third topic of this research, *to assess whether trust in online reviews or e-WOM of a social media influencer used by beauty brands on Instagram, influences Millennial women's purchasing decision living in Ireland,* where through all this context described, trust in social media influencers influences purchase decisions of Millennial women living in Ireland.

The fourth topic of this research was *to assess whether credibility in online reviews or e-WOM of a social media influencer used by beauty brands on Instagram, influences Millennial women's purchasing decision living in Ireland.* In fact, credibility is a following characteristic of trust perceived by followers through honesty and transparency on their personalities and content production, showing a correlation between "what is said" and "what is done". These characteristics were found leading for a positive impact in consumer behaviour driving purchase decision of followers. On the contrary, when the negative association is perceived, it also drives negative purchase decisions. Social media influencers are, in the most part, followed by people that like the same related style, informing and keeping customers

updated about trends and with news about the field. Therefore, social media influencers that get specialised in a specific field or are already professionals in a specific area, are deemed by their target audience to be more credible to talk to in relation to giving tips and advice about beauty products.

The final topic in this research was *to contribute with marketers working on beauty industries to implement good marketing communication practices in order to influence Millennials purchasing decision living in Ireland, through the use of social media influencers on Instagram.* During the research, it was found that Instagram's profiles of beauty brands are not followed by the most part of the participants and sometimes it was hard for to them name some options. That disinterest was related with the boring commercial content and feeling of manipulation of purchase decision. Therefore, these are the motivations for customers following a social media influencer instead of the brands themselves. These findings can contribute with brands to listen to their target market and produce content that they are interested in, instead of just trying to push and promote sales. As described before, Millennials are even more sceptical to traditional mass marketing strategies, and thus, by tailoring content to their audience interests, brands can increase their engagement with customers.

With regards to social media influencers engagement with customers, brands could invest more in partnerships with similarities. For example, a social media influencer, such as a body-builder sponsored by a nutritional brand will make sense for the audience and so, engaging with a higher probability of driving purchase decisions and accordingly, beauty influencers would be good to sponsor for beauty products and travel influencers would be good to sponsor with airline companies, hotels and travel agencies. As a result, customers can relate the image of the social media influencer with that product. It will give brands the possibility to talk with their target audience through the social media influencer forging that "one-to-one" relationship sought by companies. In marketing, the closer a brand is to its target

audience, the better it is to tailor products, build strategies and drive purchase decisions. However, for brands the downside is probing the social media influencer to ensure that she/he has no negative behaviours that can damage the association with the brand and find the most suitable character that better communicates with the desired targeted audience.

5.0   Recommendations for future academic research:

As a new topic of research, few articles in the academia were found related with that phenomena in the study. Therefore, the relationship among brands, social media influencers and customers' needs to be continuously monitored. Longitudinal studies should also be carried out, due to the fact that social media platforms are constantly being updated bringing new forms of interactions with customers, and so, it is probable that in the near future more developments around the topic will be found and research that delves deep inside that phenomena would bring an enriching nature for brands to improve and increase marketing communication strategies on social media platforms, and so, future academic research is suggested in:

a) The different ways in which Millennials interact with social media networks, focusing on the first or second Millennial generation in order to get a deeper insight about the differences of motivation when making a purchasing decision within the same generation.

b) The same study could be applied to other cultures or countries to understand how it's their native relation with the topics covered in this study.

c) In addition, other social media networks or even other types of marketing communication strategy channels, such as advertising on TV, could be evaluated.

d) Subsequently, following a trend where even more men are using beauty products (Souiden and Diagne, 2009), further research could analyse whether this gender is influenced by social media influencers, used by beauty brands on Instagram to drive the purchasing decision of products and how that relation of trust and credibility works among them.

References

Alston, A. N. (2018) 'Beauty the $445 Billian Beast', *License! Global*, 24(4), pp. 31–33. Available at: http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cookie,shib&db=bth&AN=131281047&site=eds-live&scope=site&custid=ncirlib [Accessed 16 July 2019].

Andaleep, S. and Anwar, F. (1996) 'Factors Influencing Customer Trust in Salespersons in a Developing Country', *Journal of International Marketing*, 4, pp. 35-52.

Armano, D. (2009) *Social Engagement Spectrum*. Available at: https://darmano.typepad.com/logic_emotion/2009/05/social-engagement-spectrum.html [Accessed 16 July 2019].

Ashraf, A. R., Thongpapanl, N., and Auh, S. (2014) 'The application of the technology acceptance model under different cultural contexts: the case of online shopping adoption', *Journal of International Marketing,* 22(3), pp. 68–93.

Balter, Dave and John Butman (2006), "Clutter Cutter," Marketing Management, 15 (July–August), 49–50.

Barbalova, I. and Rolland, M. (2018) 'World market for beauty and personal care', *Euromonitor International,* 1, pp. 1-62, WARC. Available at: https://www.warc.com/content/article/euromonitor-strategy/world_market_for_beauty_and_personal_care/123364 [Accessed 16 July 2019].

Becker, H. S. (1998) *Tricks of the Trade: How to Think about Your Research While You're Doing It.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Bellman, L. T. and Clark, S. (2009) 'Fashion Accessory Buying Industry Intentions among Female Millennials', *Review of Business*, 30, pp. 46-57.

Bergh, J. V. (2018) 'How brands can effectively engage young consumers', *Warc Best Practice*, June. Available: https://www.warc.com/SubscriberContent/article/bestprac/how_brands_can_effectively_engage_young_consumers/122479 [Accessed 31 July 2019].

Bernhardt, J.M., Mays, D. and Hall, A.K. (2012) 'Social marketing at the right place and right time with new media', *Journal of Social Marketing*, 2(2), pp. 130-137.

Bolton, R. N., Parasuraman, A., Hoefnagels, A., Kabaday, S., Gruber, T., Loureiro, Y. K. and Solent, D. (2013) 'Understanding Generation Y and their use of Social Media: A Review and Research Agenda', *Journal of Service Management*, 24(3), pp. 245-267. doi. org/10.1108/09564231311326987.

Boon, S. and Holmes, J. (2001) 'The Dynamics of Interpersonal Trust', in Hinde, A. and Groebel, J. (eds), *Cooperation and Prosocial Behavior*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Boyle, M. (2003) 'Brand Killers', *Fortune*, 11 August 2003, pp. 89-100.

Brenner, M., Brown, J., and Canter, D. (1985) *The Research Interview Uses and Approaches*. London: Academic Press.

Brown, J. J. and Reingen, P. H. (1987) 'Social ties and word-of-mouth referral behaviour', *Journal of Consumer Research*, 14(3), pp. 350-362.

Bryman, A. (2008) *Social research methods.* 3rd edn. New York: Oxford University Press.

Bryman, A. (2012) 'How many qualitative interviews is enough?', in: Baker, S. E. and Edwards, R. (eds.) *How Many Qualitative Interviews is Enough? Expert Voices and Early Career Reflections on Sampling and Cases in Qualitative Research*. Southampton: University of Southampton, pp. 18–20.

Bryman, A. and Bell, E. (2011) *Business Research Methods*. 3rd edn. New York: Oxford University Press.

Burkhardt, M. E., and Brass, D. J. (1990) 'Changing patterns or patterns of change: the effects of a change in technology on social network structure and power', *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 35(1), pp. 104–127.

Burrell, G. and Morgan, G. (2016) *Sociological Paradigms and Organisational Analysis*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Chaffey, D. (2019) *Global social media research summary 2019*. Available at: https://www.smartinsights.com/social-media-marketing/social-media-strategy/new-global-social-media-research/ [Accessed 14 July 2019].

Chao, P., Wuhrer, G. and Werani, T. (2005) 'Celebrity and foreign brand name as moderators of country-of-origin effects', *International Journal of Advertising*, 24(2), pp. 173–192.

Charmaz, K. (2006) *Constructing Grounded Theory*. London, Sage.

Chatzigeorgiou, C. (2017) 'Modelling the impact of social media influencers on behavioural intentions of millennials: The case of tourism in rural areas in Greece', *Journal of Tourism, Heritage & Services Marketing*, 3(2), pp. 25-29. Available at: https://www.jthsm.gr/vol3iss2/3-2-4.pdf [Accessed 17 July 2019].

Chen, Y., Liu, F., Cheng-Hsi, F. and Lin, T. M. Y. (2013) 'Understanding the effectiveness of word-of-mouth: an elasticity perspective', *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 7(1), pp. 57-77, Scopus. doi: 10.1108/17505931311316743.

Christou, E. (2014) 'Branding Social Media in the Travel Industy' in *International Conference on Strategic Innovative Marketing (IC-SIM 2014)*. Madrid, Spain, 1-4 September 2014, pp. 607-614.

Christou, E. (2015) 'Branding social media in the travel industry', *Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 175, pp 607-614, ScienceDirect. doi: 10.1016/j.sbspro.2015.01.1244.

Ciminillo, J. A. (2005) 'Elusive Generation Y demands edgier marketing', *Automotive News*, 79(6144), p. 28B.

Collis, J. and Hussey R. (2009) *Business Research: A practical guide for students*. 3rd edn. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Collis, J. and Hussey, R. (2003) *Business Research: A practical guide for undergraduate and postgraduate students*. 2nd edn. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Cone, Inc. (2006) *The Millennial Generation: Pro-Social and Empowered to Change the World*. Boston: Cone, Inc.

Cooper, P. G. (2018) 'Social Media', *Salem Press Encyclopaedia*. Available at: http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cookie,shib&db=ers&AN=89139034&site=eds-live&scope=site [Accessed 16 July 2019].

Crotty, M. (1998) *The Foundations of Social Research.* London: Sage.

Dabholkar, P. A. and Sheng, X. (2012) 'Consumer Participation and the Trust Transference Process in Using Online Recommendation Agents', *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction & Complaining Behaviour*, 25, pp. 96-117.

Dabija, D. C. and Grant, D. (2016) 'Investigating Shopping Experience and Fulfilment in Omnichannel Retailing: A Proposed Comparative Study in Romanian and UK of Generation Y Consumers, in the *21st Annual Logistics Research Network Conference*. Hull, UK, 7-9 September 2016, pp. 1-9, Research Gate. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/307167524_Investigating_Shopping_Experi ence_and_Fulfillment_in_Omnichannel_Retailing_A_Proposed_Comparative_Study _in_Romanian_and_UK_of_Generation_Y_Consumers [Accessed 15 July 2019].

Dabija, D., Bejan, B. M. and Tipi, N. (2018) 'Generation X versus millennials communication behaviour on social media when purchasing food versus tourist services', *E+M Ekonomie a Management*, 21, pp. 191-205. doi: 10.15240/tul/001/2018-1-013.

Dahl, A. J., D'Alessandro, A. M., Peltier, J. W. and Swan, E. L. (2018) 'Differential effects of omni-channel touchpoints and digital behaviors on digital natives' social cause engagement', *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 12(3), pp.258-273, Emerald Publishing Limited. doi: 10.1108/JRIM-04-2018-0051.

Darwish, A. and Lakhtaria, K. I. (2011) 'The Impact of the New Web 2.0 Technologies in Communication, Development, and Revolutions of Societies', *Journal of Advances in Information Technology*, 2(4), pp. 204-216. Semantic Scholar. Available at: https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/fe75/af214fdf787113399e0f174268a762e3267e.pdf [Accessed 14 July 2019].

Denzin, N. K. and Lincoln, Y. S. (2005) *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research.* 3rd edn. London: Sage.

Eastman, J. K. and Liu, J. (2012) 'The impact of generational cohorts on status consumption: an exploratory look at generational cohort and demographics on status consumption', *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 29(2), pp. 93-102. doi: 10.1108/07363761211206348.

Ellison, N. B., Steinfield, C., and Lampe, C. (2007) 'The benefits of Facebook "friends:" Social capital and college students' use of online social network sites. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication,* 12, pp. 1143–1168.

Engebretson, J. (2004) 'Odd gen out', *American Demographics*, 24(4), pp. 14-18.

Erdogan, B. Z. (1999) 'Celebrity endorsement: a literature review', *Journal of Marketing Management*, 15(3), pp. 291–314.

Euromonitor (2015) *Millennials Impact of their Behaviour on Global Consumer Markets*. Available at: https://www.euromonitor.com/millennials-impact-of-their-behaviour-on-global-consumer-markets/report [Accessed 15 July 2019].

Fisher, C. (2007) *Researching and writing a dissertation: A guidebook for business student*. 2nd edn. Essex: Pearson.

Flick, U. (2011) *Introducing research methodology: A beginner's guide to doing a research project*. 2nd edn. London: Sage.

Forrester Research Inc. (2005) *US Online Marketing Forecast: 2005 to 2010*. Available at: http://www.centerformediaresearch.com [Accessed 16 July 2019].

Freberg, K., Graham, K., McGaughey, K. and Freberg, L. A. (2011) 'Who are the social media influencers? A study of public perceptions of personality' *Public Relations Review*, 37(1), pp.90-92.

Fromm, J. and Garton, C. (2013) Marketing to Millennials: Reach the Largest and Most Influential Generation of Consumers Ever. EBSCOHOST. Available at: http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cookie,shib&db=nlebk&AN=587098&site=eds-live&scope=site&custid=ncirlib [Accessed 19 June 2019].

Fusch, P. I. and Ness, L. R. (2015) 'Are we there yet? Data saturation in qualitative research', *The Qualitative Report,* 20(9), pp. 1408–1416.

Ghauri, P. and Gronhaug, K. (2010) *Research Methods in Business Studies: A Practical Guide*. 4th edn. Harlow: FT Prentice Hall.

Glaser, B. and Strauss, A. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory.* Chicago: Aldine.

Goddard, W. and Melville, S. (2004) *Research Methodology: An Introduction*. 2nd edn. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.

Goldsmith, R., Lafferty, B. and Newell, S. (2000) 'The impact of corporate credibility and celebrity credibility on consumer reaction to advertisements and brands', *Journal of Advertising*, 29(3), pp. 43–54.

Hair Jr, J. F., Wolfinbarger, M. F., Ortinau, D. J. and Bush, R. P. (2010) *Essentials of Marketing Research*. 2nd edn. New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.

Haymarket Media, (2016) 'Millennials continue to disrupt media and advertising models', *PR Week*, 19(9), p. 9, General One File. Available at: http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip,cookie,shib&db=edsggo&AN=edsgcl.464897641&site=eds-live&scope=site [Accessed 16 July 2019].

Heinonen, K. (2011) 'Consumer activity in social media: Managerial approaches to consumers' social media behavior', *Journal of Consumer Behavior*, 10, pp. 356–364. doi: 10.1002/cb.376.

Herbig, P. and Milewicz, J. (1995), 'To be or not to be credible that is: a model of reputation and credibility among competing firms', *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, (13)6, pp. 24-33.

Hogan, J. E., Lemon, K. N. and Libai, B. (2004) 'Quantifying the ripple: word-of-mouth and advertising strategies of competing durable good producers', *Marketing Science*, (7)4, pp. 356-367.

Jackson, V., Stoel, L. and Brantley, A. (2011) 'Mall attributes and shopping value: differences by gender and generational cohort', *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 18(1), pp. 1-9.

Klear. (2018) *The State of Influencer Marketing; An industry analysis of branded partnerships and the strategies that reach success* [Online] Available at: https://klear.com/TheStateofInfluencerMarketingKlear.pdf [Accessed 17 July 2019].

Kozinets, R. V. (2010) *Netnography: Doing Ethnographic Research Online*. Newbury Park: Sage.

Kvale, S. and Brinkmann, S. (2009) *InterViews.* 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Lamberton, C. and Stephen, A. T. (2016) 'A Thematic Exploration of Digital, Social Media, and Mobile Marketing: Research Evolution from 2000 to 2015 and an Agenda for Future Inquiry', *Journal of Marketing*, 80(6), pp. 146–172. doi: 10.1509/jm.15.0415.

Lester, D. H., Forman, A. M. and Loyd, D. (2006) 'Internet shopping and buying behaviour of college students', *Services Marketing Quarterly*, 27(2), pp.123–138.

Lo, S. C. (2012) 'Consumer decisions: the effect of word-of-mouth', *The International Journal of Organizational Innovation*, 4(3), pp. 188-196.

Loda, M. D. and Coleman, B. C. (2010) *Adjusting Attitudes Using Traditional Media: Magazines Can Still Move Millennials.* Tourism and generation. London: CAB International.

MacKenzie, S. B. and Lutz, R. J. (1989) 'An empirical examination of the structural antecedents of attitude toward the ad in an advertising pretesting context', *The Journal of Marketing*, 53 (2), pp. 48-65.

Malalgoda, C., Amaratunga, D. and Haigh, R. (2018) 'Empowering local governments in making cities resilient to disasters: research methodological perspectives', *Procedia Engineering*, 212, pp.902-909, ScienceDirect. doi: 10.1016/j.proeng.2018.01.116.

Manser, E. P., Peltier, J. W. and Barger, V. (2017) 'Omni-channel marketing, integrated marketing communications, and consumer engagement: a research agenda', *Journal of Research in Interactive Marketing*, 11(2), pp. 185-197.

Martin, C. and Turley, L. (2004) 'Malls and consumption motivation: an exploratory examination of older Generation Y consumers', *International Journal of Retail and Distribution Management*, 32(10), pp. 464-475. doi: 10.1108/09590550410558608.

Martin, K. D. and Smith, N. C. (2008) 'Commercializing Social Interaction: The Ethics of Stealth Marketing', Journal of Public Policy & Marketing, 27(1), pp. 45-56, EBSCOHOST. Available at:

http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=3&sid=0dbb093e-bc3c-46df-b98a-b4c0fe9a3860@sessionmgr4006 [Accessed 05 August 2019].

McGrath, C. (2013) *Mirror, mirror on the wall. An investigation into consumer behaviour and consumption of image altering products and services in an Irish context.* Msc thesis. Dublin: National College of Ireland. Available ate: http://trap.ncirl.ie/846/1/conormcgrath.pdf

Miller, L. J. and Lu, W. (2018) *Gen Z Is Set to Outnumber Millennials Within a Year.* Available at: https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-08-20/gen-z-to-outnumber-millennials-within-a-year-demographic-trends [Accessed 15 July 2019].

Mills, H. (2015) 'The changing face of the beauty customer', *Admap Magazine,* pp. 1-9, WARC. Available at: https://www.warc.com/content/article/admap/the_changing_face_of_the_beauty_customer/106141 [Accessed 18 July 2019].

Mohammed, R., Fisher, R. J., Jaworski, B. J., and Paddison, G. (2002) *Internet Marketing: Building Advantage in a Networked Economy*. NY: McGraw-Hill/Irwin.

Morse, J. M. (2015) 'Data were saturated…', *Qualitative Health Research*, 25(5), pp. 587–588. Sage Journals. doi: 10.1177/1049732315576699.

Nadeem, W., Juntunen, M. and Juntunen, J. (2017) 'Consumer segments in social commerce: A latent class approach', *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 16(3), pp. 279-292, Psychology and Behavioral Sciences Collection. doi: 10.1002/cb.1632.

Norum, P. S. (2003) 'Examination of generational differences in household apparel expenditures', *Family and Consumer Sciences Research Journal*, 32(1), pp. 52-75.
Park, H. and Cho, H. (2012) 'Social network online communities: information sources for apparel shopping', *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 29(6), pp. 400–411.

Pesquera, A. (2005) 'Reaching Generation Y', *San Antonio Express-Newsz*, 29, p. 1.

Petty, Ross D. and J. Craig Andrews (2008), "Covert Marketing Unmasked: A Legal and Regulatory Guide for Practices That Mask Marketing Messages," Journal of Public Policy & Marketing, 27 (Spring), 7–18.

Prensky, M. (2001) 'Digital natives, digital immigrants', *On the Horizon*, 9(5), pp. 1-6, Emerald Insight. doi: 10.1108/10748120110424816.

Quinlan, C. (2011) *Business Research Methods*. Hampshire: Cengage Learning EMEA.

Quinlan, C., Babin, B. J., Carr, J. C., Griffin, M., Zikmund, W. G. (2015) *Business Research Methods*. Hampshire: Cengage Learning EMEA.

Quinlan, C., Babin, B., Carr, J. Griffin, M. and Zikmund, W. G. (2018) *Business Research Methods.* 2nd edn. United Kingdom: Cengage.

Remple, J. K., Holmes, J. and Zanna, M. (1985) 'Trust in Close Relationships', *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 49, pp. 95-112.

Rust, R. T. and Oliver, R. W. (1994) 'The death of advertising', *Journal of Advertising*, 23(4), pp. 71-77.

Sammis, K., Lincoln, C. and Pomponi, S. (2016) *Influencer Marketing for Dummies*. New Jersey: John Wiley & Sons.

Sato, H. (2019) 'Using Grounded Theory Approach in Management Research', *Annals of Business Administrative Science*, 18(2), pp. 65–74, Business Source Complete. doi: 10.7880/abas.0190326a.

Saunders, M. N. K., Lewis, P. and Thornill, A. (2019) *Research methods for business students.* 8th edn. Research Gate. Available at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330760964_Research_Methods_for_Business_Students_Chapter_4_Understanding_research_philosophy_and_approaches_to_theory_development [Accessed 25 June 2019].

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2012) *Research Methods for Business Students.* 6th edn. England: Pearson.

Silverman, D. (1993) *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text and Interaction.* London: Sage.

Souiden, N. and Diagne, M. (2009) 'Canadian and French Men's Consumption of Cosmetics: A Comparison of Their Attitudes and Motivations', *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 26(2), pp. 97-109. doi: 10.1108/07363760910940465.

Sprague, R. and Wells, M.E. (2010). 'Regulating online buzz marketing: Untangling a web of deceit'. *American Business Law Journal*, 47(3): pp.415-454.

Starks, H. and Trinidad, S. B. (2007) 'Choose your method: a comparison of phenomenology, discourse analysis, and grounded theory', *Qualitative Health Research,* 17(10), pp. 1372–1380.

Strategic Direction (2015) 'Improving insight on Generation Y consumers: The significance of lifestyle, gender, and media habits', *Strategic Direction*, 31(4), pp. 22-24. doi: 10.1108/sd-02-2015-0030.
Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1990) *Basics of Qualitative Research: Grounded Theory Procedures and Techniques.* Newbury Park: Sage.

Strauss, A. and Corbin, J. (1998) *Basics of Qualitative Research*. 2nd edn. Thousand Oaks: Sage.

Subramani, M. R. and Rajagopalan, B. (2003) 'Knowledge - sharing and influence in online social networks via viral marketing', *Communications of the ACM*, 46(12), pp. 300-307.

Swanepoel, C., Lye, A. and Rugimbana, R. (2009) 'Virally inspired: A review of the theory of viral stealth marketing', *Australasian Marketing Journal,* 17(1), pp. 9-15, ProQuest. Available at: https://search.proquest.com/docview/199341931?accountid=103381 [Accessed 05 August 2019].

Trusov, M. , Bucklin, R. and Pauwels, K. (2009) 'Effects of word-of-mouth versus traditional marketing: findings from an internet social networking site', *Journal of Marketing*, 73(5), pp. 90-102.

Tsang, M. M., Ho, S. C. and Liang, T. P. (2004), 'Consumer attitude toward mobile advertising: an empirical study', *International Journal of Electronic Commerce* (8)3, pp. 65-78.

Valentine, D. B. and Powers, T. L. (2013) 'Generation Y values and lifestyle segments', *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 30(7), pp. 597-606. doi: 10.1108/jcm-07-2013-0650.

Venkatesh V., L. Thong, J. Y. and Xu, X. (2012) 'Consumer acceptance and use of information technology: extending the unified theory of acceptance and use of technology', *MIS Quarterly* 36(1), pp. 157–178. doi: 10.2307/41410412.

Viswanathan, V. and Jain, V. (2013) 'A dual-system approach to understanding "generation Y" decision making', *Journal of Consumer Marketing*, 30(6), pp. 484-492. doi: 10.1108/jcm-07-2013-0649.

Vogel, P. (2015) *Generation Jobless?* London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Warc.com. (2018). *Are influencers to be trusted? | WARC*. [online] Available at: https://www.warc.com/newsandopinion/news/are_influencers_to_be_trusted/40910 [Accessed 02 August 2019].

Warc.com. (2019). *What we know about marketing on Instagram | WARC*. [online] Available at: https://www.warc.com/content/article/bestprac/what_we_know_about_marketing_on _instagram/110477 [Accessed 18 Jun. 2019].

Weiss, A. M., Lurie, N. H. and MacInnis, D. J. (2008) 'Listening to strangers: whose responses are valuable, how valuable are they, and why?', *Journal of Marketing Research* , 45(4), pp. 425-436.

Wolburg, J. M. and Pokrywczynski, J. (2001) 'A psychographic analysis of Generation Y college students', *Journal of Advertising Research*, 41(5), pp. 33-52.

Woods, S. (2016) *Sponsored: The Emergence of Influencer Marketing.* Published Ph.D. thesis. Tennessee: University of Tennessee Honors Thesis Projects.

Yin, R. K. (2009) *Case Study Research: Design and Method*. 4th edn. London: Sage.

Young, E. (2015) *How Millennial Get News: Inside the Habits of America's First Digital Generation,* case, Chicago: Associated PressNORC Center for Public Affairs Research & American Press Institute.

Zucker, L. G. (1986) 'Production of trust: Institutional sources of economic structure', *Research in Organizational Behaviour*, 8, pp. 53-111.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Semi-structured interview questions

Conditional questions for participation:

- Are you currently living in Ireland?
- Do you have an Instagram account?
- Do you buy any kind of facial cosmetics?
- How old are you?

Online behaviour:

- How long do you spend on your Instagram account during your whole day in minutes?
- What motivates your daily access?
- When deciding to purchase a product do you seek other's people information online (online reviews/e-WOM)? Why?
- Can others influence your purchase decision?

Beauty products:

- Which kind of facial cosmetics do you buy?
- Why do you buy them?
- What motivates your purchasing decision?
- Do you follow any of the beauty brands on Instagram?
        - Any reason why you don't follow them?
        - Do you know any of the beauty and personal care companies on Instagram?
        - Which ones?
- Do you believe that beauty brands influence purchase decisions of products through Instagram?

-Why do you perceive that is happening?

- Do you feel influenced by beauty brands to buy these kinds of products through Instagram?

-What it is your opinion about the latter?

- Which kind of promotional aspect influenced your purchase decision?

Social media influencers:

- Do you follow any of the social media influencers on Instagram?

- Why do you follow them?

- Which kind of content do you most like?

- Are they promoting any kind of beauty products (facial cosmetics)?

- Can you see if the content is paid or sponsored by brands?

- What is your opinion about that relationship?

- How do you feel about content where that relationship is not clear?

- Can it influence your purchase decision, negatively or positively?

- Do you believe that social media influencers are trustworthy?

- How do you perceive that they are trustworthy?

- Do you believe that social media influencers are credible?

- How do you perceive that they are credible?

- Are those attributes important for to you follow them?

- Could those characteristics influence your purchase decision?

- Do you feel your purchase decision is influenced by them? How/Why?

- Have you bought any kind of beauty products (facial cosmetics) influenced by them?

Final considerations:

- Any thoughts that you would like to bring into our conversation and contribute with the research discussion?

Appendix 2 - Table of participants

	LI	IA	DA	AG	PFC	FBBI	FSMI	BBII	FIBI	FISMI	BFCI
P1	Yes	Yes	300	37	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
P2	Yes	Yes	120	28	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No
P3	Yes	Yes	60	25	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
P4	Yes	Yes	90	30	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
P5	Yes	Yes	10	30	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
P6	Yes	Yes	30	23	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
P7	Yes	Yes	180	31	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
P8	Yes	Yes	120	35	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
P9	Yes	Yes	90	23	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

LI - Living in Ireland

IA - Instagram Access

DA - Daily Access/min

AG - Age

PFC - Purchase of Facial Cosmetics

FBBI - Following Beauty Brands on Instagram

FSMI - Following Social Media Influencer on Instagram

BBII - Believe Beauty brands Influence on Instagram

FIBI - Fell Influenced by Beauty brands on Instagram

FISMI - Fell Influenced by Social Media Influencer

BFCI - Bought Facial Cosmetics Influenced by SMI