



Impact of Social Media Micro-influencer on the Buying
Behavior of lifestyle Product of Irish Millennials.

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Abstract

Millennial generation has substantial purchasing power, its crucial to find how millennial generation react to the emerging concept of social media micro-influencer. The purpose of this study to build understanding around the micro-influencer marketing perspective and examine the impact of Social media micro-influencer on the buying behaviors of lifestyle product of Irish Millennials.

Interpretivist, inductive approach utilised to attend true reflection of millennial consumer views. Six in-depth semi-structured interviews were conducted with Irish Millennials. The finding of this explored and achieved through thematic analysis which presented as the main themes emerged viz, Social media and visuals , Engagement, Relatable , Credible and Trust. Moreover , Finding have provided more insightful information on the aspect of millennials and their buying behaviour on the social media. In relation to engagement, it was found that millennial push their boundaries to seek connection. When influencer is approachable it encourages millennial consumer to interact and feel comfortable. Relatability aspects of social media micro-influencer with millennial found to be highly significant because of the millennial consumers ability to relate the source. In terms of credibility, it was prominent that millennial seek source credibility, which has high impact on their purchase decisions. It was found that credibility is important dimension of trustworthiness. It was found that millennial induce two-communication interactivity, this generation is prone to value other opinions. This was significant in findings that millennials have higher trust level with smaller social media influencer (micro-influencer) to make their purchase decision.

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1.0 Introduction

Social media marketing is powerful business around the globe. The changing landscape of social media has always been a prime focus for marketer to establish and invent new strategies for marketing (Wissman, 2018). Millennial are demanding two-way communication between brands and themselves (Pew research, 2015).

Although, millennial characterise digital native and are changing the marketing face (DeVaney, 2015) . Statistics shows that millennial are spending majority of their time on social media platforms, Instagram, Facebook, Snapchat are some popular social media platform among them (Pew research, 2015). Social media influencers are integrated tool amongst marketers to establish the connection to their targeted audience. Today it's difficult to scroll down the Instagram feed without watching the influencer endorsing a post. Social media Influencer have tremendous impact on their follower, this leverage their marketing value in the business. Micro- influencers are considered to be local in terms of their relationship with the followers Pierucci (2018). Micro-influencer consists smaller number of follower base compare to bigger or celebrity influencer (Wissman, 2018). This smaller base gives advantage to establish close relationship with their audience. Brands are focusing on local market to increase customer intimacy (Goldgehn, 2004). Influencer marketing has substantial impact on the purchase decision of millennial (Hudders, 2017) . This study will understand how Millennial generation react to the concept of Social media micro-influencer. This makes crucial to researcher to look into this layer or generational stance of the population closely.

The main objective of this study is to build understanding around the micro-influencer marketing perspective. As the objective outline below aims to address the research question; Impact of Social media micro-influencer on the buying behaviors of lifestyle product of Irish Millennials.

1. To assess engagement of social media micro-influencer with Irish millennials.

2. To assess the impact of credibility, relatability and authenticity of social media micro-influencer from the Irish millennials perspective.

To achieve profound understanding on these objectives, this study utilized a qualitative methodological approach of exploring the in-depth interview of six Irish millennials interested in the social media micro-influencer. The interviews enable researcher to build prominent understanding in the area of influencer marketing as well as the opinion and the thought so of Irish millennial generation. This research focus on the new emerging phenomenon of social media micro- influencer with millennial who follow this new type of influence force . Social media micro-influencer marketing segment is relatively new therefore, the literature around this found to be still limited. It found that there were no previous studies that have researched on how millennial generation feels about social media micro-influencer considering the engagement factor as well as it was necessary to understand the credible, relatable, authentic viewpoints of millennials specifically present in Ireland. The finding of this explored and achieved through thematic analysis which presented as the main themes emerged viz, Social media and visuals , Engagement, Relatable , Credible and Trust. Moreover , Finding have provided more insightful information on the aspect of millennials and their buying behaviour on the social media.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

The literature review aims to build a greater understanding of the current knowledge relating to the key areas of this research question; Impact of Social media micro-influencer on the buying behavior of lifestyle product of Irish Millennials.

The context will be provided firstly on the key aspect of Millennial generation, their characteristics and buying behaviour as well as their social media usage. This is followed by a brief review on social media to provide grounding of the subject and understands how it evolved over the period.

Influencer marketing is integrated tool amongst marketers to establish a connection with targeted audience. The literature further explored on aspects of Influencer marketing impact and attractiveness. In order to build enhance understanding of influencer marketing, the study will examine the literature present on social media influencers and social media micro-influencers. The phenomenon of social media micro-influencer is relatively new, therefore the available literature is limited. However, recent publications on the social media micro-influencer will be analysed. Overall , the literature presented in the study will provide a useful perspective in addressing the research question.

2.2 Millennials

This study enlighten the aim, to find the how Millennial generation react to the concept of Social media micro-influencer. This makes crucial to researcher to look into this layer or generational stance of the population closely. When dive deeper into subject, seems there are various studies about millennials perspective in all other area within academy. As this generational stance is highly associated with the technology, in fact known as technology naïve. According to the president of Pew Research Centre, Dimock (2018) who stated that millennial are the ones who born

between 1981 to 1996. Millennials are the first one to join the digital workforce and are in age group of 22 to 37. According to few studies, Millennials are also known as Generation Y, represent the first years of the third millennium (Sago, 2010; Serazio, 2015 ; Aksoy et al, 2013; Moore, 2012). As per (Pew Research, 2018) research survey, millennials are hyperconnected to the social media and their number were kept on increasing over few years. Researcher (Sago, 2010; Serazio, 2015 ; Aksoy et al, 2013; Moore, 2012) highlighted the fact that millennials are prominent users of social media applications and websites. Millennial significantly the largest group since the baby boomer. Collectively, the largest group of tech-savvy population use variety of social media platform to broadcast their personal opinion, share images and connect with others (Serazio, 2015). Millennial generation frequently rely on the social media to make their purchase decisions (Aksoy et al, 2013). Stemming to this, researcher further explored characteristics and consumer behaviour of millennial generation to deepen the grounding of the subject.

2.2.1 Characteristics of Millennial Generation

Millennial generation define “*the experiential essence of a group of persons, born in an identifiable period but defined more by their shared experience*”(Cutler, pp.34). Thus , there is no solidarity amongst the researcher on the period of birth to define the millennial generation. Hence , researcher considered as millennial, the individual who are born between the year of 1981 to 1996. According to Stokes (2015) nearly 25 percent of millennial generational population were present in Europe the year 2013, majority of them are young and progressing into professional world as attractive target for professional companies. Most prominent characteristics of millennial that they grew with the internet and pushed the boundaries to seek connections, expression and meaningful relationship online (Hurst 2016). Longitudinally, millennials will exceed the buying power of previous generation because millennial generation implies homogeneity in values, belief, behaviour (Bucuta, 2015). Easy access and utilisation of technology signifies the unique aspect of this generation, Eastman et al (2014) highlighted that millennial generation use mobile technology and social media as native. Millennials are empowered

consumers, who seek digital collaboration based on the commercial interest (Serazio, 2015). They endure financial stability and have grown up inside vast and unregulated world of internet which makes their personal intimacy to consumer their behaviour. DeVaney (2015) describe millennials as creative , solution- focused and socially conscious . Millennials stimulated through internet for recommendations on purchasing decision. Researcher studied that Millennials actively seek involvement and share information with much larger peer groups, than other generations (Fromm and Garton, 2013; Weber, 2017). According to (Pew research, 2015) they tend to be more enthusiastic about technological advances to make their purchase decisions. Millennial count to constitute the future, with their purchasing power estimated to surpass that of any generation by 2017 (Davidson, 2014), Therefore , there is need to understand millennials purchasing desire more clearly.

2.2.2 Buying Behavior & Media Usage of Millennial Generation

Millennials consider to be refined shoppers and digital native in nature (DeVaney, 2015), As they illustrate different nature from other generation in terms of communication and accessing information (Bucuta, 2015). It appears that, they spend more emotional time on making buying decisions (Bucuta, 2015). Millennial tend to carry out extensive research to make purchase decision research (Schewe and Meredith, 2004). They get influenced to make decisions from friend, family and certain social media group (Viswanathan and Jain, 2013). Goldgehn (2004) stated that an average millennial spend around 450 billion dollars a year and extensively spend more money on the top lifestyle product brands and high-end products. According to some researcher (Goldgehn, 2004; Eastman et al, 2014) millennial spend more than any other generational stance, especially on status inducive and branded products. Millennial emphasise high brand loyalty and always willing to pay more for desire product (Goldgehn, 2004). Author Albiniak (2015) affirm that this is one of the largest generation with most purchasing power. Adding to this, previous research of author Pate (2013) shown that millennial, consumer more concern and environment friendly, they expect personalisation of product and service, seek more

flexibility on their buying decision as they believe that companies always offer solution for their purchase need. Moreover, This generation indulge more technology to establish contact and develop relationship on social media to purchase online product (Moore, 2012).

Millennial are technology naïve and spend considerable amount of time on consuming online content when compare to other generations (Sago, 2010; Serazio, 2015 ; Aksoy el al, 2013; Moore, 2012). In fact, according to Sinek (2017), millennials are lazy and impatient personalities having tremendous amount of unrealistic expectations. They constantly looking for engagement to be occupied and not getting bored , that's why they prone to find distraction on social media (Bergh, Alders, Boullart and Bijnen, 2014). Millennial consume internet and technology to deal every-day activities as well as commercial purpose , as this generation use modern means of technology to connect on social media (Moore, 2012). Easy access to the internet through their smartphone allowed millennials to experience instant online life. This perceive quality of millennial using internet constantly changes the way how this generation interacts with media.

As researcher highlighted that this generation induce two-way communication interactivity with information present online, Mukherjee (2017) and Serazio (2015) emphasise that millennial declined the one way marketing strategy as they tend to more distracted in nature, ignoring advertisement and fast-forwarding commercials (Sago 2010). Thus, social media usage induce more engagement amongst millennials and provide opportunity to influencer to achieve millennials attention. This generation is more prone to value others opinion on the social media, this made millennial to more social media addict (eMarketer, 2011). Researcher presume that media usage by millennial risen influencer marketer interest in this cohort.

2.3 Social Media

Social media depicts a platform or a medium of application and technologies which emerged from the web (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2012). The most obvious difference between traditional media and social media is its very nature as it emerged in the

digital era. Researcher Kim and Ko, (2012, p) highlighted Social media as it “refers to activities, practices, and behaviours among communities of people who gather online to share information, knowledge, and opinions using conversational media” . Kim and Ko, (2012, p.36). on the other hand , author Tapscott (2008, p.2) stated that social media is about “*peering: sharing, socializing, collaborating, and, most of all, creating within loosely connected communities*”. Another researcher Fuchs et al (2013, p.3) describe social media as the platform offering “*online social networking, online community building and maintenance, collaborative information production and sharing, and user-generated content production, diffusion and consumption*”. In January 2018, The amount of active user on social media has increased nearly 3.2 billion worldwide, with an increase on annual basis of 13% from 2017(Chaffey, 2018). Social media presented as any web-based service that allows user to integrate on network of connection allows to interact with that particular network along with network of those connections (Boyd & Ellison, 2010). Prominent characteristic of social media is that, all applications are interconnected in a complex social media ecosystem, which include social networking site and applications (Hanna, Rohm, & Crittenden, 2011; Mangold & Faulds, 2009). Millennial nearly spends over six hours a week on their social media accounts. Thus, in reality social network present vital aspects of marketing communication. According to Shaw (2019), Millennials daily usage of social media has increased across all the social media platform in Ireland , prominent increase in user base can be seen regards to Facebook about 66% and on Instagram about 65% until June 2018.

Social Media Platform	Daily Usage June 2018
Facebook	66% (-3%)
Google	25% (+1%)
Instagram	65% (+7%)
Linkedin	23% (+10%)
Pinterest	18% (+5%)
Twitter	43% (+7%)

Fig. 1 Social media usage in Ireland in 2018 (Shaw, 2019)

To emphasise the interest of this study, Facebook and Instagram are two most popular social networking platform amongst millennials. Instagram became prominent choice for social interaction Voorveld et al's (2018). Photos on Instagram described as direct highway to Millennials heart as they tend to more visually addictive (Arnold Street Media 2016). Which makes Instagram more engaging to the millennials. Engagement through social media can be illustrated as "repeated interactions that strengthen the emotional, psychological or physical investment a customer" (Chaffey 2007). Higher number of engagement displace power to an influencer to establish connection with consumer and indicate how influential they are (Hurst 2016). Pansari and Kumar (2017, p.295) highlighted that "*when a relationship is satisfied and has emotional bonding, it then progresses to the stage of engagement*".

When it concern to social media and consumer engagement, it widespread that social media work better for celebrities. Stemming to this, engagement can be seen towards own social circle. According to Zhu and Chen (2015) model considering engagement, connection and interaction, social media divides into two steam, viz. *Profile-based* and *Content-based* platform. Profile-based social media platform emphasise on individual members, aims to connect with the person behind the profile such as Facebook, twitter. On the other hand, Content-based social media platform emphasise on content, discussion, and comment on the post (Zhu and Chen,2015). Therefore, it is safe to conclude that Profile-based social media might leverage celebrities endorsement while Content-based social media would be more democratic to people that are not famous but have something interesting to share. Taking that into consideration, this study assumes that it makes sense to research the topic of Micro Influencers (non-celebrities) on Instagram.

2.4 Influencer Marketing

Influencer marketing is a form of marketing where influential people utilize their personality to share brand marketing or messaging through sponsored content. It is a powerful tool to present advantage over word-of-mouth to customer and people who already follow influencer on social platform (Bladow, 2018). Sudha and Sheena (2017) elaborated that influencer marketing involves a process of individuals influence over specific targeted audience. In present form of social media, influencer marketing has substantial impact on current marketing scenario and the industry is rapidly growing (Bladow, 2018). This involves process of influencer factor of particular individual who have influence over specific targeted group or audience (Sudha and sheena, 2017). In terms of influencing factors such as product perception, distributing product information to engage consumer, influencer marketing has become first choice for marketers in mainstream digital marketing business (Burke, 2017). According to Michael, Goodman and Norman (2011) the intensions of influencer community is powerful and largely driven by social media over perception of brands and companies. Influencer is key aspect for marketing establishment. Recent studies conducted by De Veirman, Cauberghe and Hudders (2017) have shown that the influencers on the social platform are more likable amongst millennials. This form of marketing enable consumer and brands to connects to influencer more efficiently, directly and more organically, at the scale of their everyday life. According to researcher Wang and Scheinbaum (2018), in influencer marketing source credibility is important dimension of trustworthiness for customer and it is the evaluation of influencer capability in terms of their follower's trust. Influencer responsible for driving down the brands message to targeted audiences, that's why it is important that voice and face carrying brand message is trust worthy. To escalate this , literature this literature will further dig into the subject of social media influencers.

2.5 Social Media Influencer

Social media influencers are considered an individual who expresses their opinion and experiences to advance public attitude towards brand and are act as independent third-party endorser on social media platform such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and other media (Freberg et al, 2011). In modern form of social media, social media influencer worked to advance and amplify the word-of-mouth phenomenon as the information spread online with an unprecedented speed. According to Freberg (2011), this immense to contribute to the firms to spread their information to the respective consumer and influence them. As consumer credence has already shifted towards the modern use of internet and social media (Johnson, 2018). In modern form of influencer marketing, brands prompt to employ social media influencer to act as their brand ambassador (Sudha and Sheena, 2017). As the information shared by social media influencer tend to be more engaging to the consumer (Freberg et al, 2011).

On social media platform, people who have opinion and influencer capability are known as Influencers, such individuals have audience to convince and create trend on social media. The prominent social media influencer are group of popular celebrities who usually have large circle of followings (Senft, 2013). Internet-born influencer can be divided on the basis of their follower count as it gives an idea of their influence power in the market. These social media influencer have tremendous impact on their followers, this leverage their marketing value in the business. According to author Wissman (2018) of Forbes, *Micro-influencer* are those personalities who have social media power with their follower base between 10,000 to 100,000. Above this follower base 100,000, such influencers will be considered as social media *Macro-influencers* (Wissman, 2018). Macro-influencer induce a status of social media celebrities as they have more power of their followers. A prime example of Kylie Jenner , as one of the most inflectional celebrity

On Instagram and social media. Kylie Jenner has a follower base of nearly 144 million (Statista, 2019) which illustrate her as prominent macro-influencer on social media.



Fig. 2 *Kylie Jenner endorsing a lifestyle product*

“Influential generally do have many direct followers but what makes them truly valuable is the number and relevance of their extended or indirect connections” (Hall, 2010).

Conversely, social media has provided platform to ‘no-one’ individual to become ‘some-one’ and have an opportunity to showcase their potential to influence audience. According to Wang and Scheinbaum (2018) credibility is important dimension of trustworthiness for consumer which evaluate of influencer capability in terms of their follower’s trust. Influencer responsible for driving down the brands message to targeted audiences, that’s why it is important that voice and face carrying brand message is trust worthy. Forbes contributor Qudsi (2018) stated that micro-influencers are flipping the celebrity and global social influencer. Brands are focusing on the smaller segmented marketing, social micro-influencer who have below 100,000 followers have audience deeply connected to them (Wissman, 2018). A study on celebrity endorsement conducted by Jatto (2014) found that 46.7% of people found celebrity endorsement on social media is believable, and majority of individual nearly 51% believed that they do not consider celebrity endorsement experience when it come to the factor of product authenticity. Wissman (2018)

stated influencer marketing expanding substantially, There is no doubt that in emerging social media marketing industry, influencers has different perspective. Although the research aims to determine if such social media influencer impact the decision of millennial consumer.

2.6 Social Media Micro-Influencer

Micro- influencers consider to be local in terms of their relationship with the followers. As they have smaller number of follower base compare to bigger or celebrity influencer . The term of Micro- influencer is new in terms of academic study , In studies, researchers Abdin (2016) and Zietek (2016) mention that social media influencer with smaller number of follower considered to be micro influencers. In marketing business world, this term rather used to understand social media influencer's follower base commonly with minimum audience engagement (Wissman, 2018; Dhanik,2016; Main, 2018). The researcher Bijen (2017) emphasise that social media micro-influencer induce more brand trust and induce purchase intension as compare to macro-influencer. As stated previously by author Wissman (2018) of Forbes, *Micro- influencer* are those personalities who have social media power with their follower base between 10,000 to 100,000. *Number of followers* is crux for differentiation between social media micro-influencer and social media macro-influencer.

Social media micro-influencer (Micro-SMI) likely to have more engagement with audience, its relatively small as compare to celebrity influencers (Wissman, 2018). Micro-influencer tend to be more trustworthy and to be *more like us* to their followers, as the feeling of social distance decrease the appeal of a celebrity (Thomson, 2006). Jin et al. (2019) standard user to became *instafamous* on social media website Instagram having small audience with high potential of engagement with them. Abidin (2016) stated that new style online performance of individual that influence other people and their popularity amplifying up over certain amount audience known to be micro-influencer celebrity. Direct interaction of micro-influencer tend to more authentic and interactive with their fan compare to traditional social media celebrity (Marwick, 2015). According to Pierucci (2018)Despite having fewer follower that million-plus peer, micro-influencer are more profitable to brands

as they perceived trust and close relationship with their audience. Pierucci (2018) found that micro-influencer have nearly 66% of high engagement rate with their audience and are cost-efficient for brands. This made micro-influencer to be the first choice for brand to promote their produce and increase consumer base (Wissman, 2018).

According to study of Watts and Dodds (2007), micro-influencer often influenced by other influencer called super influencer, researcher cite an evidence in support with this as influencer is usually an influenced person who influence easy-to-influence individual. This phenomenon mostly depend on the structure of their network as influencer should be at right place to boost their network. In spite of the fact that , micro-influencer individuals personally own their craft and have a limited number followers. There is no consensus that what exact amount of followers micro-influencer usually have. Some researcher Pierucci (2018) and Westwood (2018) consider follower base to be between 30,000 to 100,000. On the other hand, Wissman (2018) emphasise the follower base of social media micro-influencer is between 10,000 to 100,000. Considering the state, This study will consider Social media micro-influencer with particular scale of followers between 10,000 to 100,000.

2.7 Conclusion

This research focus on the new emerging phenomenon of social media micro-influencer with millennial who follow this new type of influence force . Social media micro-influencer marketing segment is relatively new therefore, the literature around this found to be still limited. Few studies determined by researcher Bijen (2017) and Zietec (2016) brought attention on social media micro-influencer and their differentiation with traditional macro-influencer on social media. Studies of Jatto (2014) and Burke (2017) emphasise on brands and celebrity endorsement side in the influencer marketing industry. On the other hand, Bladow (2018) considered influencer marketing as word-of-mouth without escalating further factors of social media influencers, specifically micro-influencers. Researcher De Veirman et al (2017) emphasised the points on influencers follower count which make them more

likable amongst audience but did not consider demographic background of audience for micro-influencer.

When dived deeper, the literature present on the specific area enlighten that business marketers have been differentiating the social media micro-influencer from the traditional social media influencer on consumer engagement variable (Main, 2018; Wissman, 2018; Dhanik, 2016). While engagement can be good or bad reaction to brand and buying behaviour of millennials (Wissman, 2018). Author further explored engagement of social media influencer with millennials within the studies (Chaffey, 2007; Hurst, 2016; Pansari and Kumar, 2017; Zhu and chen, 2015; Burke, 2017 and Freberg et al 2011) This literature was extensive, however , so far there are no previous studies that have researched on how millennial generation feels about social media micro-influencer considering the engagement factor. Therefore it is necessary explore engagement of millennial with the social media micro-influencers. Thus, represent the first objective of this study : *To assess engagement of social media micro-influencer with Irish millennials.*

The second area of interest is based on the understanding of relatability, authenticity and credibility associated with the social media micro-influencers. Abdin (2016) and Zietek (2016) have shown that, celebrity influencer have positive impact on the purchase intension. Zhu and Chen (2018) stated that relatability occurred on basis of the profile of the micro-influencer as they are local and possesses their own social craft. While credibility of source is an importance dimension of trustworthiness (Wang and Scheinbaum, 2018). It is evident in the research that credibility of source, authenticity and relatability of micro-influencer are important dimensions to make purchase for millennials (Qudsi, 2018; Wissman, 2018; Jatto, 2014; Pierucci, 2018; Marwick, 2015). However, the data derived from literature can only give a certain amount of information present in this area. Therefore, it is necessary to further to understand credible, relatable, authentic viewpoints of millennials specifically present in Ireland. Thus, represent the second objective of this study : *To assess the impact of credibility, relatability and authenticity of social media micro-influencer from the Irish millennials perspective.*

Although, secondary data achieved from the literature provided certain amount of information. To obtain more profound understanding on how social media micro

influencer impact the buying behaviour of Irish Millennial. It is necessary to go further in this research .

3.0 Research Objective and Methodology

3.1 Research Objective

The purpose of this study to investigate Irish millennials buying behaviors of lifestyle product on account of social media influencers through understanding of their beliefs, feeling and opinions. The main objective of this study is to build understanding around the micro-influencer marketing perspective. The literature presented in the previous chapter signifies the overall objective of the study. As the objective outline below aims to address the research question;

Impact of Social media micro-influencer on the buying behaviors of lifestyle product of Irish Millennials.

Two objective derived in line with areas of interest within the literature are:

Objective One:

To assess engagement of social media micro-influencer with Irish millennials.

Objective Two:

To assess the impact of credibility, relatability and authenticity of social media micro-influencer from the Irish millennials perspective.

3.2.0 Research Methodology & Paradigm

3.2 Introduction

Previous chapters outlined the research objectives and the researched gap in great depth. This chapter describes the details on research design and research methodologies utilized for collecting and analyzing data for this study. Sim & Wright (2000) explained the methodological approaches and the data collection techniques determines the research question. Structure of this chapter primarily based on that of research onion illustrated by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012). Research methodologies adopted on the basis of nature of investigation. A comprehensive justification of all methods will be given .

3.3 Research Philosophy

This piece of research explored on the basis Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill's (2012) model of research onion which outline the importance of considering the suitable research approach. Making assumption about the nature of reality or about the human knowledge is quite often possible approach in our research at every stage (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). Certainly , these assumptions invariably contribute to the business practice and theory ongoing forward (Crotty, 1998). According to Quinlan (2011), philosophical framework crucial for any research study as it influence research development and contribute to the conclusion of the research. As research philosophies illustrated by Saunders et al (2012, p.127) acknowledge “the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge”. In the same vein, Saunders et all (2012) have given two different types of paradigms viz epistemological and ontological, each of them represent specific approach. Epistemology specifies the scientific knowledge which focused on different areas of thought to achieve relevance of human being (Mejías, 2018). On the other hand, Ontology specifies the study of being , the nature and ours ways of being in the world which sight the world through a series of events, (Quinlan, 2011).

This study represent the epistemological perspective as its concern with the study of knowledge, in which researcher delve to understand social media micro- influencer by virtue of *acceptable knowledge* through qualitative in-depth interviews (Bryman and Bell, 2011). According to Saunders et al (2012) , there are four major philosophies reinforcing business research including positivism , interpretivism , realism and pragmatism. As it illustrated by figure below (Figure 1) indicating outer layer of research onion.

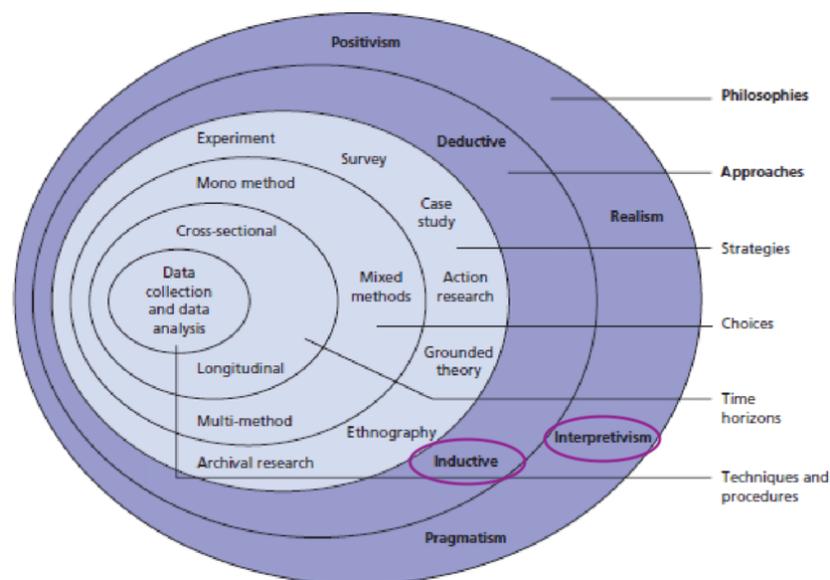


Fig. 3 The Research Onion (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012)

In interpretivist epistemology, the researcher work along with participant to understand their viewpoints (Creswell, 2007). This perspective of research consider “the distinctness of human against the natural order” (Bryman and Bell 2011, p.16). This study underpinned acceptable knowledge and understanding of Millennials consumer perspective towards social media micro-influencer , this reason justify the chosen interpretivism epistemology of research paradigm for this study .

3.3.1 Positivism

Positivist paradigm is generalised by that of a natural scientist. The researcher limited to an objective of data collation and interpretation. Gill and Johnson (2010) stated that this stance is more towards collecting data about observables realities to ingrain regularities, cause and effect relationships. Certainly this paradigm tend to be robust methodological structure where result can be easily replicated (Gill & Johnson 2010). This is the mostly used for research methods to analyse the secondary data , questioners, experiments and statistical analysis (Saunders et al, 2012). According to Saunders et al (2012) positivist paradigm adhere the concept for value neutrality. Positivism approach considered to be inappropriate for the study because it being concerned with only one objective reality .

3.3.2 Realism

This stance of paradigm of realism is predominantly a scientific line of enquiry. Realism is ultimate sense of reality and that object have an existence independent of the mind (Saunders et al, 2012). “Realism quiet similar to positivism in that assume a scientific approach to the development of knowledge” (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009, p.114). This assumption underpin collecting and understanding the data. The realism prorate into direct realism and critical realism. Direct realism relates to our experience mirror the world accurately which means what you see is what you get. On the other hand Critical realism realist agree our experiences are sensation, perception of things in the real world , not the things directly (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). In terms of business environment, critical realism crux of the ability of employee , departments and the firm to understand the perception. Oppositely, direct realism is adamant and unchanging (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009).

3.3.3 Pragmatism

Pragmatism point up that concept or theory only meaningful if they reinforce action (Kelemen and Rumens, 2008). In this stance of paradigm , there is no binary right or wrong way to view the world . Pragmatists view , there is no single point ever give an entire picture of the world .

When research question doesn't justify which philosophy should be taken ,then this approach of pragmatist viewpoint should be considered which gives possibility of multiple view points for the research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2009). According to Kelemen and Rumens (2008) Pragmatism engage the method that facilitated credible and reliable data to be collected.

3.3.4 Interpretivism

Interpretivism research paradigm depicts interpretation of certain elements along with the human interest the mind . Positivist paradigm is normally more structured as compare to interpretive paradigm as it focuses on qualitative analysis (Ragsdell, 2009). Researcher act as a social factor to acknowledge the diversity among the people (Saunders et al, 2012). Interpretivism approach emerge into understanding social realities of human and perceptions, it concern to view people as a subjective being, thus Individuals feeling, opinion and viewpoints ensure value and meaning (Saunders et al, 2009). Throughout this research approach, participant exhibit certain sensitivity and trust towards researcher. Although less structured approach and different interpretation induce greater variation of results (Hallebone and Priest, 2008). Conversely, some researcher found this approach suitable for business and management research study (Saunders et al, 2009). According to some researchers (Mack, 2010; Dudovskiy, 2016) interpretivist research nature is subjective therefore finding cannot be generalise for situation or populations. Despite this fact, Greene & McClintock (1991) argue great value of the interpretivist research approach as “One individual's perception of meaning in a given setting is likely to differ from others and representing both is needed for an understanding of the whole”. Considering this approach of research paradigm , researcher bares the greatest degree of resemblance as this study focuses on the phenomenon of social media influencer , each millennial consumer is subjective and have their own feeling and experiences.

3.4 Research Approach

The sole purpose of this study is to develop and refine theory which can approximate reality. In these regards, there are two prominent approaches to develop research study. Which refers to inductive and deductive approach (Saunders et al, 2009). Bryman and Bell (2011) conveyed that the deductive approach concern with the pre-existing theory which emphasise on the finding relationship between existing theory and the research, this depicts researcher's that theoretical base is clear for the research. In other words, this approach involves falsification or verification theory for research base. Johnson & Clark (2006) reflect as inductive approach consider meaning to develop through the data collection process which facilitate the identification of relationships and patterns. Inductive research favour the qualitative method of small samples whereas deductive approach support large samples which emanate quantitative method (Saunders et al, 2016). Inductive approach facilitate the theory building and generation consider to build new theory by interpretation of data collected. This study refers inductive nature and seek to develop new theory around the concept of social media micro-influencer with qualitative research method closely align with interpretivist approach (Saunders et al. 2016).

3.5 Methodological Choice (Qualitative Approach)

Research methodologies are adopted on the basis of nature of investigation. Researchers utilise different strategies to address a research question (Burrell & Morgan, 2005). According to Saunders et al (2012) primary choice of researcher to identify the area research whether on the quantitative, qualitative or mixed method. Common perception used identifying these methodologies is that, qualitative relates to non-numeric data whereas quantitative relate to numeric data (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012). In business and management research studies both the method are commonly employed. Appropriate Methodological choice justify further research strategy and instrument, that why it's crucial to choose suitable method for study (Saunders et al. 2016). Qualitative method crux to "begin with assumptions, a worldview, the possible use of a theoretical lens, and the study of research problems

inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to social or human problems” (Creswell, 2007, p.37).

Some studies carried out last years (Bijen, 2017; Zentek 2016; Abreu 2019) primarily based on quantitative methods to study side of social media micro-influencer but none of them used qualitative analysis method. In Irish millennial context , This topic to micro SMI is relatively understudied. The aim of propose study to investigate the impact of micro-influencer on purchasing behaviour of Irish millennials. The aim solidate the qualitative approach to get new insight and understanding on the micro-influencer their impact on Irish millennial on their purchasing behaviour. *“A limited knowledge about the investigated life world may bring about problems of operationalization and measurement: researchers who do not know how specific words and actions are understood in the sociocultural contexts of their research domain may ask the wrong questions or misinterpret the respondents’ answers in questionnaires”*(Kelle, 2006, p. 296). Hence a qualitative research method will provide a deeper ground on the context of social media micro-influencer. Qualitative method permit researcher to define understanding on consumer and their behaviour. As a study view their participant as subjective this enable qualitative research to understand each individuals on their feeling and beliefs concerns to the topic of study (Saunders et al. 2009). Qualitative research method provide flexibility to researcher to delve into subject and obtain information. Sunders el al (2016) expressed primarily, gathering of information enables analysis and finding to be presented. Secondly, it provides the valuable insight of the targeted audience toward the research subject. Concerning the purpose of this study, Researcher’s choice of a qualitative analysis approach would bring new area of intelligence build on existing literature. As the topic of Micro SMI is underdeveloped , the qualitative analysis approach of this study will provide explorative study allowing more depth understanding of view and opinion about social media micro-influencers.

3.6 Research Strategy

The previous section contributed to the methodological choice. According to Ellis et al (2008) the mythological choice and the research strategy are closely related the research direction. The term strategy displaced the meaning to achieve research goal.

Addition to this, research strategy illustrate how the research intends to answer the research question (Saunders et al, 2012). According to Saunders et al (2016) combining interpretivist perspective with an inductive approach of qualitative method along with small samples furnish better research data as compare to larger sample quantitative method. On the ground of Saunders el at (2016) research onion and understanding perceived his model, a qualitative method of in depth interview with use of small sample was suitable for this study. In contrast , considering the case studies and ethnography would have been a considerable option while interpreting the millennials consumer propose feeling on micro SMI.

Apart from this , focus group strategy of research would also have considered for this particular study as it allow insights and feeling occurred on group dynamics. According to some researchers (MacDougall and Baum, 1997; Adams, Khan and Raeside, 2014) group power influence problem of *group thinking* in which participant follow group thought rather than their own viewpoints on the research study. For this topic of study, focus group induce the risk of missing the genuine thoughts and feeling of participants, Thus a face-to-face interview with participant would give powerful insight on the research area. This adopted strategy of one-on-one interview provide true thoughts , feeling and attitude of participants which are prominent in the study. In in-dept interview , participant feel more confident and express their concerning and rejection in terms of their point of view (Zaharia and Grundey, 2008). Brayman (2008) believes that in-depth interview gives understanding of participants viewpoints through structured , semi-structured and unstructured interview , usually between a time frame of 45 minutes to 2 hours. Researcher can consider any of these three interview method to achieve desire goal. In unstructured interview, researcher has no predominant question therefore asked participant number of open-end questions on the topical area to achieve research goal (Cameron and Price, 2009). Structured interview are prominent when researcher is set to find particular piece of information align with the aim and objective of the study(Cameron and Price, 2009). Conversely, Semi-structure interviews refers to achieve the balance between both structured and unstructured approach of interview. For this study , Semi-structure interviews approach established to regain more detailed and affluent viewpoints of participants. Flexibility within the research

method become apparent for new theme and pattern to developed which induce understanding of the situations of participant (Brayman, 2008).

3.7 Sampling

In qualitative research study, sampling and people selection is very important (Saunders et al. 2016), as a sample with strong representation of certain target group ensure accuracy and endure confidence in generalizing the research findings (Graziano and Raulin, 2010). Cooper and Schinder (2014) highlighted term of sample as “*examines a portion of the targeted population and the portion must be carefully selected to represent that portion*”(p.84). Therefore, this is mandatory that chosen participant resemble the targeted group under investigation. There are two different types of sampling , as each of them justify different approach to target the audience for sampling. In order to obtain respondents for this study non-probability sampling techniques were utilized. Non-probability choice of sampling was the best suited for this qualitative study according to Saunders et al (2016). Two sampling techniques were chosen for this study, viz. snowball and purposive sampling. Snowball sampling enable researcher to identify respondent and asking them to identify or expose the research to further member of the population. This widely utilised technique provides homogeneous sample results and continued iteratively until sample is sufficiently large (Saunders et al, 2012). Saunders et al (2016) describe snowball sampling as “a procedure in which subsequent respondents are obtained from information provided by initial respondents”

On the other hand , the use of purposive sampling involve subjective, judgemental and selective sampling enable researcher to decide who to include. Researchers prime choice throughout this initial purposive sampling was to identify the individuals who were active on the social media and located in the Dublin city of Ireland . In purposive sampling members of particular group are purposefully sought after (Eqbal and Singh, 2008). Researcher was confident about this study needed people that specially were interested in shopping of lifestyle product and were familiar with the concept of social media influencer. Thus, it is impossible to determine the number of people that specify this population as well as who they are,

that's why researcher opted for this strategy. Non-probability method usually has smaller number of population than probability sampling (Eqbal and Singh, 2008). Millennials were the selected target group for this study who aged between twenty-two to thirty-seven (Dimock 2018). And participants were chosen based on the three following criteria's, (Participant table-Appendix 2)

AGE: To ensure the participant was within the millennial generation who aged between twenty-two to thirty-seven years.

NATIONALITY: To ensure that the participant was Irish national, to achieve an Irish consumer context for the study.

INTEREST: To ensure that the participant hold interest and have knowledge of social media influencer.

3.8 Time Horizons

According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2012) researcher face one the pressing issue over what time horizon the research will be conducted. In this regard, there are two predominant categories to signify the time horizon, viz. longitudinal and cross sectional in nature. Stemming from this, a longitudinal is linked to the series of snapshots and collects the data over an extended period of time (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2012).

Conversely, Cross sectional is described as a snapshot taken at particular time and collects data once (Sekaran 2003). In reality , due to time constraints placed on this study, a cross-sectional research was best suited as longitudinal study was rendered impossible , this will be discussed further in the limitation section of this research study .

3.9 Data Collection and Data Analysis

3.9.1 Data Collection

The flexibility of Face-to-face interview is that , they can be held in any suitable place. For the purpose of this research , the researcher booked library's group study room facilitated by National College of Ireland to conduct interviews of participant. This place in the centre of Dublin, easy and accessible to transport which suited all the participant as they live or worked nearby. This place was prime choice for researcher and participant as the environment was comfortable, quiet ensuring the participant was at ease. These interview were held in the duration of thirty five to one hour. All participant interviews were arranged according to their suited time and availability. These interviews were in the month of July over period of two weeks.

This was researcher responsibility to ensure the descriptive validity of all the interviews. Each participants interview were recorded using QuickVoice recorder application on iphone7 and Macbook's Quick Time/voice memo application. Researcher made sure that each of the participant were aware of the recording of conversation. Also researcher confirms to all participant of the recording and data will destroyed after research finished. Researcher assured to participant of deleting all the data collected and recorded on both devices and transcription would be destroyed by a paper shredder.

The question sort to be open-ended in nature to allow participant to explore about the research topic(Jamshed, 2014) . To perform interviews more optimally , questions constructed to be unambiguous and succinct to avoid any bias or confusion on the side of participants. As the phenomenon of Social media micro-influencer is relatively new and underdeveloped , the researcher had to compromise and develop suitable question for the topic based on other academic studies. To get more prominent discussion on the research topic , researcher had created a thematic interview guide which followed a theme perceptible within literature. The topic covered in literature gave researcher to develop a thematic question guide. A sample of questions presented and tested to five different personalities to ensure that they would understand researcher's intension of this study. Furthermore, researcher had

made few changes in the questionnaire to get a clear perspective about thematic approach of research . An example of thematic question guide can be found in the appendix1 of this research document.

3.9.2 Data Analysis

A large content achieved during the participants interview were apparent . In the context of this study , a grounded approach of data analysis was chosen as illustrated by Hussey and Hussey (1997), it gave firm grounding when previously established theory was not tested against within the study. Specifically when there is no theoretical framework as this study is of inductive in nature. According to Chapman et al (2015) grounded theory is inductive method of developing theory. Hence grounded theory emphasise on finding the data within piece of information collected. Saunders et al, (2016) motioned that thematic analysis provide better approach when there is large amount of unorganised qualitative data to be analysis to find relationships among the words of subjective individuals.

A memo of each interview inscribed before following interview to keep track of observations made during the interview, provides ease on identifying points of discussion. This method enables researcher to register experiences and helped to reduce bias while ensuring data reliability (Saunders et al 2016). In addition to this , all recording were listened multiple time to make more notes and to develop better understanding of the participants experiences. Lastly, interview were transcribed and information were identified to get initials codes, then code were categorise to put into themes, provides researcher an open coding (Quinlan 2011). To obtain pinpoint patterns and recurring themes, all the data were abstracted and analysed according to the principle of thematic analysis (Aronson, 1995). Following the process of theoretical saturation researcher continued to add themes until the category was well developed or saturated (Bryman and Bell 2011). Axial coding was used to find the relationship of code followed by selective coding method to produce the overall theme of research(Saunders et al. 2016). Finally the elucidated theme were found from qualitative narrative of the interviews. These themes were then compared with the literature to add additional layer of interpretation to constitute a prominent discussion around the research topic.

3.9.3 Ethical Consideration

Concerned study involves interaction with individuals as it examine human behaviour . This study met all the requirement of ethical guideline recommended by The National College Of Ireland throughout the research process . Specifically ‘Ethical guidelines and procedures for the Research Involving Human Participants’. This study carried out in accordance of an ethical review consideration form with the proposal of this dissertation.

3.9.4 Voluntary Participation & Confidentiality

Alsmadi (2008) stated that potential participants should be kept anonymous. The purpose of interview and study was explained to each participant to provides understanding to all the participant about what they were participating in. Furthermore each of the participants were informed verbally as well as in writing, the nature of this study and their response would be publishes for the academic purpose in future. All the data collected, will remain solely and safely in my possession and all participants expressed to maintained their anonymity and the participant are named in terms of , Participant A, Participant B, Participant C.

3.10 Limitations

As Silverman (2001) highlighted that ‘there is no specific or binary right or wrong methodological approach’ addicting to this truism highlights that every research has limitations. A limitation illustrated as “weakness or deficiency in the research” (Collis & Hussey 2014, p.110)

One of the main limitations of this study, was time constraints as given time-frame was the most challenging part of the process and was limited by maximal word count allowed for its submission. Also, a longitudinal qualitative study would have provided more insight on the engagement and interaction of Irish millennials consumers with social media micro-influencer.

Although the concept of Social media influencer is very familiar with Irish millennials but there might be few participant that did not fully recognise the difference between the micro influencer and macro influencer. Despite being clearly addressed with the explanation of the concept of micro-influencer at the beginning of each interview , for this reason it would have been ideal to deal only with people that's followed a *Micro-influencer* to deepen the analysis of the study.

4.0 Findings, Analysis and Discussion

The purpose of this section is to expose the key finding that emerged from the interviews and their analysis as well as provides the discussion on main findings emerged for the same . Despite the participants having different background and experiences, the investigation was able to rise the common themes that were shared amongst the majority of participants. The finding are arranged on the basis of theme and the direct quotes from the participants which represents their feeling and opinions. This align to address the objective of this study, Which is to explore the impact of social media micro-influencer on the Irish millennials.

4.1. Research Objective One

<p><u>Research Objective One</u></p>
<p><i>To assess engagement of social media micro-influencer with Irish millennials.</i></p>
<p><u>Themes</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Social Media and Visuals• Engagement

4.1.1 Social Media and Visuals

This study include six participants, and the data collection process began with discussing their viewpoints on use of social media and their preferable platform for social media. As all the participant use social media extensively , This suggest that, Millennial generation is engrossed using social media .

Participant A “ *Well, I spent most time being online on social media these days (...) specially on Instagram* ”.

Participant C “ *I am using social media ...for almost 15 years*”.

Participant D “ *....I hardly remember, but I started using social media at age of 16*”.

Participant F “ *I use Instagram mostly ...I think everyone use that.. (...) it’s easy to access and easy to use as well*”.

There was a consensus amongst participants about using Instagram as preferred social media platform. They found Instagram stories and photos are visually appealing, this was the main reason they enjoy using Instagram.

Participant B “ *I like Instagram... it’s pretty good with visuals* ”.

Participant D “ *I like watching videos, photos and stories on Instagram*”

Participant E “ *...I love to see what people are doing in their lives ,..like seeing their photos shared on Instagram.. it’s pretty cool*”..

The responses given by participant emphasize that millennial are technology naïve and spend considerable amount of time on consuming online content when compare to other generations (Sago, 2010; Serazio, 2015 ; Aksoy et al, 2013; Moore, 2012). In fact , millennial are prominent user and hyperconnected to social media (Pew Research, 2018). It is substantial that Instagram was prominent choice for social interaction Voorveld et al’s (2018) amongst participants. Photos and stories on Instagram described as direct highway to Millennials heart as they tend to more visually addictive (Arnold Street Media 2016).

4.1.2 Engagement

Another significant theme emerged from interviews was engagement as conversation were in depth on the aspects of social media micro-influencer. All participant provided introduction about social media micro-influencer, five out of six participants were familiar with the micro-influencer term and only one participant have an adequate knowledge on them but hold interest in social media influencer. All participants were explored further on the aspect of topic.

Participant A “ *..social media micro-influencer are engaging.. most of stuff they posted useful for me*”

Participant D “ *In my opinion , micro-influencer are more approachable and engaging ..I remember.. when I commented on Sarah Hanrahan post on Instagram, she replied back to me.* ”

Above participants comments indicate that millennial push their boundaries to seek connections, expression and meaningful relationship online (Hurst 2016). This induced that when influencer is approachable, it encourage consumer to interact and feel comfortable doing it which help to establish an engagement between them. Jin et al. (2019) stated that Instagram influencer having small audience have high potential of engagement.

Participant F “ *..they are more engaging (..) they are like us..* ”

This participant complemented Bucuta (2015) study, where he stated that millennials implies homogeneity in belief, behaviour with influencers . This reduces gap between the influencer and their audience. This became apparent that participant F had formed a bond with social media micro-influencer, which can be explained by Pansari and Kumar’s (2017), that once consumer formed an emotional bond with social media influencer then the next stage of relationship is engagement.

Participant E “ *..I saw post of (...) recommending a product .. I felt like buying it.* ”

This participant, expresses his interest as the influencer impacted his intension to buy a particular product. Thus, this express the engaging relationship in a form that an influencer impacted on consumers purchase decision. This reflected in Serazio (2015) study, as millennials are empowered consumer and seek digital engagement with influencer based on their purchase interest.

4.2. Research Objective Two

Research Objective Two

To assess the impact of credibility, relatability and authenticity of social media micro-influencer from the Irish millennials perspective.

Themes

- Relatable
- Credible
- Trust

All participant interviewed and explored to achieve more profound theme, all participants were discussed on the aspect of micro-influencer credibility, relatability and authenticity weather it had an impact on their purchase decisions. The theme relevant to second research objective of this study will be analyzed and discussed.

4.2.1 Relatable

All participant expressed that they find micro-influencers are more relatable as compare to celebrity and macro-influencer. They were asked to provide reasoning on the aspect of relatability with micro-influencers.

Participant C “ *I think they are more domestic and relatable...* ”

Participant A “ *.. easy to reach out to them (..) more like friend..*”

Participant E “ *Their normal living style fascinates me (...) which I found more relatable*”

This participant expressed that millennials find micro-influence closer as compare to celebrity influencer because they view them as normal personalities like them. Micro-influencer perceived more relatable and to be *more like us* to their followers , as the feeling of social distance decrease the appeal of a celebrity (Thomson, 2006). This also gives grounding that consumers are no longer feel connected to celebrity influencers. Further, Participant express their relatability concerning purchase decision.

Participant B “ *In my opinion , micro-influencer whom I followed, (..) is relatable to me, most of my purchase decision based on him recommendations*”

This participant expresses his purchase decision are based on the micro-influencers recommendation whom he followed on Instagram. This enlighten the study of DeVaney (2015), he mentioned that millennial stimulated through social media micro-influencers relatability for the recommendation on purchase decisions.

Participant F *“celebrities you don’t know them personally, (..)I am more relatable with an influencer because you have better chance to interact with them”*

This participant comment illustrates that, influencers are relatable as you can reach out to them easily as compare to celebrity influencer, this make easier to form relationship influencer. Contributing to this, Hurst (2016) explained that millennials constantly seek relationship online and this is apparent that, when influencer are accessible by consumer, then they feel more related towards them.

4.2.2 Credible

Participant were mixed in their responses while exploring the aspect of social media micro-influencer as a creditable source, some of them describe their inability to view micro-influencer as a credible source.

Participant A *“ NO , they get paid for product they endorse. That’s why I don’t find them credible ”*

Participant E *“ I don’t see them as credible source”(…) specially when their post are sponsored”*

Conversely, other participant found micro-influencer are credible,

Participant B *“ for me they are relatable, which make them, credible as well“*

This participant view about credible source is based on his relatability with micro-influencer, As it can been seen in the literature, Wang and Scheinbaum (2018) stated that , influencers audience stance varies on their choices. As the participant were mixed on their responses . This can be explained by the Zhu and Chen (2015) model, Where he mention that , there are two stems which dived the social media as credible source, viz Profile based and content based. Profile based social media account emphasise on the individual member who aim to connect with the person behind the profile on the basis of their popularity. Whereas content based profile emphasis on the content , discussion and relatability. Therefore it safe to be conclude that profile based influencers might leverage the endorsement while content based influencer would be more democratic and relatability.

Stemming to this, a study of Wang and Scheinbaum (2018) which emphasise that , in influencer marketing source credibility is important dimension of trustworthiness

for customer and it is the evaluation of influencers capability in terms of their follower's trust. Influencer responsible for driving down the brands message to targeted audiences, that's why it is important that voice and face carrying brand message is trust worthy. This conversation around credibility enlighten its associated dimension- trust by consumer which will escalate further in next section.

4.2.3 Trust

When discussed on the aspect of trustworthiness of social media micro-influencer. There consensus amongst all participant when asked whether social media micro-influencers reviews on a product are trustworthy as your family and friend reviews it.

Participant F *“Absolutely, I trust them (..) I find their review honest”*

Participant E *“ ..They are trustworthy , I generally follow their recommendations “*

Participant A *“ I find smaller number influencers are trustworthy than celebrity influencer”*

Above participants illustrate that , micro influencer having smaller follower base are more trustworthy . which signify the study of Aksoy el al (2013) Millennial generation frequently rely trust on the smaller social media influencer to make their purchase decisions. Micro-influencer perceived more trustworthy as the feeling of social distance decrease the appeal of a celebrity (Thomson, 2006). As mentioned by (eMarketer, 2011), millennial generation induce two-way communication interactivity and trust the information, this generation is more prone to value other opinion on the social media.

5.0 Conclusion and Future Recommendation

5.1 Conclusion

The purpose this study was to understand the Irish millennials buying behaviors of lifestyle product on account of social media micro-influencers. This study gave profound understanding on the micro-influencer marketing perspective. The area of Engagement, Credibility, Relatability and Trust explored and addressed successfully.

In relation to engagement, it was found that millennial push their boundaries to seek connection. When influencer is approachable it encourages millennial consumer to interact and feel comfortable. Hence, millennial consumer has high engagement relationship with social media micro-influencer. It also explored that; millennials consider micro-influencers homogenous to them. This emotional engagement empowered millennial consumer to seek digital engagement with micro-influencer and impact their purchase decision. Relatability was found to be highly significant aspect of social media micro-influencer. It was found that millennial feel more connected and closer towards social media micro-influencer. In fact, this study proposes that micro-influencer replacing the traditional celebrity influencer because millennial consumer ability to relate the source

In terms of credibility, it was prominent that millennial seek source credibility, which has high impact on their purchase decisions. It was found that credibility is important dimension of trustworthiness for customer and it is the evaluation of influencers capability in terms of their follower's trust. The aspect of trustworthiness of micro-influencers was explored, it was found that millennial induce two-communication interactivity, this generation is prone to value other opinions. This was significant in findings that millennials high trust level is with smaller social media influencer (micro) to make their purchase decision.

5.2 Future Research Recommendation

This study was conducted in Dublin city of Ireland. Although it could be replicated in any part of the world such as Asia or Europe. Asian countries like India, China have huge social media communities which can provide Asian consumer perspective. On the other hand , European countries such as UK, France could provide different consumer perspective on aspects of influencer marketing. Thus, This can provide new insights on the micro-influencer marketing associate this new type of influence force of micro-influencer marketing.

Future research could adopt alternative methodological approach such quantitative approach or mixed approach. Which would provide more broader scope for research, which involve survey and different data analysis method.

Moreover , this research could be apply on different stance of generation. This study considered both male and female millennial perspective. In future, This could be applied only on male millennial or only on female millennial stance to achieve more profound understand on the subject of micro- influencer marketing .

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Appendices

Appendix 1.

Interview Template Guide

Do you use social media?

When did you begin using social media?

What social media platform, you actively use?

How often you find yourself active on social media?

What is the main reason for you to use social media?

Do you follow social media influencer, who particularly interested in the lifestyle industry?

Do you follow any social media micro-influencer and what do you feel is your main drive to follow them?

What is your opinion on the influencer who have less followers (Micro-influencers)?

In your opinion, do you view social media influencer who have more follower are less authentic on her/his recommendation? Why?

Do you view micro-influencer are trustworthy?

Would you view social media micro-influencers reviews on a product as credible and trustworthy as your family and friend reviews? Why?

Do you view social media micro-influencer are normal people like you?

Have you recently bought any lifestyle product based on social media micro-influencers recommendation/reviews or collaboration?

What motivated you to make the purchase? Or not?

Appendix 2.
Participant Table.

Age	Gender	Interest in Social media influencers	Nationality
26	Male	Yes, Interest area- Fitness	Irish
27	Female	Yes, Interest area- Lifestyle and fashion	Irish
29	Male	Yes, Interest area- Fitness and health	Irish
29	Female	Yes, Interest area- Fashion and beauty	Irish
30	Male	Yes, Interest area- Health and fitness	Irish
24	Male	Yes, Interest area- Sport, Fashion and Fitness	Irish