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**GLOBAL CULTURE AND CORPORATE SOCIAL
RESPONSIBILITY IN THE COSMETICS INDUSTRY**

‘Studying the Impact of Global Culture and Corporate Social
Responsibility on Cosmetic Consumers’ Behaviour in Ireland’

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Dedication

This paper is dedicated to my beautiful mother, Rose. I would not have made it this far without your unwavering support and love over the years. You are my hero and the bedrock of my strength. Thank you for everything.

Abstract

Communication technologies like social media have played a pivotal role in connecting individuals from across the globe. With increased connectivity, emerges a digital society, presenting a homogeneous global culture, where individuals share opinions, experiences, beliefs, and values online. Simultaneously, there is an increasing emphasis on the importance of battling societal and environmental issues. As a result, businesses are expected to contribute to positive change, by engaging in corporate social responsibility initiatives.

This paper examines global culture and corporate social responsibility as prevalent trends in international business and marketing and demonstrates how consumers frequently rely on these elements to produce opinions and preferences towards cosmetic brands.

The literature review conducted in this paper reveals that global culture and corporate social responsibility are radically impacting consumer behaviour and illustrates how companies must adapt to these changes with modern business and marketing strategies.

The primary research conducted by the author investigates how the global culture and corporate social responsibility are impacting cosmetic consumers' behaviour in Ireland. The participants involved in this study are aged 18-30 years old and are active users of social media. The findings present valuable marketing information and unique insight from the participants who took part in a survey, which asked questions regarding their attitudes, purchasing habits, and personal experiences, in regard to cultural globalisation and corporate social responsibility in the cosmetic industry.

Contents

Acknowledgements	3
Dedication	3
Abstract.....	4
Introduction.....	7
Background and Context.....	7
Literature Review	10
Consumer Behaviour	10
The Rise of Social Media.....	11
Global Culture.....	11
Global Culture and Consumer Behaviour.....	13
Cosmetics in the Digital Realm	15
Corporate Social Responsibility	17
CSR and Consumer Behaviour	18
CSR in the Cosmetics Industry	19
Environmental Responsibility.....	21
Ethical Responsibility	22
Global Culture & CSR – ‘Cancel Culture’	25
The Irish Cosmetics Industry	26
Conclusion	27
Research Question and Objectives	28
Research Methodology	29
Introduction.....	29
Framework	29
Research Philosophy	30
Research Approach	31
Research Strategy.....	32
Research Method	33
Ethical Considerations	36
Time Horizon	36
Techniques and Procedures.....	36
Sample Selection.....	36

Data Collection Procedures.....	38
Data Analysis Process.....	38
Limitations	39
Findings and Analyses	41
Quantitative Data.....	41
Consumer Awareness.....	41
Influence of Social Media in Global Culture	43
Corporate Social Responsibility	49
Global Culture and CSR’s Relationship	54
CSR & Global Culture in Cosmetics Marketing.....	56
Qualitative Data	62
Global Culture & CSR in Cosmetics	62
Influence of Social Media on Global Culture	63
Influence of CSR.....	64
Merged Data & Interpretation.....	65
Discussion.....	67
Conclusion	71
Future Studies	71
Bibliography	73
Appendix.....	83
(Full Answers to Open-Ended Question from Survey).....	83

Introduction

This research studies the impact of global culture and corporate social responsibility [CSR] on consumer behaviour, with a focus on cosmetic consumers in Ireland aged 18-30 who are active on social media. A mixed method approach was developed to conduct primary research for investigating the topics outlined.

Background and Context

Understanding current trends in consumer behaviour is crucial to any B2C firm's success and the role of marketing in attracting consumers cannot be undermined. Marketers must be aware of why consumers choose certain products and how they are informed about them, so they can adapt to this behaviour to influence buying decisions through innovative strategies. Cultural barriers have been named as one of the biggest challenges in global marketing. However, the interconnectedness brought about by globalisation and modern technologies has led to the formation of a digital society, where consumers from across the world are sharing values and beliefs (Dey et al., 2020). In response to this, marketers must embrace adaptation to compete in the evolving global landscape (Karaman, 2023).

The shift to global culture through social media presents new opportunities for firms to expand internationally and has become increasingly pivotal in shaping a brand's communication tactics, particularly in regard to their corporate social responsibility (Dwivedi et al., 2021). The cosmetic industry provides an excellent example of emerging homogenised consumer behaviour, highlighted by a global demand for sustainable cosmetic products, diversity and inclusivity, and an increased awareness regarding a firm's corporate social responsibility (Lee & Jeong, 2022). Additionally, cosmetic brands in particular must successfully navigate the concept of a global culture, where the opinion of global online beauty influencers is highly valued by consumers (Rakuten, 2019). The most resilient brands today are pioneering digital and social media marketing to reform the consumer experience.

There have been numerous studies about understanding digital marketing, corporate social responsibility, cultural marketing, and consumer behaviour respectively. However, much of the research is limited to their broader definitions and theories, irrespective of their correlation within specific business sectors. The global culture present in social media and its impact on consumer behaviour is a contemporary concept with a lack of breadth in marketing

research. Additionally, CSR's influence on cosmetic consumers' behaviour within a global context has not been thoroughly examined, leaving room for further investigation.

Examining the impact of global culture and CSR specifically on Irish cosmetic consumers' behaviour for this thesis is intentional. Ireland has a strong global reputation for high quality and sustainable products in multiple industries. Most prominently, the beauty and cosmetics sector, which has also seen a recent influx of successful Irish entrepreneurs. Irish cosmetic brands like Sculpted by Aimee, Fragrances of Ireland, Pestle & Mortar, Skingredients, and many more, have paved the way in the industry, with massive growth and exports to international markets (Enterprise Ireland, 2023). Moreover, Ireland has placed an increased emphasis on ethics and sustainability in business (Enterprise Ireland, 2022), meaning national and international cosmetic companies are faced with the challenge of attracting consumers whose opinions are impacted by heightened corporate social responsibility demands and the presence of social media platforms (Hassan, et al. 2021).

The focus on sustainability and social responsibility efforts in the Irish business realm calls for research on its influence on consumers' behaviour in Ireland. Additionally, global culture's role in altering consumer trends must be investigated to further understand its impact on the Irish market. Likewise, the concept of online 'cancel culture', which has not been thoroughly studied in marketing literature (Saldanha et al., 2022) must be explored, to provide an even deeper insight into how the global online culture is responding to corporate social responsibility efforts, and to examine the impact of this dynamic on cosmetic consumers' brand preferences and purchasing behaviour.

As a conscious consumer of cosmetics and an avid user of social media, the researcher avoids cosmetic brands who implement unethical practices like animal testing and has a first-hand perspective on the influence of global culture in shaping consumers' habits through social media. Furthermore, the researcher's keen interest in cross-culturalism and its effect on marketing, has fuelled the interest of exploring this element in greater detail. By presenting this research, the author hopes to provide valuable academic and practical insight into the field of business and marketing and determine whether Irish consumers are being influenced by a global connectivity and firms' contributions to society.

From this broader context, the research question that emerges is as follows:

“How does global culture and CSR impact cosmetic consumers’ behaviour in Ireland?”

By answering this question, the determining factors in influencing consumer perceptions and behaviour in the cosmetics industry can be illustrated, offering detail into what motivates positive response to cosmetic brands alongside increased purchase intentions. Additionally, if a relationship between global culture and CSR awareness among consumers is found to be prominent and impactful, further investigation into how the industry can adapt to this relationship would be effectual.

Literature Review

In this section, the existing literature relevant to this study will be explored, to achieve a comprehensive understanding on the elements regarding the research question. The concept of global culture and the role of social media in accelerating this phenomenon will be studied. Also, corporate social responsibility [CSR] will be defined and its role in the cosmetics industry will be illuminated. Throughout the review, the impact of these factors on cosmetics marketing communications and consumer behaviour will be considered. Finally, an industry insight for Irish cosmetics is outlined, granting more detail relevant to the study.

This chapter clarifies the similarities and the gaps within existing studies to underscore the motivation for conducting this thesis and to build a strong foundation for approaching the research question.

Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour contributes majorly to the success of an organisation. It is broadly defined as the study of individuals or organisations, and the processes consumers use to search, select, and use products or services to fulfil their needs (Babu et al., 2017).

By understanding and recognising the patterns and influences involved in consumer behaviour and purchasing progressions, businesses can identify the factors that will stimulate consumers' purchasing decisions (Yeo et al., 2018). Successful brands constantly gather data to analyse buyer patterns, trends, and decisions to evaluate future prospects (Kumar et al., 2014). The central goal of marketing is to satisfy consumer needs, and marketers thereby must adapt to behavioural trends to create value and attract the target market through tactical strategies and campaigns.

Various factors influence consumer behaviour such as personal factors, product factors, and situational factors. According to Rai (2013), culture plays a significant role in consumer behaviour, as their perception of international brands are based on lifestyle, experiences, and surroundings. Jawahar and Tamizhjyothi (2013) also note that consumer attitudes are formed through their experiences, and this affects their buying behaviour. Furthermore, Hofstede's 'Five Dimensions of Culture' serves as a foundation for understanding culture's role in

marketing and portrays five dimensions of culture which are common among six different countries: Individualism/Collectivism, Power Distance, Uncertainty, and Masculinity/Femininity (Babu et al., 2017). These dimensions point to the fact that in traditional marketing, cultural dynamics influence consumer behaviour and perceptions, and many similarities can already be found between several countries, without technology being a catalyst.

The Rise of Social Media

Social media and other digital communications technologies are now a part of daily life for billions of people around the world. According to data from April 2024, 5.44 billion people, or 61.7% of the global population, use the internet. Of this number, 62.6% of the world is actively using social media (Statista, 2024).

Social media has transformed the way individuals communicate and take up information. According to Imani et al (2023), social media can be viewed as an online enabler that fosters connections and social bonds. It can also promote awareness regarding relevant concerns such as environmental conservation, human rights, and other ethical issues. Users on social media now share and promote aspects of their culture which encourages the exchange of lifestyle norms and global knowledge within the digital era (Wibowo, 2023).

Consequently, consumer behaviour has been significantly influenced by the introduction of social media platforms like TikTok, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram (Fortune, 2023). This exchange of cultural dynamics and interactions across borders is among the biggest advantages of digitalisation for international businesses. Businesses who use social media marketing can accomplish their goals by reaching a wide audience at a low cost, as consumers who spend time on social media, now use it as their primary source of information on goods and services (Dubbelink et al., 2021).

Global Culture

To understand the concept of global culture, it is first important to define what culture is. In this respect, it can be better understood how the homogenising of culture is forming internationally standardised beauty and fashion norms and a globalised consumer behaviour.

Culture has often been described as a ‘fuzzy’ concept, which is difficult to conceptualise (Causadias, 2020). However, Macionis (2009) provides a clear and concise description, stating that culture is the ‘*ways of thinking, the ways of acting, and the material objects*’ that form peoples’ way of life. In turn, culture shapes not only the way society acts but also the way they feel.

From the beginning of the 20th Century, advances in technology have increased the mobilisation of goods, services, technology and individuals across the globe. This has led to a phenomenon known as ‘superdiversity’, a term first depicted by anthropologist Steven Vertovec (2007). According to Bird & Stevens (2003), globalisation encourages the decline of national cultures while also converging them into a broader global culture. Marshall McLuhan (1964) first coined the term ‘global village’ to describe this simultaneous contraction and expansion of world culture initiated by technological advancements.

Several scholars use the term global culture to refer to the flow of cultural goods, products and symbols, differentiating cultural globalisation from economic or political globalisation (Mele & Vujnovic, 2016). In general, the term ‘global culture’ refers to the set of shared experiences, beliefs, ideals, and symbols that unite individuals across the world (Peng, 2023) and the pre-existing studies conclude that cultural globalisation points to the notion that traditional cultures are becoming more homogenous in modern society.

Social media and globalisation have leveraged the ability to spread culture to other parts of the world and as cultures interact, one culture becomes more dominant. This occurrence has given rise to the emergence of a new global culture or a ‘digital society’ as described by Levin (2014). The spreading of social media as a platform for advertising fashion and beauty has further amplified the convergence of cultural ideals. Ritzer (2011) discusses this concept as ‘Westernisation’, which indicates an increasing uniformity induced by global capitalism and the spread of standardised fashion norms and aesthetics throughout the world. Many other researchers have concluded that the concept of a global culture is linked to the Westernisation process and the expansion of Western values, norms, and trends (Bogoliubova & Nikolaeva, 2017).

An additional observation which examines global culture in regard to Westernisation is the ‘McDonaldisation’ theory, which refers to the process of fast-food restaurant principles dominating more business sectors of society across the world. McDonaldisation scholars have

investigated the diffusion of processes like efficiency, cost, predictability in products, and employee behaviours through international McDonald's restaurants, representing a cultural uniformity and an infringement on local cultures. Hence, the research on McDonaldisation focuses on how Western influences can permeate multiple industries worldwide (Mele & Vujnovic, 2016).

Most recent studies conclude that social media has accelerated the hyper-unification of traditions, lifestyles, and philosophies, which have expanded social interactions across the world (Balshaw, 2024). Consequently, some researchers have deduced that this mass movement towards a digital society and the globalisation of culture holds the possibility for the loss of unique cultural identities (Levin, 2014).

Global Culture and Consumer Behaviour

According to Mazaheri et al (2014), culture has a profound influence on all aspects of consumer behaviour. Additionally, Zhou et al (2008) state that the rise of cultural homogeneity is increasing similarities in global consumption habits. Due to advancements in technology, and the development of social media, global consumers can gather information on different cultures and quickly absorb localised consumer trends into global trends (Hwang et al., 2021). The transition to homogenised consumer tastes in the 21st Century is a certainly a byproduct of the internet and fast media. The introduction of MTV is a good example of this, as teens across the continents developed the same taste in music, celebrities, fashion trends, and lifestyles (Mooij & Hofstede, 2002). This was similarly observed by Jean (2002), who stated that the internet and television embody the sheer power and influence of the global corporate culture.

Nam and Kannan (2020) determine that in the digital environment, social interactions often reflect offline interactions. Hence, as more social interactions move online, consumers mirror the preferences of others which they interact with through digital platforms, creating a synergy in offline preferences and opinions. Additionally, Generation Z (born in 1997-2012) are more likely to adopt emerging technologies than other generations (Nam and Kannan, 2020). This supports the contention that there is an emerging global culture present online, as consumers aged 12 to 27, engage with one another online and develop similar brand preferences, ultimately affecting patterns in consumer behaviour.

The transition to a digital society has not only played a pivotal role in how consumers interact with each other, but also how they interact with businesses. Global culture is changing marketing paradigms. Before this digital renovation, businesses had to constantly adapt to the cultural and local preferences of consumers based on the region, but modern technology is facilitating a digitalised and globalised market segment, making the prospect of building an international brand far more accessible (Byrnes, 2007). Traditionally, marketing strategies always start with segmentation, which divides the markets into groups based on demographic, geographic, psychographic, and behavioural aspects. However, as consumers are far more connected with one another, communities are formed online, creating an entirely new segment. This digital segment of the market shares opinions online and compile their own perceptions of brands as a unified group. Kotler et al (2017) also marks the shift to digitally globalised market segments as a result of increased social uniformity through social media.

The movement towards a more unified global culture is also recognised in recent literature by Brodowsky and Schuster (2020). In their book, *'Handbook on Cross-Cultural Marketing'*, they state that as people around the world are adopting the same style, music taste, and lifestyle, it is evident that a 'global village' is emerging. A study by Chen (2021) also proved that a byproduct of cultural globalisation is the creation of a global beauty ideal and appearance standard in both Western and non-Western societies. 'Beauty culture' refers to the typical standards for individuals' appearances and the awareness of, interaction with, and the responses to these beauty ideals (Cox et al., 2005). The spread of standardised beauty and style norms supports the belief that consumers may be purchasing similar beauty products, to achieve an internationally desired look, which ultimately affects the cosmetics industry. In addition, an international marketing research paper conducted by Madan et al., (2018) showed compelling evidence that culture plays a vital role in the pursuit of beauty through cosmetic products. This was demonstrated by the influence of culture on beauty practices in five different countries. However, the concept has still not been widely explored in context to globalised culture and its influence on consumer habits in the beauty and self-care sectors.

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) have highlighted that global culture gives brands an increased capacity to reach international audiences through social media, offering them more opportunities to expand. Regarding the cosmetic industry, the communication between beauty brands and their consumers has been revolutionised by social media and has changed both how consumers perceive cosmetic brands and how they are informed about them. The

increased connectivity available online has encouraged social media users to look for self-care products and brands that unify their identities with others, creating homogenous groups of consumers online (Laurea, 2019).

Fortune (2023) also notes that social media has a profound impact on customer behaviour in the beauty sector in particular. Consumers now have an increased access to ranges of cosmetic products, suggestions, tips, and reviews through digital platforms like TikTok and Instagram (White, 2024). Online brand communities consist of consumers who use social media platforms to create and share content and opinions about products and services, connecting with others around the world (Arévalo, 2020). The accessibility of reviews and tips posted by content creators in the online beauty community raises important concerns regarding its effect on consumer behaviour in the cosmetics sector (Arora, 2024). As communities of likeminded individuals are formed online, content creators are expected to be honest when connecting with their followers from across the world on a daily basis. Cosmetic brands can leverage beauty and self-care communities to differentiate themselves, enabling their customers to showcase their products in an authentic and personalised way. This can enhance social media marketing, which has a positive impact on a brand's relationship with consumers, their purchase intentions, and brand loyalty (Kumar & Mirchandani, 2012).

Cosmetics in the Digital Realm

The emerging digital society provides many opportunities for cosmetic brands to market their products in the global online beauty community by using influencers and user generated content. A recent study by Karimkhan (2024), found that social media influencers have become massive trendsetters in the worldwide fashion and beauty domain. Chu & Seock (2020) also observe that social media influencers are dominant sources of inspiration for cosmetic consumers in particular. These influencers provide a sense of community where individuals can share their opinions and explore their style regardless of geographical boundaries or sociodemographic status (Trequattrini, et al., 2019).

Cosmetic brands are reaping the benefits of the online beauty community and influencer marketing to adapt themselves to meet consumers' needs and values, whilst reaching a wider audience at a low cost (Britt, et al., 2020). According to Nafees & Cook (2021) consumers also demonstrate a conscious acceptance of product recommendations from influencers.

Additionally, beauty influencers on social media receive increased engagement over traditional cosmetic commercials (Karimkhan, 2024). Globally recognised brands like MAC, Charlotte Tilbury, and L'Oreal are some of the few successful companies who employ influencers to promote and use their products (Hassan et al., 2021).

It is understood that social media enables its users to adopt the same beauty and self-care trends from all across the world and allows cosmetic brands to reach consumers from international markets with ease. However, despite researchers recognising the effectiveness of non-verbal cues, which can be understood by consumers at a global level, many argue that while indirect forms of communication such as symbols, colours and music are effective, the language and words are necessary to convey a brand's message (Brodowsky & Schuster, 2020). Based on this theory, it is known that whilst aesthetics and sounds can attract consumers' attention, it is the words and messaging that retain this attention, highlighting the importance of localised marketing tactics.

In contrast, scholars have argued that a brand's communications can be understood at a global level without the use of language at all, by using imagery and sounds to convey their message. Research conducted by Moran et al (2019), concluded that rich media formats are highly engaging and stand out from text-only communications, and sensory stimulation has been found to induce greater consumer response. As rich media formats do not require the use of language; brands can implement this as a strategy to engage with consumers internationally via digital platforms.

The theory that rich media is highly engaging, is further supported by the existence of online viral trends. Viral trends have become a key part of global culture and consumer behaviour. Berger & Milkman (2012) describe virality as when a piece of content spreads rapidly, reaching a wide audience. Many of the products that go viral are from the beauty industry, such as skin care, makeup, hair care, and fragrances (Marchessou & Spagnuolo, 2021). Viral beauty trends often quickly dominate social media platforms, capturing the attention of global cosmetic consumers and compelling them to participate. Viral content has massive global reach, as the internet breaks geographical and cultural boundaries, providing opportunities for cosmetic companies to reach a broader audience within hours. As marketing strategies have evolved online, viral trends play a crucial role in creating successful campaigns to increase brand awareness (EMB, 2024).

In summary, global digital connectivity allows people to communicate and collaborate with others from all over the world and exchange opinions and cultural values. This connectivity has led to the emergence of a global culture, present online, which impacts the cosmetics industry and its consumers. While this movement towards societal unification offers opportunities for brands to reach international markets, it is important for businesses to identify the challenges and dynamics that come with navigating the future of digitalised and globalised consumer segments.

Corporate Social Responsibility

As consumers move to a digital society, sharing opinions and values, the global culture has led to an increased emphasis on a corporation's social responsibility [CSR]. Studies show that consumers are becoming increasingly interested in CSR research (Teh et al., 2019). Additionally, there is evidence which shows that some consumers use CSR as a purchase criterion, suggesting that it has an effect on purchasing intentions (Mohr et al., 2001). Consequently, companies have realised that operating their businesses ethically is vital in order to attract consumers (Chan & Saad, 2019).

Corporate social responsibility is a broad concept, used in diverse ways for various studies in many fields. Overall, CSR refers to a company's commitment to avoiding harm and improving the well-being of stakeholders and society as a whole (Mohr et al., 2001).

To gain a better understanding, Archie Carroll's 'Pyramid of Corporate Social Responsibility' is commonly used in studies to precisely define and illustrate the building block nature of the CSR framework. The model structures four obligations from businesses – economic, legal, ethical, and philanthropic (Carroll, 2016).

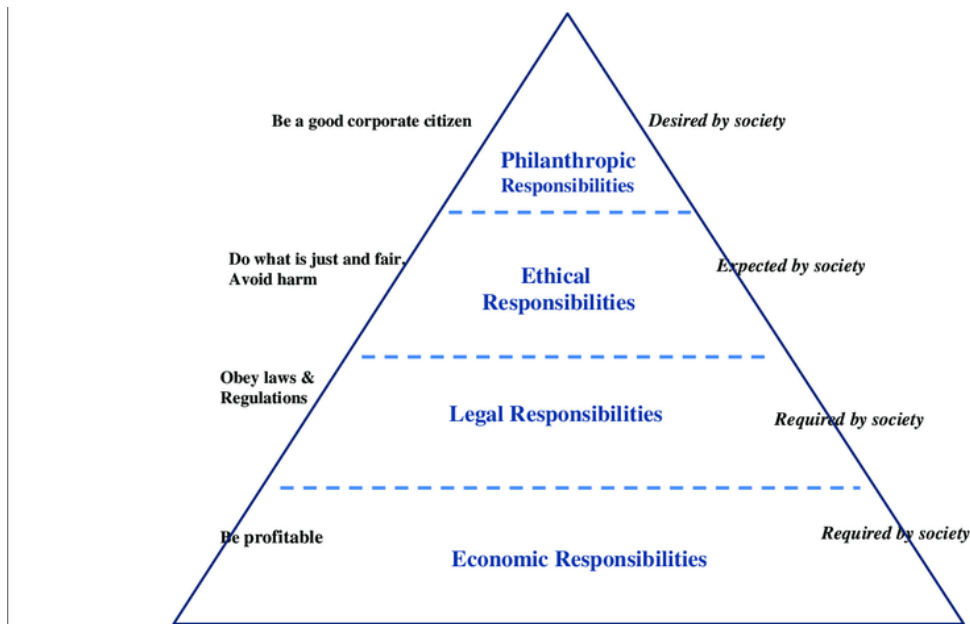


Figure 1. Pyramid of CSR (Carroll, 2016).

The diagram in *Figure 1* showcases that CSR is built on the foundation of an economically sound, socially beneficial, and ethical business. Furthermore, Moir (2001) states that CSR covers a variety of issues including human rights, ethics, and the environment, which are focal points for this study, for examining the cosmetics industry and its consumers.

CSR and Consumer Behaviour

As previously discussed, digital platforms and communications are leading to an increase in global synergies in consumer preferences. Research shows that globally, consumers are becoming more aware of a brand's ethics and are concerned with sustainability and their impact on the environment. A global survey conducted in 2019 found that 77% of people were concerned about the damage humans are causing to the environment (Lampert, 2019). Similarly, research by Sharma and Joshi (2019) found that 'younger' consumers are more concerned about environmental and societal issues and their purchasing decisions are influenced by the sustainable practices of an organisations. This supports the assertion that there is an emerging global consumer culture, with shared values, beliefs, and behaviours.

Since consumers are globally concerned about brand's impact on society and the environment, firms have begun to implement CSR initiatives into their business and

marketing strategies. There is a notable relationship between CSR and a consumer's intention to buy a brand's product (Wang et al., 2021). When consumers perceive that a brand or product is aligned with their values, they develop a positive perception of the company. This is also referred to as the 'halo effect' and is crucial to successful marketing. Hence, if a brand's message ties into a consumer's values, the consumer is motivated by moral heuristics (Sheehan & Lee, 2014). A study by Mandhachitara and Poolthong (2011) also demonstrated that CSR initiatives can influence service quality perceptions, brand performance, and customer attitudes. In their study, environmental concern is identified as one of the several dimensions of CSR. The findings of this study thusly suggest that implementing CSR can persuade consumers into assuming a company's products and services are of higher quality.

Corporate reputation relates to advertising and marketing and is concerned with a firm's credibility, brand equity and value judgment in society (Fassbender, 2020). Hence, to develop a positive brand reputation, businesses must adapt their marketing communications to meet consumer trends. There is a positive correlation between corporate reputation and consumer behaviour in the cosmetics industry. Cosmetic brands which address their environmental awareness through eco-friendly packaging and involvement in inclusivity campaigns and marketing (such as using models with skin conditions/disabilities etc.) are more likely to achieve brand trust and loyalty (Popa et al., 2022). Research also indicates that consumers not only demand CSR efforts but *expect* companies to be involved in environmental or socially beneficial causes (De Jong et al., 2017).

CSR in the Cosmetics Industry

Porter and Kramer (2006) state the importance for organisations to choose certain practices for their CSR strategy, to reflect the corporation's principles. They write that the decision to select which activities to engage in should create value for both the company and its consumers, therefore benefiting both parties. One worthy aspect of CSR when researching the cosmetics industry is the intersection of diversity and inclusion initiatives. According to Tovar (2023), diversity refers to all aspects of human differences. This includes race, ethnicity, colour, sexual identity, and gender identity. As previously mentioned, CSR is a broad concept and is used in varied studies. This study focuses on the cosmetics industry and its consumers and thus, ethical and environmental responsibility were deemed most appropriate to use as focal points for the CSR research.

The founder of New Ethics Institute highlighted the increasing value of implementing CSR strategies for cosmetic companies (McDoughall, 2010). The industry has seen a huge transformation in the market's need to operate in a more ethical and sustainable fashion, mainly due to its record of negative media attention concerning animal testing, environmentally harmful production, and lack of diversity. One of the main shifts in recent years is consumers' increased interest in sustainable cosmetic products (Sahota, 2014). Additionally, the importance of incorporating diversity and inclusion initiatives in cosmetics marketing has been emphasised in recent years (Segran, 2020). In North America and Europe, ethical consumerism is attracting the attention of many international firms (Carrier et al., 2012). As a result, many cosmetic brands are adopting labels which identify with ethical consumption, promoting their corporate social responsibility to meet consumer demands (Wang et al., 2020).

In relation to global consumer culture, studies show that the internet plays a large role in the consumption of cosmetic brands that implement CSR strategies, with more than three quarters of conscious consumers relying on reviews and recommendations posted online (Nielsen, 2012). However, according to Organic Monitor (2010), there is a lack of communication from cosmetic companies regarding CSR matters, and most of their customers are not aware of their efforts. Despite lack of communication, current research has shown that cosmetic consumers are becoming more aware of the harmful chemical ingredients in some beauty products and are seeking brands which contribute positively to society and the environment (Nguyen et al., 2019). In addition, a study by Maryam et al (2022) also found that the formulation of cosmetic products, which uses a blend of chemical ingredients, has sparked public apprehension regarding the safety of cosmetic items. This has increased a demand for natural, sustainable, and ecologically friendly personal care items. Consequently, 'green cosmetics' have now become a symbol of environmental responsibility in the cosmetics industry and using green products is now part of a lifestyle based on self-care and sustainability (Lin et al., 2018). A survey conducted by Ethical Consumer Organisation shows that sales revenue from Ethical Cosmetics has been steadily increasing, implying a large demand for ethical beauty and self-care products (Ridder, 2020). Furthermore, Unilever (2017) performed a market study which found that one third of cosmetic consumers purchase brands based on their environmental and social impact.

Environmental Responsibility

Environmental responsibility refers to the behaviour of an organisation that is as environmentally friendly as possible and is one of the most common forms of CSR (Stobierski, 2021). According to Stobierski (2021), companies that embrace environmental responsibility engage in the following activities:

- Reduce harmful practices by decreasing pollution, water consumption, single-use plastics, carbon emissions etc.
- Regulate energy consumption by increasing use of renewable energy and sustainable materials and resources
- Contribute to environmental protection by donating to related causes

As society becomes more aware of environmental issues, ‘green consumers’ have emerged, in hopes to protect the environment through conscious and sustainable purchasing choices (Paço et al., 2018). Research by Thrassou & Festa (2023) found that sustainability has had a profound effect on marketing and business profitability and that environmental attitudes are among the most influential aspects defining consumer behaviour.

According to Yung (2017), mass media has contributed to the spreading of information regarding the planet’s sustainability. Consequently, the increased movement of society towards maintaining more sustainable and healthy lifestyles, has contributed to an increase in demand for ‘green cosmetics’ (Borges & Paanenen, 2020). Green cosmetic items are eco-friendly and sustainable products, which are produced in a way that is safer for the environment (Chan & Chai, 2010). To meet increased consumer demands, cosmetic brands are emphasising their sustainability when marketing their products. Brands such as The Body Shop, Lush Cosmetics, and Typology are some of the few well-known brands among many others that have emerged, defining themselves as sustainable, through eco-friendly packaging, ingredients, production methods, and more (Erdyn, 2024).

A recent study by Dr Kumar Gupta (2024) on the current circular economy and sustainability in business identified a strong effort within the cosmetic industry to implement CSR activities. According to the study, more than half the brands under L’Oreal’s ownership have launched campaigns aimed at engaging consumers in sustainability efforts. Sephora has collaborated with Pact Collective to address packaging and recycling issues in the beauty

industry. Coty Inc have recently revised their sustainability framework 'Beauty That Lasts', outlining the firm's commitment to environmental and social responsibility in their business strategy and product offerings. Furthermore, the 'Back to MAC' program initiated by MAC cosmetics, is encouraging their customers to participate in sustainable practices by recycling MAC product containers in return for free cosmetic items.

However, it must be noted that cosmetic brands who advocate their 'greenness' may be subject to speculation. To fulfil consumer expectations, many businesses misrepresent their products, claiming to be more eco-friendly than they actually are (Aji & Sutikno, 2015). This poses as a threat for cosmetic brands who implement green marketing tactics such as labelling their products as 'organic'. Furthermore, studies have shown that many cosmetic consumers are not entirely concerned about the 'greenness' of a beauty product but are more focused on the products' performance rather than its eco-friendly components (Lin et al., 2018). This leaves room for questioning whether a cosmetic brand's CSR efforts can override product performance and truly influence consumers' purchasing decisions.

Ethical Responsibility

Apart from environmental concerns, in previous years there have been serious ethical issues within the cosmetic industry. Consumers today are increasingly concerned with cosmetic brands' ethical responsibility and according to Sheehan and Lee (2014), ethical consumers will only purchase products and services that have been produced in an ethically sound way.

Ethical responsibility implies that organisations embrace the activities, norms, standards, and practices that are expected by society, even though they are not codified into law (Carroll, 2016).

According to Carroll (2016), a business who operates ethically meets the following expectations:

- Performs in a manner consistent with the expectations of societal and ethical norms
- Respects new or evolving moral norms adopted by society
- Prevents ethical norms from being compromised to meet business goals
- Acts as a good corporate citizen
- Understand ethics and integrity go beyond mere compliance with laws and regulations

For many years, makeup brands marketed their products primarily towards people with lighter complexions (Hunter, 2007). This has brought light to complex issues regarding diversity and inclusion [D&I], which correlate with firms' social and ethical responsibilities. The growing global advocacy for positive societal change has impacted the way cosmetic brands advertise and market their products, to convey their inclusivity (Alli, 2022).

Generation Z grew up in an era when the world was rapidly changing with global revolutions and movements alongside the influence of social media. This generation is pivoting towards a more socially diverse and conscious era as a result (Fromm & Read, 2018). Globally recognised movements like 'Black Lives Matter' and 'Me Too' have caused corporations to pay more attention to their reputation and involvement in CSR and D&I initiatives (Alli, 2022). Additionally, multiple cosmetic brands released online statements to express their support of such movements (Bauknecht, 2020). This has triggered demands for companies to do more for their communities and be actively involved in social action (Ira, 2020).

The launch of Fenty Beauty by Rihanna in 2017 sparked a massive change in the cosmetics sector known as the 'Fenty Effect' (Fetto, 2020). The brand released a 40-shade foundation range and created formulas for all skin types, so that all customers could be included (Rihanna, 2019). The launch of Fenty foundation was so successful that it made Time's 'Best Inventions' list of 2017 (Time, 2017) inspiring other brands to follow in their footsteps. This encouraged D&I to become the new norm in cosmetics and brands such as Milk Makeup, MAC, and NYX followed Fenty's path (Nilsson et al., 2021).

According to Saunter and Shin (2019) Generation Z has been the driving force in the shift towards creating a market environment that acknowledges consumers with different abilities, appearances, and backgrounds. A positive example of a brand that advocate this shift is Dove. Dove's 'Real Beauty' campaign which launched in 2004, published research that concluded that only 2% of women felt beautiful. Dove has since made a commitment to making all women feel beautiful and included, through impactful marketing campaigns, demonstrating their CSR (Rodgers, 2021). In their most recent project, '#Show Us' (*figure 1*), Dove partnered with women and non-binary individuals across the globe to showcase a collection of over ten thousand images that offer an inclusive and diverse vision of beauty in marketing (Dove, 2024).

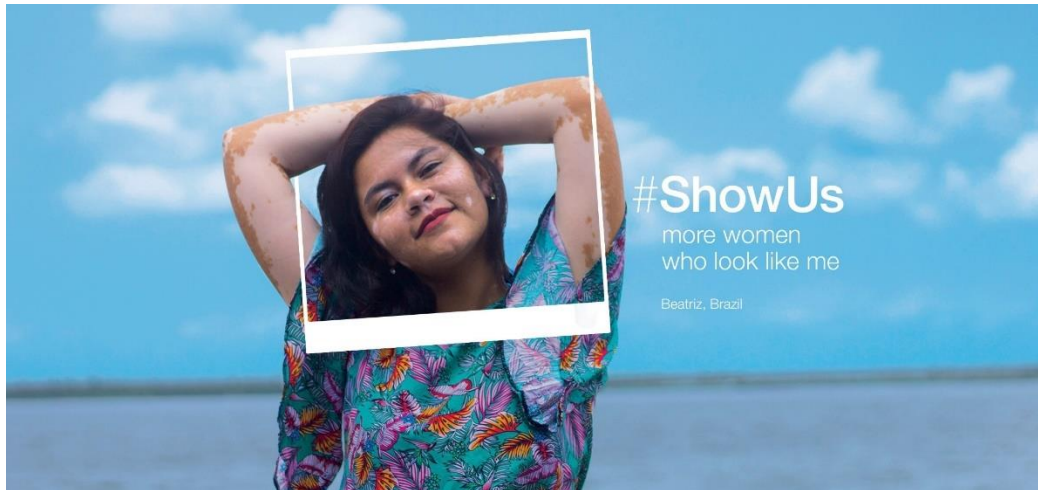


Figure 2. '#ShowUS' Campaign Image (Dove, 2024).

Another relevant issue regarding ethics in the cosmetics industry is the use of animal testing. The self-care and beauty sectors have seen a surge in demand for cruelty-free and vegan products in recent years (Kreitzen, 2022). Animal testing in cosmetics has been used to test the safety and hypo-allergenic properties of beauty and self-care products for human use. The practice primarily exploits rodents, such as rats, mice, and rabbits (Innis, 2019). The European Commission, Australia, Canada, several U.S states, and some other countries have already introduced a ban on animal testing, making it illegal to produce products such as shampoo, toothpaste, and makeup, in a way that harms animals. However, animal testing continues to prevail in the cosmetics industry. In countries like China, the government requires all cosmetic products to be tested on animals (Wang et al., 2020). Additionally, approximately 80% of countries still have no laws against animal testing (The Body Shop, 2024). Hence, the controversy remains prevalent. According to PETA (2024), major cosmetic brands like Benefit, Clarins, NARS, Maybelline, Bobbi Brown, and many more big brand names, are still using animal testing today.

Studies that examine consumer behaviour towards cruelty-free cosmetic products are still scarce. In their 2018 survey with 15,000 participants, Perfect365 show that 36% of participants buy cosmetics from cruelty-free brands (Pur Cosmetics, 2018). Alaouir et al. (2019) investigated the factors influencing purchase intention for cruelty-free cosmetics products among female millennials in Sweden. They found that morals and environmental knowledge positively affect the intention to buy cruelty-free cosmetics.

Additionally, Grappe et al. (2021) studied the impact of the claim "not tested on animals" on consumers' attitudes and behaviour. The findings showed that credibility, attitude, and subjective norms affect the intention to buy cruelty-free products. They also advised companies to increase customers' knowledge with transparency regarding this issue.

Furthermore, Amalia & Darmawan (2023) conducted a study of 326 participants in purchasing cruelty-free personal care products, revealing a 73.4% tendency towards cruelty-free product purchase intention. The study also showed that participants aged 17-25, were more concerned about cruelty-free products and had a higher likelihood of purchasing vegan cosmetics over their peers, further demonstrating Generation Z's attention towards these matters.

Global Culture & CSR – ‘Cancel Culture’

In relation to the global attention towards CSR, is the emergence of ‘cancel culture’. The rise of the online global culture has led to this phenomenon (Alli, 2022). Despite its mass presence on social media, cancel culture has not been thoroughly studied in the marketing literature (Saldanha et al., 2022). Cancel culture is a contemporary way of boycotting or ‘calling out’ a brand on social media for their unethical behaviour, such as animal cruelty, racism, and environmental damage (Bromwich, 2018). It has been employed on various social media platforms to ‘dismiss something or somebody’ (Rojo, 2018). According to one study, 40% of Generation Z have stopped purchasing or boycotted a brand or company because they stood for something or behaved in a way that didn't align with their values (Sustainable Brands, 2018).

Influencers and other social media users can ‘cancel’ brands and individuals instantly and this can have a massive impact on their global reputation (Dershowitz, 2020). Duque et al, (2021) examined how cancel culture can spark massive change such as the previously mentioned, BLM movement. Additionally, it has become easier than ever to pinpoint which brands are not making the effort to promote these types of issues with a simple internet search (Grigore, 2010).

Cancel culture has a large presence within the online global beauty community. Worldwide famous makeup influencer and brand creator, Jeffree Star, has been the target of cancel culture due to his racist comments among many other influential individuals in the beauty and

self-care industry (Mulroney, 2021). While this phenomenon has not been widely researched, it is still important for brands to understand the stake of cancel culture when selecting an influencer to promote their products (Saldanha et al., 2022). This form of online activism demonstrates the power of the digital society and its impact on global consumer behaviour, particularly within the cosmetic industry.

The Irish Cosmetics Industry

The cosmetic market is a valuable and vibrant business sector within the Irish economy and society, generating significant employment and economic activity (Power, 2021). In 2024, the beauty and personal care market in Ireland is projected to generate a revenue of 1.21 billion USD and has a CAGR of 1.81% (2024-2028). Online sales have been projected to contribute to 24.2% of the total revenue in the cosmetics market in 2024, and the surge in demand for organic and natural skincare products in Ireland reflects a growing consumer preference for sustainable and eco-friendly cosmetic options (Statista, 2024). This highlights the need for brands to communicate their corporate social responsibility to gain the attention of this market.

According to data reports, Ireland is home to 4.01 million social media users (in January 2024), equating to 79% of the country's population (Kemp, 2024). The cosmetic market one of the fastest growing consumer markets, driven by new demand from Generation Z on social media, as trends from all over the world are spreading and changing the daily beauty and self-care routines of these consumers (Statista, 2024). The target group for this research is cosmetic consumers in Ireland aged 18-30 years old, who are active on social media. From the previous studies, it is evident that this generation is quickly adopting new technologies and changing marketing paradigms. From the statistics and insight, it is evident that a large portion of Irish consumers are using digital platforms and engaging in global trends, which is driving cosmetic consumption. This reflects the importance of using social media as a marketing tool for cosmetic brands that are looking to target the consumer segment that reside in a global online beauty community.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the literature review reveals several insights into the relationships between cultural globalisation, consumer behaviour, and CSR within the global cosmetics market. It is evident that cultural dynamics play a key role in shaping consumer behaviour and as consumers are interacting through social media, the homogenisation of global purchasing norms, lifestyles, and values has been accelerated. The increase in digital communication and sharing of knowledge online has also accentuated consumers' awareness regarding businesses' social and environmental responsibility, and businesses are now expected to actively contribute to society and the environment in a positive manner.

Despite the growing body of research on global culture and CSR, gaps remain in concern to the extent of which these elements impact consumer habits and product choices, particularly within the cosmetics sector. While studies do show that ethical and environmental considerations are increasing in value to consumers, highlighted by the growth in demand for green cosmetic products and inclusive marketing, there is limited insight into the extent of its impact on consumer behaviour in the cosmetics industry. There are also conflicting theories regarding a products' greenness and its actual performance and which of these aspects is most valued and if cosmetic consumers are being accurately informed about a company's CSR efforts. Additionally, it is understood that global culture is a byproduct of the advancement of social media, however studies have not illustrated how consumers feel about the global culture, nor documented their full contributions or awareness this phenomenon. The relationship between the global consumer culture and CSR has not been adequately documented, providing opportunity to explore this correlation in more detail, especially with the advent of cancel culture, and its vigour to initiate global change.

Overall, the literature that currently exists calls for expansion on the phenomenon of global culture and its impact on consumer behaviour in the digital era. Additionally, more recent studies regarding CSR's influence within the cosmetic sector is necessary, to gather valuable information on its impact on consumer behaviour and perceptions. This is especially important as consumers online are highly informed and concerned about a business' contributions to society and the environment.

Research Question and Objectives

The main purpose of this study is to assess the impact of global culture and corporate social responsibility on consumer behaviour in the cosmetics industry. This research focuses on cosmetic consumers in Ireland aged 18-30, who are active on social media.

As mentioned previously, the research aims to answer the following question:

“How does global culture and CSR impact cosmetic consumers’ behaviour in Ireland?”

Four research objectives have influenced this study to answer the research question and provide the structure for the thesis’ analysis. These objectives are as follows:

❖ ***Objective 1***

To define both global culture and CSR in the cosmetics industry and ascertain the relationship between these two concepts in terms of their impact on consumer behaviour and brand perceptions.

❖ ***Objective 2***

To assess the influence of social media in exposing Irish cosmetic consumers to a global culture and how this affects their behaviour.

❖ ***Objective 3***

To explore the impact of CSR on cosmetic consumers’ behaviour and brand perceptions in Ireland.

❖ ***Objective 4***

To develop a list of ‘best practice’ principles for marketing cosmetics to consumers in an era of global culture alongside increased ethical and environmental concerns.

Research Methodology

Introduction

Kothari (2004) describes research as ‘a scientific and systematic search for pertinent information on a specific topic’. Apuke (2017), states that research involves building knowledge and conducting experiments, to find out the cause and effect of a chosen topic. Thus, research involves collecting data on a chosen subject, to determine cause and effect through different variables. Methodology is a fundamental research strategy which illustrates how research should be conducted and is an integral part of a thesis, ensuring consistency between techniques, tools, and underlying philosophy and principles (Melnikovas, 2018).

This study examines the impact of global culture and CSR on consumer behaviour within the context of Irish cosmetic consumers. In this chapter, the methods and approaches to conducting the primary research will be outlined.

Framework

The methodology for this research is constructed following the ‘research onion’ model proposed by Saunders et al, (2016). The research onion provides the researcher with ordered stages, which formulate effective methodology (Raithatha, 2017). Saunders proposes that the onion model consists of three levels of decision making, which are broken down into six layers; research philosophy, research approach, research design, research strategy, time horizon, and techniques and processes (Saunders et al., 2012).

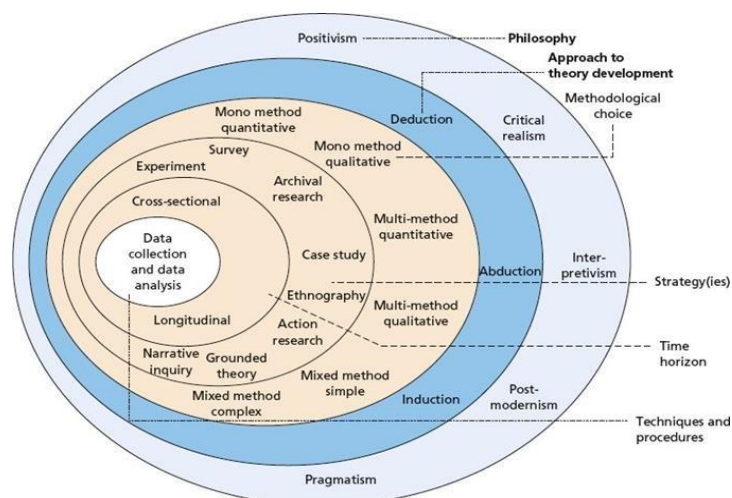


Figure 3. 'Saunders' Research Onion' (Saunders et al., 2016)

Research Philosophy

As seen in *Figure 3*, four main research perspectives are outlined; positivist, interpretivist, pragmatist, and critical realist (Saunders et al., 2016). Research philosophy is based on a set of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge, pointing to the notion that any researchers, whether aware of these philosophies or not, will make several assumptions throughout their study (Burrell & Morgan, 2016).

Positivism is a belief that that knowledge should be derived from empirical observation and objective measurement, thus making it a rigorously scientific approach to research, assuming that there is one fixed reality which exists independently of society's perceptions, grounded on structured data (Rashid, 2023). Similarly, critical realism undertakes a scientific approach, assuming that the future can be determined by participating influences, which also exist independently from human perceptions (Melnikovas, 2018). Interpretivist researchers believe that reality is socially constructed and continuously evolving, therefore data is relative and subjective (Melnikovas, 2018).

John and Clark (2006) state that business researchers need to be aware of the philosophical commitments they make through choice of research strategy. Additionally, Alvesson and Skoldberg (2009) note that researchers must become aware of and understand the relationship between their philosophical position and how their research is conducted.

Whilst examining these philosophies, it was concluded that pragmatism was the most applicable. This perspective to research assumes that integrating positivist and interpretivist approaches is the best method to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the research question, providing an outcome that has both practical implications and relevance to society (Rashid, 2023) thus, appropriate to gather quantifiable marketing data on consumer trends and behaviour along with relevant social insight gathered through a qualitative approach. Adopting this approach aims to provide a deeper comprehension of the impact of global culture and CSR on cosmetic consumers' behaviour in Ireland. In this sense, a pragmatist position offers the researcher with freedom to choose which methods and strategies can best answer the research question, providing more context for analysis (Creswell, 2007).

According to researchers like David et al., (2018) and Dawadi (2019), a pragmatist approach presents the lengthy process of data collection as a major challenge. Another limitation cited is integrating qualitative and quantitative data can be difficult for many researchers (Wisdom & Creswell, 2013). However, many justifications for this approach argue that a mixed method strategy allows researchers to widen their thesis question and provide depth to the inquiry, broadening insight, and accumulating more data regarding the research topic (Creswell, 2003). Additionally, if the data is combined thoughtfully, it can add greater value to the study. Hence, producing opportunities for extra reflection and greater understanding of a phenomenon, also opening new avenues for future research (Teddle & Tashakkori, 2009). Pragmatist researchers recognise that the world can be interpreted in many ways when undertaking research. Pragmatist research aims to provide a deeper insight to the research question, using a method or methods that provide reliable, well-founded, and relevant information to be collected, thus adding value to the study (Keleman & Rumens, 2008).

Research Approach

According to Saunders et al (2012), there are three distinct approaches to research: deductive, inductive, and abductive. Trochim (2006) defines inductive reasoning as moving from the ‘specific to the general’, while deductive reasoning begins with the general and ends with the specific. Hence, deduction is based on analysis of pre-existing theories, whereas induction seeks to develop a theory.

As this research aims add confirmation to pre-existing theories, it may be described as deductive. Conversely, the study’s intention to seek patterns or themes within the qualitative data could be described as inductive. The amalgamation of reasonings within this study is where the abductive research approach comes to light. Instead of moving from theory to data or data to theory, abductive reasoning moves back and forth between induction and deduction (Suddaby, 2006).

For this study to examine the impact of global culture and CSR on Irish cosmetic consumers’ behaviour, an abductive approach was deemed most appropriate. While quantitative and qualitative research connects theory to data using deduction and induction singly, the pragmatic approach relies on abduction (Modell, 2009). Hence, abduction corresponds to the

research philosophy adopted for this study. By doing this, the researcher can derive distinct and multiple realities from both quantitative and qualitative research (Rorty, 1999; Creswell and Plano-Clark, 2011).

The purpose of this research is to examine the impact of global culture and CSR on cosmetic consumers in Ireland. Abduction enables the researcher to provide an empirical and theoretical contribution to the realm of marketing and business. Due to the flexibility of abductive reasoning, many scholars argue that because pure induction or deduction methods are extremely difficult to achieve, most researchers use at least some form of abduction (Saunders, 2019). Thus, the author concludes that providing flexibility and unique perceptions into a multifaceted discussion is optimal. This is intended to emphasize coherence with pre-existing knowledge and open new insights, remaining aware of the ever-evolving nature of the marketing world, and consumer behaviour and preferences.

Research Strategy

Research strategy is a general way to aid the researcher in their choice of main data collection methods to meet research objectives (Melnikovas, 2018).

Surveys are the main means of collecting primary data and enables this data to be collected in a standardized way, thus ensuring consistency and accuracy for future analysis (Krosnick, 2018; Malhotra, 2006). This strategy is frequently used in marketing and social research (Roopa & Rani, 2012). One argument against surveying is that participants in the study may be prone to social desirability bias, in which they feel they must provide 'socially acceptable' responses or answers to which they believe the researcher is in favour of (Presser, 2010).

However, multiple studies have demonstrated that by offering anonymity on surveys and questionnaires, social pressure is reduced and thus so is social desirability bias (Presser, 2010). For these reasons, and for the purpose of exploring the research in an unbiased and purposeful manner, it was determined that employing a digital survey was the best strategy to utilize for this paper.

Research Method

The fourth layer in the research onion is research methods, which describes the three main method types: mono-method, mixed-method, and multi-method. Mono-method research focuses on one type of data, quantitative or qualitative. Multi-method research combines the use of qualitative and quantitative data by employing multiple approaches to gathering each form within a single study (Saunders et al., 2016).

Mixed method research involves the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data within a single study and then merging the results to draw overall conclusions (Tashakkori & Creswell, 2007). In this way, pragmatist researchers can determine the extent to which quantitative and/or qualitative measures are used (Teddie & Tashakkori, 2009). Undertaking this data integration allows for a more complete understanding of the research topic and the identification of new research questions (Creswell & Clark, 2011). Furthermore, a mixed method strategy assists to obtain more detailed conclusions by employing two methods in such a way that the qualitative and quantitative methods are strengthened by each other (Plano-Clark & Ivankova, 2016). For these reasons, it was decided that a mixed-method approach would be adopted for this study.

The mixed method research approach consists of three main characteristics outlined by Denscombe (2017):

1. Use of quantitative and qualitative data within a single research project
2. A focus on the link between approaches
3. Pragmatism

This study investigates consumer behaviour based on two factors – global culture and corporate social responsibility. The mixed method approach encourages researchers to improve their confidence in the accuracy of their findings through using different methods to investigate the same research question. Combining methods also supply the researcher with the opportunity to find links between the findings from one method and the findings from another (triangulation). Mixed method research also increases the accuracy of research findings, when the data produced from both methods of research are reflective in one another. Consequently, the validity of findings is therefore improved in terms of accuracy, making the mixed method approach a valuable product of the research process. Moreover, employing

mixed methods the research topic allows for a more enhanced picture of the findings while also developing the analysis by providing further data to build on what was learned through the initial method used (Denscombe, 2017). The nuanced nature of this research calls for increased insights and perception to the topic at hand and therefore these advantages were key in the decision to employ this approach.

Despite its advantages, the challenges involved in mixed methods must be addressed as a precautionary measure. One disadvantage of this approach is that the underlying philosophy (pragmatism) can be open to misinterpretation. Additionally, findings from different methods may not be supportive of one another, leading to further confusion and the challenge of extending the research further to explain the reasons for this (Denscombe, 2017).

However, as a problem-driven individual with both an analytical and inquisitive mind, the author concluded that the mixed method design would be most effective in investigating the impact of global culture and CSR on consumer behaviour, by facilitating a blend of explanatory and exploratory research to complement each other. This hopes to address the wider range of questions involved in understanding the concept of consumer perceptions and behaviours within a unique perspective, reflecting the pragmatic philosophy associated with this research.

A vital decision in conducting a mixed method research is determining the level of interaction between the quantitative and qualitative data within the study. Mixed method research designs do not need to attach equal weight to quantitative and qualitative data; however, one type of data can be regarded as the ‘main’ and the other as the ‘subsidiary’. Used primarily in psychology and marketing research, this research employed qualitative data as the subsidiary, to gain a deeper understanding of the quantitative research collected and to explore consumers’ psychology (Denscombe, 2017).

In this study, the convergent design was employed. The convergent design occurs when the researcher gathers quantitative and qualitative data during the same phase of the research process (concurrently), then merges the two data findings for an overall interpretation. The purpose of this design is to obtain diverse yet complementary data on the same topic, to gain a better understanding of the research problem (Creswell, 2021).

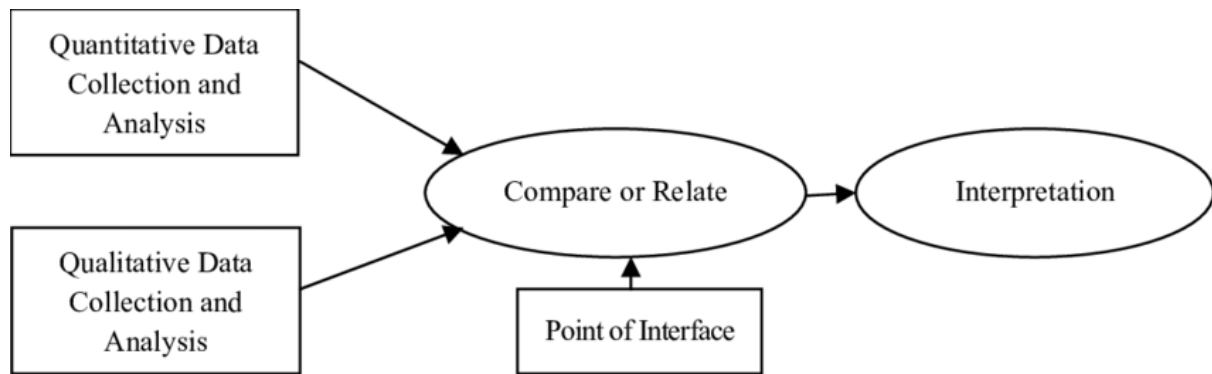


Figure 4. The Convergent Design (Creswell & Plano-Clark, 2011).

There are three common variants of the convergent design found in research literature: the parallel-databases variant, the data-transformation variant, and the data-validation variant. The data-validation variant can involve the inclusion of an open-ended question in a survey to support the results of the close-ended questions. This employs qualitative items as an add-on to a primarily quantitative design, allowing the researcher to find emergent themes and context-based insight to enhance the quantitative survey findings, which is suitable for this study (Creswell, 2021).

To examine the impact of and global culture and CSR on cosmetic consumers' behaviour in Ireland, it was determined that the convergent design would be employed using a survey. Based on the literature review, the author realises that the majority of relevant research applies a quantitative approach. However, qualitative elements also exist in the study of consumer behaviour and attitudes. As a result, it was determined that the survey would primarily focus on gathering quantitative data, with qualitative data being used to support and expand the findings. This design is effective, as it allows for the analysis of statistical trends, while also identifying the variables which impact consumer behaviour. This will provide more insight into Irish cosmetic consumers' behaviour and perspectives on the research topic in an authentic manner.

Ethical Considerations

In research, ethics is defined by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2015) as the standards of behaviour that guide your study in relation to the rights of those who become subject to and are affected by your work. In the case of this study, the ethics form provided by the National College of Ireland was filled out and adhered to prior to, and throughout the course of this research. Additionally, all participants involved in the primary research consented voluntarily and were aware of their right to withdraw from the study freely. Anonymity was guaranteed and the purpose of their participation was explained. The data provided by survey participants was stored confidentially and securely and the information was used accurately and truthfully. Lastly, all secondary research used from other authors has been acknowledged by using the correct citing and referencing, to ensure that plagiarism did not occur.

Time Horizon

In the sixth layer, the research onion outlines the time horizons as longitudinal and cross-sectional. A longitudinal study refers to research of a phenomenon or population over a prolonged period (Caruana et al., 2015), whereas a cross-sectional study is the study of a cross-section or phenomenon of the population at a particular time (Setia, 2016). Considering that the primary data collected for this study was gathered over a three-week period in July 2024, it is appropriate to conclude that this research is cross-sectional in nature.

Techniques and Procedures

The final layer of the research onion is techniques and procedures, referring to the data collection and analysis. The elements of stage seven are demonstrated below.

Sample Selection

A fundamental part of the research process is sampling. Sampling consists of deciding on where and with whom to conduct the gathering of data (Maxwell, 2013). According to Morse and Niehaus (2009), regardless of the methodology, sampling methods can maximise efficiency and validity. Denscombe (2017) also notes that when conducting research, it is vital that the participants have some knowledge and experience regarding the research questions. For these reasons, and for the context of this study, purposive sampling and snowball sampling was employed.

Purposive sampling involves selecting people based on the knowledge and experience they have regarding the research topic (Maxwell, 2013). The advantage of using purposive sampling is that it allows the researcher to home in on participants which they believe have good grounds to be critical to the research (Denscombe, 2017). Snowball sampling is often used in market research and involves asking existing participants to nominate further persons who fit the measures for the research purpose. This technique is effective for building up a reasonable sized sample for small scale research purposes and its use is perfectly compatible with purposive sampling (Denscombe, 2017).

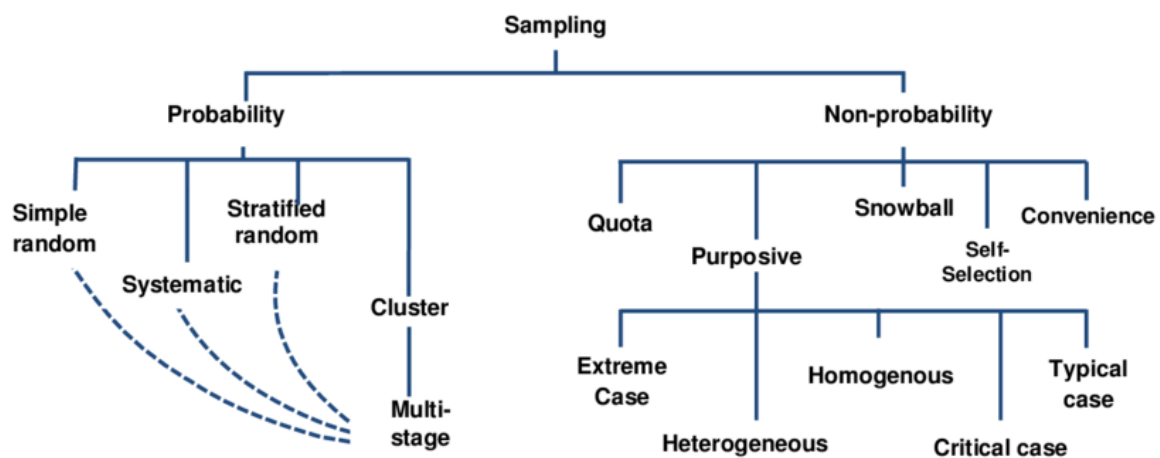


Figure 5. Sampling Techniques (Saunders et al, 2009)

Both types of sampling used for this research are non-probability sampling types, which subscribes to the pragmatic research philosophy. The pragmatic approach contends that non-probability sampling techniques produce data that is sufficiently accurate for the purpose of the research, whilst considering the constraints of time and money which can be spent on a thesis. This is particularly inclusive of project researchers who are conducting surveys as part of an academic degree, who are unlikely to have large-scale resources to work with large populations and samples (Denscombe, 2017).

The target demographic for this research was cosmetic consumers in Ireland, aged 18-30, who are active users of social media. There were sixty-one participants involved in this research who fit the criterion.

Data Collection Procedures

For this study to be conducted, primary data was collected through the means of a survey. Secondary data has also been used as a source of data collection, collected from books, peer-reviewed journal articles, and reputable internet sources.

Surveys have an emphasis on producing data based on real-world observations which suggests that the research includes an active attempt by the researcher to gather relevant data. Additionally, surveys can collect both types of data, supporting the mixed-method approach employed for this study. Self-completion questionnaires can generate large volumes of quantitative data for statistical analysis but can also provide qualitative data just as easily. The use of a pragmatic perspective and mixed-method approach to this research using non-probability sampling techniques, enabled the survey to be used as a means to collect qualitative data in support of a grounded theory enquiry, from the quantitative data collected (Denscombe, 2017).

The survey was created using Google Forms and was administered via social media platforms and direct messaging. The survey consisted of multiple questions, one of which was open-ended to encourage more detailed response. The close-ended questions required respondents to choose from answers provided by Likert scales and multiple-choice answers. These types of questions are easiest for participants to engage in and for researchers to analyse (Glasgow, 2005). The final question was an open-ended question, allowing participants to offer their own relevant insights. Open-ended questions allow the researcher to explore additional and useful insights and ideas (Salant & Dillman, 1994) thus reflecting the convergent strategy employed by the researcher. The close-ended questions in the survey were related only to the research topic and were straightforward with simple language to ensure that the participants were willing to answer (Denscombe, 2017).

Data Analysis Process

The purpose of data analysis is to gain a deeper understanding of it through detailed examination and interpretation of the topic being studied (Denscombe, 2017). In accordance with Creswell and Plano-Clark's (2017) convergent design, both sets of data were analysed separately, then merged for an overall analysis.

Denscombe (2017) presents a five-stage approach to data analysis which was followed by the researcher for both data types. The first stage in this approach is ‘data preparation’ which involves categorising the quantitative data and transcribing the text from the qualitative data. The next phase is the ‘initial exploration of the data’ which consists of identifying obvious trends and correlations within the data variables. This also includes highlighting relevant information which is deemed valuable to the findings and analyses. Stage three, or ‘analysis of the data’ refers to the researcher’s use of statistical data and qualitative data to identify comparing and contrasting themes and correlations for overall findings.

Stage four is ‘presentation and display of the data’, referring to the visualisation of findings using tables, figures, and written interpretation of the data.

In this research, the qualitative data was presented using direct quotes from the survey participants and charts, figures, and written interpretation to demonstrate the quantitative data. The last stage, ‘validation of data’ is finalised once the data has been collected and interpreted. The use of a convergent mixed method design enabled the researcher to embellish and validate the quantitative findings using comparisons while identifying patterns within the qualitative findings that were relevant to the research topic.

Limitations

Creswell (2009) highlights the importance of setting the parameters for a study by outlining the limitations and delimitations when conducting research. The limitations of a study are defined as the uncontrollable constraints to research based on its methodology and design (Miles, 2017).

As a basis for this study, the author identified several limitations:

Firstly, as this research includes aspects of very current and ever-evolving topics, there was a lack of published work to be referred to, regarding this research’s specifics. While the literature review shows pre-existing evidence of studies on the research topics (global culture, CSR, consumer behaviour) individually, it proved difficult to access to relevant and recent information on the specific objectives of this study, which positioned itself as a limitation.

Beyond the lack of breadth in recent literature on the study elements, gathering data on consumer behaviour and perceptions poses a challenge, due to the intricate nature of social and behaviour sciences. Conducting research using a survey during a specific time frame

does not factor changing circumstances, gaining of new knowledge, and other stimuli which influence individuals' behaviour over time. This limitation also emphasizes the importance of continuously researching consumer behaviour in marketing. As the research was completed over a short time period, the challenges associated with time constraints also emerged. This not only impacted the sample size's potential, but also the lack of experience regarding certain project aspects for the author. Given more time, it may have been possible to gather an obtain more information and knowledge, likely to result in more detailed and accurate analysis. Finally, given the sample size of this study, the findings may not be an accurate representation of the research's overall target population.

Delimitations are concerned with narrowing the scope of the study and prevent researchers from stating generalised findings (Miles & Scott, 2017). The broader scope of this thesis is the impact of global culture and CSR on consumer behaviour. To narrow the frame of the research focus, the author focused on the experiences of Irish cosmetic consumers aged 18-30 who are active users of social media. Limiting the research to a demographic, geographical region, and business sector acts as a delimitation factor to the study.

Findings and Analyses

Both descriptive and thematic analyses were performed on the collected data. The findings from the quantitative data were exported to Excel Spreadsheets and formatted into graphical representations of the statistics. An SPSS software was also applied to conduct frequency tables and Pearson Correlation tests. The qualitative data was directly transcribed from the survey, to identify key themes and patterns in the responses which related to the research objectives. The statistical graphs demonstrated below are followed by their corresponding interpretations.

Quantitative Findings

Consumer Awareness

(Objective 1)

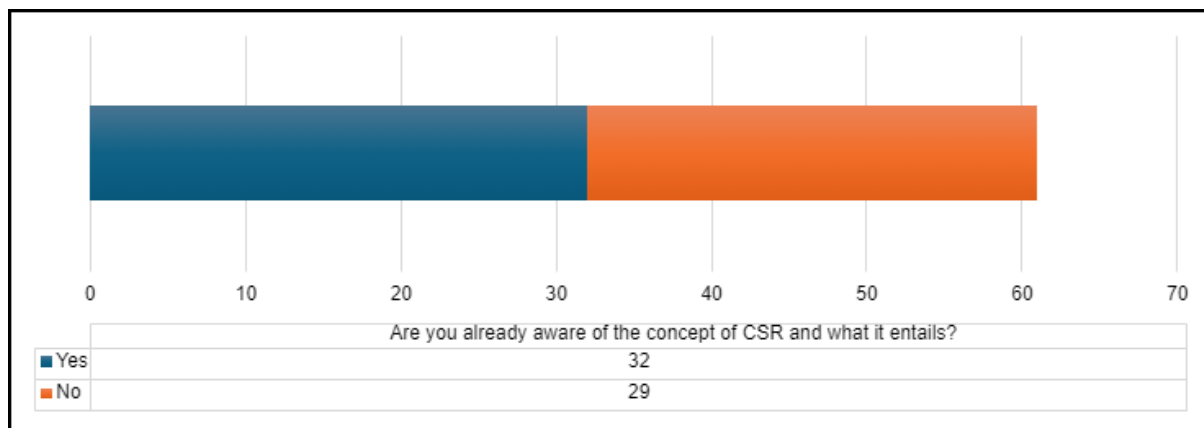


Figure 6 - CSR Awareness

Are you already aware of the concept of CSR?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	32	52.5	52.5	52.5
	No	29	47.5	47.5	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Chart 1.

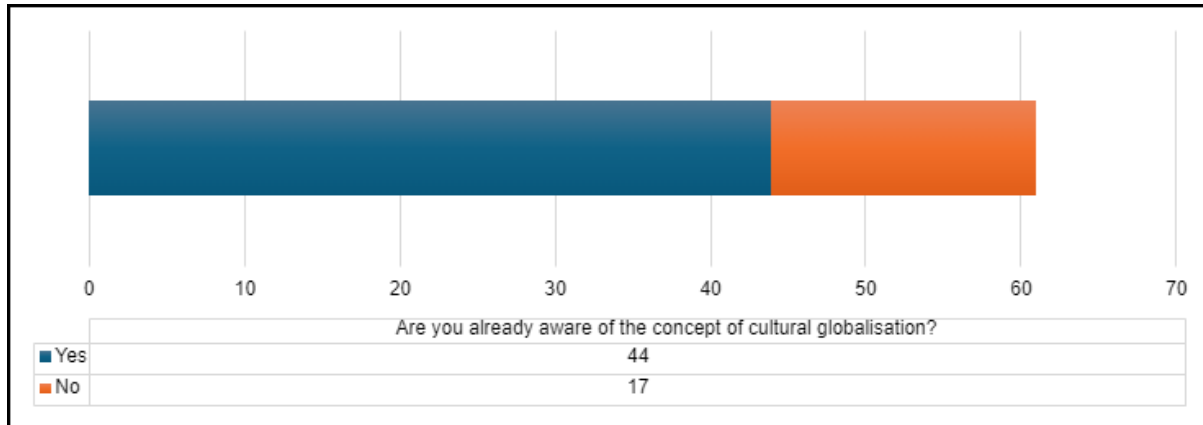


Figure 7 – Global Culture Awareness

Are you already aware of the concept of Cultural Globalisation?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	44	72.1	72.1	72.1
	No	17	27.9	27.9	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Chart 2.

Interpretation

According to the survey findings shown in *Figures 6-7* and *Charts 1-2*, 72.1% of the sample were already aware of the concept of global culture, whereas 27.9% were not. Additionally, 52.5% of participants were already aware of the concept of CSR and what it entails while 47.5% were not.

This indicates a high level of awareness of global culture and a moderate understanding of CSR. It is understood that global culture is prominent online. Hence, the fact that the sample demographic consisted of active users on social media, rationalises the towering awareness of a globalised culture. However, this was still an interesting find, as it had not been previously outlined in the literature review whether consumers were consciously aware of the concept of a global culture.

Influence of Social Media in Global Culture

(Objective 2 & 4)

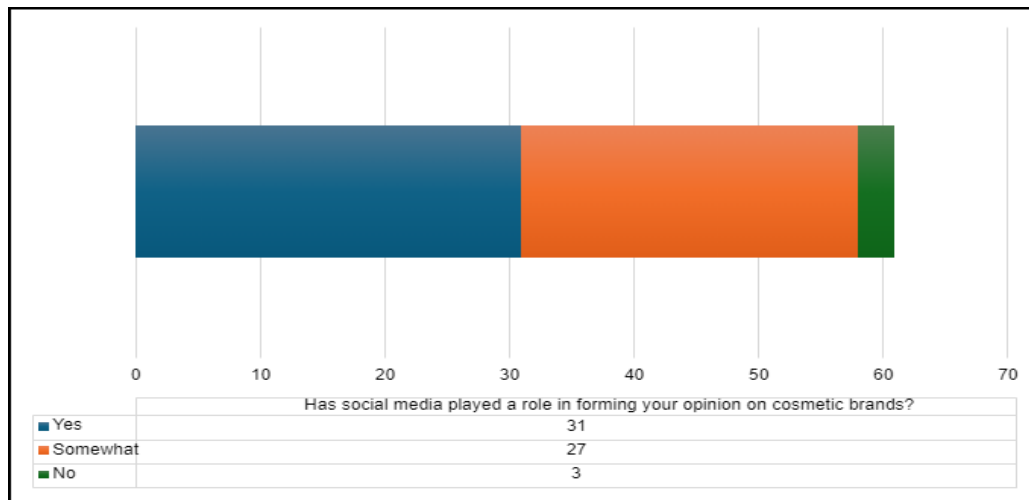


Figure 8 – Social Media's role in Forming Brand Opinions

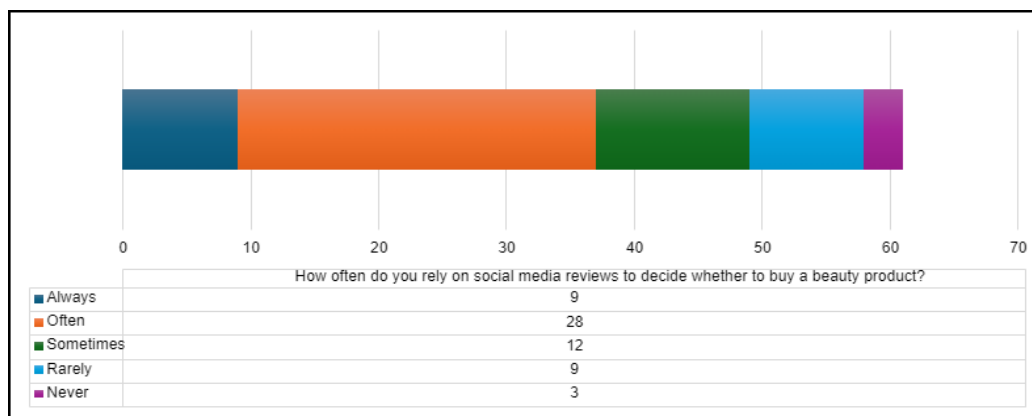


Figure 9 – Reliance on Social Media Reviews

Interpretation

Social media has played significant role in forming participants' opinions on cosmetic brands, with 50.8% responding 'yes' and 44.3% responding 'somewhat'. Only three participants (4.3%) responded that social media has had no effect on forming their opinion on cosmetic brands. The sample is also highly reliant on social media reviews. The addition of 'always' and 'often' responses accounts for 60.7% of the sample. Additionally, 19.7% submitted that they 'sometimes' use social media reviews, indicating social media reviews do have some influence on these individuals. Of the 61 participants, 19.7% state that they rarely or never rely on social media reviews when buying a product.

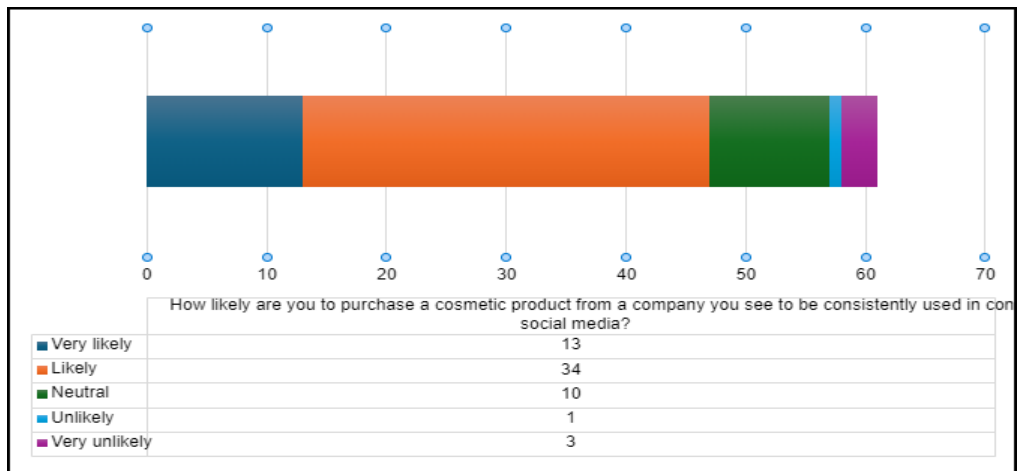


Figure 10 – Social Media use and Purchase Intention

Interpretation

The findings in *Figure 10* show that 55.7% are ‘likely’ and a further 21.3% are ‘very likely’ to purchase a product from a cosmetic brand which they see to be consistently used on social media platforms. This accounts for 77% of the study group. Only 6.5% of the group are either unlikely or very unlikely to be influenced by a product’s online popularity. Overall, most of the sample are more likely to purchase a cosmetic product with high online visibility.

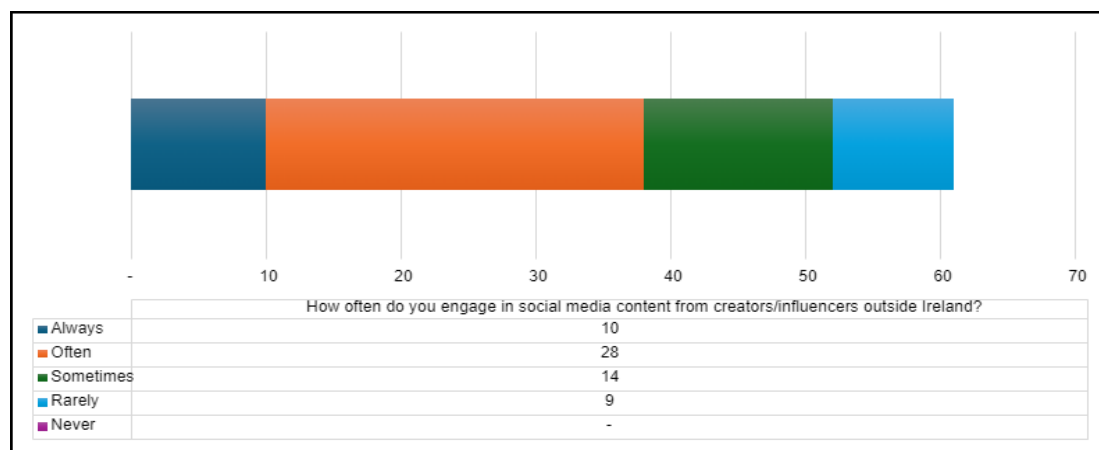


Figure 11 – Engagement with Global Influencers

Interpretation

The most common response to how often the participants engages with foreign influencers was ‘often’ at 45.9%. A significant proportion of the study sample, 23%, sometimes engage in this content and only 16.4% always engage in content from foreign creators. The lowest

response to this question was ‘rarely’ at 14.8%. This indicates that most of the target demographic are engaging with global content at various degrees. None of the participants answered ‘never’, which establishes just how available global connectivity is online.

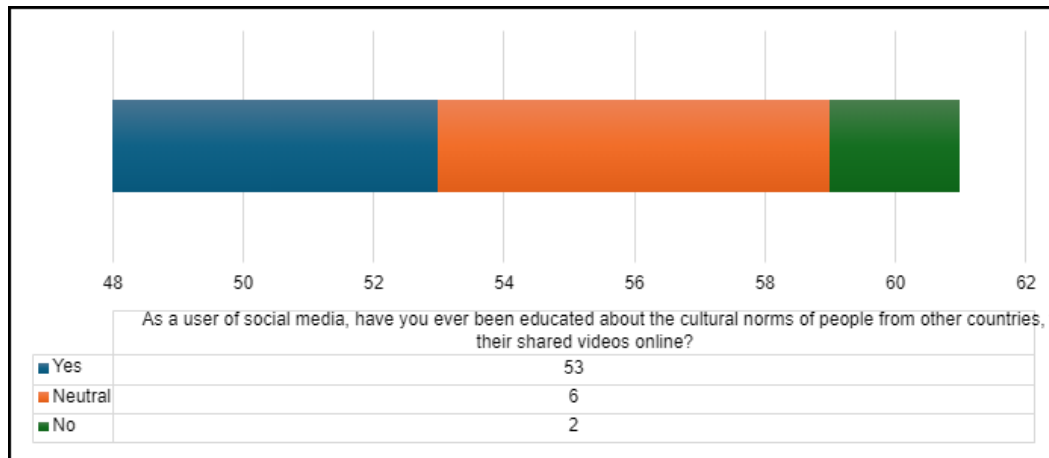


Figure 12 – Cross-Cultural Education

Interpretation

Regarding cross-cultural knowledge and education through social media platforms, a staggering number of the participants have been exposed to the experiences and norms of individuals outside of Ireland with 86.9% responding ‘yes’ to the question asked.

Only 3.3% responded ‘no’ while the remaining individuals remained neutral. This is telling, concluding that a large proportion of the sample are exposed to diverse cultures, which may influence their own beliefs, values, and beauty ideals, as demonstrated by previous literature.

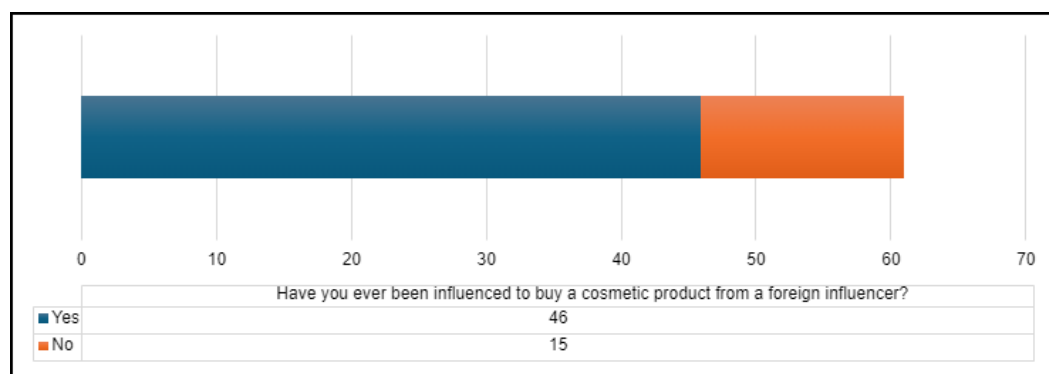


Figure 13 – Foreign Influence on Purchasing

Interpretation

Figure 13 shows that 75.4% of the survey sample have been influenced to purchase a product from an influencer outside of Ireland. 24.6% indicated that they have not. These results indicate that social media influencers from foreign countries are highly engaged with by Irish cosmetic consumers and also impact their purchasing behaviour. This underscores the impact of global culture on consumers' purchasing decisions.

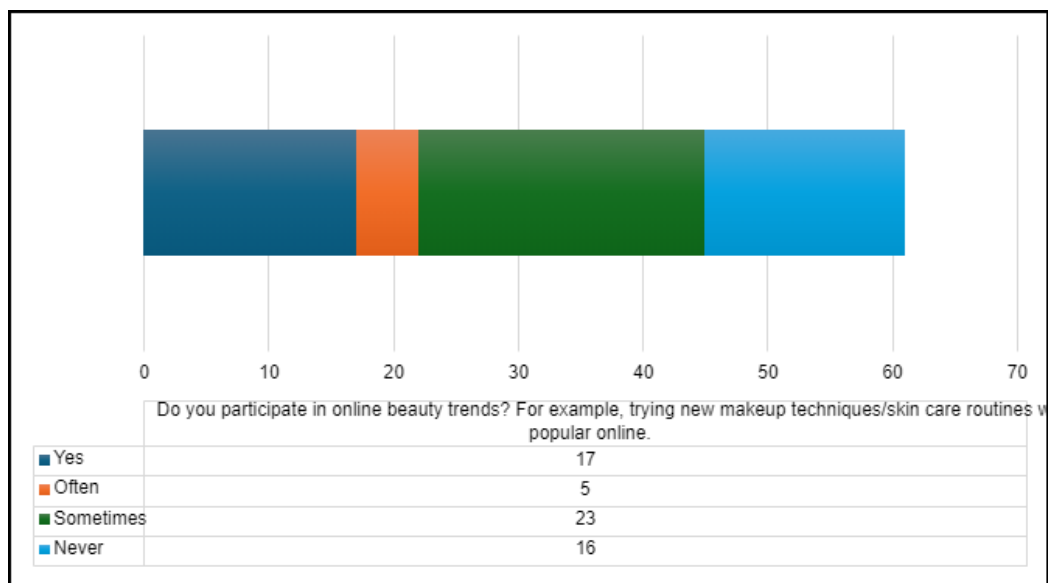


Figure 14 – Participation in Global Beauty Trends

Interpretation

A large portion of the study sample participate in global online beauty trends. 27.9% do engage in global trends, 8.2% often do, and 37.7% sometimes do. However, 26.2% state that they never participate in beauty trends that they see online.

In combination, Figures 11 to 14 show that a high percentage of cosmetic consumers in Ireland are exposed to a globalised culture, highlighted by their participation in global beauty and self-care trends and the gaining of cross-cultural knowledge through social media platforms. Moreover, the high level of engagement with foreign influencers and their impact in influencing consumers to purchase cosmetic products, further demonstrates the significant impact global online culture has in shaping cosmetic consumers' habits in Ireland.

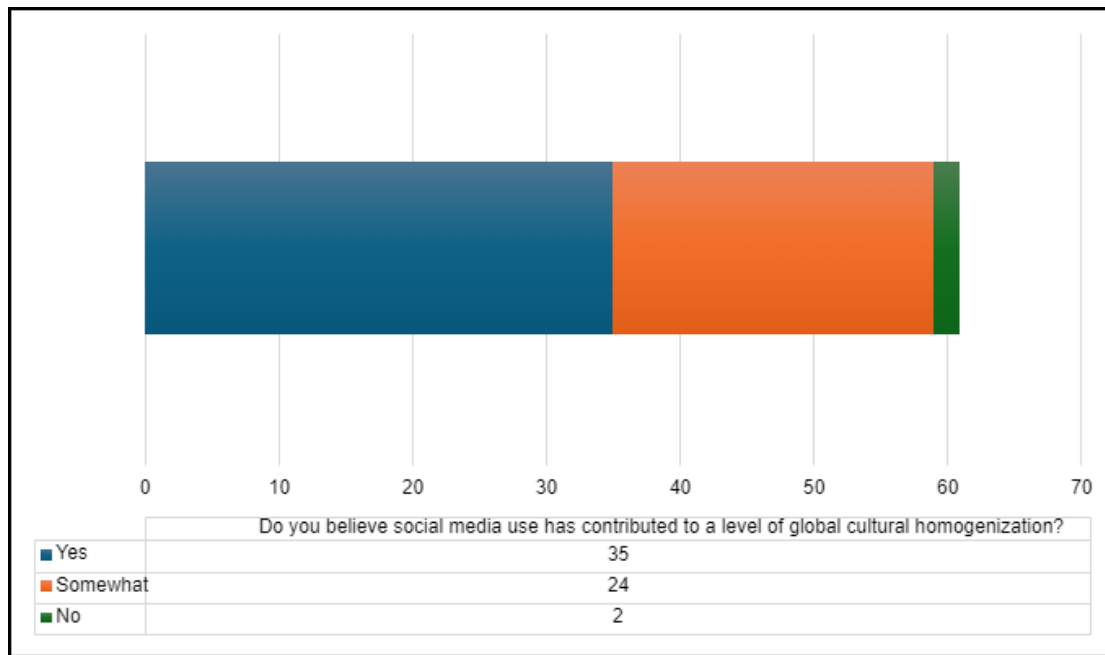


Figure 15 – Homogenisation on Social Media

Do you believe social media use has contributed to global culture?					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	No	2	3.3	3.3	3.3
	Some what	24	39.3	39.3	42.6
	Yes	35	57.4	57.4	100.0
	Total	61	100.0	100.0	

Chart 3.

Interpretation

To gain a general overview of the samples' insights into social media's role in globalising culture, the survey asked for their perspectives. 57.4% of the survey respondents believe that social media has contributed to cultural globalisation. A further 39.3% of respondents agree to some degree and only 3.3% of the participants do not believe that social media has facilitated global culture.

Similarly to *Figure 6*, this was a compelling find, as it concludes that consumers in Ireland are aware of social media's influence in cultural homogenisation and they are accepting this

shift to digital unification, by engaging with foreign influencers and changing the way they consume, use, and form opinions about cosmetic products.

In relation to the overall findings in this section, a Pearson correlation analysis was conducted and demonstrated a positive relationship between the participants that rely on social media reviews and those that engage with global influencers (*Table 1*). Additionally, there is a positive relationship between social media reliance and the forming of brand perceptions among the sample (*Table 2*). This further concludes that cosmetic consumers who use social media to gain knowledge about beauty and self-care items are exposed to a global culture and are fostering this interconnectivity which is affecting their brand perceptions and purchases.

Correlations			
Rely on social media for Cosmetic Reviews	Pearson Correlation	1	.519**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	61	61
Engage with Global Influencers	Pearson Correlation	.519**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	61	61
**. Correlation is significant.			

Table 1.

Correlations			
Rely on social media to decide whether to buy a product.	Pearson Correlation	1	.438**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		<.001
	N	61	61
Social media has played a role in forming opinions on cosmetic brands.	Pearson Correlation	.438**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	
	N	61	61
**. Correlation is significant.			

Table 2.

Corporate Social Responsibility

(Objective 3 & 4)

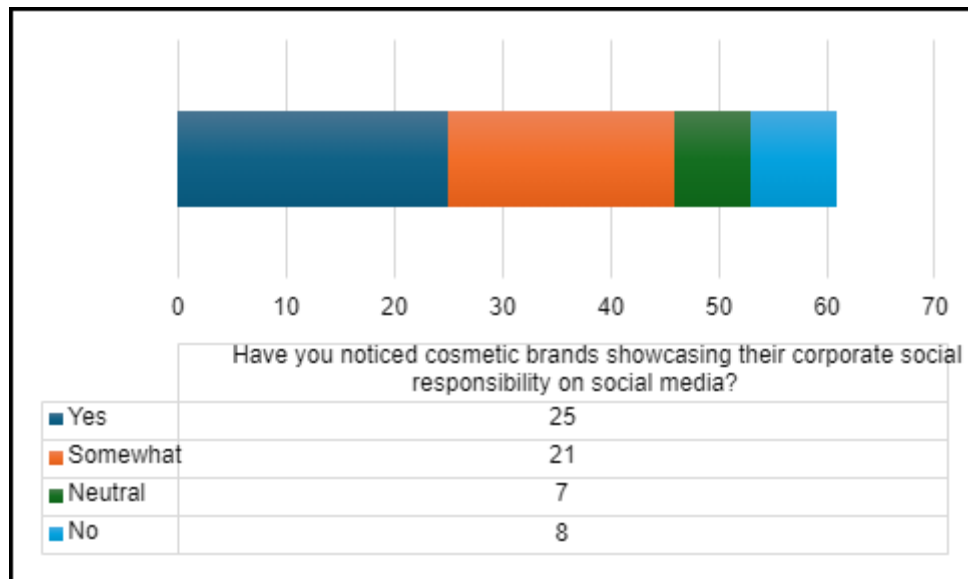


Figure 16 – CSR Communications

Interpretation

Of the sample group, 41% have definitely noticed and 34.4% have somewhat noticed cosmetic brands showcasing their CSR on social media platforms. Only 13.1% of the respondents have not noticed any efforts from cosmetic brands in demonstrating their social responsibility. Based on this feedback, it is clear that cosmetic companies are attempting to demonstrate their social responsibility through social media marketing and that consumers in Ireland are aware of this.

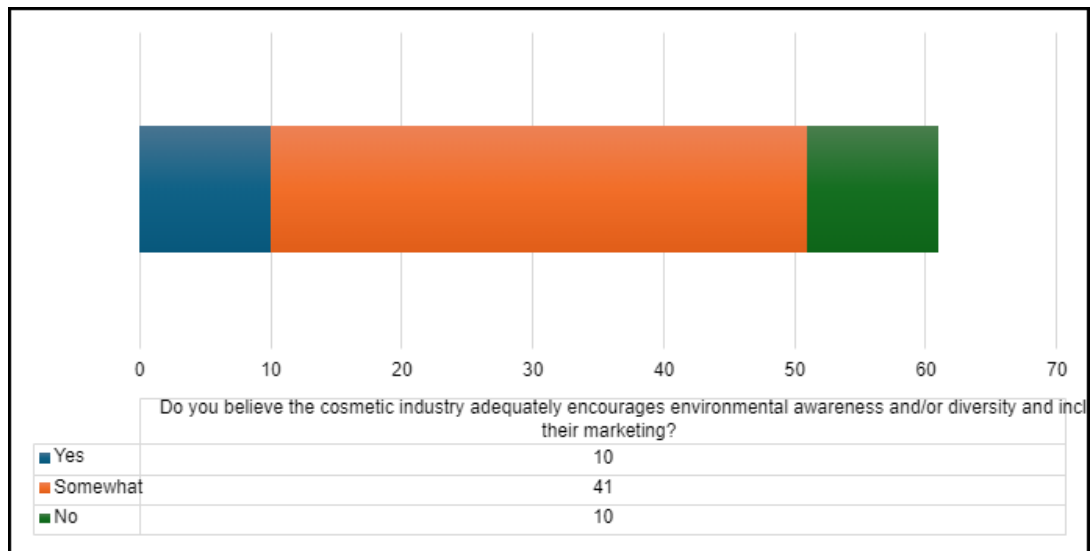


Figure 17 – CSR in Cosmetics Marketing

Interpretation

67.2% of respondents ‘somewhat’ believe that the cosmetics industry is adequately encouraging environmentalism and diversity and inclusion in their marketing communications. Equal responses of 16.4% are ‘yes’ and ‘no’ to the question. Based on the distribution of these responses compared to the other survey question answers, it is safe to conclude that cosmetic consumers in Ireland are not definitive in their belief that cosmetic brands are advocating for these causes as more than half of the sample are only in somewhat agreement that the cosmetics industry is making adequate efforts in CSR related activities.

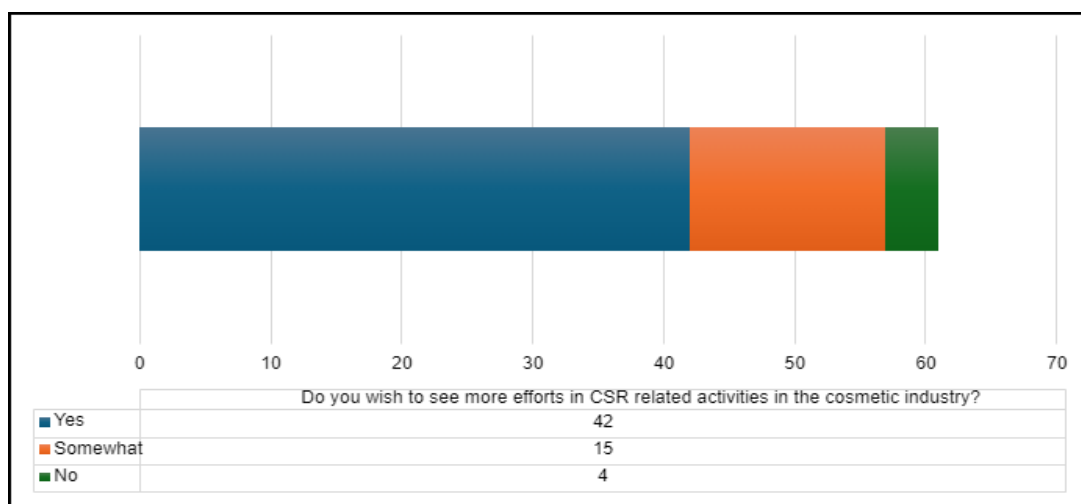


Figure 18 – Demand for CSR Efforts

Interpretation

Figure 18 shows 68.9% of cosmetic consumers in Ireland wish to see increased CSR efforts in the cosmetics industry. Only 6.6% do not and 24.6% somewhat believe there should be increased efforts. Despite the fact that most of the study sample wish to see more CSR efforts within the industry, a large portion (67.2%) somewhat believe that the cosmetic industry is encouraging environmental awareness and/or diversity and inclusion in their marketing communications.

This is a noteworthy find, suggesting that cosmetic brands may need to increase their communications regarding their CSR initiatives, to increase awareness among their consumers and ensure that they adequately showcase their efforts, so that consumers are confident in their efforts to contribute positively to society and the environment.

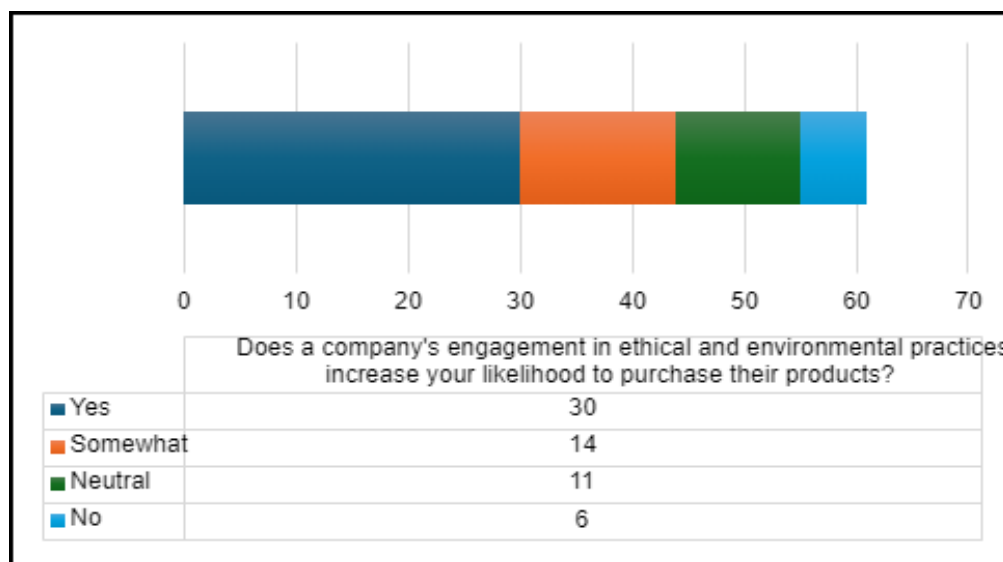


Figure 19 – Environmental Practices and Purchase Intention

Interpretation

49.2% of the study participants are more likely to purchase from ethical and environmentally friendly cosmetic brands. A further 23% indicated that their likelihood to purchase products would be increased by these aspects. 11 participants remained neutral to the idea and only 9.8% responded 'no'. These results demonstrate that the implementation of CSR elements have a positive effect on cosmetic consumers in Ireland's purchasing tendencies.

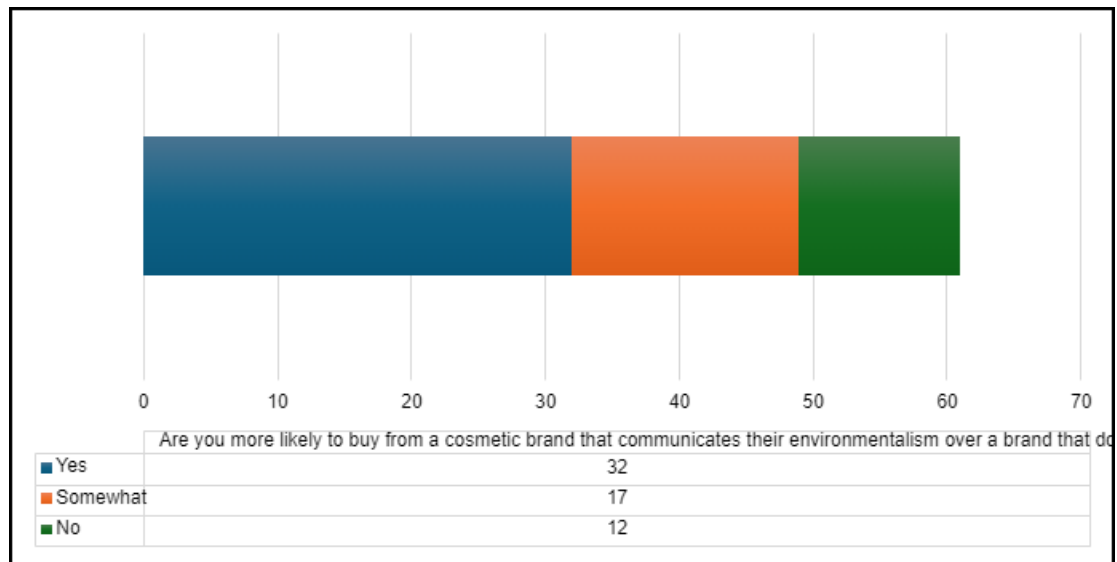


Figure 20 – Sustainability Communications and Purchase Intention

Interpretation

When asked are they more likely to buy from a brand that communicates their environmentalism over those that do not, 52.5% of consumers in this reported that they would be more likely. A further 27.9% are somewhat inclined to choose a cosmetic brand that communicates their environmentalism over ones that do not. 19.7% of the participants would not pick one brand over the other based on their green marketing communications.

This suggests that cosmetic brands which showcase their sustainability and ‘greenness’ can achieve competitive advantage over brands that do not. However, it is important to note that a significant number of the sample answered a definitive ‘no’, which calls for further investigation into why this is.

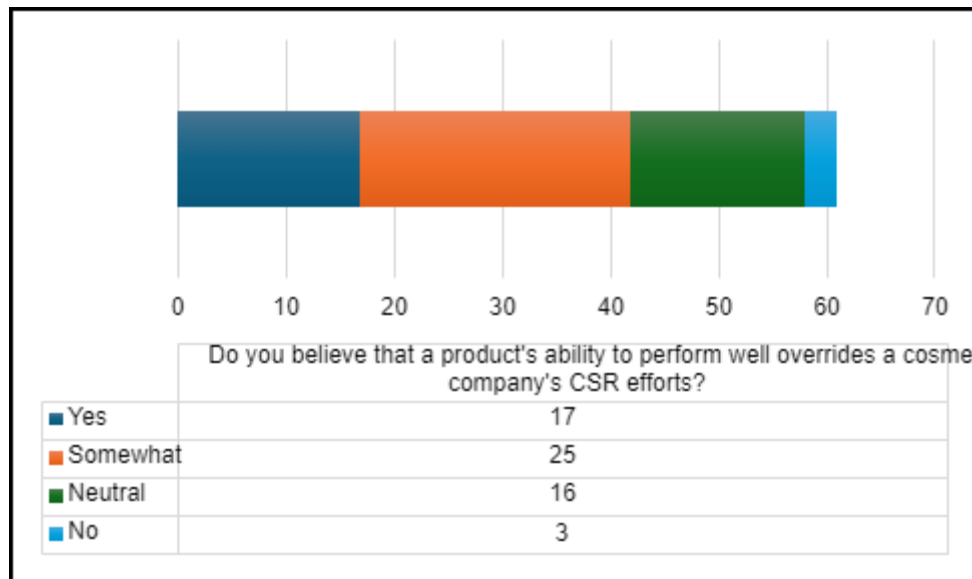


Figure 21 – Product Performance vs CSR Efforts

Interpretation

68.9% of the study group believe that a product's ability to perform well either somewhat or completely does override a cosmetic company's CSR efforts. Only 4.9% of the population believed that a brand's CSR activities were more important than a product's performance, while the rest of the participants remained neutral to the subject. Overall, these numbers indicate a strong demand for high product quality and ability to meet consumer standards, irrespective of the company's contribution to society and the environment. Despite this, the findings previously outlined show that consumers are highly concerned about cosmetic companies' contributions to society and the environment.

This is valuable information, as it shows that consumers in Ireland are not only concerned about a cosmetic brand's contribution to society and the environment, but they also expect products to be high-quality. Moreover, the findings from *Figure 20*, which found 19.7% of participants would not buy a brand over another due to their CSR efforts, may have included the importance of product quality into their decision-making process.

Global Culture and CSR's Relationship

(Objective 1)

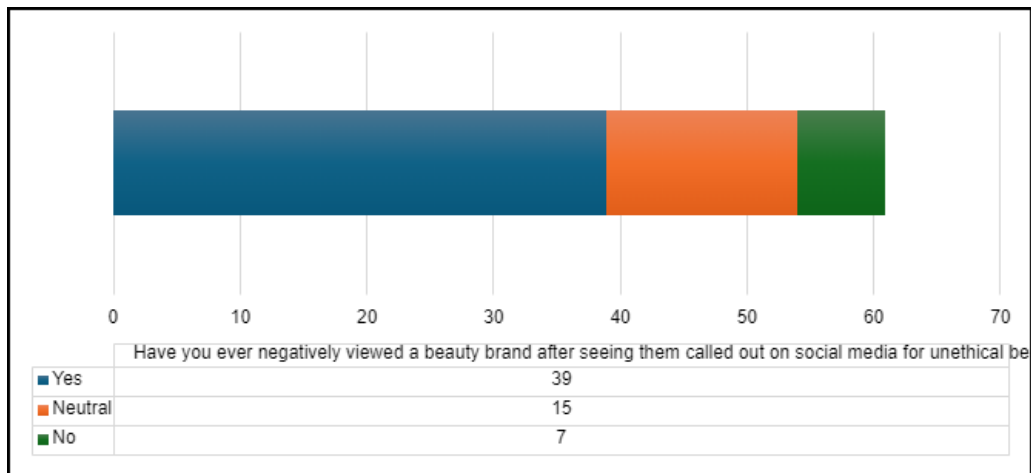


Figure 22 – Unethical Behaviour and Brand Perception

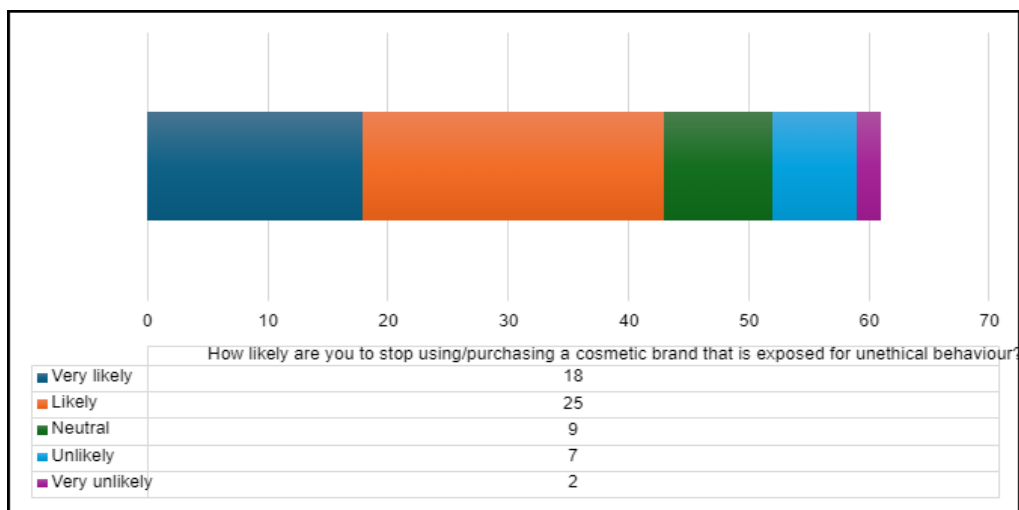


Figure 23 – Unethical Behaviour and Purchase Intention

Interpretation

In relation to the concept of cancel culture in the online beauty community, 63.9% of cosmetic consumers have had a negative brand perception after seeing a brand called out on social media for unethical behaviour. 11.5% of participants said it had no effect on their brand perceptions and 24.6% remained neutral to the subject. Hence, global culture and the propagation of knowledge and ethical codes is affecting consumers' brand perceptions.

Furthermore, 29.4% of the respondents said they were ‘very likely’ and 41% were ‘likely’ to stop using or purchasing cosmetic brands who were exposed for their unethical behaviour such as animal testing. 11.5% were ‘unlikely’, 3.3% were ‘very unlikely’, and a further 14.8% remained neutral. These statistics further demonstrates how cosmetic consumers are being impacted by global culture elements and CSR through social media.

The relationship between global culture and CSR elements can be shown in a positive Pearson Correlation between consumers who engage in global cosmetic trends and those who stop purchasing ‘unethical’ cosmetic brands (*Table 3*). The participation in global beauty and self-care trends is related to an increasing global awareness and attitudes towards CSR in the cosmetic industry, thus affecting purchasing habits and brand perceptions.

Correlations			
Stop purchasing unethical Cosmetic Brands	Pearson Correlation	1	.280*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.044
	N	52	52
Participate in Global Beauty/Self-Care Trends	Pearson Correlation	.280*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.044	
	N	52	61
*. Correlation is significant.			

Table 3.

This relationship may point to a uniform code of ethics present in global online culture. As cosmetic consumers in Ireland are engaging with global trends, there appears to be a distribution of ethical codes within the online beauty community, which influences the study sample to stop purchasing cosmetic products from brands who are seen as ‘unethical’ within the global culture.

CSR & Global Culture in Cosmetics Marketing

(Objective 4)

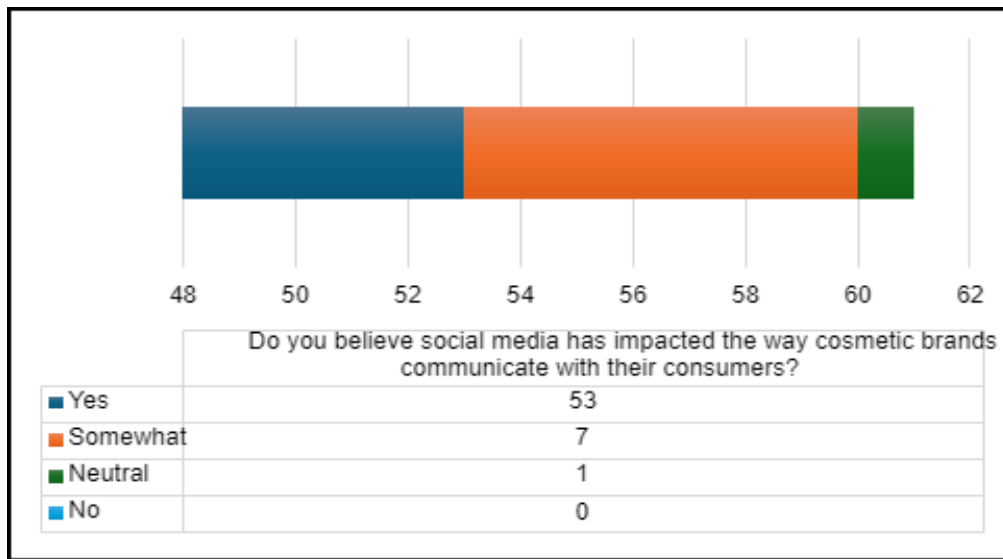


Figure 24 – Social Media and Brand Communication

Interpretation

All participants, bar one who remains neutral, believe that social media has impacted the way cosmetic brands are communicating with their consumers, with an overwhelming 86.9% of the sample responding, ‘yes’ and 11.5% responding ‘somewhat’.

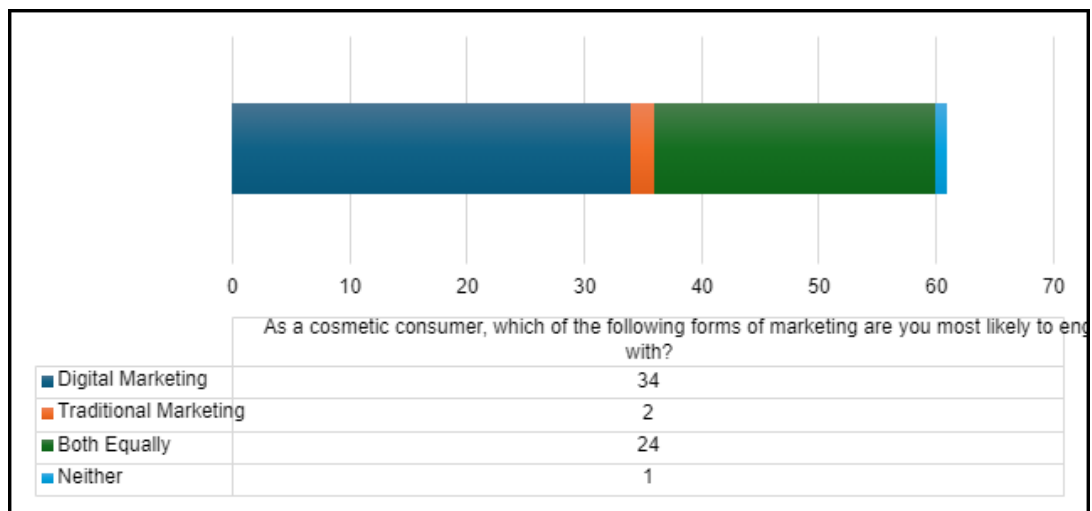


Figure 25 – Marketing Strategies and Engagement

Interpretation

The findings in *Figure 25* show digital marketing harnesses the most engagement, with 55.5% of the sample being most likely to engage with this form of marketing in cosmetics. 39.3% of the study sample weighing equal effectiveness between traditional and digital marketing. Despite being a small percent, 3.3% favoured traditional marketing tactics, which was drawing, considering sample consists of active social media users. One participant decided that neither forms of marketing were engaging. Overall, digital marketing is included as a major tool of engaging with cosmetic consumers in Ireland. Thus, global brands can target the Irish market using this strategy.

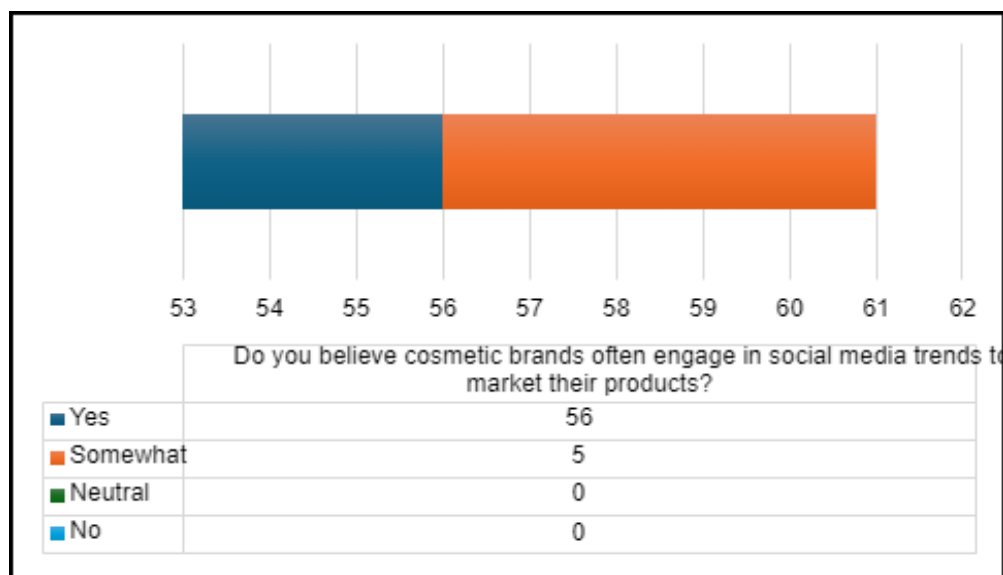


Figure 26 – Social Media Marketing

Interpretation

All participants in this study believe cosmetic brands leverage social media trends to market their products. 91.8% of respondents answered, 'yes' and 8.2% answered 'somewhat'.

The consumers within this study sample are aware of cosmetic brands' attempts to leverage global social media trends to market their products and have therefore been exposed to international cosmetic brands through this marketing strategy.

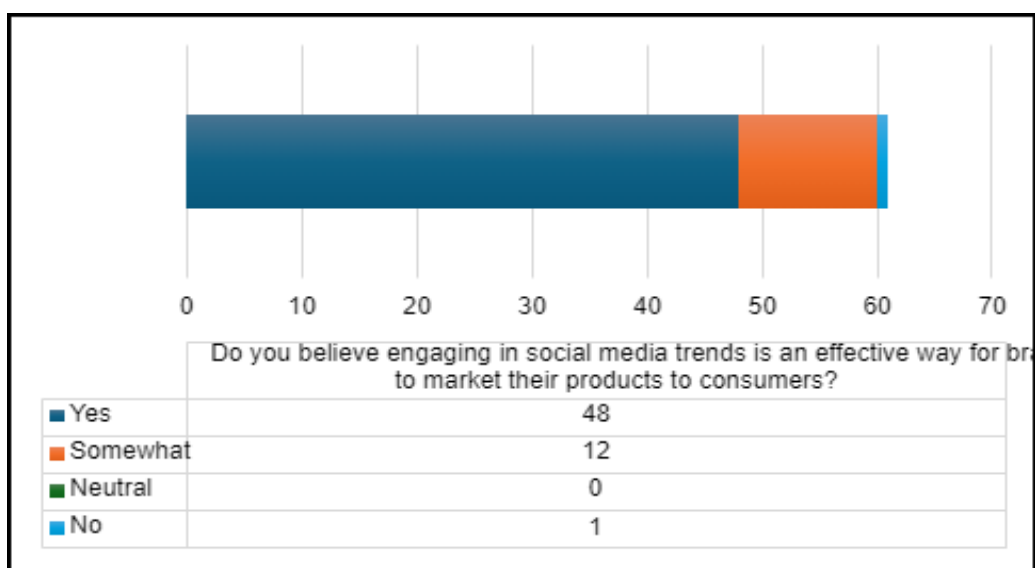


Figure 27 – Social Media Marketing and Perceived Effectiveness

Interpretation

In correlation to *Figure 26*, *Figure 27* shows that participants believe that engaging in these trends are an effective way to market their products. 78.7% replied ‘yes’, 19.7% said ‘somewhat’, and one respondent (1.6%) said ‘no’. Thus, leveraging global culture on social media is perceived as efficient marketing tactic for cosmetic consumers.

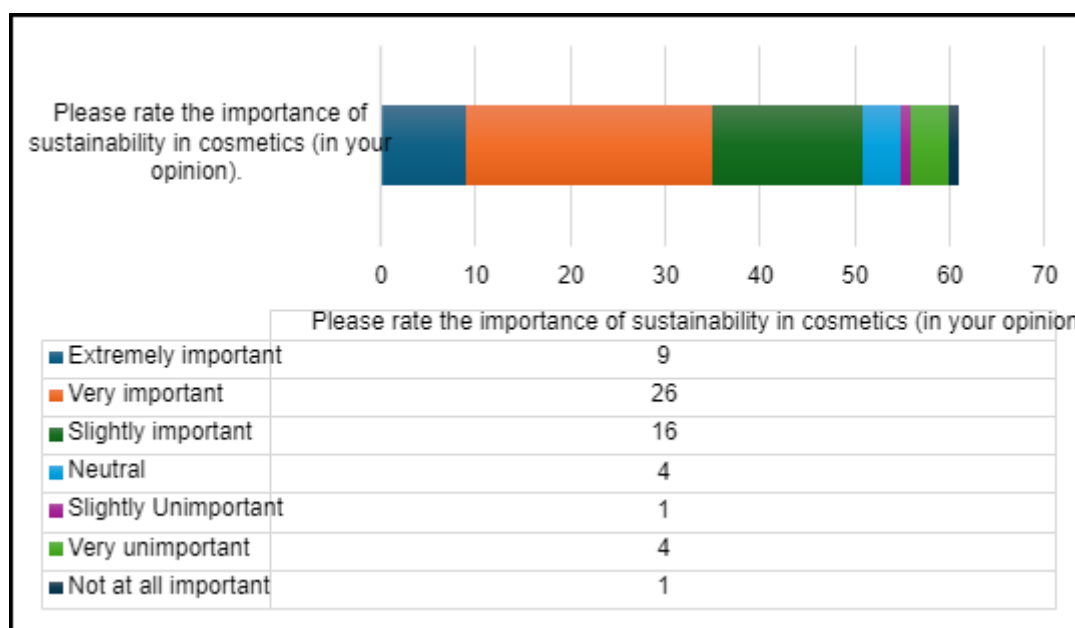


Figure 28 – Rate of Importance: Sustainability

Interpretation

In *Figure 28*, sustainability was ranked as ‘extremely important’ by 14.8% of the sample and ‘very important’ by 42.6%. ‘Slightly important’ was rated by 26.2% of the participants.

Only 1.6% of participants decided it was slightly unimportant, 6.6% very unimportant and 1.6% not at all important. 6.6% of the survey respondents remained neutral to the subject.

Overall, it is evident that sustainability in cosmetics is deemed valuable to the participants with nearly 84%, or 51 out of the 61 of the individuals surveyed ranking it as an important aspect in the industry.

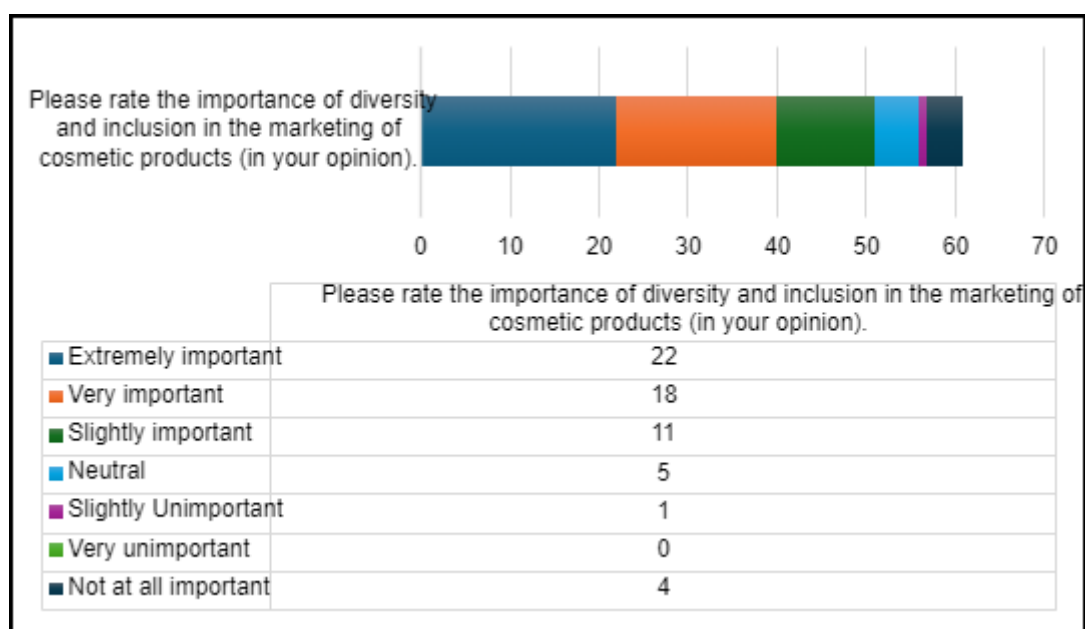


Figure 29 – Rate of Importance: Diversity and Inclusion

Interpretation

Diversity and Inclusion [D&I] in the marketing of cosmetics was rated the participants’ opinion of its level of importance, and 36.1% of the sample said that it was ‘extremely important’, 29.5% said that it is ‘very important’, and 18% ranked it as ‘slightly important’. 8.2% of the respondents remained neutral and 1.6% viewed D&I as ‘slightly unimportant’ and 6.6% as ‘not at all important’. Similarly to the rating of sustainability in cosmetics, 51 out of 61 participants reported that they believed D&I to be an important aspect of cosmetics marketing to various degrees.

A Pearson Correlation analysis was conducted for sustainability and D&I and its effect on purchasing behaviour. This was to determine whether consumers simply rate these elements of CSR as important, or whether there is a correlation between their personal values and purchasing behaviour.

The relationship between valuing sustainability and diversity and inclusion in cosmetics both had a positive correlation with consumers' avoidance of 'unethical' brands. Thus, it can be concluded that CSR and its communication in cosmetics, does impact cosmetic consumers' purchasing decisions and brand perceptions in Ireland.

Correlations			
Importance of sustainability in cosmetics marketing	Pearson Correlation	1	.331**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.009
	N	61	61
Avoidance of 'unethical' brands	Pearson Correlation	.331**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.009	
	N	61	61
**. Correlation is significant.			

Table 4.

Correlations			
Avoidance of 'unethical' brands	Pearson Correlation	1	.306*
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.016
	N	61	61
Importance of D&I in cosmetics marketing	Pearson Correlation	.306*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.016	
	N	61	61
*. Correlation is significant.			

Table 5.

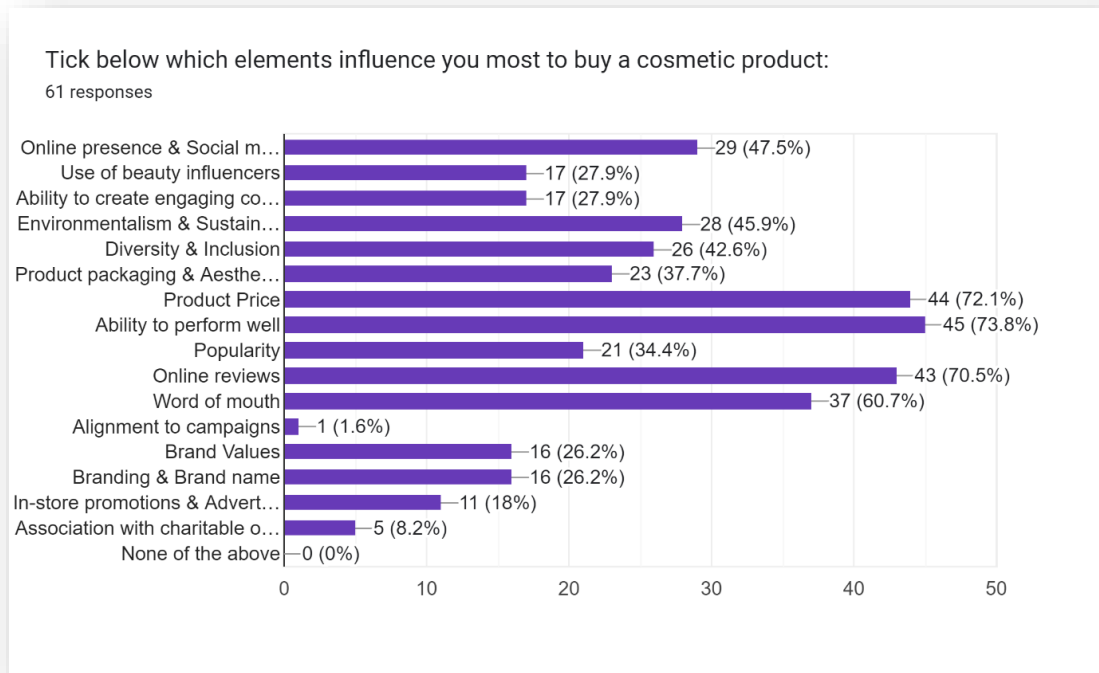


Figure 30 – Elements to Influence Purchase

Interpretation

According to the results, word of mouth, ability to perform well, price, packaging, popularity, online reviews, online presence, sustainability, diversity and inclusion are among the highest ranked elements that influence the participants to purchase a cosmetic product. Association with charities, alignment to campaigns, and in-store promotions were deemed least important.

Key Takeaways:

- Ability to Perform well at 73.8% was the highest ranked influence next to Price at 72.1%.
- Online Reviews were among the top three highest influential elements at 70.5% of the sample, which is similar to the high ranking of Word of Mouth at 60.7%
- Elements of CSR were highly ranked by the participants. However, Sustainability ranked slightly better at 45.9% than Diversity and Inclusion at 42.6%. Percentage wise, these rankings were similar to the number of participants who selected Online Presence as influential, which was 47.5%.

- Beauty Influencers and Engaging Content were rated at the same rate of influence at 27.9%.

Qualitative Findings

The open-ended question asked the sample to provide their own insights on global culture and CSR's impact on the cosmetics industry. From this question, nine responses were produced from willing participants (*see appendix*). The themes emerging within the responses were analysed to demonstrate their relativity to the research objectives.

Each insight contributes to the development of a 'best practice' list for cosmetics marketing, for research Objective 4.

Global Culture & CSR in Cosmetics

(Objective 1)

The responses suggest that the relationship between the global culture and CSR awareness exists, and it has an effect on consumer perceptions and behaviours.

Participant 1 highlighted the challenges related to using global trends in cosmetics marketing. They point out concerns such as over consumption and mass production as "*consumers keep up with trends*". This is demonstrated as an issue in relation to sustainability, as they state it leads to "*high levels of waste*". In contrast, participant 2 believes that although social media does have negatives, "*it can be and is generally used positively in regard to the influence of inclusion... and CSR*" in the cosmetics industry. Hence, social media is facilitating global culture by spreading beauty trends and is also shaping consumer expectations and concerns regarding elements of CSR.

Participant 3 indicates that "*CSR is very important... for all industries*" and that although some brands may position themselves as socially responsible and sustainable, they may not be fully transparent in their activities, using Unilever as an example of a brand with an "*ambition to deliver net zero emissions*", but also a corporation that "*indirectly supports... negative impact on climate change*". Participant 5 also writes "*companies miss out on strategic benefits when there is a discrepancy in what the companies communicate and what customers want to know*". This highlights the uncertainty surrounding 'green marketing' and an emphasis on building consumer trust through brand transparency, implying that CSR is

highly influential on cosmetic consumers' brand perceptions. This importance of implementing CSR in cosmetics is further confirmed by participant 4 who writes that companies can *"differentiate themselves and gain competitive advantage"* by doing so.

Influence of Social Media on Global Culture

(Objective 2)

Social media is presented as a key influence in exposing consumers to global cosmetic products and beauty and self-care trends. Participant 7 writes that social media *"plays a prominent role in cosmetics and skincare and that it has come to benefit millions of its users as well as producers"* and Participant 8 says *"social media can be the main source of information regarding skincare products and cosmetics as well as cosmetics procedures"*, aligning with the findings in *Figures 8 and 9*.

However, an issue is also presented by Participant 8 who says that global cosmetic trends on social media may cause consumers to use products that *"could be harmful to their skin type and condition"*, and from *Figure 14*, it is conclusive that consumers are engaging in these trends. Participant 9 writes that television shows like 'Love Island' are amplifying the global culture, by connecting individuals from across the world and *"it is very noticeable"* to consumers, which correspond to the findings of *Figure 15*.

Social media platforms like TikTok, Instagram, and Twitter have been mentioned by Participant 8 and 9, as key influencers in the dissemination of global culture. Participant 9 writes, that they often individuals post about *"the make-up, beauty and fashion ...and tag brands/cosmetic companies/products in their comments"*, which they see on television shows, with posts and comments coming from various regions. They write, *"this is only one example of how social media can influence buyers and impact the cosmetic industry"*. Overall, social media is exposing the participants to a global culture and is affecting how they are communicating, learning about, and using cosmetic products, indicative of the results from *Figures 10-14*.

Influence of CSR

(Objective 3)

From the responses, it is evident that implementing CSR has a positive impact on cosmetic consumers' preferences and purchasing decisions and Irish consumers are highly informed on the related elements within the cosmetics industry.

Participant 4 writes *“cosmetic customers find CSR important, and it influences relational and transactional outcomes”* and *“customers don't mind paying a higher price for socially responsible products”*. This increased intention to purchase is also indicated by Participant 5, who says customers want to *“see that their hard-earned money is going towards something not just good value for money but also ethically produced”*, aligning to the findings in *Figures 18-20*. They also add that *“more conscious of environmental issues and animal cruelty issues, which positively corresponds to the findings in Figures 22, 23, and 28*. These insights show that communicating CSR initiatives creates a positive purchasing response among cosmetic consumers. Additionally, this can lead to a positive brand reputation and loyalty as customers are *“more loyal and give excellent brand recommendations”* to brands who are socially and environmentally responsible, according to Participant 4.

However, the participants' responses also indicate the importance of brand authenticity and transparency in their CSR activities, highlighted by uncertainty regarding cosmetic companies' true intentions. Participant 2 writes that CSR *“seems like another concept to increase sales rather than a reflection of a company wanting to do the right thing”*.

Moreover, CSR is not the only determinant in the decision to purchase a cosmetic product, as Participant 4 states that it is *“not the most important... in their buying choices, and quality and previous experience are just as... important”*. This was also demonstrated in the findings from *Figure 21*. Hence, a cosmetic brands' product quality, brand authenticity, and customer experience are just as important as their contribution to a more inclusive and sustainable environment.

Merged Data & Interpretation

Objective 1 – Main Findings

- ❖ High level of awareness regarding CSR and Global Culture among cosmetic consumers in Ireland.
- ❖ CSR and Global Culture are influencing purchasing decisions, brand perceptions and marketing communications in the cosmetic industry.
- ❖ Engagement in global trends correlates with likelihood of avoiding unethical cosmetic companies.
- ❖ Global Culture is increasing CSR awareness and emphasizing the importance of D&I in cosmetic marketing.
- ❖ Online cancel culture is influencing brand perceptions and purchase intentions.

Objective 2 – Main Findings

- ❖ Global culture is impacting consumer behaviour and cosmetic consumers in Ireland believe that social media is influencing the homogenisation of cultures.
- ❖ Social media is heavily relied on for cosmetic choices and is a key source for cosmetic information.
- ❖ Engagement with foreign influencers and participation in global beauty and self-care trends.
- ❖ Foreign Influencers have influenced purchasing habits.
- ❖ Consumers are gaining cross-cultural knowledge

Objective 3 – Main Findings

- ❖ Demand for increased CSR efforts in the cosmetics industry. Sustainability and D&I are highly valued by cosmetic consumers.
- ❖ Uncertainty surrounding cosmetic companies' green marketing communications and their true intentions and contributions to society.
- ❖ Product Performance can override CSR efforts.
- ❖ Cosmetic consumers favour ethical brands over non-ethical.
- ❖ Avoidance in purchasing cosmetic brands who are exposed for unethical practices.
- ❖ Consumer concerns regarding overconsumption, production, and waste management.

Objective 4 – Main Findings

- ❖ Preference towards digital marketing for cosmetics.
- ❖ Increased purchase intention towards products that are visible online and a high engagement rate with global influencers.
- ❖ Leveraging global trends to market cosmetic products is deemed effective.
- ❖ Balancing CSR efforts and product quality is crucial.
- ❖ Aligning marketing strategies with global trends and ethical concerns is beneficial.
- ❖ Importance placed on Diversity and Inclusion in cosmetics marketing.
- ❖ Importance placed on brand authenticity and transparency.
- ❖ Positive consumer engagement and experience is a priority.

Discussion

The main purpose of the primary research was to investigate how global culture and CSR is impacting cosmetic consumers' behaviour in Ireland. This section will compare and contrast the primary outcomes with the literature review section, highlighting the essential points derived from this study.

The primary research indicates that cosmetic consumers in Ireland are highly aware of CSR and the globalisation of culture, and these concepts have played a major role in influencing their brand perceptions, brand expectations, and purchasing choices. Social media has been a key facilitator in driving this awareness and the behavioural changes. The study found that 86.9% Irish consumers have gained cross-cultural knowledge through social media platforms and 75.4% of these consumers have been influenced by global content creators in their purchasing decisions.

The levels of engagement with global influencers are notable and the quantitative findings demonstrate a significant level of participation in global beauty and self-care trends, demonstrating cosmetic consumers in Ireland's exposure to international content and participation in global culture activities. This was previously studied by Berger & Milkman (2012), who concluded that viral trends are a key part of the global culture and globalised consumer behaviour. Social media is noted as a major source of information for skincare and beauty products, as pointed out by Participant 8, "*social media can be the main source of information regarding...cosmetics*". Additionally, 60.7% use and 19.7% sometimes use social media reviews to decipher whether they should purchase a cosmetic item. This has similarly been pointed out in the study by Nielsen (2012), who found that more than 75% of conscious consumers rely on social media reviews and opinions. Moreover, global online culture plays a key role in influencing consumer purchases, with 77% of the study more likely to buy products which they frequently see used on social media platforms and 47.5% identifying social media presence as an influential element in purchasing habits. Hence, cosmetic companies who are active on social media are more likely to attract consumers and be rewarded with increased intentions to purchase, supporting the findings in the literature review, which suggested global culture increases a brand's opportunity to expand and reach international audiences.

Social media's role in globalising culture has been highlighted thoroughly in the literature review. The secondary research highlights the global interconnectedness within the new digital market segment, as consumers share opinions with one another and compile their own perceptions of brands as a community (Arévalo, 2020; Laurea, 2019; Kotler et al., 2017). Similar to the findings of Mooij and Hofstede (2002), who stated that media platforms like MTV have unified tastes and trends across the globe, Participant 9 discusses how they have noticed television shows like Love Island have gained the attention of viewers from various regions, *“in Africa, the U.S., Canada and from across Europe”*, who all post *“about make-up, beauty and fashion they see on the show”* and this is effecting consumer purchases and brand choices.

Furthermore, social media's role in homogenising cultures has been noticed and confirmed by an astonishing 96.7% of cosmetic consumers in Ireland and is becoming increasingly noticeable among those who use social media platforms, highlighted by Participant 9, *“it is very noticeable”*. This consumer awareness regarding global culture had not been previously identified in the literature review. Referring back to Levin (2014), some researchers suggested that the globalisation of culture may lead to a loss of unique cultural identities. However, the primary findings suggest that whilst consumers are adopting similar styles, trends, and purchasing habits in the cosmetic industry, there is an emerging harmonious online community, encouraging D&I in cosmetics marketing alongside an increased demand for CSR efforts, as shown in *Figures 28 and 29*. Additionally, the sharing of cross-cultural knowledge among cosmetic consumers in a global culture may be the reason that D&I is highly valued in cosmetics marketing, as consumers are increasingly exposed to diverse individuals through social media. Thus, consumers expect to see inclusion normalised in the global cosmetics industry and its marketing, as suggested by Alli (2022).

Despite the positive influences of social media and global connectivity, like supporting inclusion and increasing awareness regarding CSR, as highlighted by Participant 6, there is also a mindfulness and caution regarding the potential mismatch between partaking in global trends, using viral cosmetic products, and an individual's personal needs, such as those pointed out by Participant 8 who states, *“the potential issue here may be that the consumer may not be aware that a product may not be suitable for them, in fact a product could be harmful to their skin type and condition”*. Additionally, concerns are raised about CSR elements within a global culture by Participant 1, who states that *“following latest trends*

leads to mass production of product temporarily which leads to high product turnover and therefore high levels of waste", suggesting a need for cosmetic companies to focus on long-term sustainability rather than short-term, continuous consumption, driven by global consumer trends.

The concerns found within the study highlight CSR as a critical element in cosmetic consumption among Irish consumers aged 18-30. The findings show 68.9% of cosmetic consumers demand increased CSR efforts within the cosmetics industry. In the literature review, Organic Monitor (2010) state that many consumers are unaware of companies' CSR activities. In contrast, 41% of this study sample have definitely noticed, and 34.4% have somewhat noticed cosmetic brands showcasing their CSR on social media platforms. However, there is some lack of certainty among cosmetic consumers in Ireland regarding this subject, as 67.2% of respondents only 'somewhat' agree that the cosmetics brands are adequately showcasing their CSR in their marketing strategies, indicating a need for increased communication between cosmetics brands and their consumers.

Popa et al (2022) observed that brands that emphasise eco-friendly packaging and inclusivity will receive brand trust and loyalty. This was confirmed by the study group who implied that not only is it an influencing factor for purchasing a product, but 49.2% of participants are more likely to purchase from ethical and environmentally friendly cosmetic brands and a further 23% indicated that their likelihood to purchase products would be somewhat increased by these aspects. Additionally, Participant 4 notes that *"customers don't mind paying a higher price for socially responsible products, are more loyal and give excellent brand recommendations"*.

Despite these findings, CSR being viewed as a secondary priority is noted in both the literature review and the primary research findings. Lin et al (2018) state that many consumers prioritise product performance over their sustainability. This is shown in *Figure 21*, which finds that 68.9% of the study group believe that a product's ability to perform well either somewhat or completely does override a cosmetic company's CSR efforts and Participant 4 writes that *"quality and previous experience are just as, if not more, important"* than CSR in cosmetics. These findings contradict the study by Mandhachitara and Poolthong (2011), who state that CSR initiatives can influence the perceptions of a product's quality.

Furthermore, some participants perceive CSR in the cosmetic industry as mere marketing tactics rather than genuine commitments, as indicated by Participant 2, *“seems like another concept to increase sales rather than a reflection of a company wanting to do the right thing”*, which brings to light the challenge of ‘greenwashing’ allegations. As stated by Aji and Sutikno (2015), cosmetic brands who advocate their greenness may claim to be more eco-friendly than they actually are. This concern is highlighted by Participant 5 who says, *“companies miss out on strategic benefits when there is a discrepancy in what the companies communicate and what customers want to know. This gets more challenging as people become more conscious of environmental issues and animal cruelty issues”*. Additionally, Participant 3 also drew attention to miscommunicated CSR by one cosmetic brand in particular, which further demonstrates the awareness regarding sustainability issues in the cosmetics industry among this study sample and the ability to access this information online. With this in mind, it is obvious that cosmetic companies need to enhance their marketing and communication strategies to showcase their authenticity and increase brand transparency to reduce the chances of speculation, as pointed out previously by Aji and Sutikno (2015).

The primary findings found that there is a positive correlation between consumers who engage in global cosmetic trends and those who stop purchasing ‘unethical’ cosmetic brands (Table 3). Thus, the global consumer culture is related to an increasing global awareness and preference towards CSR in the cosmetic industry. This is further demonstrated in the primary findings, as cancel culture presents itself as a culmination of the amplified awareness of CSR within the global culture. According to a study by Sustainable Brands (2018), 40% of Generation Z have stopped purchasing a brand that behaved in a way that didn’t align with their values. Similarly, in this study it was found that 63.9% of cosmetic consumers in Ireland have had a negative brand perception, as 70.4% of consumers in Ireland were likely to stop purchasing from a cosmetic brand which was cancelled online for unethical behaviour. This is relevant as digital marketing, particularly through social media, is preferred by cosmetic consumers in Ireland. Hence, cosmetic companies must be mindful of how they present themselves online.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to examine how global culture and corporate social responsibility impact the behaviour of Irish cosmetic consumers. By employed a mixed approach to meet the research objectives, it is believed that this research aim has been fulfilled, while also yielding meaningful and unique insights from relevant participants.

The study findings identify the substantial impact of global culture and CSR on cosmetic consumers' decision making and brand perception in Ireland. The overall consensus is that CSR positively influences brand loyalty and perception, however there is a balance to be met with product quality, to ensure consumer demands are entirely met. Moreover, effective communication is critical, to ensure that consumers are certain of cosmetic brands' authenticity in their CSR initiatives, as there is emphasis placed on a need for transparency and correspondence between cosmetic consumers' needs and a brand's activities.

A global culture is clearly present on social media and cosmetic consumers in Ireland are actively contributing to and participating in this phenomenon. As a preference towards digital marketing, reliance on social media reviews, and engagement with foreign influencers, and adoption of global trends become more apparent, cosmetic consumers in Ireland believe that leveraging the global culture activities, like social media trends, is an effective way to market beauty and self-care products. Additionally, communicating a cosmetic products' high-quality and sustainable elements through diverse and inclusive marketing strategies will yield positive consumer feedback and increased intention to purchase.

Future Studies

The author found that, despite efforts to narrow the research scope, the primary and secondary findings only amplified curiosity the want to grasp further understanding of the topics at hand. This outcome may simply be symptomatic of the pragmatic philosophy and abductive approach which was adopted for the study as suggested by Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009), who stated that this approach can provide opportunities for 'extra reflection' and the 'opening of new avenues for further research development'.

Whilst conducting the data analyses, the author identified some further challenges within the findings, and areas for improvement which merit attention for future studies.

Firstly, while this study did narrow the age limit to consumers aged 18-30, the data would have been improved by insight into the participants' age and even gender(s), to identify if this has an effect on their opinion on CSR and globalised culture. Additionally, the challenge of adopting a mixed method approach, proved difficult to navigate, despite its appeal.

Additionally, as the author has outlined, there is minimal literature on the relationship between the global culture and CSR demands, which warrants further investigation for its impact in specific business sectors. As mentioned, cancel culture is not fully understood and is a subject which may be beneficial for increased market research, particularly its role within the cosmetics industry.

Furthermore, global culture's effect on marketing and consumer behaviour has been studied as a contemporary concept thanks to the advent of social media, however, as culture continues to change and evolve with the development of new technologies, this phenomenon may be studied in more breadth over time. Finally, this paper may be revisited, to determine whether the relationship between global culture and CSR has changed, and whether cosmetic consumers within the global culture still feel as strongly about sustainability and ethics in the coming years.

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Appendix

(Full Answers to Open-Ended Question from Survey)

Participant 1: *“Following latest trends leads to mass production of product temporarily which leads to high product turnover (consumers keep up with trends) and therefore high levels of waste rather than focus on how to improve sustainability aspects of best sellers (i.e. refills)”*

Participant 2: *“Seems like another concept to increase sales rather than a reflection of a company wanting to do the right thing”.*

Participant 3: *“CSR is very important not only for cosmetic industry, but for all industries. Regarding cosmetic industry, Unilever corporation positions itself slogan "Our ambition is to deliver net zero emissions across our value chain", but at the same time, the corporation still presence in Russian market paying taxation and investing in Russia, and, as a result, indirectly supports Russian war against Ukraine and... in this way supporting negative impact on climate change”.*

Participant 4: *“Companies are increasingly engaging in CSR in order to differentiate themselves and gain competitive advantage. Cosmetic customers find CSR important, and it influences relational and transactional outcomes. Customers don't mind paying a higher price for socially responsible products, are more loyal and give excellent brand recommendations. These factors are not the most important ones in their buying choices, and quality and previous experience are just as, if not more, important”.*

Participant 5: *“Companies miss out on strategic benefits when there is a discrepancy in what the companies communicate and what customers want to know. This gets more challenging as people become more conscious of environmental issues and animal cruelty issues. It also becomes important to those who want to see that their hard-earned money is going towards something not just good value for money but also ethically produced”.*

Participant 6: *“Although social media can have its downsides, I really think it can be and is generally used positively in regard to the influence of inclusion, cultural globalisation and CSR in the cosmetic industry!”*

Participant 7: *“It's evident that social media plays a prominent role in cosmetics and skincare and that it has come to benefit millions of its users as well as producers”.*

Participant 8: *“Social media can be the main source of information regarding skincare products and cosmetics as well as cosmetics procedures; the most influential platforms are*

currently likely to be Tik Tok, Instagram, Snapchat and YouTube. The potential issue here may be that the consumer may not be aware that a product may not be suitable for them, in fact a product could be harmful to their skin type and condition; so, taking general opinion on board and following other individuals' choice of cosmetics or skincare or procedures might not give them the favourable outcome they want...relying entirely on social media is not the best thing to do".

Participant 9: *"My comment is just a personal observation and I hope it helps. I'm a BIG fan of the reality show Love Island and I've noticed in recent years that more and more viewers of the show are from outside the UK/Ireland. Viewers often post on X (Twitter) about the make-up, beauty and fashion they see on the show and tag brands/cosmetic companies/products in their comments. There are posts and comments from regions in Africa, the U.S., Canada and from across Europe. This is only one example of how social media can influence buyers and impact the cosmetic industry. It's happening right now, and it is very noticeable in my opinion".*