



Prifysgol Cymru
Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

DISSERTATION PROPOSAL

Student Name: Kristina Kushlova

Student ID: 1909417

**The impact of Instagram influencers on consumers purchasing
behaviour in the beauty industry**

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Mary March

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Introduction

Social media marketing is one of the emerging trends that most organisations are adopting. This is attributed to the convenience, cost and the flexibility of the social media platforms that make it more reliable. Organisations have shifted to engaging social media influencers to market their products on their social media accounts and pages. These influencers use their fame and popularity to advertise various products to their fans prompting them to make purchases. This proposal puts forward the research topic, objectives of the research study, literature review related to the topic of study. Furthermore, the proposal also highlights the research methods and data collection methods and data analysis. This proposal provides ways of data interpretation, time prospects of the research using a Gantt chart and the ethical considerations to be adhered to during the research.

Research aim

The main research aim is to investigate the role and the impact of Instagram influencers on consumer purchasing behaviour in the beauty industry.

Most beauty businesses have opted to engage social media influencers to run adverts and market their products. It is believed that these influencers play an important role in marketing the products and influence the consumer's purchasing behaviour based on the posts they make concerning specific products. This study therefore will collect relevant information to evaluate the existing relationship between Instagram influencers and the consumer purchasing behaviour. The study will mainly focus on establish the relationship between the Instagram influencers and consumers and how they influence the purchasing behaviour of the consumers. Based on the data obtained, the study will explain the impact the influencers have on the consumers' purchasing decisions and behaviour.

Research objectives

The objectives for this research include:

1. To identify the role of Instagram influencers in the beauty industry
2. To explore the factors that influence the purchasing behaviour among consumers in the beauty industry
3. To analyse the relationship between Instagram influencers and the consumers
4. To evaluate the impact of the influencers on the **behaviour of both young and older female consumers aged between 18-25 and 45-60 years.**
5. To suggest recommendations that beauty companies can adopt to attract the interest of **different groups of female customers** including those who are not using social media.

Research questions

Once the research is conducted, the findings should address the following questions:

1. What is the role of Instagram influencers in the beauty industry?
2. What factors have influenced the purchasing behaviour of customers in the beauty industry?
3. What is the relationship between Instagram influencers and consumers in the industry?
4. What impact do Instagram influencers have on consumer purchasing behaviour?
5. What recommendations can beauty companies adopt to ensure they attract more customers including those not using Instagram and other social media platforms.

Literature review

Research conducted by De Veirman et al (2017), explained that Instagram influencers are individuals who have a high number of followers and are perceived to be likeable and considered more marketable than individuals with less followers. Therefore, with the many followers on their accounts, they are preferred by most businesses to carry out advertisements for their products. The study suggests that with the many followers, they are likely to influence their purchasing decisions and have consumers purchasing these products. Moreover, these influencers are able to reach out to large numbers of people thus likely to increase the company's customer base. There is easy accessibility to large markets thus likely to increase the company's sales. However, the study further outlines that this strategy may not be the best marketing method especially when promoting divergent products. This is because it decreases the perceived uniqueness of the product or brand since it is made available and accessible by large number of consumers which becomes common. Therefore, this negatively affects the brand reputation in one way or another.

In another research study, it is observed that Instagram is a popular platform that is mainly used for online shopping globally. From the findings, it was established that 44% of the active users of this platform mainly use it to search and discover new brands in the market while 53% of the users follow their favourite brands on this platform (Negi and Pabalkar, 2020). Therefore, businesses have found it easier and profitable to engage the influencers on this platform rather than celebrities since from the influencers' reviews, the businesses are able to obtain genuine reviews and feedbacks which are more reliable and influence the decision-making process. It is from these reviews that consumers are influenced especially when purchasing a product. They are able to analyse and evaluate the available decisions for them before purchasing products. The reviews are highlighted in the comments section where other customers state their experience regarding their interactions with different products. The study also highlighted

that Instagram influencers play a role in helping consumers to choose their lifestyles through introducing them to the prevailing trends in the fashion world. Through these updates, consumers are able to adjust accordingly when making purchasing decisions on which they adjust accordingly to suit the existing trends.

In another study, an online survey was conducted whereby active Instagram users were selected and engaged on the role the influencers play in influencing consumer purchasing behaviour. From the sample size of 285 users that were selected, about 63% of the users noted that the main dimensions that determine the credibility of an influencer are attractiveness and trustworthiness of the influencer (Rebelo, 2017). The study established that many females are perceived by the influencer's trustworthiness. Moreover, it was established that the credibility of an influencer usually affects the consumer's purchasing intentions since this character makes them outstanding and more reliable hence the information they portray is likely to be reliable. Therefore, this study concluded that businesses need to measure and evaluate the credibility of the influencers before engaging them since they equally influence the consumers making purchases of the product. Apart from the purchasing intentions and decisions, influencer credibility also impacts on the consumer consumption of a product and the attitudes towards a given product or brand. This study was concluded by stating that influencer's reliability majorly influences women's purchasing decision more than it does for men.

Studies have also shown that Instagram influencers influence consumers' buying decisions especially for young people since they are active on the platform. It was established that having Instagram influencers to carry out brand awareness for products has become a common practice in the current business environment and is efficient in reaching out to the youths (Mlodkowska, 2019). The study involved respondents who filled an online questionnaire and established that Instagram influencers were effective in reaching out to the youths and gaining new customers from them. The influencers were responsible for sharing any information on their platforms

regarding various products and the youths can easily access it and share with their colleagues. As a result, they are able to make informed decisions regarding the purchases they need to make hence increasing the overall sales since they bring new customers on board. Moreover, influencers are engaged by beauty companies as brand ambassadors whereby they dress in the existing fashions to display the products and brands existing in these houses. When they post them on their platforms, they influence the purchasing decisions since the youths would be interested in purchasing the products and associate themselves with the influencers. Therefore, this contributes to increased sales by the beauty company. The study further established that these influencers are used to influence the purchasing decisions especially among the youths aged between 18 and 25 years.

Short Conclusion

According to the studies above, Instagram influencers have an impact on the consumer's purchasing behaviour. Consumers wish to be associated with certain influencers and celebrities thus when they are used to promote a certain brand, it is likely that consumers will consider purchasing the products. Also, using the influencers is an easier way to reach a large market thus an effective way of advertising products to consumers.

Research methods and methodology

This part summarises an analysis of the methods that the research will apply in gathering data, analysing and interpretation of the data obtained.

Research philosophy

Research philosophy is the beliefs and assumptions revolving around the way certain data needs to be collected and analysed and appropriately used (Zukauskas et al, 2018). Research philosophies include pragmatism, realisms and interpretivism. This research will apply interpretivism philosophy since the research will try to establish and understand the scenario

of the role played by the Instagram influencers. The research will gather real data and interpret it and establish the reality based on the data. This philosophy is the most appropriate since it helps in establishing the reality and a scenario based on real data and not assumptions.

Research paradigm

This refers to the philosophical frame work that the research is founded on. It represents a pattern of beliefs and understandings from which the research practices are based on (Khaldi, 2017). Research paradigms include positivism, constructivism or interpretivism. The research will apply interpretivism paradigm whereby a dynamic and changing nature of the society will be shaped by the findings obtained from the research and examined by the participants instead of the researcher.

Research approach

A research approach refers to the specific procedures and research processes that cuts across all the research steps and assumptions to various data collection methods, analysis and interpretation (Crotty, 2020). A research approach can either be deductive or inductive. The most appropriate research approach for this research will be deductive research approach whereby there will be an exploration of facts and data interpretation which will be gathered based on the research aim and objectives. From the findings, conclusions and recommendations will be drawn to ensure that all the objectives have been achieved.

Research methods

The research will mainly apply both primary and secondary research methods. Primary methods will mainly utilise designing questionnaires which will be issued to the respondents to fill them. the questions included in the questionnaires will be in line with the research aim and objectives. The questions will be mainly closed end questions which will require the respondents to make choices from the options given for each questions. Secondary methods

mainly books and journals will partly be used whereby past statistics and data will be obtained from already published articles and journals that are related to the research topic.

Research strategy

It is a step by step process that outlines the plan of action which issues directions and determines the efforts of the researcher towards attaining an effective and informative research (Gray and Malins, 2016). A research strategy can either be qualitative or quantitative depending on the type of data being used. This research will utilise both qualitative and quantitative research strategy to establish the role of the Instagram influencers on consumer behaviour, the relationship between the influencers and consumers and the impact these influencers have on various groups of consumers.

Sampling methods

There are various sampling methods ranging from random sampling, convenience, systematic, stratified and cluster sampling. Each of this sampling method is chosen depending on the type of research to be undertaken and the resources available among other factors. This research will apply both convenience and random sampling whereby a sample size of 50 respondents will be selected. The respondents will be randomly selected across the women and age based on their availability. Convenience sampling will also be used to select respondents who are actively engaged on Instagram and follow different influencers. They will also be selected depending on their availability and accessibility to participate in the research.

Data collection methods

The research will utilise primary methods of data collection. As earlier stated, questionnaires will be designed highlighting specific questions that seek to address all the research questions. The questionnaires will be shared with the respondents via respective email addresses, have them filled and send back for analysis. Secondary methods will also be used whereby previous research on the topic will be evaluated and data analysed to establish specific findings and conclusions made regarding the topic.

Data interpretation methods

Data analysis and interpretation involves inspecting, transforming and giving meaning to the data gathered from the research. Qualitative data obtained from the research will be analysed using content analysis whereby the data will be categorised depending on the behavioural data observed during data collection and presented using tables, graphs and pie charts.

Time prospects of research (Gantt chart)

The research project is estimated to take 11 weeks from its initiation to the presentation of the results and findings as shown in the following Gantt chart

Project activities	Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4 and 5	Week 6 and 7	Week 8 and 9	Week 9 and 10	Week 11
Topic selection								
Formulation of research aims and objectives								
Proposal writing								
Literature review writing								
Data collection								
Data analysis								
Compilation of the report								
Presentation of the findings								

Ethical considerations of the research

These refer to the moral values and considerations that are adhered to in a research process. Ethical considerations are meant to attain accuracy and reliability of the research. Some of the ethical considerations that will be considered in this research include respondent's privacy and confidentiality. This will ensure that respondents are provided with a safe space to share their honest opinions and information regarding the research topic. The respondents will also be engaged depending on their voluntary willingness to participate in the research and fill the questionnaires. The data obtained will only be issued out to authorised individuals alone. The

respondents will not disclose their personal information as a way of keeping the information private and anonymous. For the secondary sources that will be used, credits will be given to the authors by citing the sources used.

Conclusion

Social media influencers play a role in influencing consumer purchasing behaviour by providing some information that consumers need when making purchasing decisions. Furthermore, these influencers also play an important role in ensuring provision of relevant and crucial information to businesses identifying consumer needs and trends. However, it is important to identify the existing relationship between these influencers and consumers to manage the use of these influencers. Businesses need to choose appropriate and reliable influencers who will help them increase their sales by effectively influencing the consumer purchasing behaviour.

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