



**SHOP NOW! IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA ON PURCHASE
INTENTION OF MILLENNIALS**

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the degree of Digital Marketing at Dublin Business School**

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Declaration

I declare that this dissertation that I have submitted to Dublin Business School for the award of MSC Digital Marketing is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated, where it is clearly acknowledged by references. Furthermore, this work has not been submitted for any other degree.

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Abstract

The aim of this research is to understand how brands can create a better experience for millennials in social media. This research project will provide an overview of customers' buying process and use of social media. In addition, it will propose a conceptual framework for the impact of social media marketing on the purchase intention of millennials in the Irish market. Using convenience sampling method, the study selected 195 participants through an online Microsoft Form questionnaire. Data collected were analysed through Pearson Correlation analysis. Findings showed that millennials consider social media an important factor to decide between brands before a purchase. Other findings explain that review from friends has a significant impact during the decision-making process. To conclude, this study recommends that companies increase investment to create more quality and frequency of content on social media, once they are important in millennials' decision.

Keywords: Social Media, Millennials, Purchase Intention, Ireland

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Context

One of the principal issues in the contemporary digital marketing world is finding the relationship between companies and users to meet people's needs and brands' interests and align them to benefit both. Nowadays, social media platforms are powerful and essential tools for marketers and companies - a platform where it is possible to find and talk directly to the customer. A report by Statista (2021) predicts that by 2023, 4.12 billion people around the world will access social networks, rising to an estimated 4.41 billion by 2025. According to Carvill et al. (2015), this increase is linked to the development of technology, making the internet affordable and faster speed available even for individuals living in the Third World and Emerging Nations to connect. The International Telecommunication Union (2021) report states that 4.9 billion individuals are utilizing the Internet in 2021, up from 4.1 billion in 2019. Considering that more than 50% of the population uses this way to communicate, brands need to be aware of attracting, engaging, and delighting customers through these powerful channels.

Social media has changed the way that people connect and influence each other. Millennials, also called Generation Y, are aged from twenty-five to their early forties and represent 1.8 billion people - 23% of the global population (MSCI, 2020). Most millennials are the new generation of power buyers, making them extremely important for the market share. Considering all of the above factors, the focus of this study is to identify the influence of social media marketing on the purchasing behaviour of this cohort.

Understanding what makes them choose one brand instead of another in social media is essential for the market segment. Once markets and companies base the strategy on consumer

behaviour, the results become more effective and targeted to the consumer. As an example of a successful brand, Apple is an example of how research leads to successful marketing strategies and tactics (Moorman, 2018). The result is a distinct competitive advantage that drives meaningful business results, making Apple has the highest level of consumer loyalty (Iyer, 2008).

In the digital space, everyone has room to talk directly about what is in mind, and companies also have this opportunity to be close to the customers. However, more important than sending any message is to send a right and clear communication, and it is essential to know what customers are more interested to hear. Millennials are the generation that now forms the largest workforce and the most important consumer markets (Kotler et al., 2021). As a consequence of the advancement of the internet and the increased usage of social media, businesses may now interact with customers from the same digital environment that friends and family do. One of the most ubiquitous effects of social media platforms are now blending commercial and personal content more than they used to - and now it is often difficult to distinguish between the two (Dahl, 2018).

The buying process, often known as the choice to purchase a product or service, is a component of the broader idea of consumer behaviour and a step in the customer's purchase decision process. Understanding how brands can create a better experience for millennials in social media and what content is more relevant for them nowadays will help future marketing strategies be more effective and drive brands to increase value in customers' perspectives. The society we live in today is experiencing generational misalignment, and marketers worldwide are struggling to serve many generations at the same time (Kotler et al., 2021). However, it is

critical to understand the feature creating a vital connection, particularly understanding how effective communication is for each age.

Creating a compelling message is an essential pillar for effective marketing communication. In order to do so, it is crucial to understand the difference between each generation. The pillar of a successful marketing campaign is to create a connection with the right target. The big issue companies face is understanding how to balance between maximising value creation for the present and positioning brands for the future (Kotler et al., 2021). Social media creates and shares information and ideas about any favourite subject (Quesenberry, 2021). In the past, communication was general through TV, radio, and other offline channels, and the audience had to consume what the communications had chosen instead of what they liked. Online communication allows users to watch in the time that would suit them better or even skip to the most relevant part.

Social media is defined as a group of Internet-based applications built on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0. Social media does not fundamentally change the ways in which audiences make decisions about their everyday actions but maximises the opportunity for marketers to reach and interact with consumers. (Mahoney and Tang, 2017). Social is power, according to (Farook and Abeysekara, 2016), social media marketing creates new variations of the conventional options, increases firm-to-firm interaction and customer dialogue, and strengthens communications between purchasers and sellers. Brands profile provides a connection between individuals, businesses and organisations; using the digital channels, brands can build a strong presence in customer minds. The challenge for companies is to attract and persuade people to engage with the content.

Online interpersonal influence may significantly impact a decisional relationship since customers can immediately distribute reviews to various audiences via social media (Bedard and Tolmie, 2018). The world of social media is expansive, diverse and nuanced. Networks and talent can harness its power by understanding the dynamics of owned content to craft their content strategies better. The adage of "content is king" holds true when intertwined with the social realm (The Nielsen Company, 2018). As a result, we are entering the age of social business, in which social media influences all areas of a company (Carvill et al., 2015). Assuming that concept, marketers have to encourage brands to act strategically to grab millennials' attention. Online interpersonal influence may significantly impact a decisional relationship since customers can immediately distribute reviews to various audiences via social media (Bedard and Tolmie, 2018).

Consumers have gone to the social web in an effort to communicate among themselves their personal experiences with brands, products, and services to present a more "genuine" picture of their shopping experience since they are no longer happy with advertising and promotional information as the primary source for learning about new products and services (Evans and McKee, 2010). At the same time, buyers are using the experiences of others before making their purchases, in other words, the influence on marketing has been enormous.

There are different types of models that have been developed in the previous literature to explain consumer purchase decision making. The purchase decision, often known as the choice to acquire a product or service, is a subset of the broader idea of consumer behaviour and a step in the customer's purchase decision process. In general, it is reasonable to structure the numerous components that have been proposed to analyse consumer behaviour. Most purchases and consumption reflect individual characteristics such as motivations, perceptions,

past experiences, and attitudes. On a second level, it is equally clear that in the case of many purchases, consumers are influenced by their immediate environment: their family, friends, neighbours, or colleagues. On a third and final level, consumption patterns receive their meanings from the larger sociocultural environment in which they occur. (Dubois, 2000). Throughout the purchase decision step, the buyer may desire to obtain the most desired brand or product.

1.2 Problem Description

Ireland's population was at 4.96 million at the beginning of 2021, growing at a rate of 1% per year, implying that the global total has risen by more than 50,000 people from the beginning of 2020. Between 2020 and 2021, the number of internet users climbed by 242 thousand, with 3.79 million social media users accounting for 76.4 per cent of the overall population (Digital in Ireland: All the Statistics You Need in 2021, 2021). According to Data Reportal (2021), the average daily time spent by Irish people on the internet is 6h30min, whereas 1h55 was spent on social media in the previous year.

Millennials are a large population, but it is not the only significant aspect of the group. According to Census 2016, the population between 25-44 years represented 29,5 per cent of the population. There were 3 890 000 Facebook users in Ireland in April 2021, which accounted for 78.6% of its entire population. People aged 25 to 34 were the largest user group (950 000). Moving on to another social media platform, there were 2 380 000 Instagram users in Ireland in April 2021, which accounted for 48.1% of its population. People aged 25 to 34 were the largest user group (670 000). (NapoleonCat, 2021). The group seems to have unique characteristics that place them at an advantage in deciding social change, particularly during a time of technological disruption. The fact that they were the first technological natives lends

context to the common belief that evolving technology and the digitalisation of life may help millennials drive societal change, particularly when compared to prior (older) generations.

The media habits of millennials are distinct. They are less likely to read newspapers or watch television than Generation X or Baby Boomers. Millennials are significant social media users and are more likely to buy products or services online. Businesses that do not have a strong web presence or use social media risk being forgotten. Millennials use the Internet to analyse and compare items, identifying fake advertising quickly. This generation also cares about brand and value and are quick to share it online if they find any mistake by companies regards to social issues for that reason, a business should be transparent while interacting with them.

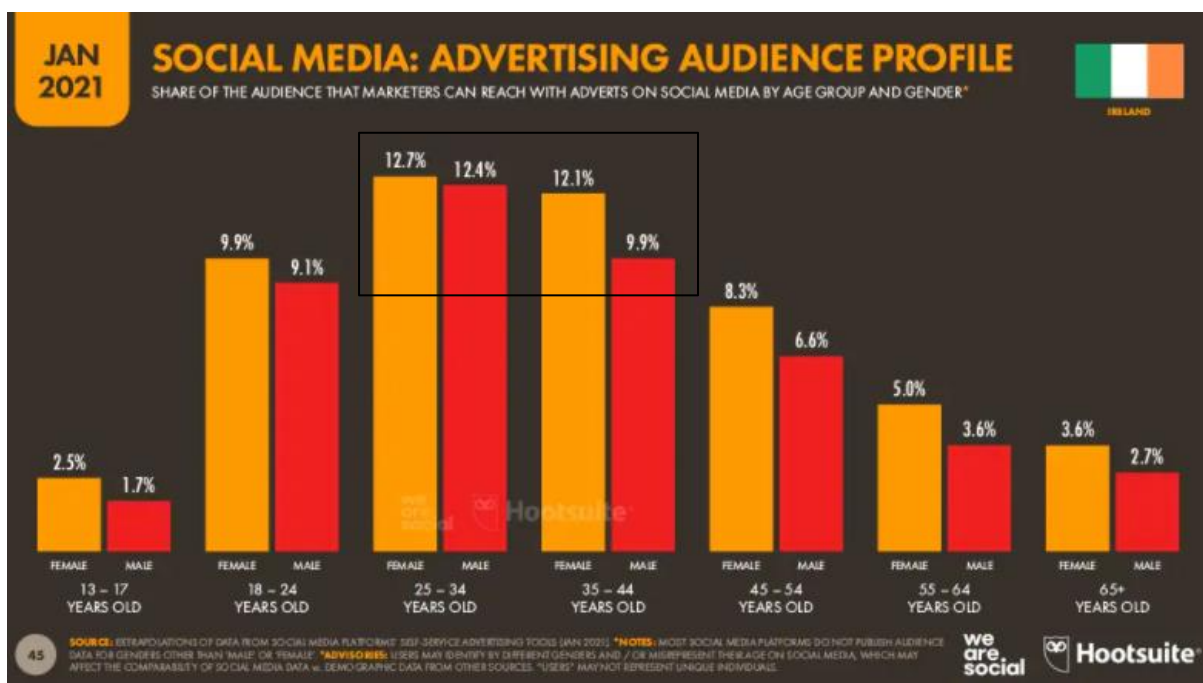


Figure 1: Top user social media according to age in Ireland.

Source: (Digital in Ireland: All the Statistics You Need in 2021, 2021).

Figure one shows the advertising audience those marketers can reach with adverts on social media by age group and gender.

Millennial's approach digital content consumption differently from the rest of the population, and this demographic is engaged with digital services during all waking hours of 5 the day. The opportunities are endless for how marketers and advertisers will capitalise on their usage behaviours (The Nielsen Company, 2017). The millennials, currently aged between the mid-20s and late 30s, are a larger cohort than any generation that has preceded them, have higher levels of education than any former generation, and are postponing family formation to invest in other aspects of life, including education, leisure, and careers. These changing social and economic behaviour patterns are likely to strongly influence economic outcomes for the broader society globally (MSCI, 2020).

1.3 Research Aim and Objectives

The aim of this research is to understand how brands can create a better experience for millennials in social media. It intends to identify if social media has played any significant impact on the purchase intention of Millennials in Ireland. Moreover, the influence of social media on consumers' purchasing decision-making process has brought new implications for marketers that would be interesting to research. Understanding what content is more relevant for them nowadays will help future marketing strategies be more effective and drive brands to increase value in customers' perspectives.

This research project will provide an overview of customers' buying process and use of social media. In addition, it will propose a conceptual framework for the impact of social media marketing on the purchase intention of millennials in the Irish market. As objective to better understand this relationship between millennials and brands, this study proposes to analyse:

1. To analyse the impact of social media networks on consumer purchase decisions in Ireland.

2. To examine the factors that influence the purchase intentions of millennials and how reviews by others on social media affect their purchase intentions.

An objective is to find out the best way for the brand to create exciting content to engage millennials and see more value.

The research is thus guided by one central research question: ‘To what extent does Social Media influence Millennials' purchasing behaviour in Ireland?’ Moreover, the influence of social media on consumers’ purchasing decision-making process has brought new implications for marketers that it would be interesting to research.

1.4 Research Hypotheses

1. Social media networks significantly impact millennials' purchase intentions in Ireland.
2. Millennials are more likely to trust companies with a solid social media presence.
3. Social media presence influences the purchase intention of millennials in Ireland.

1.5 Significance of Research

The significance of this research will be discussed in two folds: academic and practical implications of the study. The findings of this research will be very useful to academia. Online communities have a huge influence on the millennial generation. It is becoming evident that social networks have become an integral aspect of people's lives, this research will contribute to the body of information that will assist academics in understanding the workings of social media networks, which are a component of the continuing technology revolution. Secondly, the findings of this study are limited to Ireland. This opens up the possibility of replicating this study in other study locations in Europe and the developing world in the future. Third, because

of the quantitative aspect of this study, researchers who are biased toward qualitative research or who are used to the mixed-method approach may combine qualitative research processes to expose the research findings to a more rigorous scientific examination.

The practical implications of this study are also very significant because more than 50% of the population uses this way to communicate, brands need to be aware of attracting, engaging and delighting customers through these powerful channels. Companies have been quick to adapt to this different form of communication environment (Dahl, 2018). As a result, this research will successfully bring to light the difficulties of a niche sector with so many opportunities. Millennials, also called Generation Y, are aged from twenty-five to their early forties and represent 1.8 billion people -23% of the global population (MSCI, 2020). Most millennials are the new generation of power buyers, making them extremely important for the market share. Therefore, this research will investigate the impact of social media marketing on the purchasing habits of this cohort in the Irish market to understand the activities better and possibly suggest ways to improve the experience so that companies in the industry can provide better service.

CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The literature review can be defined as the section of the dissertation that contains a framework of the significance of the study related to the results in the area under study. (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). To begin this part, the working title of this dissertation is divided into relevant component terms that reflect the concepts that form the full dissertation. These keywords are millennials, social media, purchase intention, Ireland. These keywords, taken individually, might comprise pertinent portions of this literature study. However, some of these keywords must be combined to make a more meaningful and compact phrase to successfully express essential knowledge regarding the subject of study. For example, the term Ireland will result in a too broad reach. Combining Ireland with any other term, on the other hand, generates a context that is more relevant for the scope of this study.

Using the keywords that have been determined, an exhaustive literature search approach will be implemented. Except for basic facts and information, the literature search will normally be confined to the previous 30 years to prevent referring to outdated information. EBSCO source will be the main search engine for literature search. However, there are other search engines that will be used which are equally extensive and linked to databases that may not easily appear with EBSCO source search. This is to avoid creating any biased conclusion that may arise from getting a set of sources that are not representative of the existing literature base. The use of quotation marks with keywords and phrases makes search results more accurate and will therefore be strategically used to avoid wasting time reviewing unnecessary information.

2.2 Millennials

A generation is now defined as a group of people born within a specific time period; however, "the year of birth alone does not represent the variations in experiences, opportunities, and viewpoints of rich ethnic groups and poor, majority and minority, rural and urban, and the like" (Katz, 2017). According to Nielsen (2017), the Baby Boomers were born between 1947 and 1964, and successive generations, the X and Y, the last usually referred to as Millennials, were born between 1965 and 1979, and 1980 and 1996, respectively.

Generation Y was born during a period of economic expansion and significant technological development. Bennett, Maton and Kervin (2008) describe them as living lives immersed in technology and have a high purchasing power. It is also usually known that they have always been on the search for the greatest and lowest pricing deals (Lim *et al.*, 2016). This is the first generation to learn about and utilise new technology, especially the internet, from a young age (Vogels, 2019). As a result, Millennial's regard technologies as unavoidable in their daily lives, and they have been dubbed "digital natives" by Bilgihan (2016). According to Kaur (2017), they are an appealing market segment for e-commerce since, unlike their predecessors, they trust the internet and online purchasing methods. Millennials have grown up at a rapid transformation of technical progress, globalisation, and economic disruption, giving them a distinct set of goals and expectations that differ from preceding generations.

Millennials are actively engaged in the digital environment and, among all age groups, have the highest level of intention of purchasing online (Viswanathan and Jain, 2013). However, Krbova (2016) agrees that they are the ones who spend the most time buying online and who, in a way, represent generational variations in online purchasing preferences. In general, people

visit several stores before making a final selection, and they almost always choose from e-retailers. As a result, Generation Y is recognised as the generation that contributes the most to the expansion of e-commerce, followed by Generation X and Baby Boomers (Dhanapal et al., 2015). Millennials are an excellent target because of their paper dominance and large-scale activity; yet, creating trust with merchants is not a priority for these young people, which may be a massive hurdle for retailers (Bilgihan, 2016; Krbova, 2016).

The world of social media has added a new degree of complexity to understanding purchase intent, but it has also generated several opportunities. This is especially true when it comes to using social media and the diverse range of impacts that it brings. As companies' online presence on social media grows, consumer spending in general. The millennial generation is at the centre of it all. This generation now represents the most significant proportion of the workforce in the U.S. and will soon overtake Baby Boomers to become the largest living population of adults, according to estimates from the U.S. Census Bureau. Millennials are projected to spend \$1.4 trillion in 2020. As the biggest users of social media and the most likely to make online purchases, this group is shaping the future of how we do business ('Consumer Culture Report | 5W Public Relations, 2020).

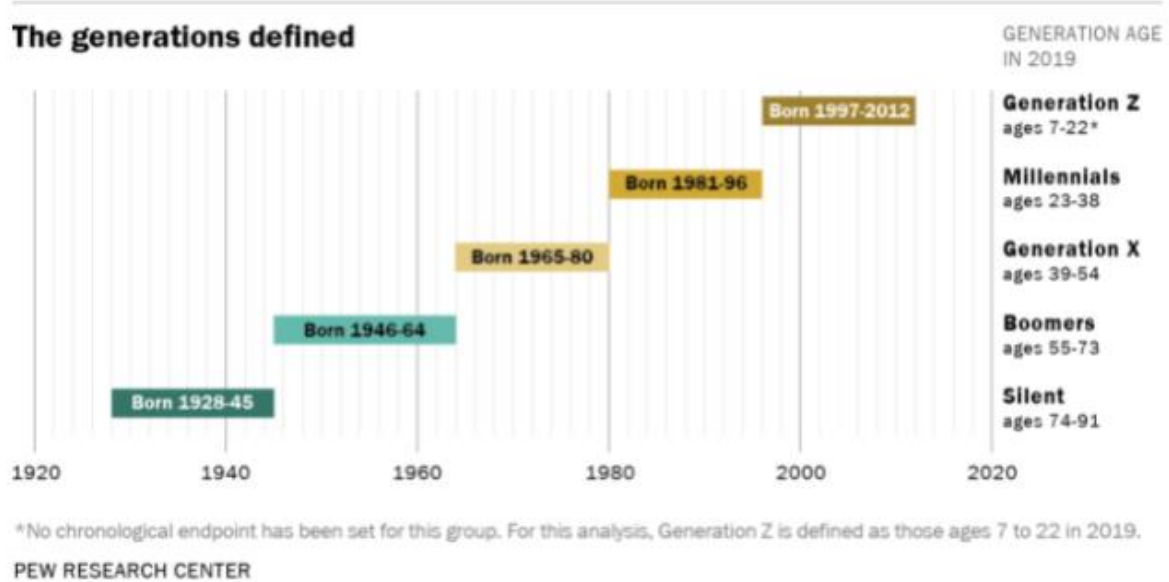


Figure 2: Definition of generations by Pew Research Centre Dimock.

Source: Auxier and Anderson (2021)

Figure two shows many generations, and it was described by Auxier and Anderson (2021) that Generation Y, commonly known as Millennials, are individuals born between 1981 and 1996.

Not all Millennials are at the same stage of life right now. While all Millennials were born around the turn of the century, some are still in their early twenties, juggling new occupations and settling down, while older Millennials have a house and starting families. They are not just culturally distinct, but they are also in different stages in their financial lives. The younger generation is only now beginning to exercise their purchasing power, and the latter group has a long history and maybe refinance their mortgage while raising their children. The disparity between priorities and necessities is apparent. While they are of the same generation, their perspectives and demands are highly different. Marketing targeting youthful generations as a single cohort will be ineffective unless both the approach and messaging are segmented.

Millennials' media consumption is predicated on 95 per cent still watching TV, although Netflix has surpassed traditional cable as the preferred source. The most common option is to

replace traditional channels with streaming services. Although this generation is quite comfortable with mobile devices, 32% will still make purchases on a PC. They usually have several social media profiles. Millennials are less committed to brands than earlier generations. They like to shop for items and features first, and they have limited tolerance for inefficient or poor service. As a result, Millennials invest their faith in companies with a strong product history, such as Apple and Google. They want digital debt management solutions and regard their banks as transactional rather than relationship.

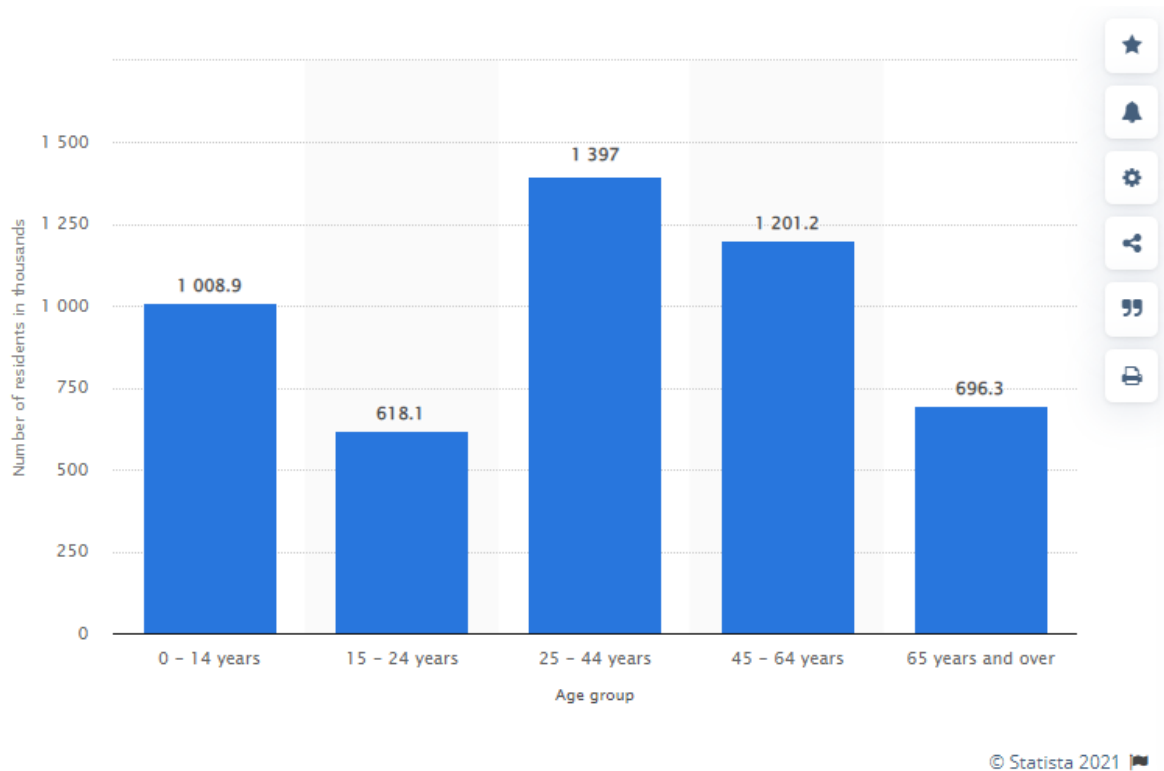


Figure 3: Population of the Republic of Ireland in 2019, by age group.

Source: (Irish population, by age 2019, 2020).

Figure three shows the population of Ireland in 2019, and there were around 1.4 million persons aged 25 to 44.

While brands are declining in prominence, social media is increasing. When making shopping decisions, millennials are looking to their online networks. "When a brand uses social media, I like that brand more," said 34% of those aged 16 to 34 (Millennials Infographic, 2013). Millennials have reached adulthood amid a period of rapid technology advancement, globalization, and economic upheaval. As a result, they have distinct habits and experiences from their parents. They have been slower to marry and move out on their own, and their attitudes on ownership have contributed to the emergence of what is known as a "sharing economy." They are also the first generation of digital natives, and their love of technology influences how they purchase. They are accustomed to having fast access to pricing comparisons, product information, and peer evaluations. Certainly, they are committed to wellbeing, dedicating time and money to exercise and proper nutrition. Their busy lifestyle impacts everything from food and drink to fashion trends. Another notable example of the importance of millennials in pop culture industries such as music, film, sports, food, fashion, and technology, youth create the trends for their seniors. Seniors frequently lack the time and agility to investigate the rapidly changing pop culture properly; instead, they just follow and depend on the advice of youngsters. Younger-generation customers are frequently the first to try new items, making them the prime target market for marketers. When young people adopt innovative items, they are more likely to make it to the mainstream market. Millennials engage in impulsive exchanges with brands on social media. Consequently, marketers should maintain that such exchanges adhere to a brand's overall image. Social media should be treated as an essential resource when it comes to providing marketing tactics to millennials in a flexible context (Helal, Ozuem and Lancaster, 2018).

2.3 Social Media

According to Aichner *et al.* (2021), the word "social media" (SM) was originally used in 1994 on Matisse, a Tokyo online media environment. Over the last decade, social media has infiltrated people's lives effectively (Helal, Ozuem and Lancaster, 2018). The number of SM platforms and active SM users has expanded substantially, making it one of the most essential Internet applications. Every day we spend 145 minutes on Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, WhatsApp and others (Digital 2021: Global Overview Report — DataReportal – Global Digital Insights, 2021). Social media channels have been everywhere since the early 2000s, and it has been growing at exponential rates since then. It's hard to imagine a world where social media wasn't a thing, especially for the generation growing during the massive increase of these new technologies. A social media platform is an online platform that people use to create social networks or social relationships with others with similar personal or professional interests, hobbies, backgrounds, or real-life connections.

In essence, all social media platforms exist to facilitate the sharing of material (ideas, photographs, news, videos) with everyone or a pre-approved set of friends or contacts (Gray, 2013). Kaplan and Haenlein (2010, p. 61) define social media as: “a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content.” Akram (2018) suggests that customers may connect and engage with businesses more personally by utilising internet networking. Instagram, Facebook, and Facebook Messenger are among the most popular social media platforms, as are Google, LinkedIn, Pinterest, Snapchat, Tumblr, Twitter, WeChat, Weibo, and WhatsApp (Yeo *et al.*, 2020). Social networks have a significant influence on young people. It is becoming evident that social networks have become an integral aspect of people's life. Many teenage people check their laptops, tablet computers, and cell phones for Tweets and status updates from friends and family. A study by Loechner (2017) suggests that social media

influences 74% of millennials' shopping. With the introduction of the internet, the opportunity to have their voice heard has altered, and it has lately gotten much simpler thanks to smartphones and mobile-enabled social networks (Carvill and Taylor, 2015). Social media is a type of web-based data transmission. Users of social networking sites may hold discussions, exchange information, and produce web content. Blogs, micro-blogs, wikis, social networking sites, photo-sharing sites, instant messaging, video-sharing sites, podcasts, widgets, virtual worlds, and other types of social media exist. Forouzan (2013) defines data transmission as "the exchange of data between two devices via some form of transmission medium such as a wire cable", transferring and reception data in the form of a digitized analogue signal helping to communicate over distances.

The terms "social media" and "web 2.0" have in the past years become popular for describing types of World Wide Web (WWW) applications, such as blogs, microblogs like Twitter, social networking sites, or video/image/file-sharing platforms or wikis. The term "web 2.0" was coined in 2005 by O'Reilly (2005), the founder of the publishing house O'Reilly Media, which focuses on the area of computer technology. Web 2.0 is the network as the platform, spanning all connected devices; Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an "architecture of participation", and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences. (O'Reilly 2005b).

According to Tuten and Solomon (2015), "Social media are the online means of communication, conveyance, collaboration, and cultivation among interconnected and

interdependent networks of people, communities, and organisations enhanced by technological capabilities". Basically, it is the websites and applications people use every day to share content with other users. According to Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), social media is a category of internet-based apps that are founded on the conceptual and technological foundations of Web 2.0 and enable the production and exchange of User-Generated Content. The phrase "web" refers to websites and other sites that allow people to engage with one another in a non-observer, non-intrusive manner without requiring enduring interaction between various users - for example, social networking sites like LinkedIn and Facebook. (Dahl, 2018).

Over the past few years, social media has changed the way companies connect to customers, creating a closer relationship. Traditional media still has a massive influence on customer decisions, and traditional and social media communications both have a significant influence on brand equity. While conventional media has a more significant impact on brand awareness, social media communications significantly impact brand image. (Bruhn, Schoenmueller and Schäfer, 2012). Having a profile on a platform like Instagram, Facebook or LinkedIn is essential for a strategy. Marketing creativity can be brought to life through social media, especially for those with limited or no media budgets. It's all too easy to depend on them as proof of achievement (Fulgoni, 2015). Especially for some young people that try to gain popularity at all costs, because they believe that only popularity will make them better people on the Internet (Wojdan *et al.*, 2021).

2.4 Purchase intention on social media

According to Hosein (2012), customer intention to purchase has a massive influence on customers' final purchasing decisions. Companies can now talk directly to customers

worldwide due to social media and approach the global market by using social media networks, and trends to reach many people. Brand followers also contribute their own content and shopping experience with companies and customers (Helal, Ozuem and Lancaster, 2018). Kim and Ko (2012) define purchase intention as a mixture of consumers' interests and the likelihood of purchasing the product. Martins *et al.* (2019) define purchase intention as an indication of buying behaviour. Understanding the precise indications of purchase intent allows companies to sell to customers at each stage of the purchasing process. Spears and Singh (2004) describe purchase intention as a person's intentional decision to acquire a specific brand.

One of the most dependable predictors of purchasing behaviour is purchase intention. It focuses the marketing efforts on only the actions that will make a difference for the business. Today, marketers are advancing their attempts to increase consumer engagement on social media platforms (Barger *et al.*, 2016). However, engaging content isn't just about making it simple for people to engage with your content - it's also about creating a user-friendly experience (Carvill and Taylor, 2015). The study conducted by Younus, Rasheed and Zia (2015) investigate the factors that affect customer purchase intention and explains that the customer's knowledge about the product and features increase the purchase intention, and celebrity endorsement increases the worthiness and reliability of the product in the consumer's mind. Purchase intentions can be used to put a new distribution channel to the test. The concept occurs during the pre-purchase cycle and captures the motivating factors influencing consumer behaviour. Other studies like Peña-García *et al.* (2020) shows social media as a vital factor to understanding the attitudes, evaluations, and internal elements that lead to buying intent to predict customer behaviour. Social media has shown to be advantageous since information may reach a vast number of people in a short period of time, making it a cost-effective way of advertising (Bandyopadhyay, 2016). Smith and Zook (2011) also find that social media

platforms effectively validate purchase decisions. However, most customers consider it necessary to have previous experience to make them totally trust a brand. Despite the fact that social media provides an overwhelming quantity of information to purchasers, Stachowiak-Krzyżan (2019) found that shoppers still go through different stages of evaluation, becoming aware, searching for information and assessing alternatives before purchasing rather than buying quickly. Jahn and Kun (2012) suggest that brand managers should embrace this new channel and understand how to work with it in a contemporary way.

Social media is a way to influence a shopper directly. Helal et al. (2018) suggest millennial brand consumption has surpassed practical use as millennials seek more value. Millennials and businesses develop symbolic ties through social media, which remain with customers long after an item has been consumed. According to Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan (2017), some segments are more likely to be loyal brand advocates, for that reason marketers should count on the success of young, women, and netizens (YWN). Purwasito (2018) describe netizens as "a new creature with new mind and status, like the metamorphosis of human beings who are born from natural transformation of information and communication technology". In the digital era, YWN is the most influential segmental (Kotler, Kartajaya and Setiawan, 2017); each is a profitable category in terms of size, revenue potential, and market size. For that reason, millennials are a very important generation to be investigated in this study, their subcultures have begun to have an impact on mainstream society.

To win customers' trust, marketers must create a solid and concrete differentiation through their marketing mix. Customers are now enabled and empowered in the digital economy to analyse and even investigate any company's brand-positioning promise. Because of the increased openness brought about by the emergence of social media, companies can no longer

make misleading, unverifiable claims. Social media provides companies with an easy connection to their target clients. Every post a company share adds value to their audiences, demonstrates the benefits of their products and services and establishes trust with potential consumers.

Social media serves as an extension of a company's customer support personnel, filling the gap between audiences and companies by enabling real-time updates and two-way dialogues, from replying to reviews to resolving typical consumer issues. The frequency of use has increased because of the utility, that is, the features associated with the social networking sites, which has a higher impact than networking on the frequency of use. Information use and problem solving did not appear to be significant in explaining the frequency of use, as social networking sites have become a source of entertainment with more enhanced features rather than just an online community, where opinions and information are shared. (Kartikeya P Bola, 2009). And, because social media allows customers to communicate with hundreds, if not thousands, of different businesses from other consumers worldwide, companies are no longer a singular source of communication and information about the brand.

2.5 Consumer behaviour on social media

Historically, companies were able to control the information available about them through strategically placed press announcements and good public relations managers. Today, however, firms have been increasingly relegated to the side-lines as mere observers, having neither the knowledge nor the chance nor, sometimes, even the right—to alter publicly posted comments provided by their customers (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). When making purchase decisions, customers have typically been driven by individual preference as well as by a desire for social

conformity. The level of importance for each of these two factors varies from one person to another, and it also varies across industries and categories. Given the connectivity we live in today, the weight of social conformity is increasing across the board. Customers care more and more about the opinions of others. Customers are impacted by their favourite social media influencers or their own friends, with whom they may maintain up to date and talk about trends in the community, particularly among young consumers (Abdullah *et al.*, 2020). They also share their opinions and compile massive pools of reviews. Much of today's customer behaviour may now be found online.

On social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter, consumers debate brands and products and endorse or complain about the decisions they have made (Szmigin and Piacentini, 2018). Together, customers paint their own picture of companies and brands, which is often very different from the image that companies and brands intend to project. The internet, especially social media, has facilitated this major shift by providing the platform and tools. Virtually everyone on earth will be connected very soon. It turns out that the solution for the internet laggards was not cheap laptops but rather affordable smartphones. With such vast connectivity, market behaviour will become significantly different. For example, in-store research using mobile phones to compare prices and check reviews is trending in many countries. Mobile connectivity allows customers to access the crowd's wisdom and make better purchase decisions. In such an environment, customers conform more to social opinions. In fact, most personal purchase decisions will essentially be social decisions. Customers communicate with one another and converse about brands and companies. From a marketing communications point of view, customers are no longer passive targets but are becoming active communications media. According to Underhill (1999), many shoppers will visit stores, make

choices, then go home and buy from a retailer's website when they find the right product or price match to suit their needs.

Companies used to have control over marketing communications, and they used to handle customer complaints individually. With community-generated content, companies have no control over the conversation. Transparency is also enabled via internet derivative items. Consumers may use social media platforms like Twitter and Instagram to highlight and share their customer experience, encouraging other customers of the same or lower socioeconomic status to replicate and pursue a similar experience. Customers may make educated decisions based on the wisdom of the crowd by using community rating sites like TripAdvisor and Yelp. Previous studies have shown that price is an important variable, but other variables such as product and service quality are essential in the process of customers' purchase decisions. The nature of interactions on social media platforms has altered dramatically due to many users, including family, co-workers, friends, group organisations, and governments (Giovanis et al., 2013).

Marketers often segment consumers by age. The basic logic is that people of the same age are going through similar life experiences and therefore share many common needs, experiences, symbols, and memories, which, in turn, may lead to similar consumption patterns. (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2010). In making a purchase decision, the consumer is faced with a range of stimuli that they may or may not respond to depending upon their choice criteria. At the first level, the mixed elements and marketing environment factors such as social influencers can inspire and induce personal buying decisions often in an impulsive way rather than on sound rationale and economic grounds. For the younger consumer, it is often peer pressure that stimulates the initial product interest (Gay, Charlesworth and Esen, 2007).

Consumer behaviour reflects the totality of consumers' decisions with respect to the acquisition, consumption, and disposition of goods, services, activities, experiences, people, and ideas by (human) decision-making units. Consumer behaviour means more than just the way that a person buys tangible products such as bath soap and automobiles. It also includes consumers' use of services, activities, experiences, and ideas such as going to the doctor, visiting a festival, signing up for a yoga class, or taking a trip. In addition, consumers make decisions about people, such as voting for politicians, reading books written by specific authors, seeing movies starring certain actors, and attending concerts featuring favourite bands (Hoyer and MacInnis, 2010).

Consumer behaviour reflects more than how a single person acquires a product at one point in time, marketing strategies and tactics try to influence one or more of the dimensions of consumer behaviour. Consumer behaviour has long been a popular topic in the marketing world. If companies can understand why consumers behave in a certain way, they can efficiently tailor their marketing strategies accordingly. This results in the main goal for the marketer, which is being able to influence consumers to purchase their products positively. Understanding purchase behaviour also leads to the psychology of the consumer mind and the reasoning behind selecting certain products over others (Stankevich, 2017). For the consumer, there is a constant ongoing task of making important decisions regarding what products or services to purchase. Whilst these decisions are undoubtedly of huge importance to consumers, they are also hugely important to marketers. These are not easy decisions for the consumer to make as there are often a large number of substitute products/services available to choose from. There is no shortage of information available from sources such as advertisements and friends,

and the consumer often finds themselves uncertain about the potential future performance of the product. (Bettman, Johnson and Payne, n.d.).

2.6 Conclusion

Social media and purchase intention are the two important keys related to buying process nowadays. The literature review has shown the impact of these two phenomena on traditional purchasing decision-making and how the process of consumers has been modified, been social media the most searched for online sources before the purchase (Krbova, 2016). Because of that, a customer can now identify an issue or need, search for relevant product information, evaluate alternatives, buy a product or service to satisfy the need, and even engage all through social media. This ability to rate and evaluate items, services, and brands available on social media may have a significant influence on other customers who are also present on social media. As one of the most cohort, millennials are a digitally native generation having particularly preferences that need to be achieved by brands.

The impact of social media on customer decision-making has significant consequences for marketers. Moreover, we saw that brands should monitor social media in order to identify influencers and engage with consumers. Therefore, the literature review pointed out that the consumer's behaviour of young consumers has been changed and social media has a significant market to be are searching on social marketers should engage consumers to build trust. Therefore, this study aimed to understand how brands can create a better experience for millennials in social media, identify if social media has played any significant impact on the purchase intention of Millennials in Ireland as is shown in other markets.

CHAPTER 3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The research method is the ‘technique or procedure used to obtain and analyse data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). This chapter explains how the researcher plans to carry out the current research endeavour using a well-explained approach. This study seeks to examine to what extent social media influences millennials purchasing behaviour in Ireland utilising the quantitative research approach. This section includes explanations for the selection of participants, the study design (covering population, sample size, sampling technique, research instrument, data collecting, ethics), and data analysis. The analysis that will be done from there will be valuable for the results that will be created and the debate that will follow if the research approach is used successfully.

The process adopted to conduct an online questionnaire survey answered by 195 participants who live in Ireland, based on the quantitative methodological approach. The data gathered was converted into charts and statistics using Microsoft Excel and the Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software, aligned with tables created in Microsoft Word. SPSS converted the quantitative data into cross-tabulated data to assess the correlation between the variables presented in charts and tables, section 4.4 Dependent and Independent Variables and tested the hypotheses using The Pearson Correlation coefficient. It also has the ethical issues highlighted by the researcher regarding the commitment and importance to respect the rights of the respondents of this study.

3.2 Participants

Between 2020 and 2021, the number of internet users in Ireland increased by 242 thousand (+5.7%). In January 2021, Ireland's internet penetration was 91.0 per cent (Statista, 2021). The study area for this research is Ireland while the population of the participants is the total number of registered users on the social networks, who are based in Ireland and are 25 to 40 years old. To begin with, Ireland, also known as the Republic of Ireland, is a country located in north-western Europe with an estimated population of 4.995 million people as of December 25, 2021 (Data Commons, 2021). It has consisting of 26 of the 32 counties of the island of Ireland, and Dublin is one of Europe's major financial centres. In terms of GDP per capita, Ireland is among the top ten wealthiest nations globally, despite this has been attributed in part to distortions generated by the tax inversion tactics of several multinational corporations operating in Ireland. As a developed country, Ireland ranks well in various national performance criteria, including healthcare, economic freedom, and press freedom.

It was chosen to select millennials since they grew up at the period when social media marketing was on the rise. They have also followed all of the developments over the years as businesses began to move into the social media sector and are highly familiar with the various social network platforms. Because they are the workforce, this generation also represents significant spending. According to Donawerth (2021), Millennials as a group have a purchasing power of more than a trillion dollars and account for more than 21% of overall consumer purchases. Because they are the workforce, this generation also represents significant spending. Millennials are more reliant on their mobile devices for purchasing than earlier generations. In fact, 58 per cent of Millennials prefer to make shopping decisions on their phones (Donawerth, 2020) with so much potential consumer spending on the line, as well as their regular usage of social media, it is plainly evident that gathering information from the millennial's point of view is incredibly beneficial.

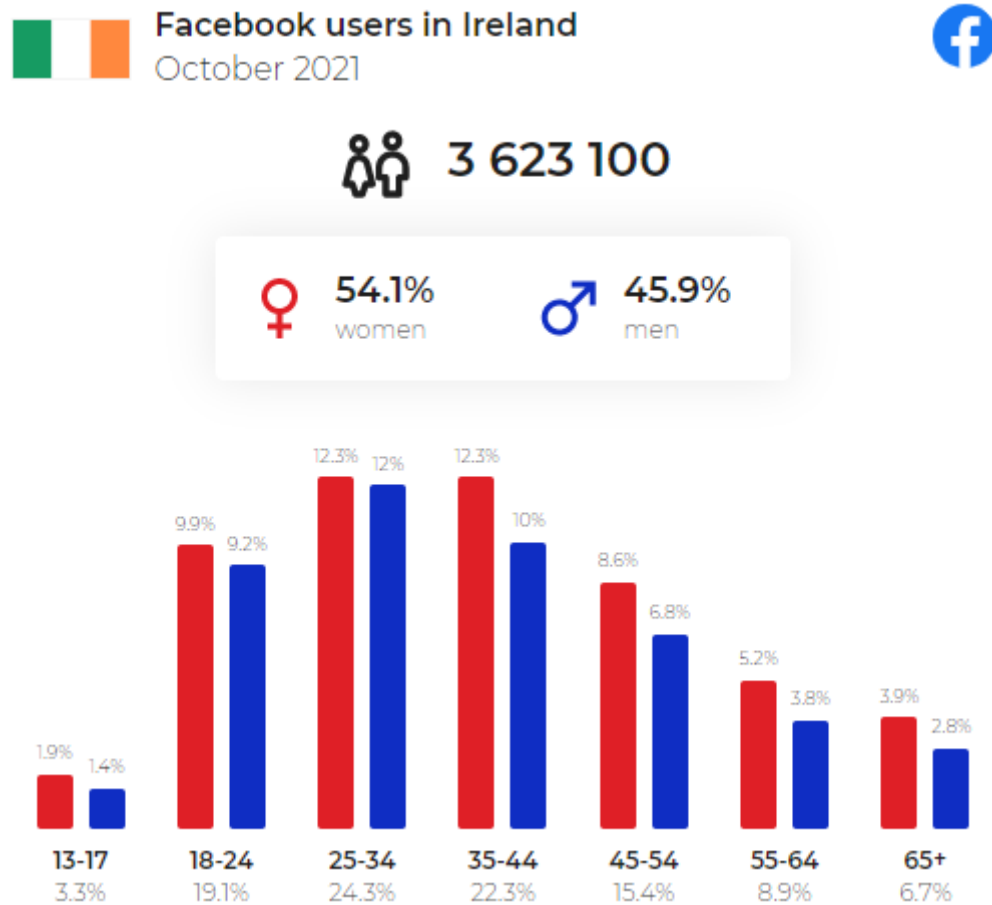


Figure 4: Facebook users in Ireland in 2021, by age group.

Source: (*Facebook users in Ireland - October 2021, 2021*).

According to Napoleon Cat (2021), some 90 per cent of Irish people aged between 16 and 24 use social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, as figures four show.

Data from the EU's official statistical office Eurostat shows that 60 per cent of Irish adults used social media overall last year. This compares to an EU average of 56 per cent. The use of such platforms has risen strongly across the continent in recent years. According to the Irish Retail and Consumer Report (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2019), the exponential growth of mobile shopping in Ireland is related to social media, which represented 3.79 million social media

users in Ireland in January 2021. The number of social media users in Ireland increased by 110 thousand (+3.1%) between 2020 and 2021, equivalent to 76.4% of the total population in January 2021. Average daily time users aged 16 to 64 spend using the internet: 6h30min.

Facebook is the most used platform in Ireland, and the number has increased from 2018 to 2020, reaching over 3.3 million users in October 2020 (*Facebook users in Ireland - October 2021*, 2021). The leading social media platform was trendy amongst adults in the age category ranging from 25 to 34 years old, making up a share of 25.1 per cent, followed by 22 per cent of users aged between 35 and 44 years old (Ireland: social network penetration 2019, 2021). The social media giant was followed by Instagram and LinkedIn, with respective penetration rates of 43 and 35 per cent. From 2009 to 2018, the percentage of people who use the internet daily climbed from 40% to 77%. In comparison, the proportion of people who said they hadn't used the internet in the preceding three months reached 18 per cent in 2018. Participation in social media followed a similar pattern, increasing from 40% in 2011 to 60% in 2018 (Ireland: social network penetration 2019, 2021). With so much potential consumer spending on the line and their regular usage of social media, and strong familiarity with influencers, it is clearly evident that gathering data from millennials is essential. Perspective is beneficial.

3.3 Design

Using a range of data gathering techniques and analytical procedures, qualitative research investigates participants' meanings and the links between them. The effectiveness of the qualitative researcher's work is based not only on having physical access to individuals who participate, but also on developing rapport and displaying sensitivity in order to acquire cognitive access to their data. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). The research design for this study is a quantitative-based cross-sectional survey design. The quantitative research

method is ideal for identifying between data collecting and data analysis (Lawrence and Tar, 2013) as well as evaluating, validating, and expanding qualitative findings reported in current study or past literature (Venkatesh, Brown and Bala, 2013).

To participate in this study, the respondent needs to have an internet connection, an active email address, and be a Social Media user. The researcher exposed the subject of this study on these social media platforms, requesting individuals to engage voluntarily in this survey. Simultaneously, the researcher distributed the questionnaire link to existing contacts, inviting them to participate in this study, which aimed to understand consumer purchase behaviour regarding social media impacts on millennials and answer the research questions 'To what extent does Social Media influence Millennials' purchase behaviour in Ireland?'. The study collected data from the participants from November 23rd to December 23rd 2021.

3.3.1 Simple Size

The sampling technique is selecting part of people that represents the whole target population in a survey. It can be divided into two types: (1) probability, when the chance of an individual being selected is equal among all of them, and (2) non-probability, the probability of an individual being selected is unknown (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2019). This study applied a non-probability sampling technique to gather data from a percentage of target respondents who are representative of millennials in Ireland, using a convenience sample. The target respondents of this study were general adults between 25 to 40 years old, living in Ireland and social media users. In 2021, the World Population Review estimated that there be 3,763,440 adults in Ireland. The formula presented in Figure 5 was used to calculate the sample size for this study based on the number of people who are likely to participate.

$$\text{Sample size} = \frac{\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2}}{1 + \left(\frac{z^2 \times p(1-p)}{e^2 N}\right)} = 385$$

Figure 5: Sample Size of Millennials in Ireland.

Source: SurveyMonkey 2021, 'Sample Size Calculator.'

Where: N = population size: 1,397,000 adults between 25-44 years old in Ireland.

e = Margin of error (95%): this percentage indicates how closely the survey results will represent the views of the general public. At a particular confidence level, the lower the margin of error, the closer the survey is to get the exact answer (SurveyMonkey n.d.).

z = z-score (0.05): number of standard deviations from the mean of an information point (SurveyMonkey n.d.).

However, some factors, such as the time and budget constraints, did not allow the researcher to survey the entire population or large sample size. Therefore, the researcher had to raise the margin of error to 7%, consequently, this study collected data from a sample of 242 answers, where 195 were valid participants, between men and women, who are millennials living in Ireland, from different nationalities.

3.3.2 Sampling Techniques

For this research, the convenience sampling method will be adopted. In convenience sampling, the researcher approaches the selected participants that he or she can easily access. Convenience sampling has been used when resources were limited (Macaro, Tian and Chu, 2018). On the other hand, snowball sampling may be the sole option for difficult-to-identify populations (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). According to Riff (2014), convenience sampling does not usually allow inference to a population. Still, some conditions justify its use, firstly, when the sampling frame is impractical to obtain as in the case here of online consumers or with the breakout of pandemics such as Covid-19 which might affect mobility and robust data collection drive; secondly, when resources do not permit; and thirdly, when an under-researched but important area is explored. These reasons justify the use of convenience sampling.

A self-administered online questionnaire with close-ended questions will be used as the data collection instrument. Descriptive and inferential statistics will be used in analysing data. All information on ethical considerations, such as anonymity, right to withdraw, informed consent etc., will be outlined appropriately to the respondents. This will demonstrate ethical awareness in the context of the study.

A non-probability convenience sampling method was employed to recruit participants for this study. Given the short twelve-week time frame to complete this research and the limited resources available, this non-probability sampling method is best suited. Convenience sampling allows quick and inexpensive collection of data which will most efficiently serve the aims of this study.

The researcher in this study has access to a number of millennials through social media, and the survey link was shared in their personal account like WhatsApp, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Using this form of participant recruitment, it can be assured that all participants in the study have at least one social media account and therefore are qualified to participate in the research. The study was shared with about 600 millennials living in Ireland. However, a demographic variable is requested to answer this study, to participate the respondent have to be aged between 25 to 40 years old. Resultantly, the required 195 participants to reach a 97% confidence level is achievable.

This study is a cross-sectional and mono-method quantitative study. The data was collected by a questionnaire survey, which was transformed to an online version using Microsoft Forms to generate a link that was shared to the researcher's existing connections in Ireland, such as friends, colleagues, co-workers, and neighbours. The survey was distributed via WhatsApp, Instagram and LinkedIn as the unit analysis in this study are social media users. An online survey was chosen as the most appropriate strategy for this study as this method allowed us to gain insights into the extent of consumers engagement with ephemeral content. Surveys are considered the most effective way of gathering data from a large number of people while being both time and cost-effective (Saunders and Lewis, 2017). Surveys are generally quick to put together and straightforwardly conducted, which suits this study given the limited time scale and available resources. Furthermore, surveys allow the ability to study large numbers of consumers and also ensure a level of objectiveness as the researcher is not directly involved during data collection.

The design of this quantitative study is descriptive in nature. Quantitative research involves the collection of data to predict, explain or control the relationship between variables. This

relationship is measured numerically and analysed using statistical methods (Saunders et al., 2019). This study aims to understand how brands can create a better experience for millennials in social media. This data is numerical in nature, and for this reason, a quantitative research approach is best suited to this study.

3.4 Materials / Apparatus

The stimulus material used in this research project was an online survey hosted using Microsoft Form. The survey consisted of one open demographic question and twenty-nine closed questions designed to address the hypotheses identified in chapter 1. The majority of the questions were closed questions because they are usually quicker and easier to answer (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). The questions asked were specific in nature, including, for example, “Do you feel inspired by trends on the internet?” and “When making your purchasing choices, would you give preference to brands that are active on social media?” (See appendix C). The questions asked were all multiple choice, and one open-ended question was used. The response options given varied from question to question, and the number of answer options ranged from two options to five options. Response options included yes/no, time scale, numerical scale, among others, in addition to general demographic questions. Due to the specific nature of the questions asked, participants were permitted to select just one predefined answer for each question. To ensure that participants provided responses to specific questions, all of them was marked as mandatory.

Reliability and validity are central concepts to ensuring the quality of the research conducted. Saunders et al. (2019) define reliability as the consistency of results across time, i.e., can the results be replicated. To ensure the reliability of this study, the research method has been carefully considered and planned to guarantee the conditions of research are identical for each

participant. The research process will be reported clearly and transparently throughout this chapter to allow external reliability.

To maintain internal reliability, the online survey distributed was identical for each participant. The questions were identically worded, and written introductions and instructions were all exactly the same. All participants will access the survey via the same link. Survey questions were divided into four sections. While every effort has been taken to ensure consistency and reliability, the researcher cannot control the environmental conditions of the participants while taking part in the study as the survey is distributed online and completed, but participants are in their own environments.

Mitchell (1996) sets out three methods of assessing reliability – test-retest, internal consistency and alternative form. In the context of this study, internal consistency is the most appropriate method. Internal consistency involves correlating participant responses with each other generally across a subgroup of questions Saunders et al. (2019). Cronbach's Alpha is the most frequently used method for calculating internal consistency and is measured using the consistency of responses to a subset of questions (Saunders et al., 2019). SPSS can facilitate a Cronbachs Alpha test. Reliability is an important characteristic of quality research, and while important, it is not sufficient alone. Research quality also depends on its validity. Saunders et al. (2019) define validity as the appropriateness of the measures used to assess what is being studied. Internal validity is concerned with the degree to which the observed results can be attributed to the intervention being researched (Saunders et al., 2019). A valid survey will ensure accurate data which measures the concepts we are interested in. In the context of this study, criterion validity will apply. Questions were asked of participants relating to the behaviour in social media that drives their engagement with that content and consequently

purchase intention. By asking questions of this nature, the researcher can accurately predict consumer engagement behaviour in social media.

3.5 Procedure

The data collection of this study was conducted totally online, and without any direct interaction between the researcher and the participants. As presented in the previous section, questionnaires were distributed to respondents electronically usually using the Internet. Respondents accessed the questionnaire through a web browser on their computer, tablet or phone using a hyperlink provided by the researcher. On arriving at the webpage participants are greeted with the title of the survey along with a brief presentation about the research, followed by an introduction to the topic and aims of the study. The introduction below stated clearly the aim of the study: *“In this survey, we will discuss your preferences and behaviours when it comes to purchasing a new item, as well as how social media influences your choice. The goal of this research is to learn more about how millennials use social media and what marketers can do to provide a better experience for them.”*

Following the survey introduction, a consent form including brief instructions was set out. The consent form serves to agree of respondents to submit their data when completing the survey. Bellow the introduction/consent form, participants are shown the first question *“I declare I read through the consent form above and accept to share my information with the researcher.”* after clicking “Yes” the survey officially begins. Each of the 30 questions in the survey is mandatory to answer. Following the choosing of response to the first section, the page moves on to section two and so on.

Once completion of question thirty-one, the final question, participants are invited to click 'done' which ends the survey and submits the responses. Further on, an end page is provided, thanking participants for their participation in the research, finalizing the survey. The average time participants took to complete the survey was 6:22 minutes. Following the completion of the data collection process, the raw data collected was transferred from Microsoft Forms over to SPSS for analysis. The following chapter will illustrate the results of this study. After the data gathering procedure was completed, the raw data was uploaded from Microsoft Forms to SPSS for analysis. The results of this study will be illustrated in the next chapter.

3.6 Ethics

In order to specify the data collection and analysis process, ethical considerations must be taken. Ethics refers to the rules of conduct that guide behaviour regarding the rights of individuals who become the subject of your study or are impacted by it (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). Creswell and Creswell (2018) explain that research is about collecting data about people for that reason is necessary to develop trust with then protecting participants rights. Because of the consumer-focused nature of this research project's topic, data collecting from members of the public is required, which will necessitate ethical consideration.

As a result, in conducting the research study, the researcher is obligated and committed to sticking to best practices and principles fundamental to scientific inquiry, such as avoiding data fabrication or falsification, plagiarism of previous studies, or engaging in any misconduct that would affect the integrity of this research study. To prevent any misunderstanding, it had an Information Form (See appendix A) at the beginning of the questionnaire that explained the nature of the research and the goal of the study. Moreover, in the first section of the

questionnaire, there was a Consent Form (See appendix B), where the research explains how the data would be used and protected, and there was the researcher e-mail, in the case the participants need to contact for any issue or further information associated with this study. Additionally, the respondent confirmed he/she fully understood the dynamic of the survey, and they had to consent to an agreement confirming they were taking part in it voluntarily. The time commitment required at the start of the process is clearly shown, and the progress bar by Microsoft Forms provides a time estimation during the survey process. This ensures that participants are aware of the time commitment required and how they can follow their progress throughout the survey. At any moment, the respondent could interrupt their participation and withdraw from the survey without any penalty. The survey was completely anonymous and confidential. It would provide neither risk nor benefits for the respondents.

To ensure the integrity of all respondents, the researcher ensured the confidentiality and anonymity of all information gathered from participants, which was used strictly to support a theory developed in this current academic study, and the information would not be disseminated or shared with any other researchers or used for other purposes, such as commercial. The only exception was academic lecturers from Dublin Business School who would be evaluating the study and needed access to the data. Furthermore, the acquired data was transformed into a password-protected Microsoft Excel spreadsheet file, which will be kept on the researcher's laptop until the end of the study in March 2022, when the final grade is expected to be received which point the file will be removed.

3.7 Data Analysis

The study sample was categorized using descriptive statistics. The descriptive statistics were presented in graphs charts and tables. Furthermore, mean comparison and Pearson correlation analyses were conducted to analyze the relationship between the variables of interest, as well as multiple regression analyses to assess the predictive power of the variables and the effect of social networks on Millennial purchase intentions. The correlation coefficient analysis findings are between -1.0 and 1.0, indicating that the correlation is ideal. When the correlation is positive, it indicates that there is a positive link between the variables, while negative correlation indicates that there is a negative association between the variables. Multiple linear regression analysis, on the other hand, comes in helpful when estimating the value of a variable based on the values of two or more variables.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter interprets the data in light of whether the hypotheses or questions were supported or refuted (Creswell, 2014, 2018). The general aim of this study is to investigate the influence of social media on consumers' purchasing decision-making process in Ireland. Presented in this chapter is a detailed account of the collected data and the analysis of the data. The questionnaire has 25 questions and 5 statements, which respondents rated based on their level of agreement or importance using a 5-point Likert scale, with 1 being the lowest value and 5 being the highest value. The consent form was the first question, in which respondents declared that they were aware that their participation was voluntary. Questions from two to five collected demographic characteristics of the participants, while questions from six to 19, gathered psychological information. The question from 20 to 30 analysis the behaviour aspects. Question two and three are the last question of the survey if participants are not living in Ireland or between 25 to 40 years old. The data compilation was separated into two parts: descriptive, which described the fundamental features of the data, and inferential, which determined the correlation between variables as well as statistical significance. Furthermore, the findings reported in this chapter will be utilized to decide if the hypotheses proposed in Chapter One of this study are supported or rejected.

4.2 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistical Analysis is a visual and numerical technique that count the number of occurrences in each category of a variable allowing the research to identify patterns, trends,

bumps, and irregularities (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2019). This method was applied to assess the data gathered from the online survey respondents about their demographic and psychological and behavioural characteristics presented in a pie chart, or clustered column charts created on Microsoft Excel, and tables created on Microsoft Word, according to the type of information. In parallel, SPSS software was used to analyze statistically the information collected, calculating the mean and standard deviation of the central tendency and dispersion, respectively of psychological characteristics. The second and third questions are limited to continuing the questionnaire regards to location and age of the respondent for that reason this study has validated 195 answers of 242 participants in total. The tables below present the responses of the participants to the questions they completed in the survey instrument.

Table 1: Expression of Interest

Expression of Interest		
Questionnaire	Participants	Percent
Yes	242	100
No	0	0
Total	242	100

Table 1 shows that all the participants approached with the request to participate in the survey did indicate “Yes” by signing the Participant Information Agreement.

4.2.1 Demographic Characteristics

The demographic characteristics collected from the participants were: age, gender and nationality, and where they live to have a profile of the respondents. The results are presented in the sections below.

4.2.1.1 Age

As the population of this study were millennials, the second question is limited to it, to continue to the following question all the respondents have to be 25 to 40 years old. As show in Table 2, who participated in the survey that were in the required age categories of 25-40 years represent 82,3% of respondents. As a consequence, the entire sample size analysed is the same age.

Table 2: Expression of Interest

Age of Respondents		
Age Categories	Frequency	Percent
Under 24	33	13.9
25-40	195	82.3
41-56	8	3.4
57 or more	1	0.4
Total	237	100

4.2.1.2 Gender

As shown in figure 6, women were the most respondents who took part in the survey (61,50%), followed by men (37,9%) and non-binary (0,50%).

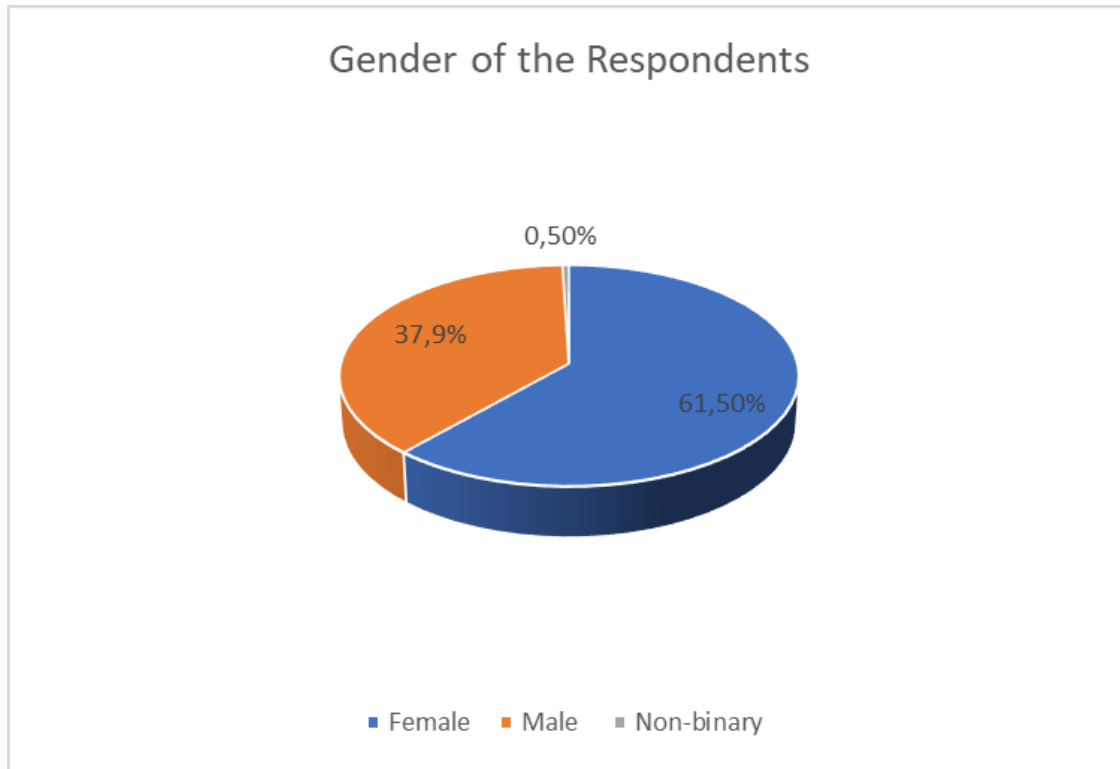


Figure 6: Gender of the Respondents (Q5).

4.2.1.3 Nationality

Most respondents were Brazilian (45%), followed by Irish People (16%) and people from other nationalities as shown in the graphic below (Figure 7).

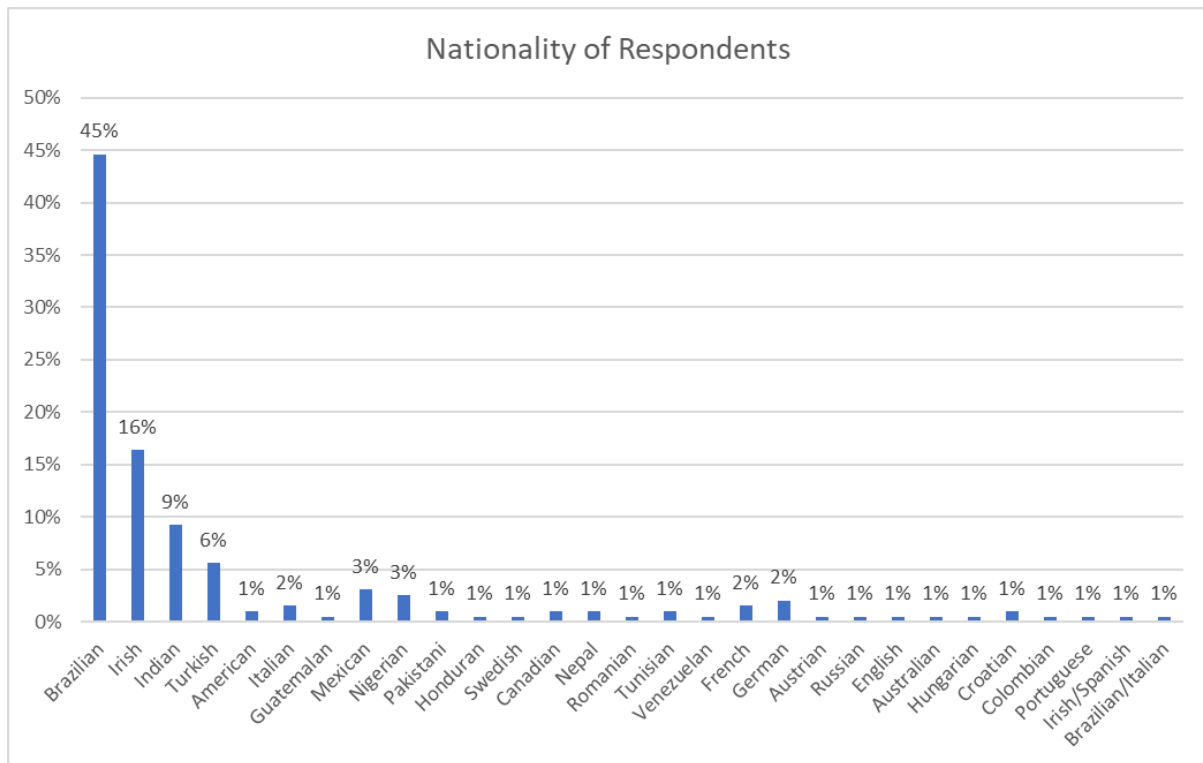


Figure 7: Nationality of the Respondents (Q4).

4.2.2 Social Media Usage

The majority of respondents (99%) have an active social media account (Figure 8), confirming the survey participants were appropriate respondents for this study. Regarding the length of experience with social, the respondents have been in social media for 5 years or more (88%), as presented in figure 9 below; 11% of respondents have been using it for 2 to 5 years. Concerning the number of profiles actives on social media, figure 11 below shows that 52,3% of respondents said they have 3 to 4 accounts active, 24 % one or two accounts and 23% have more than 5 accounts.

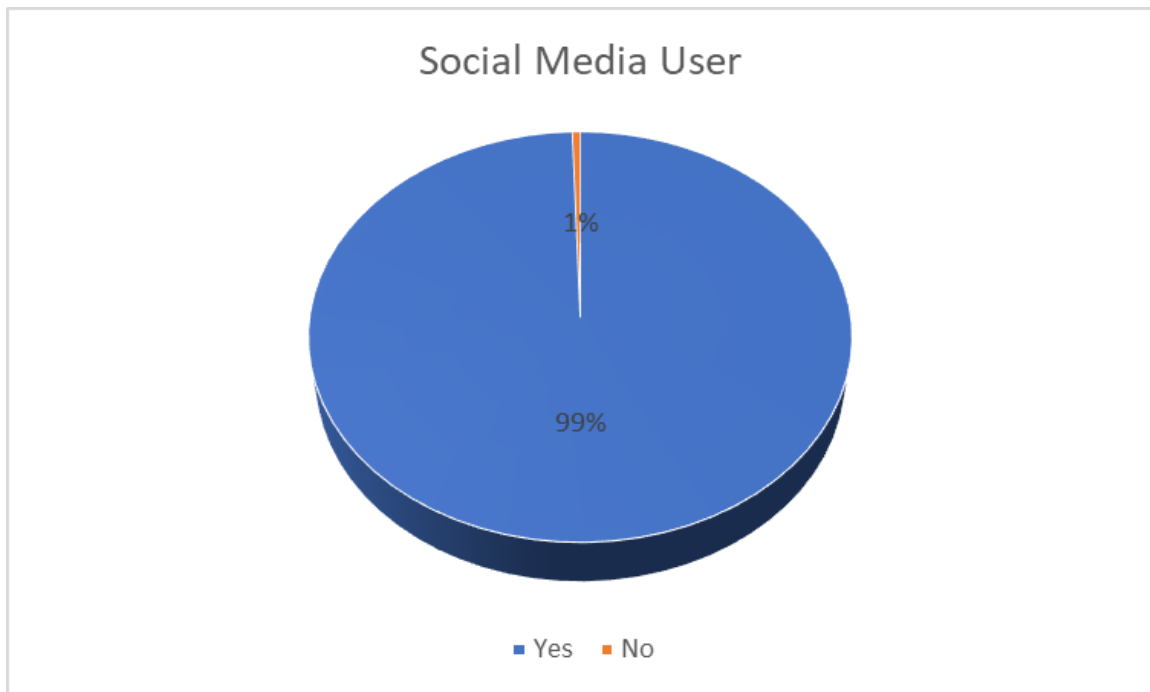


Figure 8: Do you have a social media account? (Q6)

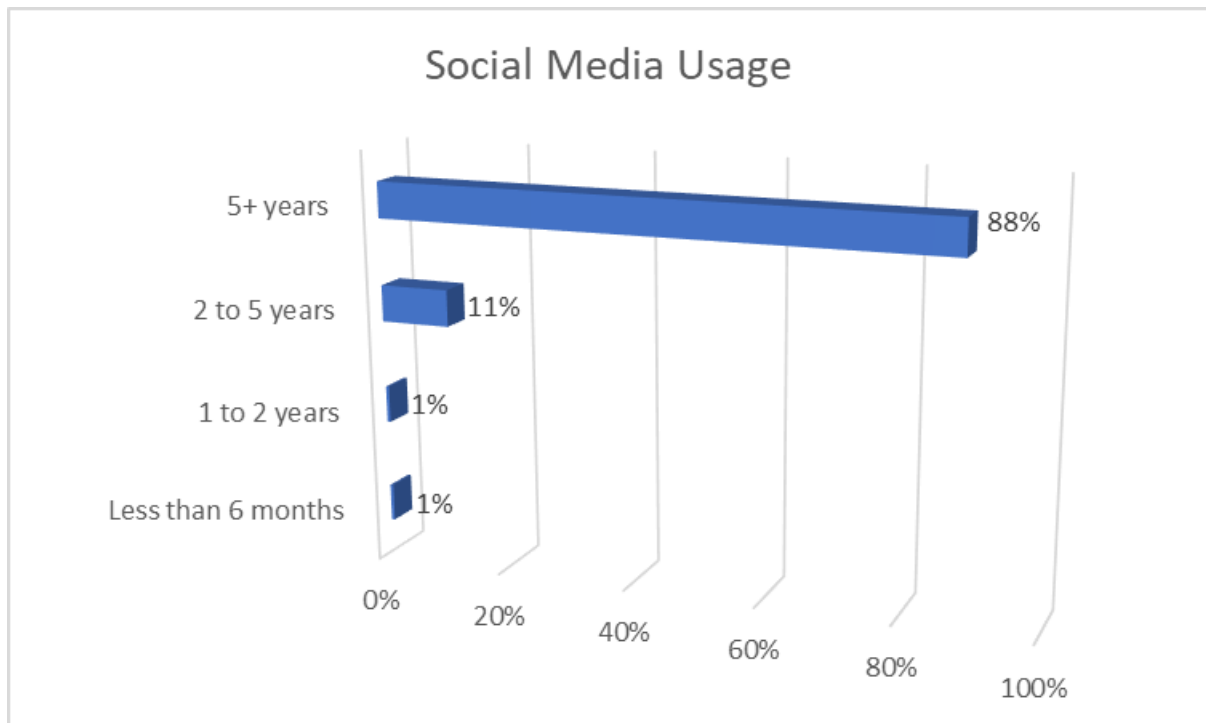


Figure 9: How long have you been using social media? (Q7)

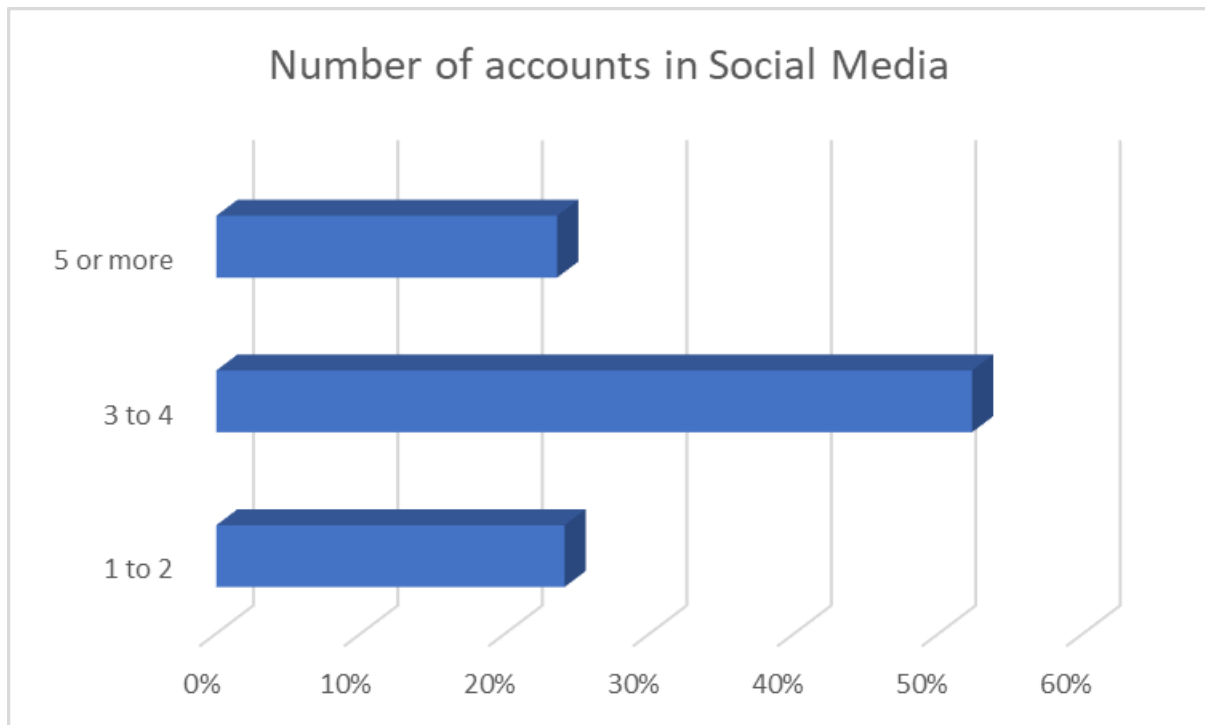


Figure 10: How many active accounts in social media do you currently have at the moment?
(Q8)

As presented in figure 11 (below), consumers have some preference between social media platforms. 56% of respondents said they prefer WhatsApp to other platforms; while 28% have Instagram as a favourite social media platform.

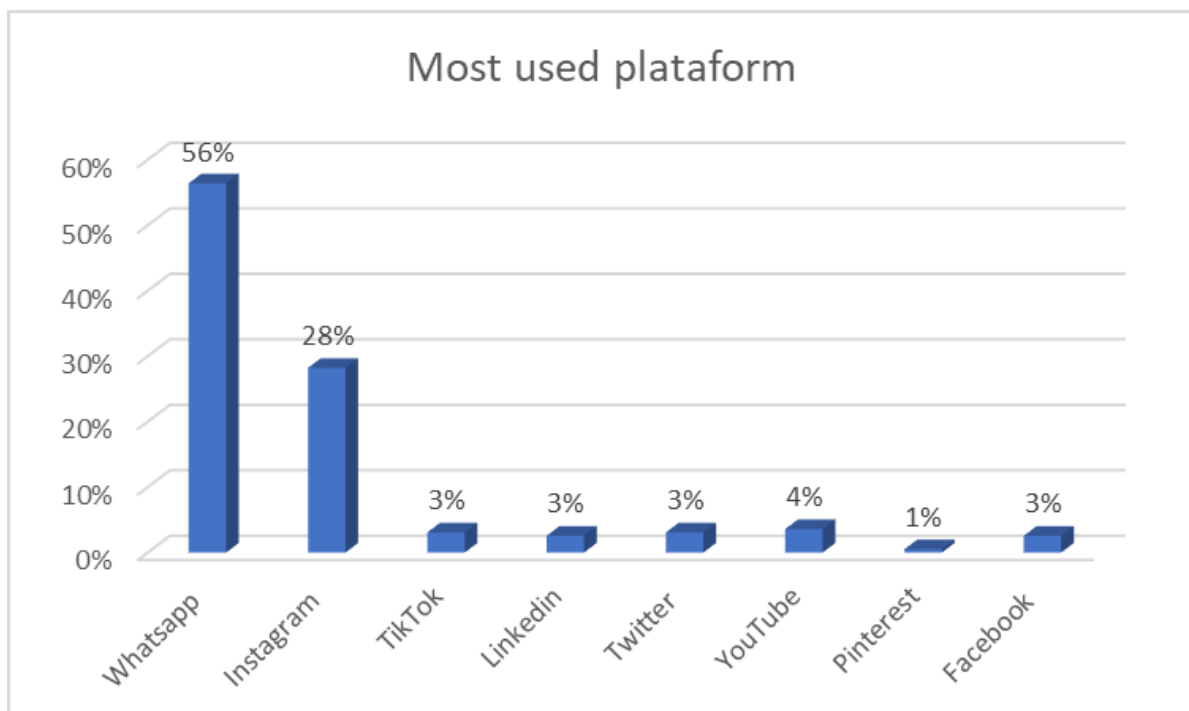


Figure 11: What platforms do you most use? (Q11)

4.2.3 Brand Engagement

The next questions were included to gain further insight into the way in which participants engage with brands throughout social media. The first and second question relates to whether they do and the reason to follow a brand in a social media space. Figure 12 shows 75% follow a brand on social media. Concerning the reason that makes them follow it, 46% of respondents said the most important reason is to get updates about products or services (figure 13).

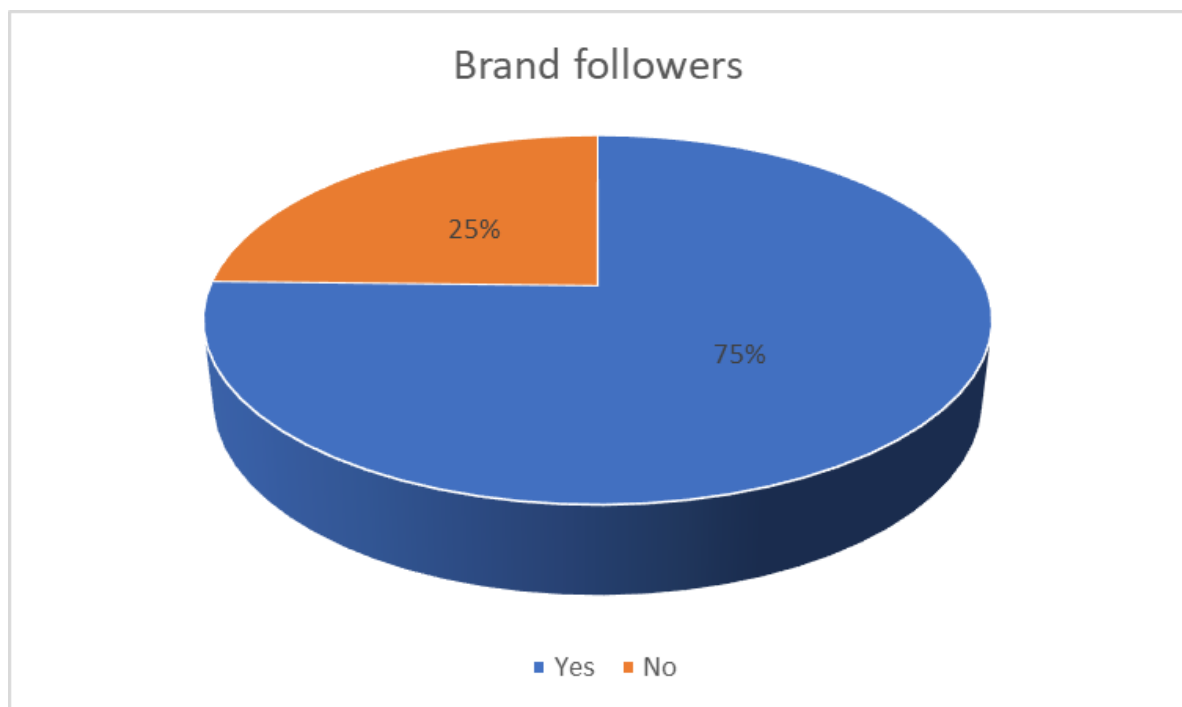


Figure 12: Do you follow any brand(s) on social media? (Q9)

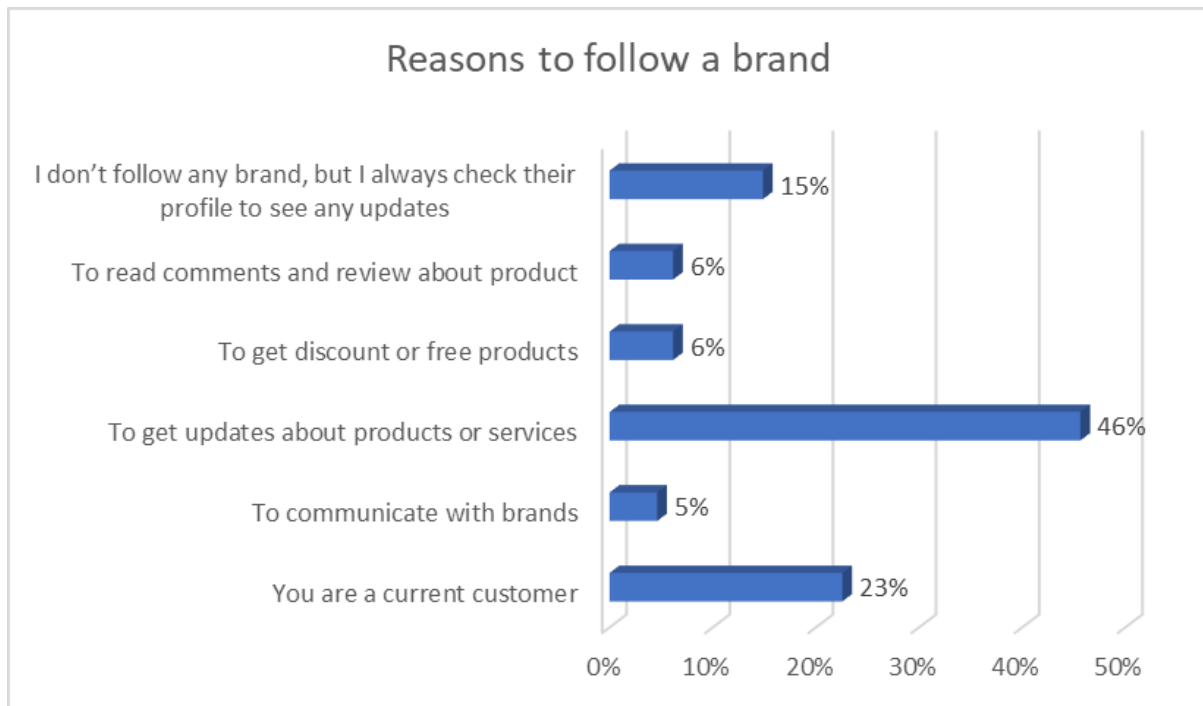


Figure 13: What makes you follow a brand on social media? (Q10)

From Table 3, most of the participants (66,2%) demonstrated that they feel inspired by trends on social media Yes response, while 33,8% indicated otherwise. Regarding the length of influence by social media, 81,5% of the participants confirmed that they had bought something influenced, followed by 18,5% that said they never bought anything influenced by social media. In the same vein, regarding the question of whether factors influenced this decision, about 51% of the participants said good reviews while 28,7% said advertising; 18,5% believes influencers/bloggers, and only 1,9% consider star rating as the main influence that made them to buy something influenced by social media.

Furthermore, when asked if participants would prefer brands active on social media when making their purchasing choices, the majority (61%) said yes. In comparison, 39% indicated otherwise. When asked the importance of a brand having a solid social media presence, 34,4% of respondents think it is extremely important.

Table 3: Responses of Participants to Other Survey Questions (A)

Do you feel inspired by trends on the internet?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	129	66,2
No	66	33,8
Indicated	195	100
Total	195	100

Did you ever buy anything influenced by any social media?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	159	81,5
No	36	18,5
Indicated	195	100
Total	195	100%

If yes, what most influenced you to buy it?	Frequency	Percent
Influencers/Bloggers	29	18,5
Good reviews	80	51
Advertising	45	28,7
Star rating	3	1,9
Total	157	100

When making your purchasing choices, would you give preference to brands that are active on social media?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	119	61
No	76	39

Indicated	195	100
Total	195	100
How important is it to you that the brand chosen has a solid social media presence?	Frequency	Percent
Extremely important	67	34,4
Somewhat important	58	29,7
Neutral	57	29,2
Somewhat not important	7	3,6
Extremely not important	6	3,1
Total	195	100

In Table 4, 64,9% of the participants said quality and frequency of content on social profiles impact their decision between brands; 72,3% check profile and engagement (like, comment, etc.) before purchasing from a non-brand. In addition, 49,7% of respondents rate the importance of companies' presence on social media are high.

Concerning the online purchasing of non-essential items (as clothes, toys, furniture, shoes, electronics, etc), more participants (50,8%) rated their habits as moderate; 53,3% of the participants agreed social media is more influential than traditional media in their final purchase decision, 18% of the respondents did not share that opinion. Also, regards to other`s opinion about the product/service when making a purchasing, more participants (62%) said friend`s opinion is the most important. They were followed by 24% of the participants who consider family`s opinion as the most important.

Table 4: Responses of Participants to Other Survey Questions (B)

Does the quality and frequency of content on social profiles impact your decision between brands?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	126	64,9
No	68	35,1
Total	195	100

Before purchasing from a non-brand (unknown business from you), do you check their social media profile and engagement (like, comment, etc.)?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	141	72,3
No	54	27,7
Indicated	195	100
Total	195	100

In general, how do you rate your online purchasing habit of non-essential items (as clothes, toys, furniture, shoes, electronics, etc)?	Frequency	Percent
High	33	16,9
Moderate	99	50,8
Low	59	30,3
None	4	2,1
Total	195	100

In terms of your brand loyalty, how do you rate the importance of companies' presence on social media?	Frequency	Percent
High	97	49,7
Moderate	71	36,4
Low	24	12,3
None	3	1,5
Total	195	100

Do you agree with the following statement: "Social Media is more influential than traditional media in my final purchase decision"?	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	26	13,3
Agree	78	40
Neutral	56	28,7
Disagree	13	6,7
Strongly disagree	22	11,3
Total	195	100

When making a purchasing who would be the most important opinion about the product/service for you to consider?	Frequency	Percent
Family's opinion	46	24
Friend's opinion	121	62
Influencer's opinion	12	6
Celebrity's opinion	4	2

Unknown person's opinion	12	6
Total	195	100

In Table 5, in spite of the produced of content by brands on social media 64,9% of the participants said they feel more connected to the brand when they watch it. When asked about their loyalty, 47,2% consider they are loyalty to the brands they most consume, 13,90% did not shared this opinion; 80,5% agree that company that has a solid social media presence has a better chance of keeping client loyalty; 57,4% are more likely to see things that they need to buy and/or sell on social media than any other online or physical channel. Therefore, 57,4% of respondents are more likely to see things that need to buy and/or sell on social media than any other online or physical channel. Also, 40% consider social media important in the purchase decision, despite of 20,5% consider the opposite.

Concerning the influence of others opinion, 87,2% of respondents are more likely to make a purchase online recommended by family, friends, influencer or celebrity; 51,8% trust their friends reviews and comments about products/services/brands on social media. When asked about reviews, 68,2% said they don't leave a comment/review about the experience with the product or service after making a purchase.

Table 5: Responses of Participants to Other Survey Questions (C)

When you watch their content produced on Instagram or other social media platforms, do you feel more connected to the brand?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	126	64,9

No	68	35,1
Total	195	100

On a scale from 1 to 5. Where 5 is the most loyal. How loyal would you consider yourself to the brands that you consume the most?	Frequency	Percent
1	6	3,1
2	21	10,8
3	76	39
4	63	32,3
5	29	14,9
Total	195	100

Do you agree with the following statement: "A company that has a solid social media presence has a better chance of keeping client loyalty"?	Frequency	Percent
Strongly agree	56	28,7
Agree	101	51,8
Neutral	32	16,4
Disagree	5	2,6
Strongly Disagree	1	0,5
Total	195	100

Are you more likely to make a purchase online if the product or service comes	Frequency	Percent
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Do you agree with the following statement:	Frequency	Percent
“I trust in my friends’ reviews and comments about products/services/brands on Social Media”?		
Strongly agree	26	13,3
Agree	85	43,6
Neutral	66	33,8
Disagree	11	5,6
Strongly disagree	7	3,6
Total	195	100
After making a purchase do you usually leave a comment/review about the experience with the product or service?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	62	31,8
No	133	68,2
Total	195	100
On a scale from 1 to 5. Where 5 is the most important. How important is social media in your final purchase decision?	Frequency	Percent
Unimportant	16	8,2
Slightly important	24	12,3
Moderately Important	77	39,5
Important	51	26,2
Very Important	27	13,8
Total	195	100

4.3 Inferential Statistics

The inferential statistical measures adopted for this study are the Pearson Coefficient Correlation. They were adopted to test the research hypotheses, which are:

H1. Social media networks significantly impact millennials' purchase intentions in Ireland.

H2. Millennials are more likely to trust companies with a solid social media presence.

H3. Social media presence influences the purchase intention of millennials in Ireland.

4.4 Testing the Hypotheses

SPSS software provides several statistical techniques to explore the relationship between variables or differences between groups. Pearson's Correlation was used to assess the linear relationship between two continuous variables. To apply Pearson's correlation, the variables must have a normal distribution, and linear relationship (Howitt & Cramer 2020).

Table 6: Model Summary of the Significance of the Impact of Social Media Networks on Consumer Purchase Decision in Ireland

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
2	0,20**	1	-	-	-	-	-	-
3	-0,13	-0,73	1	-	-	-	-	-
4	0,15*	-0,07	0,37**	1	-	-	-	-
5	0,17*	-0,12	0,40**	0,45**	1	-	-	-
6	0,06	-0,06	0,10	0,28**	0,32**	1	-	-
7	0,05	-0,18*	0,41**	0,31**	0,37**	0,11	1	-
8	-0,31	-0,07	0,33**	0,16*	0,20**	0,11	0,27**	1

Predictors: ** $p < 0,01$; * $p < 0,05$. Variables: 1 – How long have you been using social media?; 2 -How many active accounts in social media do you currently have at the moment?; 3- Does the quality and frequency of content on social profiles impact your decision between brands?;

4- How important is it to you that the brand chosen has a solid social media presence?; 5- When making your purchasing choices, would you give preference to brands that are active on social media?; 6- Did you ever buy anything influenced by any social media?; 7- Do you feel inspired by trends on the internet?; 8- Did you ever buy anything influenced by any social media?

Table 5 represents the model summary of the significance of the impact of social media networks on consumer purchase decision in Ireland. The results show positive correlation between online engagement and number of active accounts ($r=0,20$; $p < 0,01$), solid social media presence ($r=0,17$; $p < 0,05$), and preference for active brands on social media ($r=0,15$; $p < 0,05$). Quality and frequency of content had a positive correlation with solid social media presence ($r=0,40$; $p < 0,01$), solid social media presence ($r=0,37$; $p < 0,01$) and purchase influenced by social media ($r=0,33$; $p < 0,01$).

The importance of a solid social media presence is a positive correlation between purchase intention choices ($r=0,45$; $p < 0,01$) and purchase influenced by social media ($r=0,20$; $p < 0,01$). Another finding is between the preference for active brands on social media and purchase influenced by social media ($r=0,16$; $p < 0,05$).

4.5 Buy influenced in findings

Other findings have been identified regarding the variations in the influence of social media based on gender and nationality. The next section is dedicated to outlining only the significant differences identified in the results.

4.5.1 Gender and Nationality

As shown in figure 14 below, it points out that females (66%) already bought something influenced by social media more than males (33%). Moreover, regarding nationality as seen in figure 15 below, 47% of Brazilians said that they already bought something influenced by social media. In contrast, the majority of Irish people (18%) never did it.

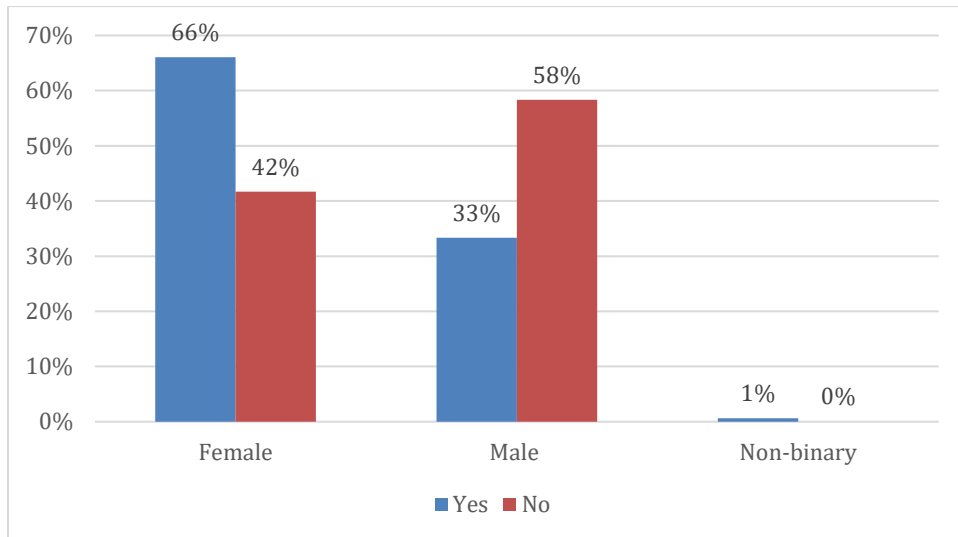


Figure 14: Did you ever buy anything influenced by any social media? (Q13)

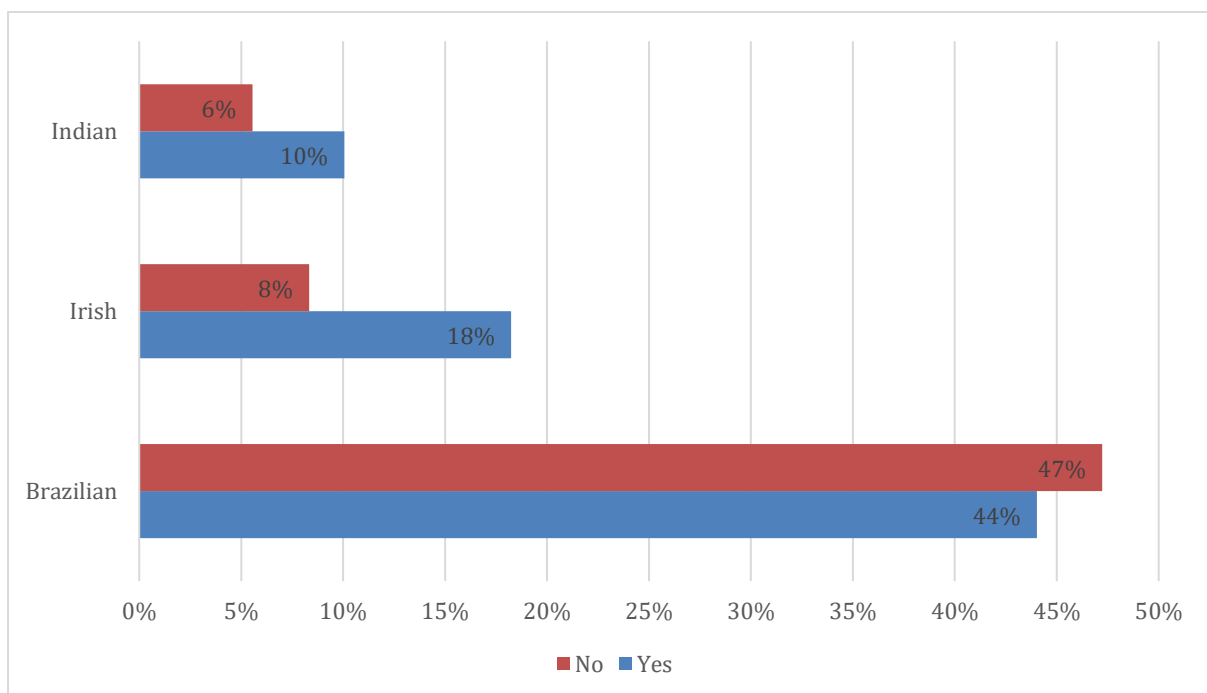


Figure 15: Did you ever buy anything influenced by any social media? (Q13)

4.6 Conclusion

The results of the data analysis of the online survey performed as part of this study were reported in this chapter. The results were shown by exporting raw data from Microsoft Forms, the web platform used to host this poll. This raw data was analyzed with SPSS and Microsoft Excel and displayed visually in the form of graphs and tables throughout this chapter. After the Pearson's Correlation analysis, three hypotheses were accepted, demonstrating that social media presence, quality and frequency on social media significantly impact millennials' purchase intentions in Ireland. A discussion of this study and findings will be done in the next chapter.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The aim of this study is to identify if social media has played any significant impact on the purchase intention of Millennials. This chapter aims to highlight the relevance of findings of the research liking how it fits with previous theory stated in Chapter 2 Literature Review, and examining the contributions and weaknesses of the research. In addition, the implications of the findings and the limitations identified during the application stages of this study are also pointed out. Finally, the conclusion discusses its future research potential, identify the implications of the results and the research applications, and give ideas for future research stemming from the findings.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

Data from the demography reveal that 195 participants took part in the survey, while there more female than male respondents.

The results data shows that majority of participants follow a brand on social, and principal reason for that is to get update about the products or services. In addition, they all have a social media account while only 1 participant denied having a social media profile. But majority had between 2- and 5-years' experience with social media. WhatsApp is the most popular platform between millennials in Ireland. Also, longer online engagement increases the importance and preferences for brands active on social media. These finding confirm the presence of millennials on social media and demonstrate the value of WhatsApp as important media to be develop more strategy to reach millennials.

In relation to trends on social media, the data shows most of respondents are influenced by trends on internet, a majority of participants already bought something influenced by social media. Good reviews also provided popular as the most influenced factor to influence online purchase. Recommendation by others like family, friends, influencer or celebrity are relevant while searching for an online purchase. Friends' opinion is the most relevant, and celebrity is the less important. Majority think is relevant to see a comment but don't leave a comment after making a purchase. Social Media is more influential than traditional media in my final purchase decision for most of respondents. Based on these results, **H1** and **H3** is deemed as supported by the results data of this study.

Regards to the presence of brands on social media, the results data indicate that survey respondents agree that a company with solid social media presence has a better chance of keeping customer loyalty, only 6 respondents disagree. These findings are further supported when participants were asked about their preferences between brands. Again, most of respondents would rather buy from a brand active on social media, and they seek profiles before make a purchase to check quality and frequency of brands content on social media, especially from a non-brand what make them more confident about the brand. Many of respondents consider they can be loyalty to a brand if they like it. While many participants rated online purchase habit of non-essential items are low, a significant number those habit are high. **H2** is deemed as supported by the results data of this study.

When analyzed the data regards to influenced between gender and nationality, females are more intent to purchase by influence of social media, different of the majority of male that have never done. Despite the mix of nationality in the results, there isn't a significant impact between

origin country of participants, however Brazilian were showed more influenced than other nationalities.

5.3 Discussion of findings relative to previous theory and research

The research shows that most of the participants were active on social media. Most of them follow a brand on these platforms to get updates about services or products of a brand, also majority feel inspired by trends on internet. The most relevant antecedent for this study was the influence of social media on 74% of millennials' shopping (Loechner, 2017), as well the significant impact of social media on brand image (Bruhn et al.,2012).

Important findings made in this study are the impact of content on this purchase intention of millennials, they assume the influence of quality and frequency on social media before making a purchase. This has a great support in literature as the purchase intention an indication of buying purchase decision, it is concluded sharing photos and videos on social media increase endorse the purchase intention during the marketing purchase funnel (Martins et al.,2019; Abdullah et al., 2020; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2010). The findings of this study in relation to customer behaviour contribute the content and shopping experience between companies and customers with Helal at al. (2018) study in that, of the sample surveyed in this study, a majority of respondents agreed social media influence in the final purchase decision. Furthermore, this study confirms the preference for brands active on social media study confirming the importance of create a user-friendly experience, also find that social media platforms effectively validate purchase decisions (Smith and Zook, 2011; Hosein, 2012; Carvill and Taylor, 2015).

The relevance of theory of customer behaviour to the findings made celebrity endorsement increases the worthiness and reliability of the product in the consumer's mind (Younus, Rasheed and Zia, 2015). Results data shows that majority of respondents are more likely to do a purchase recommended by others, but don't leave their own review after a purchase. However, majority are more likely to be loyal brand advocates (Kartajaya and Setiawan, 2017; Stankevich, 2017). Therefore, shoppers go through many stages before purchasing (Stachowiak-Krzyżan, 2019), social is essential during this process and more influential than traditional media in the final purchase decision.

According to the prior literature review, the general findings of this study are consistent with the findings of previous work on the issue. This study contributes to the current body of literature on consumer engagement by giving platform-specific statistics on consumer interaction behaviour, whereas most of the prior material has been focused on social media content in general.

5.4 Strengths and weakness of research

The researcher's weakness may be the small sample size; initially, the researcher attempted to achieve a sample size of 385 with a margin of error of 5%, but had to increase it to 7% due to the pandemic circumstances and challenges. However, for a study of this nature in the context of pandemic circumstances and challenges, physical contact would be more dangerous to both the researcher and the population of this study. Furthermore, there was a lack of quantitative data, which may have offered more information on the research participants' behaviour.

5.5 Limitations of the study

This study was conducted in a very limited time frame of just twelve weeks using limited resources. For that reason, methodological approach may be limited. Quantitative research design was defined as most appropriate, but mixed method research design, such as focus group would suit this topic. This would have provided greater insight into customer behaviour on social media and provided a deeper understanding of the complexity of purchase intention in a qualitative aspect to the study. such as a focus group, with part of the sample respondents from the. Also, some close questions limited the perception of participants, qualitative would have add additional insights in some cases. Time and resource constraints made a mixed method design impracticable in this case.

5.6 Future Research Potential and Applications

This study focused on the influence of social media in purchase intention of millennials in Ireland, the academic application for future research would focus on analysis the relation between demographics aspects as income and education level would impact in the purchase intention. Therefore, additional research is recommended to go deeper in the analysis of the difference between generation on the Social Media influence. Moreover, it would be really interesting, through future research, to compare the differences around customer behaviour on social media between generations focusing on their purchasing decision-making process. In addition, expand the analysis between nationalities as Ireland is a multicultural country with a mix of nationality living in. This additional research could help markets to better understand the factors to increase customer satisfaction.

5.7 Conclusion

This study has analysed the impact of social media on purchase intention of millennials in Ireland. Three research hypotheses were formulated for testing the independent and dependent variables in the study. The research concludes that the social media has a massive significance in purchase intention of millennials, and a solid presence in social media increase the confidence of customer when the knowledge about the brand is limited. Quality and frequency of content increase even more the intention in terms of purchase decision. Millennials are influenced by friends' opinion and like to know about previous experience before purchase a product or service, however this generation are unlikely to spending sometime writing a comment or review after a purchase. This study also adds some finding about influence of gender and nationality in customer intention on social media. Aside from academic contributions, the study offers practical facts and recommendations that can be applied in future research and to inspire effective results.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Survey Introduction

To what extent does Social Media influence Millennials' purchase behaviour in Ireland?

Hi there!

I am Manuella Ferro, MSc in Digital Marketing student at Dublin Business School. To successfully finish this course, I am conducting this research on to what extent social media influences millennials purchasing behaviour in Ireland. In this survey, we will discuss your preferences and behaviours when it comes to purchasing a new item, as well as how social media influences your choice. The goal of this research is to learn more about how millennials use social media and what marketers can do to provide a better experience for them. Thank you so much in advance.

Appendix 2: Consent Form

You are being asked to take part in a research study about how social media impacts the purchase intention of Millennials living in Ireland. I am gathering information about the current habits on the internet from users and how content quality and frequency influences their decision-making and affects their perception of brand value. This is research affiliated with the Dublin Business School's MSc in Digital Marketing course.

The study is being conducted by Manuella Ferro and under the supervision of Naomi Kendal and has been approved by the Research Ethics Committee.

TIME COMMITMENT

The study typically takes from 3 to 5 minutes to be completed.

YOUR RIGHTS

You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation required from you. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn/destroyed.

You have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you.

You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered (unless answering these questions would interfere with the study's outcome. A full de-briefing will be given after the study). If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should ask the researcher before the study begins through the e-mail: 10535268@mydbs.ie.

CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY

The data I collect in this survey is totally confidential. Any personal information gathered will be kept under safe and secure measures, only being used for the purposes of this study.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

I or/and Naomi Kendal will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time. You may contact my supervisor at naomi.kendal@dbs.ie.

1. I declare I read through the consent form above and accept to share my information with the researcher.

- Yes
- No

Appendix 3: Survey Questionnaire

2. Do you currently live in Ireland?

Yes

No

3. How old are you?

Under 24

25-40

41-56

57 or more

4. What is your nationality? _____

5. What is your gender?

Female

Male

Non-binary

Prefer not to say

6. Do you have a social media account?

Yes

No

7. How long have you been using social media?

- Less than 6 months
- 6 months to 1 year
- 1 to 2 years
- 2 to 5 years
- 5 + years

8. How many active accounts in social media do you currently have at the moment?

- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5 or more

9. Do you follow any brand(s) on social media?

- Yes
- No

10. What makes you follow a brand on social media?

- You are a current customer
- To communicate with brands
- To get updates about products or services
- To get discount or free products
- To read comments and reviews about products
- I don't follow any brand, but I always check their profile to see any updates

11. What platforms do you most use? Drag the boxes to reorder where the top one is the most used platform.

Instagram

Facebook

Twitter

TikTok

Pinterest

YouTube

WhatsApp

LinkedIn

12. Do you feel inspired by trends on the internet?

Yes

No

13. Did you ever buy anything influenced by any social media?

Yes

No

14. If **yes, what most influenced you to buy it?**

Influencers/Bloggers

Good reviews

Advertising

Star rating

15. When making your purchasing choices, would you give preference to brands that are active on social media?

Yes

No

16. Does the quality and frequency of content on social profiles impact your decision between brands?

Yes

No

17. Before purchasing from a non-brand (unknown business from you), do you check their social media profile and engagement (like, comment, etc.)?

Yes

No

18. When you watch their content produced on Instagram or other social media platforms, do you feel more connected to the brand?

Yes

No

19. On a scale from 1 to 5. Where 5 is the most loyal. How loyal would you consider yourself to the brands that you consume the most?

1 2 3 4 5

20. In terms of trust/brand loyalty: How important is it to you that the brand chosen has a solid social media presence?

Extremely important

Somewhat important

Neutral

Somewhat not important

Extremely not important

21. In general, how do you rate your online purchasing habit of non-essential items (as clothes, toys, furniture, shoes, electronics, etc)?

High

Moderate

Low

None

22. In terms of your brand loyalty, how do you rate the importance of companies' presence on social media?

High

Moderate

- Low
- None

23. Do you agree with the following statement: "A company that has a solid social media presence has a better chance of keeping client loyalty"?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

24. Are you more likely to make a purchase online if the product or service comes recommended by others (family, friends, influencer, celebrity)?

- Yes
- No

25. When making a purchasing who would be the most important opinion about the product/service for you to consider? Drag the boxes to reorder where the top one is the most important opinion.

Family's opinion

Friend's opinion

Influencer's opinion

Celebrity's opinion

Unknown person's opinion

26. Do you agree with the following statement: “I am more likely to see things that I need to buy and/or sell on social media than any other online or physical channel”?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

27. Do you agree with the following statement: “I trust in my friends’ reviews and comments about products/services/brands on Social Media”?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

28. Do you agree with the following statement: “I trust in reviews and comments from people I don’t know about products/services/brands on Social Media”?

- Strongly agree

- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree

29. After making a purchase do you usually leave a comment/review about the experience with the product or service?

- Yes
- No

30. On a scale from 1 to 5. Where 5 is the most important. How important is social media in your final purchase decision?

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5

31. Do you agree with the following statement: “Social Media is more influential than traditional media in my final purchase decision”?

- Strongly agree
- Agree
- Neutral
- Disagree
- Strongly disagree