Power of the post: Instagram is the chosen social media platform for PR content of cosmetic companies

By

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this material, which I now submit for assessment on the programme of study leading to the award of the MA in Journalism & Public Relations, is my own; based on my personal study and/or research, and that I have acknowledged all material and sources used in its preparation. I also certify that I have not copied in part or whole or otherwise plagiarised the work of anyone else, including other students.

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Abstract

Social media has changed the PR landscape from exclusively focusing on traditional media to developing a two-way ongoing conversation between a company and their consumers. As we live a lot of our lives online, many brands have capitalised on this communication revolution we are currently experiencing. Through both visual and textual PR content posted on social media platforms, companies create brand awareness and communicate directly with their consumers.

This study investigates why Instagram has been the most successful social media platform for PR content in the context of cosmetic companies from a consumer's perspective with a self-administered online questionnaire. A second source of research is in the form of interviews with two PR executives who are currently working in consumer PR agencies to gather relevant information from industry experts. The final source of research is a content analysis of Instagram posts from three Irish cosmetic companies. It was found that the features on Instagram are the reason why it has emerged as the most suitable social media application for PR purposes. Throughout the research, the impact that visual content posted from Irish cosmetic companies has on perceptions of female beauty is considered.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

"The new rules of marketing and public relations are part of the much bigger and more important communications revolution we are currently living through – the most important communication revolution in human history" (Scott, 2015, p.28).

1.1 Summary

Scott (2015) states that we are currently experiencing the most noteworthy communication revolution in history. The public relations industry is evidence of this revolution with the rise of social media. Breakenridge and Solis (2009) note that PR began to undergo a significant transformation from the 1990's and has coined this shift as 'PR 2.0' which describes the arrival of the Web to the communications industry which inevitably required companies to connect directly with consumers. Scott (2015) claims that the arrival of social media to the world of PR has made the industry 'public' again while Breakenridge and Solis are of the belief that "social media is changing 'the game'." (Breakenridge, Solis, 2009, p. xvii)

Sherman and Perlman (2010) believes that PR allows for a straightforward interaction between the company and the consumer. Papasolomou et. al (2012) share a similar opinion in that social media has established a two-way communication environment between brands and their target audience. Whereas before the arrival of social media, PR exclusively focused on the media as the outlet for their content. According to Archer and Harrigan (2016) traditional media had been the only method for generating brand awareness and to inform consumers about new products launching.

Nowadays, the combination of Instagram and Influencers is the perfect PR recipe. Instagram is a visual medium that allows companies to generate brand awareness and as Carter (2016) claims Influencers as 'trusted voices'. Scott (2015) states that brands that use Influencers to produce PR content on social media can filter through the media and communicate directly to their consumers through 'an influential third party'.

I believe that this research is worthy as Mackson et. al (2019) notes that little research has been carried out on Instagram's influence. The social media application launched in 2010 and according to Mackson et al (2019) as of June 2018, it has accumulated over 1 billion monthly active users. A report carried out by Pew Research in 2018, showed that the biggest users of Instagram were aged 18-29. I think that my research is valuable as this age group is the target audience of cosmetic companies and it could be suggested that this is one reason why Instagram is the chosen social media application for PR content.

1.2 Research Objectives and Questions

This dissertation aims to explore why Instagram is the chosen social media application for PR content for cosmetic companies. The purpose is to investigate what makes Instagram suitable for PR content for cosmetic companies. By conducting this research, I will answer the following proposed research questions.

My proposed research questions are as follows;
- Why has social media been a success for the public relations industry?
- Why is Instagram the chosen social media application for PR content for cosmetic companies?

In order to explore possible answers to the research questions outlined above, chapter two will be a discussion of the relevant literature of this topic. Chapter three will examine the methodologies of this research study while chapter four will analyse the results gathered from the previous chapters. Finally, chapter five will conclude to discuss the findings of this research study.

1.3 Expected results or gaps in the literature

Mackson et al (2019) have noted that sufficient research of Instagram has yet to be carried out. Research could be conducted to investigate the features available on Instagram as it has become the preferred social media application for PR content, as well as the impact that Influencer brand campaigns have on brand reputation.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Overview

This literature review explores the research objectives of the dissertation, which are as follows;

- Why has social media been a success for the public relations industry?
- Why is Instagram the chosen social media application for PR content for cosmetic companies?

The sources discussed and analysed are authoritative, contemporary and as recent as possible. The literature review is divided into the appropriate themes of the evolution of public relations, Instagram, the power of word-of-mouth, and influencers and bloggers. Feminist theorists are also discussed as it would be irresponsible not to in the image saturated society we live in today.

One of the reasons why Instagram is the subject of this research study is because it is used as a public relations tool for Irish cosmetic companies. There is a gap in the literature that this research investigates. Irish cosmetic companies primarily use this application as part of their PR campaigns and the main objective of this dissertation is to find out why Instagram has been singled out as the most successful platform for this purpose. Mackson et al., (2019) note that further research is need regarding the social media platform, "[h]owever, the literature is in the preliminary stages leading up to a comprehensive understanding of the application." (p. 2)

2.2 Public Relations Evolution

Many variations of what defines public relations have been devised. Sherman and Perlman (2010) state that, "[u]ltimately, public relations is what makes for a smoother interaction between the company and its publics, leading directly and indirectly to an increase in goodwill, brand awareness, and sales." (p. 19) According to Public Relations Consultants Association Ireland, "PR is a planned, sustained and evaluated process, which by means of two-way communications techniques seeks to build mutually beneficial relationships between an organisation and its public." (PRCA website) This definition of public relations is relevant to the public relations landscape of today which has had to adapt from engaging in a one-way communication system with traditional print media to a two-way communication system where social media plays an integral role connecting the organisation and its audience.

> PR is a window that your company consciously opens to communicate with the world outside. But, a window also allows people to look inside your company. True communication is never just a one-way street, but should be a dialogue and should add value to both parties involved.
>
> (Leinmann, Baikaltseva, 2004, p. 5)

According to Sherman & Perlman (2010), "[t]he world is constantly concerned about *change* – political, economic, and social change. As the world goes, so does public relations methods, which constantly change to adapt to the changing business environments." (p. 131) Breakenridge and Solis (2009) acknowledge that the public relations industry has undergone a period of change and has developed as a result of the rise of social media. Breakenridge and Solis (2009) have named this advancement as PR 2.0:

> In the mid to late 1990s, Solis observed a shift in PR, which he termed PR 2.0 - in recognition of the impact that the Web would have on PR and how the communications industry would be forced to eventually connect with customers

directly while still working with traditional and New Media influencers to also reach them.

<div align="right">(Breakenridge & Solis, 2009, p. xvii)</div>

Kaul (2015) is in agreement with Breakendridge and Solis (2009) stating that,

> Social media has spelt the beginning of the end of information hoarders and intermediaries, breaking down barriers and allowing for dissemination of information without a single dominant narrative or narrator. By making both communication and connection with others easier and faster than before, it has emerged as an engine for change in the world and also in our own PR industry.

<div align="right">(Kaul et al., 2015, p. 461)</div>

This research concurs with Kaul et al., (2015) in that social media has almost forced both the public relations industry and companies to be more accountable and transparent as the consumer and target audience have the ability to participate in ongoing conversations through the means of social media applications like Instagram where they can comment under photos posted and message company's accounts directly.

Archer and Harrigan (2016) states that this development has been given a warm welcome by the public relations industry; "[t]he shift to social media by consumers was initially greeted as a revolution by PR practitioners and academics alike." (Archer & Harrigan, 2016, p. 68) Previously, public relations practitioners would exclusively communicate with journalists who would tell the company's story and generate brand awareness. Whereas nowadays, the media are not the only source that a company may use to communicate with its target audience.

Traditionally, public relations has aimed at raising awareness of the company through the mainstream media; today, however, using grassroots methods such as through local weekly community newspapers, the Internet, social media, email, and newsletters, public relations has been able to improve the company's public image by communicating directly with consumers.

(Sherman & Perlman, 2010, p. 132)

However, print media is not the only source that public relations avails of to communicate with its target audience; "these days great PR includes programs to reach buyers directly. The web allows direct access to information about your product, and smart companies understand and use this phenomenal resource to great advantage." (Scott, 2015, p. 23) Aronczyk et al., (2017) support Scotts view adding that, "organisations of all stripes now actively employ PR and professional campaign practices to advocate for their interests." (p. 145)

Fitch (2017) focuses on how public relations has developed within recent years incorporating the aspect of promotional activity with the rise of social media, "[p]erceptions of public relations activity have changed since Cutlip (1994) argued public relations has "an impact that generally goes unseen and unobserved" (p. 15). Public relations has played a key role in developing promotional culture and is increasingly visible to, and understood by, audiences." (Fitch, 2017, p. 165) The public relations industry is using 'influencers' through promotional activity such as campaigns and paid posts on social media applications on behalf of companies, "PR practitioners continue to seek control in relationships to produce 'value outcomes' and meet measurable objectives for the organisations they work for. With the rise of social media, the so-called 'new' influencers are now bloggers, Instagrammers and YouTubers." (Archer & Harrigan, 2016, pp. 67, 68)

Breakenridge and Solis (2009) claim that, "PR 2.0 starts with a different mindset and approach, neither of which is rooted in broadcast marketing or generic messaging. It's all about humanizing and personalizing stories specifically for the people we want to reach." (pp. xix, xx) The use of Influencers in PR campaigns is the source for companies who wish to humanize and personalize their stories while reaching their target audience.

Fitch (2017) adds that the emergence of bloggers and influencers to the public relations industry since the arrival of social media thanks to technological advances in recent years:

> The transformation of public relations practices in response to widespread technological change has led to a growing body of scholarship that seeks to understand and/or reconceptualise public relations and, more broadly, promotional work. For example, Archer (2016) investigates the changing relationship between practitioners and influencers, as practitioners increasingly rely on influential bloggers in their campaigns.

(Fitch, 2017, p. 160)

Breakenridge and Solis (2009) discuss the need for the industry to engage with social media. "Social media is powerful. It is not only changing 'the game', it is also inspiring everyone across every marketing discipline to evolve or quickly become victims of media 'survival of the fittest'." (p. xvii) Scott (2015) discusses how social media has impacted public relations and the benefit of engaging with it, "the internet has made public relations public again, after years of almost exclusive focus on media. Blogs, online video, news releases, and other forms of web content let organizations communicate directly with buyers." (p. 23) Papasolomou et. al (2012) also adds another perspective to this viewpoint, "social media enables practitioners to directly enter into conversations with their audience, but it is also used to strengthen their relation with them and, hence, their effectiveness." (p. 326) It could be argued that the authors agree that social media has developed public relations to transform into a two-way communication technique that ultimately has strengthened its connection with its target audience. This is echoed by Papasolomou (2012) et. al who state;

> it has become crucial for organizations to find more credible and durable ways to develop a two-way brand relationship with their customers and prospects, one that utilizes both traditional and new media channels... Social media creates an environment that encourages a two-way conversation that corporations can capitalize on it in a way that can benefit their business and their customers.

(pp. 323,325)

2.3 Instagram

Mackson et al. claim that, "[s]ocial media refers to technologies that facilitate user sharing, content creation, and information exchange with online communities". They go on to state that three of the most popular social media applications Instagram, Facebook and Twitter have one in four people using them worldwide. They also cite the argument of Whiting and Williams (2013) that there are seven common reasons for why people use social media. "They include (in order of prominence): social interaction, seeking information, passing time, entertainment, relaxing, communicating, and convenience." (Mackson et al., 2019, p. 2)

The social media platform, Instagram, launched in 2010 and therefore is new in existence in the social media landscape as Mackson et al. (2019, p. 2) state: "Instagram, a relatively new social media application, has become as pervasive in the lives of social media users as older sites, yet little research has examined its influence." However, its growth has been phenomenal as Abidin (2016) who cites Yeong (2013) in claiming that Instagram is the fastest growing social media application among avid mobile phone users. According to Mackson et al., (2019), Instagram was bought by Facebook in 2012 and has generated popularity among over 1 billion monthly active users as of June 2018. Mackson et al., (2019) notes a study on users of Instagram by Pew Research in 2018, "approximately 35% of US adults reported using Instagram. Over one-half of US adults aged 18–29 reported using Instagram, while 40% of 30 to 49-year-olds, 21% of 50- to 64-year-olds, and 10% of 65 years and older reported using the application, as well." (p. 2) Alhabash and Ma (2017) note that a high proportion of the teenage to young adults demographic are Instagram users. "More than half of young adults (18-29 years old) report using Instagram, thus making them the largest group of Instagram users." (Alhabash & Ma, 2017, p. 2) As a social media platform, the image is the central focus on Instagram. Lee et. al (2018) inform us that 30 billion photos have been shared on the site, and that number is increasing every minute and according to Scott (2015) when it comes to Instagram, the images do the talking. Carah and Shaul (2016) claim that: "Instagram as an 'image machine' that harnesses the continuous and habitual use of mobile devices to scroll, tap, and glance at a never-ending flow of images... The images circulated on Instagram are softly and persistently promotional in character" (pp. 70, 72).

Ghidotti (2017) notes that out of all the images posted on the platform, people tend to ignore advertisements, but they wouldn't overlook posts or blogs by influencers that they follow and engage with on a regular basis. Therefore, it is only logical for cosmetic companies to use Instagram as part of their public relations strategy to promote their products to their consumers and to potential buyers also. Carah and Shaul (2016) note that, "[w]hen Facebook purchased Instagram for $1 billion in 2012, the platform generated no advertising revenue but brands were extensively engaging with users via individual accounts." (p. 70)

Papasolomou et. al (2012) observe that consumers like using social media applications such as Instagram, as it provides them with the opportunity to interact and share information. Instagram also provides benefits for brands, "[u]ndoubtedly, social media is a powerful tool that can be used by companies since it enables them to interact in an informal and more personal way." (p. 320) This statement supports the claim made by Breakenridge and Solis (2009) that the revolution in PR (PR 2.0) which aims to humanise and personalise stories. It could be argued that Instagram seems to be an ideal setting for promotion. Aronczyk et. al (2017) claim that "[i]n thoroughly promotionalised environments, PR seems to be an ideal source." (p. 149) Therefore, it could be alleged that Instagram and public relations is a perfect partnership in the promotion industry. Archer and Harrigan (2016) states that, "[w]ithin PR, there have been claims that social media has 'reinvented' PR and that social media is a democratising influence that allows true dialogue between organisations and publics." (p. 68)

Abidin (2016) proposes the argument that Instagram's original purpose has been altered by Influencers;

> prior to its iteration with embedded native advertisements – (Instagram, 2016) by appropriating its networked intimacy for a non-reciprocal mass audience, supplementing mobile phone photography with high-end digital cameras and apps, converting memory keepsakes into broadcast material for high circulation and reworking spontaneous captures into purposeful staging.

(Abidin, 2016, p. 88)

2.4 The Power of Word-of-Mouth

According to Sherman and Perlman (2010), the word-of-mouth method can be defined as a hands-on approach as it communicates to the target audience in a personal way. Scott (2015) illustrates how the significance of word-of-mouth is as relevant as it ever was as now it is not just two people participating in a conversation, now thousands if not millions of people can engage facilitated by online social media platforms. "If you have a story worth repeating, bloggers, podcasters, and videobloggers (among other influentials) will repeat your story all over the world" (Scott, 2015, pp. xx, xxi) Ghidotti (2017) supports Scott's opinion suggesting that a brand's social media strategy relies significantly on their business Instagram account to "create content, run campaigns and interact with followers on a day-to-day basis." (p. 11) Sherman and Perlman (2010) add their perspective with the concept that word-of-mouth has significant power online, "[w]ith blogs, opinion Web sites, and consumer ratings sprouting up practically everywhere, word of mouth spreads like wildfire." (Sherman and Perlman, 2010, p. 16)

Scott (2015) acknowledges that companies would have previously used traditional methods to get attention for their product; either from costly advertisements or mainstream media writing up articles. In contrast to this, these days Scott (2015) claims that we have a superior option, "publishing interesting content on the web – content that your buyers want to consume." (p. 3) This research is in agreement with Scott (2015) as social media applications such as Instagram are free to download this also results in generating a vast amount of users, which Mackson et al (2019) supports. A platform like Instagram is an inexpensive way for a company to promote products and brand awareness. Sherman and Perlman (2010) note how the word-of-mouth method should be integrated into a PR campaign by availing of influencers, "[t]o implement the WOM method we need to develop a smaller group of influencers who can help [in] getting the word out to the larger-sized group of target audience and potential consumers." (Sherman & Perlman, 2010, p. 133) Ghidotti (2017) shares the same view as Sherman and Perlman (2010) highlighting that studies from Nielsen and Tap influence inform us how financially beneficial word-of-mouth and influencers can be for an organisation, "word-of-mouth or influencer

marketing returns 11 times greater ROI (return on investment) than the traditional advertising efforts that we're accustomed to." (Ghidotti, 2017, p. 11)

Papasolomou et. al (2012) share a similar point of view as the authors mentioned previously, conveying that a two-way conversation between the consumer and the company is created thanks to the environment of social media and that "corporations can capitalize on it in a way that can benefit their business and their customers." (p. 325) Sherman and Perlman (2010) add their perspective stating it is not just influencers or bloggers who participate in word-of-mouth activity. "Consumers love to share their experiences about products, and this can be seen not only during informal conversations among friends, but also in the media and online." (p. 37) Aronczyk et. al (2017) agree adding how the consumers often help lever the promotional side,

> word-of-mouth recommendations have long been a desirable promotional tool, and this has transformed online into a search for content that will 'go viral', where audiences themselves do the promotional leg-work by sharing videos, articles or other content.

<div align="right">(Aronczyk, 2017, p. 144)</div>

The shared theme from the works of Scott (2015), Ghidotti (2017), Papasolomou et. al (2012) and Sherman and Perlman (2010) is that social media benefits both the company and the consumer. In addition, it is the power house of communication for brands who wish to showcase their products online and that word-of-mouth is still relevant even in the modern world to spread your message across the globe using social media platforms such as Instagram. "Grassroots public relations sets off a spark and lets the WOM spread like wildfire, spurring the people to act on their own volition as the ones who will spread the news of the collection, the product, and the company." (Sherman & Perlman, 2010, p. 133)

2.5 Influencers and Bloggers

Today, when the power of word-of-mouth is mentioned, the newly coined term 'influencer' or blogger is never too far behind. Abidin (2016) notes that influencers are primarily young women who generate content on Instagram. Archer (2019) supports this opinion claiming that influencing on social media platforms has become a career for young females. "The concept of the self-branded, 'microcelebrity' (or influencer), within the attention economy has arisen and become popular for young women to aspire to as a career or at least sideline." (Archer, 2019, p. 154) Although the influencer world is mainly comprised of women, the male influencer is certainly on the rise in both the fitness and make-up artist sectors of Instagram accounts.

Abidin (2016) continues his definition of influencers as, "one form of microcelebrity who accumulate a following on blogs and social media through textual and visual narrations of their personal, everyday lives, upon which advertorials for products and services are premised." (p. 86) Archer (2019) agrees with Abidin's (2016) definition and develops it further stating that,

> Social media influencers can be defined as every-day, ordinary internet users who accumulate a large following on blogs and social media through the textual and visual narration of their personal lives and lifestyles, engage with their following in digital and physical spaces, and monetise their following by integrating 'advertorials' into their blogs or social media posts.

(Archer, 2019, p. 150)

Carter (2016) states that influencer marketing is a fast-growing industry which aims "to promote products or increase brand awareness through content spread by social media users who are considered to be influential." (Carter, 2016, p. 2) Carter (2016) notes a report carried out by Augure (2015), a company producing software for influencer marketing, "reports that 84% of brands intended to run influencers campaigns in 2015, and this is consistent with reports of strong growth that have appeared in a variety of publications." (Carter, 2016, p. 2)

Influencers and bloggers use the of word-of-mouth method through social media platforms like Instagram creating content to communicate to their followers, which essentially are their

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audience. Aronczyk et al (2017) discusses the compatibility of the word-of- mouth method and 'influencers' when they are utilised together as part of a company's public relations plan that he has coined them as 'ongoing conversations',

> The instrumental intent and promotional impact of their activity are thereby masked, at least to some extent, because they are framed in terms of a type of 'organizational sociability,' where word of mouth and the use of 'mutual friends' in the form of influencers (journalists, analysts, vloggers, bloggers, celebrities, chat show hosts) all produce a climate of engagement that is designed to be easy for audiences to accept and participate in.

> (Aronczyk et al., 2017, p. 145)

According to Sherman and Perlman (2010), influencers who are involved in promoting a company's public relations campaign are using grassroots PR to engage with the target audience, "[s]o grassroots public relations occurs when influencers are involved, pushing the public relations campaign forward through their active participation; such a method is also commonly referred to as "creating a buzz" or **viral public relations** [bold text in original]," (Sherman & Perlman, 2010, p. 132). Abidin (2016) likens an influencer's content posted on Instagram to a billboard, "[a]mong this spurt of users are Influencers whose prolific Instagram feeds function as 'real-time billboards to eager, watchful eyeballs." (p. 88) From Sherman and Perlman (2010) and Abidin (2016) perspectives, it could be argued that if a company is implementing a PR campaign on Instagram, they must include a relevant Influencer in order to create a buzz and have the advantage of a real-time billboard.

Sherman and Perlman (2010) note the importance of the relationship between brands and influencers, "Identifying **influencers** [bold text in original] is vital; look for people who are highly respected in the community and who know many other people, and encourage them to talk up the brand." (Sherman & Perlman, 2010, p. 41) Companies are opting to deal with influencers and bloggers as tools in their main public relations strategy because the audience they have garnered has an invested interest in that influencer or bloggers life, as possibly they identify with them and value what opinions they have, as Hughes et al., (2019) state that:

People who choose to interact with bloggers and their postings are typically followers of the blogger. Followers have opted to obtain information posted by bloggers and therefore are likely highly involved in the environment. This high involvement translates into several facets of blog campaigns that help strengthen engagement.

(Hughes et al., 2019, p. 4)

According to Archer and Harrigan (2016), bloggers or influencers disseminate information about a company in a faster way online compared to traditional methods. "For organisations, blogs and bloggers are important because they can quickly spread information and opinion about organisations and products." (p. 68) Breakenridge and Solis (2009) shares a similar perspective to Archer and Harrigan (2016): "Great PR has always been about telling stories in a way that makes people identify with like-minded individuals to share information and build strong relationships." (Breakenridge, Solis, 2009, p. xx)

This study agrees with Breakenridge and Solis' (2009) statement here as it has been argued by Hughes et al (2019) that influencers have an audience online that follow them as they identify with them or value their opinion. Using an influencer who has already established a solid rapport with a company's target audience is an ideal environment for a public relations campaign. Often, public relation campaigns, particularly ones involving a cosmetics brand, employ an 'influencer' or a blogger to communicate to their audience about a new product. Archer and Harrigan note this relationship (2016); "[b]loggers, as influencers, are being courted by organisations keen to cut through the clutter and connect with their consumers through an influential third party." (p. 68) Aronczyk et al (2017), voice a similar opinion to Archer and Harrigan (2016) noting that the audience has evolved from the earlier days of public relations and interpret why an influencer is a beneficial communication method;

The prevalence of promotional *culture* now means that audiences themselves use promotional techniques for their own identity and image management. Organisations today address a 'knowing' audience, which demands authentic rather than instrumental communication.

(Aronczyk et al., 2017, p. 143)

According to Sherman and Perlman (2010), "[t]he objective of public relations is to establish the company's trustworthiness and brand distinctiveness." (pp. 8, 9) Therefore, the advantage for a company who uses an influencer, is that the influencer's reputation from their followers flows directly to the company's reputation as a result of target audience valuing the influencers opinion or trying to emulate their look. Carter (2016) supports this view claiming that:

The general narrative of influencer marketing is that consumers no longer pay attention to traditional advertising, so companies now look to experts and other influential individuals to promote products. These influencers generally have large social media followings and are assumed to be trusted voices that can reach large audiences.

(Carter, 2016, p. 2)

Sherman and Perlman (2010) interpret why influencers and bloggers have worked so well for PR campaigns. "The message that public relations delivers is subtle yet quite effective; we love to identify with successful people and celebrity stories that appear in the media, whether in newspapers, magazines, television, or the Internet."(p. 7) Sherman and Perlman (2010) note how if a celebrity is seen to be wearing a certain brand, they can inspire the general public to copy them. This same theory can be applied to the cosmetic industry when an influencer or blogger wears a make-up product from a cosmetics brand, it can generate interest from the company's target audience. According to Sherman and Perlman (2010), it is not just social media that can generate interest for a brand. "If a public relations executive manages through his or her connections in the community to arrange for a celebrity to wear the company's

product, the resultant media coverage can easily spur an overwhelmingly demand for the brand."(p. 19) However, it must be noted that Sherman and Perlman's work is dated from the year Instagram was implemented as a social media application. It could be argued that social media platforms like Instagram have just as much power to generate demand for a brand as traditional media coverage outlets.

2.6 The Beauty Myth and the Male Gaze

As Instagram is a visual medium that is used by public relation practitioners and cosmetic companies to generate brand awareness and to promote new products, it cannot be left unsaid the impact these cosmetic brands represent to their target audience, which is primarily young women, starting from the teenage years to late 20s. The images that many cosmetic companies use as content on their Instagram accounts adds to the narrative of socially constructed images that ultimately skew our perception and create unrealistic standards. Wolf (2002) has defined this as the beauty myth:

> The beauty myth, like many ideologies of femininity, mutates to meet new circumstances and checkmates women's attempts to increase their power... It is actually composed of emotional distance, politics, finance, and sexual repression. The beauty myth is not about women at all. It is about men's institutions and institutional power.

> (Wolf, 2002, p. 7, 13)

The right way of depicting such representation is, as described in Wolf's *The Beauty Myth* (1991), the "Iron Maiden". It is a strong metaphor as:

> The original Iron Maiden was a medieval German instrument of torture, a body-shaped casket painted with the limbs and features of a lovely, smiling young woman. The unlucky victim was slowly enclosed inside her; the led fell shut to immobilize the victim, who died either of starvation or, less cruelly, of the metal spikes embedded in her interior. The modern hallucination in which women are trapped or trap

themselves is similarly rigid, cruel and euphemistically painted. Contemporary culture directs attention to imagery of the Iron Maiden, while censoring real women's faces and bodies. (p. 17)

Wolf (2002) claims that generations of women have been subject to the beauty myth. Beauty trends have been dictating the standard of 'beauty' from Renaissance art when bigger women were considered 'beautiful' as they had more access to food and therefore were deemed wealthy, to modern day times with the hourglass figure such as Kim Kardashian, being the most idolised beauty standard. Wolf states that, "[s]ince the Industrial Revolution, middle-class women Western women have been controlled by ideals and stereotypes as much as by material constraints." (Wolf, 2002, p.15) One such example of unrealistic standards imposed on female beauty is aging. Wolf (2002) claims that it was a challenge to find an older woman's face in magazines during the 1990's and if it did appear, it had been airbrushed. Wolf's theory is as relevant today when looking at cosmetic companies and the age of the models who appear on Instagram campaigns, billboards and magazine advertisements. According to Wolf (2002),

Recent research consistently shows that inside the majority of the West's controlled, attractive, successful working women, there is a secret "underlife" poisoning our freedom; infused with notions of beauty, it is a dark vein of self-hatred, physical obsessions, terror of aging, and dread of lost control.

(Wolf, 2002, p. 10)

Wolf (2002) terms beauty akin to currency that is shaped by politics and "in the West it is the last, best belief system that keeps male dominance intact." (p. 12) She maintains that since women's 'beauty' is used as a kind of currency among men, the idea of beauty has developed along with ideas about money since the Industrial Revolution and therefore are "virtual parallels in our consumer economy." (Wolf, 2002, p. 20) This idea agrees with Papasolomou et al (2012) that social media enables companies like cosmetic brands to capitalise on the content that is posted. Mulvey (1971) shares a similar perspective to that of Wolf in that there is a sexual imbalance among active males and passive females. Mulvey (1971) coined this imbalance among the genders:

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The determining male gaze projects its phantasy on to the female figure...In their traditional exhibitionist role women are simultaneously looked at and displayed, with their appearance coded for strong visual and erotic impact so that they can be said to connote *to-be-looked-at-ness.*

(Mulvey, 1971, pp. 808, 809)

This research is in agreement with Wolf's theories as the cosmetics industry targets women's desire to be deemed as beautiful, and this is done through advertisements with models and public relation campaigns using Influencers on social media. Whether one is online or offline, there are images of 'beauty' everywhere which simulates a pressure for women to succumb to fit the idea of beauty. "The beauty myth tells a story: The quality called "beauty" objectively and universally exists. Women must want to embody it and men must want to possess women who embody it." (Wolf, 2002, p. 12)

The sources used in this literature review analysed and explored the themes of this dissertation, in order to address the research objectives as it why social media has been a success for the PR industry and why Instagram has been the most suitable social media platform for PR content. It also used a feminist lens to highlight the superficiality of the 'image machine' that Instagram is. All the authors are in agreement that Influencers and bloggers play an integral role in public relation campaigns on social media platforms like Instagram as they have a direct link to the company's target audience who they have built a relationship with and this reputation can be linked back to the company and generate brand awareness and create a buzz around its products. It could be argued from the author's theories that Instagram provides the ideal environment for public relations work of cosmetic companies. However, Wolf's perspective highlights the idea that cosmetic companies prey on women's desire to conform to society's idea of beauty and promote products on social media platforms like Instagram using Influencers to portray perfected images that encourage women to buy cosmetic products to achieve a similar look.

The following chapter will discuss the methodologies used in this research study.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Overview

This research study wants to find out why social media has been a success for the public relations industry and why Instagram is the chosen public relations tool for cosmetic companies when implementing their public relations campaign for launching new products and to promote brand identity to consumers. In order to investigate these research questions, it has been decided to avail of a mixed methods approach combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques, comprising of interviews, content analysis and a questionnaire.

3.2 Qualitative vs Quantitative

When analysing the difference between qualitative and quantitative research methods Berger (2000) breaks it down in the most simplified manner by looking at the origin of the words. The word *quality* is derived from the Latin word *qualitas* which translates to "of what kind" and the word *quantity* originates from the Latin word *quantitas* which can be decoded as either "how much" or "how many".

According to Berger (2000), quantitative research is often described as being too narrow as the sole focus is to count and measure other important matters involved often get overlooked, "the problem that quantitative researchers often face is that they count only certain things, not everything, and it may be the case that something that cannot be quantified is of great importance in one's research." (Berger, 2000, p.13)

On the other hand, qualitative research is criticised for over analysing texts. Berger (2000) adds that qualitative researchers are noted for "having opinions or making interpretations that seem odd, excessive, or even idiosyncratic." (Berger, 2000, p.13) Hitchcock and Newman (2011) view qualitative research as gathering valuable descriptions of data whereas quantitative research is not involved with the element of detail,

qualitative researchers tend to think they can better capture the individual's point of view via interview and observation, whereas many quantitative researchers view such techniques as unreliable and subjective.

(Hitchcock, Newman, 2011, p.382)

Hitchcock and Newman (2011) note that it has been implied that qualitative and quantitative research are not compatible. Walsh (2012) agrees and voices that there is a defined debate that exists between qualitative and quantitative research and that researchers involved assume superiority over the other, "the debate has been more about ideology and who is 'right' and who is 'wrong', based on a set of unquestioned beliefs and oversimplifications of the position of the 'other', rather than reasoned argument" (Walsh, 2012, p.10). Walsh continues this debate by stating that if researchers solely focus their efforts on using either only qualitative or quantitative methods, the potential for new research methods will fail to develop, "Indeed there is the danger that in defending our entrenched positions we will be blind not only to other positions, but to the opportunity of developing new, hybrid and innovative approaches to research" (Walsh, 2012, p.10). Bolden and Moscarola (2011), share a similar opinion to that of Walsh claiming that the distinction between qualitative and quantitative is dangerous to research as it limits the opportunity for new methods evolve and progress.

Hitchcock and Newman (2011) note that this debate between qualitative and quantitative research extends to the mixed methods approach. According to Hitchcock and Newman, the division between research methods can inhibit research and its findings,

Divisions between quantitative, qualitative, and mixed-methods approaches are arguably reified more by a need to label approaches than by true differences in purpose. Overemphasizing such differences can yield false notions such as qualitative studies cannot yield causal conclusions, quantitative work eschews exploratory analyses, triangulation is a qualitative technique, qualitative research does not use statistics, and so on.

(Hitchcock, Newman, 2011, p.393)

3.3 A Mixed Methods Approach

A mixed methods approach, also known as merged methods, is when both qualitative and quantitative research techniques are used in researching, "Mixed methods research, which is described as combining qualitative and quantitative approaches to gain a richer and deeper understanding of a problem, has become increasingly popular" (Nooraie, 2018, p.1). According to Nooraie (2018) the combination of qualitative and quantitative research originates from works of scientists and dates back to Aristotle.

A mixed methods approach was chosen for this research project as from availing of different research techniques, gaining a more balanced understanding of the subject matter researched as Nooraie claims that, "The integration of quantitative and qualitative findings helped the researchers to cross-reference the results and produce richer conclusions" (Nooraie, 2018, p.10). The combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods gives the researcher a complete picture of the topic they are analysing and will enhance the efforts of the research. Bolden and Moscarola state that, "a combination of methods on the same data set will undoubtedly be more productive (and less biased) than application of a single method." (Bolden, Moscarola, 2000, p. 451)

Walsh (2012) supports Bolden and Moscarola's claim in that one method can limit the research to one point of view,

> Research is about knowing, understanding and exploring the world in which we find ourselves. There is no one privileged way of doing this. The approaches we currently possess are but windows that frame our view of this world but also limit what we can see. We should not think that our window is the only one, or indeed, our view the best

(Walsh, 2012, p.10)

Nooraie (2018) shares a similar opinion to Walsh, claiming that words and numbers work simultaneously when it comes to research,

> Defining quantitative research as a deductive approach using numbers, and qualitative research as an inductive approach using words misses the complexity of the relationship between numbers and words. Quality and quantity are inseparable attributes of any phenomenon

> (Nooraie, 2018, p.3)

Nooraie (2018) suggests that the most common form of mixed methods is when qualitative and quantitative data are applied together to explain and explore results while being completely distinguishable from each other. Nooraie states that qualitative and quantitative research findings can be converted, "qualitative and quantitative data are transformable. Meaning, such as that in constructs and assumptions, can lead to numbers. Conversely, numbers can be transformed to meanings when researchers interpret and verbalize quantitative findings" (Nooraie, 2018, p.3)

3.4 Interviews

Interviews are used by researchers as they supply information that cannot be retrieved in other ways. Berger (2000) maintains that interviews, "are unique in allowing researchers to get inside the minds of people and to gain access to material of considerable importance." (Berger, 2000, p.125)

According to Berger (2000), four different types of interviews can be identified: informal interviews, unstructured interviews, semi-structured interviews and structured interviews.

Informal interviews are acknowledged as conversations between the researcher and the informant, the interviewer to obtain the required information from the interviewee and for them to get to know each other.

Unstructured interviews involve the researcher gaining information from the informant but exert little control over the informant's answers.

In semi-structured interviews, the researcher has a prepared list of questions to ask while maintaining a casual tone throughout the interview. This type of interview gives the opportunity to ask follow-up questions, depending on how the interviewee responds to the questions asked and if it would benefit the interviewer's research to ask additional questions.

> They are conducted using an interview questionnaire or schedule comprised of predetermined or scheduled primary questions or question stems, followed by sub questions or "probes." It is important that these questions are open-ended and formulated to elicit unstructured responses and generate discussion.
>
> (McIntosh, Morse, 2015, p.4)

According to McIntosh and Morse (2015), semi-structured interviews has seen an increase in its application across a multitude of discipline since the 1990's when it commenced its development from primarily being a research strategy to an independent research method.

In structured interviews, an interview schedule is compiled by the researcher. The interview schedule may include what follow-up questions to ask if questions are replied to in a specific way. An example of a structured interview would be a self-administered questionnaire.

In this research, I was using semi-structured interviews in a face-to-face setting. According to McIntosh and Morse (2015) an advantage of face-to-face interviews is that both verbal and non-verbal communication is present, "The presence of the interviewer gives structure to the interview situation. Communication is optimized because both verbal and non-verbal communication is possible." (McIntosh, Morse, 2015, p.7) Moreover, face-to-face interviews allow for the interviewee to give more elaborate responses. I had prepared a list of questions and follow-up questions to be asked and by using this type of interview I could give myself the opportunity for potential questions not included on the list, in case I wanted to uncover more information about something in particular the interviewee said. McIntosh and Morse hold the

opinion on unscheduled follow-up questions to be beneficial for researchers, "Unscheduled prompts are improvisational, and some researchers find that respondents more fully express their perspectives in response to the unscheduled prompts." (McIntosh, Morse, 2015, p.5)

3.5 Surveys

Wiseman and Aron (1970), define the research method of surveys as,

> Survey research is a method for collecting and analyzing social data via highly structured and often very detailed interviews or questionnaires in order to obtain information from large numbers of respondents presumed to be representative of a specific population.

> (Berger, 2000, p. 188)

Berger (2000) shares a similar opinion about surveys, "Surveying is a research method that we use to get information about certain groups of people who are representative of some larger group of people of interest to us." (Berger, 2000, p. 187) Berger (2000) states that surveys are commonly used by companies to find out how people feel about the products they produce, and it is presumed that the collected information is valid for the general population.

There are two types of surveys, descriptive and analytic or explanatory. Descriptive surveys focus on present-day behaviour of the population being researched. Whereas, the analytic survey aims to find out the reason why people act the way they do. Berger's view on analytic surveys is that they, "attempt to determine whether there are casual relationships between certain kinds of behavior and various social and demographic characteristics of people." (Berger, 2000, pp. 188,189)

Surveys typically collect data through two methods, interviews either in an individual or group setting; face to face or on the phone and self-administered questionnaires, either one on one or in a group environment. The self-administered questionnaire can be supervised or unsupervised, for example if it is delivered by e-mail or disseminated online.

A self-administered unsupervised questionnaire will be distributed online using the platform SurveyMonkey. The questionnaire has been devised and targets cosmetic consumers. This survey seeks to find out if consumers believe that Instagram is an adequate environment for PR content and if cosmetic consumers buying behaviours are affected by cosmetic companies' public relations campaigns on Instagram and the involvement of Influencers.

The quantitative method of surveys has been chosen to be used as part of this research project as means to find out relevant information about Instagram as a public relations tool. In order for this research to be as relevant and up-to-date as possible, it has been concluded that a survey in the form of a self-administered questionnaire will help this to be achieved. Berger (2000) maintains that surveys can retrieve current information and that "surveys and questionnaires remain two of the most widely used means of obtaining reliable quantifiable data by researchers." (Berger, 2000, p.206) McIntosh and Morse (2015) express that self-administered questionnaires using the Internet are a cost-effective method of collecting large numbers of research data.

3.6 Questionnaire

The questionnaire can be defined as a type of survey containing a series of questions which is typically used for collecting information and are self-administered. According to Slattery (2011), the questionnaire can be used to gather information that is worth researching through various means including face-to-face, through the Internet or paper-based through the post, "The questions contain specific concepts of interest or items deemed worthy of investigation and can be disseminated in a variety of ways, including mail, Internet, or even read to participants." (Slattery, 2011, p. 832) Yongpi Gu (2016) notes that questionnaires are a perceptive source of information,

The data we get from questionnaire research can be especially insightful and satisfying when patterns emerge from a large number of respondents, when apparent differences or similarities are found among groups, or when relationships are ascertained among variables.

(Yongqi Gu, 2016, p. 567)

Rada and Domínguez-Álvarez (2014) claim that the Survey Satisficing by Krosnick (1991, 1999), which was based on the work of Tourangeau (1984) on the cognitive process that takes place when answering a questionnaire, is a major point of reference when it comes to the quality of answers to questionnaires. According to Krosnick (1991), participating in a survey or questionnaire involves cognitive effort and as a result the participant goes through four stages,

> answering a survey requires a significant cognitive effort, to the extent that, in each question, the interviewee must pass through four stages: (1) interpreting the meaning of each question, (2) searching and retrieving all the information saved in their memory, (3) integrating the information into an opinion or judgment, and (4) expressing this opinion appropriately.

> (Rada, Domínguez-Álvarez, 2014, p.257)

Slattery (2011) notes the different types of question constructions typically found in questionnaires, namely open and closed questions. Closed questions can be multiple choice or simply yes or no. Slattery (2011) claims that the use of closed questions aids in the easiness of scoring and comparing results of questionnaires however, a noted disadvantage is that, "potential answers may not be included, and they decrease the breadth of response and can take an unnatural form." (Slattery, 2011, pp. 832,833) On the other hand, Slattery (2011) claims that open questions give participants the opportunity to write responses that are more accurate and individual but note that like closed questions they too come with a disadvantage, "Researchers can often gauge importance of a certain issue better, but scoring and comparison become very challenging." (Slattery, 2011, pp. 832,833)

Rada and Domínguez-Álvarez (2014) claim that when surveys were first carried out, questionnaires were conducted as face-to-face interviews up until the 1980s. Rada and Domínguez-Álvarez (2014) note that in person interviews saw a reduction in use as a result of technology advancement and telephone interviews were the preferred method up until the end of the 20th century. Today, the most common means of conducting a questionnaire is through

the Internet. Wilson and Dewaele quote Dörnyei (2007) that "with the growing use of the internet it was inevitable that researchers would start collecting data by means of web-based questionnaires." (Wilson, Dewaele, 2010, pp. 103, 104)

The self-administered web-based questionnaire is the chosen method for this research for numerous reasons including it being an economical method for the researcher and the ease of gathering and analysing the data collected. Many scholars have noted the benefits of a web-based questionnaire as a research method in comparison to the traditional paper-based means as Denscombe states,

> The potential advantages of using the Internet for the delivery of questionnaires have been documented fairly comprehensively (e.g., Dillman, 2000). Relative to their paper-based equivalents, web-based questionnaires are inexpensive and fast and can cover wide geographical areas. They are, therefore, an attractive proposition for researchers.

> (Denscombe, 2006, p. 246)

Wilson and Deawaele (2010) share a similar point of view as Denscombe as they argue that,

> setting up a web-based project is not more expensive than traditional research and the running costs are lower. Once the project is on the web page the administration is self-running; the harvest of data is automatic and can be imported into spreadsheet software.

> (Wilson, Dewaele, 2010, p. 104)

Another advantage of web-based questionnaires is the link noted between anonymity and honesty in the respondents. Wilson and Dewaele quote that "Dörnyei also feels that the perception that web-based research is truly anonymous enhances the level of honesty." (Wilson, Dewaele, 2010, p. 104) Wilson and Dewaele note their perspective that web-based participant's answers are more well-rounded compared to traditional ones, "anonymous

internet responses tended to be 'clearer and more complete' than those in traditional samples." (Wilson, Dewaele, 2010, p. 109) Rada and Domínguez-Álvarez (2014) agree with Wilson and Dewaele (2010) as they claim that the distance between the researcher and the participant in the questionnaire gives the opportunity for less socially desirable answers and therefore more honest replies are given, "In the self-administered questionnaire, there is a large social distance between the researcher and the person being interviewed that fosters the respondent's honesty, thus reducing the number of ''socially desirable'' answers." (Rada, Domínguez-Álvarez, 2014, p. 258)

Wilson and Dewaele (2010) quote that according to Dörnyei (2007) that there are two main problems involved with Internet based research which are "participant self-selection and increased heterogeneity in the sample." (Wilson, Dewaele, 2010, p. 104) Rada and Domínguez-Álvarez (2014) argue that the distance between the researcher and the participant in a web-based environment is a disadvantage which results in the participant choosing first-option responses and affirmative answers,

> These respondents would also show how a greater number of don't know answers,
> lower differentiation in the use of scales, and a greater choice of easy answers
> (strong satisficing). In short, the satisficing theory has important implications for the
> issue at stake in this article, to the extent that the mode in which the questionnaire
> is administered may result in substantial differences in the quality of the responses.
>
> (Rada, Domínguez-Álvarez, 2014, p. 258)

Despite the arguments comparing web-based questionnaires and paper-based questionnaires, Denscombe (2006) states that there is little research conducted that proves which mode is the more beneficial option, "There is, indeed, relatively little research available that has attempted to address the question of whether the mode of delivery of the questionnaire—web based or paper based—might have a bearing on the type of information provided by respondents." (Denscombe, 2006, p. 247) Denscombe (2006) claims that the data produced by web-based questionnaires is comparable to the data collected from paper-based questionnaires. Wilson

and Dewaele quote Gosling et al. (2004) regarding the debate between traditional and contemporary modes of questionnaire delivery,

> commonly held preconceptions against internet samples are unfounded: web-questionnaire results generalize across presentation formats, do not appear to be tainted by false data or repeat responders, and are, so far, consistent with results from traditional methods. In short, the data collected through internet methods are not as flawed as is commonly believed.

(Wilson, Dewaele, 2010, p. 108)

To conclude, Wilson and Dewaele (2010) claim that a significant factor that affects the quality of responses in a questionnaire is the enjoyment of the participant in filling out their answers, "Individuals who enjoyed completing surveys showed a different response pattern from others, in particular with fewer non-responses to open-ended questions." (Wilson, Dewaele, 2010, p. 109) Slattery adds that the success and results of a questionnaire depends on the variety of respondents, "Interpretability and conclusions of results from a survey will strongly rely on who responds. The more representative a group of subjects is of a given population, the stronger and more applicable the findings will be." (Slattery, 2011, p. 833)

3.7 Content Analysis

According to Berger (2000), content analysis is a common method of research in media and communication studies, "content analysis is one of the most commonly used research methodologies by scholars dealing with media and communication. This is because it can measure human behavior, assuming, that is, that verbal behavior is a form of human behavior." (Berger, 2000, p. 173)

This research project has chosen to include content analysis as a research method as MacNamara (2015) claims that research studies have proven the effect that mass media has on the public, "many research studies show that mass media have significant impact and effects on public awareness, perceptions and sometimes behaviour such as buying decisions and voting."

(MacNamara, 2015, p. 18) MacNamara (2015) adds to this perspective that content analysis can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of a company's communication regarding audience reach, the messages disseminated and comparing against competitors.

> CEOs, marketers, advertisers and PR professionals know that mass media are important influences affecting brands, reputation, corporate image and the success of marketing and communication campaigns. It is because of this influence that mass media are used for advertising products and services.
>
> (MacNamara, 2015, p. 18)

Many definitions of content analysis have been devised by scholars. Berger (2000) quotes Charles R. Wright (1986) definition,

> Content analysis is a research technique for the systematic classification and description of communication content according to certain usually predetermined categories. It may involve quantitative or qualitative analysis, or both...It is important to remember, however, that content analysis itself provides no direct data about the nature of the communicator, audience, or effects.
>
> (Berger, 2000, p. 173)

On the other hand, George V. Zito (1975) definition is that,

> Content analysis may be defined as a methodology by which the researcher seeks to determine the manifest content of written, spoken, or published communication by *systematic*, *objective*, and *quantitative* analysis...the *intention of the communicator* may be the object of our research. Or we may be interested in the audience or *receiver* of the communication, and may attempt to determine something about it.
>
> (Berger, 2000, p. 174)

MacNamara notes that Lasswell's (1948) statement condenses the essence of content analysis,

"Who says what

through which channel

to whom

with what effect" (MacNamara, 2015, p. 2).

MacNamara highlights Neuman (1997) interpretation of content analysis as a non-reactive

research methodology,

> A technique for gathering and analysing the content of text. The 'content' refers to
> words, meanings, pictures, symbols, ideas, themes, or any message that can be
> communicated. The 'text' is anything written, visual, or spoken that serves as a
> medium for communication.

(MacNamara, 2015, p. 2)

MacNamara (2015) maintains that content analysis first came about as a research method to

study mass media, specifically propaganda, by Harold Lasswell (1927). According to MacNamara

(2015), in the 1920s and 1930s it was used to study the communication content of films and

since then, "has been the fastest-growing technique over the past 20 years or so" (MacNamara,

2015, p. 1)

Berger (2000) states that what could entice researchers to use content analysis as a research

method is its affordability compared to other research methods. MacNamara (2015) notes how

it is a non-intrusive method that researchers can use to investigate data over long periods to

establish popular discourses and their possible meanings and how often they can be applied is

beneficial to the researcher, "Another benefit of content analysis is that it can be conducted

frequently (e.g. every month), whereas audience research such as large-scale surveys are,

because of their cost and time taken, restricted to once per year or every few years."

(MacNamara, 2015, p. 6)

Berger (2000) claims that the reasoning behind the use of content analysis as a research method is that one might have a hypothesis about a specific topic and there is an interest to find out if the hypothesis is correct. MacNamara quotes Berelson (1952) suggestion that content analysis holds five main purposes,

> To describe substance characteristics of message content; To describe form characteristics of message content; To make inferences to producers of content; To make inferences to audiences of content; To predict the effects of content on audiences.

> (MacNamara, 2015, p. 3)

Content analysis can be broken down into quantitative and qualitative. MacNamara (2015) quotes Neuendorf's argument that content analysis is defined as only quantitative research, "Content analysis is a summarizing, quantitative analysis of messages that relies on the scientific method … and is not limited as to the types of variables that may be measured or the context in which the messages are created or presented". (MacNamara, 2015, p. 2)

However, according to MacNamara (2015), Shoemaker and Reese (1996) do not agree with Neuendorf's rigid definition of content analysis as solely quantitative research. Shoemaker and Reese classify content analysis into the behaviourist and humanist traditions. The behaviourist approach involves the possible effects of the content while the humanist approach deals with how the content can be interpreted as a reflection of society and culture,

> The behaviourist approach to content analysis is primarily concerned with the effects that content produces and this approach is the one pursued by social scientists. Whereas the behaviourist approach looks forwards from media content to try to identify future effects, the humanist approach looks backwards from media content to try to identify what it says about society and the culture producing it

> (MacNamara, 2015, p. 3)

MacNamara adds that Newbold et al. (2002) also argues for the inclusion of qualitative research in content analysis as the quantitative method does not have the capability the context when a text becomes relevant. According to Newbold et al. (2002), qualitative content analysis is significant when it comes to the audience of the text,

> Proponents of qualitative text analysis point out factors that have a major bearing on audience interpretation and likely effects, include...Audience characteristics such as age, sex, race, ethnicity, education levels and socioeconomic position which will all affect 'readings' of media content.

> (MacNamara, 2015, p. 5)

MacNamara (2015) voices a similar perspective regarding qualitative content analysis stating that it acknowledges the connection between the text and the possible meaning interpreted by the audience,

> recognizing that media texts are polysemic – i.e. open to multiple different meanings to different readers – and tries to determine the likely meaning of texts to audiences. It pays attention to audience, media and contextual factors – not simply the text.

> (MacNamara, 2015, p. 5)

MacNamara (2015) concludes that both quantitative and qualitative research is significant for content analysis and therefore this method will be applied in this research project,

> In summary, quantitative content analysis can conform to the scientific method and produce reliable findings. Qualitative content analysis is difficult and maybe impossible to do with scientific reliability. But qualitative analysis of texts is necessary to understand their deeper meanings and likely interpretations by

audiences – surely the ultimate goal of analysing media content. So a combination of the two seems to be the ideal approach.

<div align="right">(MacNamara, 2015, p. 5)</div>

To conclude, this chapter has examined the qualitative and quantitative methods used as part of this study and discussed why these methodologies are suitable for this research and to enable the research questions of why social media has been a success for the PR industry and what makes Instagram the most suitable application for PR content, in the case of cosmetic companies. The following chapter will look at the research analysis and findings.

Chapter Four

Research Findings and Analysis

4.1 Overview

Following on from what was discussed in chapter three, this chapter discusses the results of the quantitative and qualitative data analyses. To restate my research questions;

- Why has social media been a success for the public relations industry?
- Why is Instagram the chosen social media application for PR content for cosmetic companies?

The research methods used were:

- Questionnaires: In total, 200 respondents participated in the questionnaire. The results from the questionnaire are expressed in bar and pie charts with a discussion following.
- Interviews: Two interviewees participated in separate interviews.
- Content analysis of three Irish cosmetic Instagram accounts were analysed.

4.2 - Quantitative Data Research and Analysis

An online survey was set up on SurveyMonkey for the purpose of this dissertation. The method of distribution was explained in detail in chapter three. A mixture of open and closed questions were created for this questionnaire as Slattery (2011) made recommendations to the advantages of using both question types. Denscombe (2006) and Wilson and Deawaele (2010) shared similar opinions of the benefits for the researcher in using web-based questionnaire noting that they are inexpensive to run, and the collection of data is automatic.

SECTION A: Demographic Data

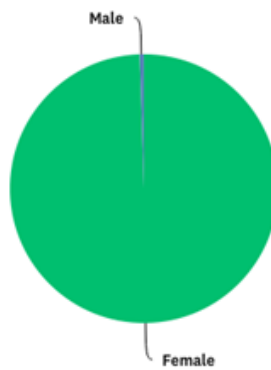**Figure 1 – Gender**
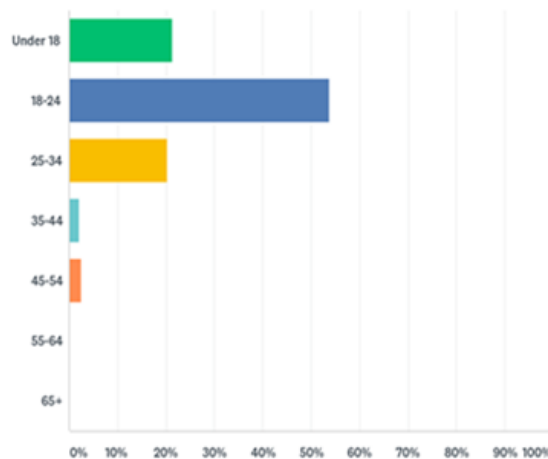
Figure 1

Q1 What is your gender?

Figure 2 – Age

Q2 What age category do you belong to?

From figure one above, it can be seen that 99.5% of the respondents were female and 0.5% of the respondents were male. The results in figure two show respondents at 53.81% are in the 18-24 category. Followed by 21.32% of respondents in the under 18 category and 20.30% of respondents in the 25-34 category. Therefore, this shows that the majority of the respondents are female aged between 18-24. These results support the theory that Mackson et al (2019) and Alhabash and Ma (2017) put forward that the largest group of Instagram users are young adults between 18-29 years old.

SECTION B: Social Media

Figure 3

Q3 Do you use the social media application Instagram?
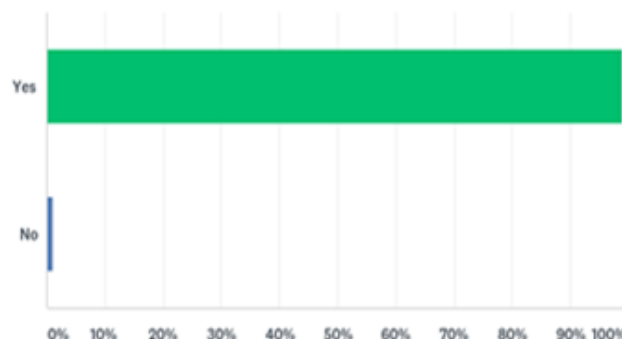
This question was created in order to find out if the respondents use the social media application Instagram. The majority of the respondents answered Yes (98.99%) that they use Instagram with respondents answered No (1.01%) to using the social media application. This result supports the claim by Mackson et al (2019) that Instagram has become prevalent among social media users with over one billion active users according to research conducted as of June 2018.
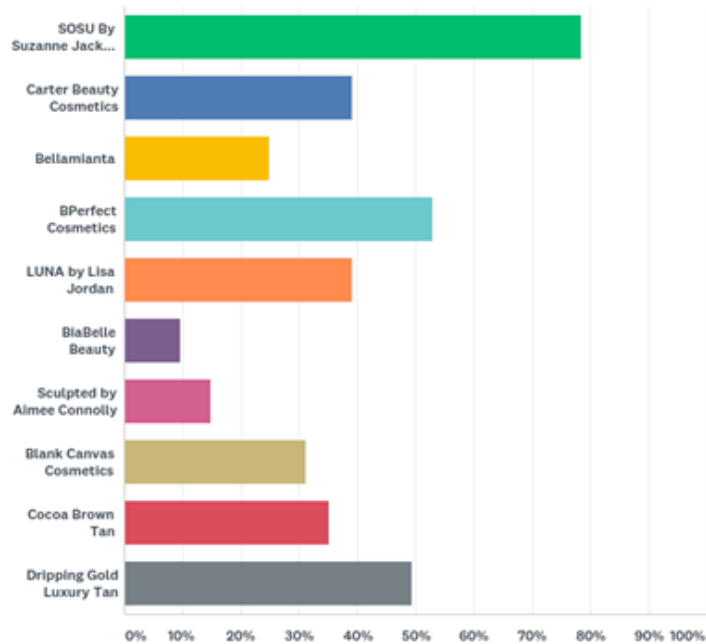
Figure 4

Q4 Do you follow cosmetic companies accounts on Instagram?

This question was devised in order to find out the popularity of following cosmetic companies accounts on Instagram among users and to provide an insight into answering research question one of this study, "Why is Instagram a chosen PR tool for cosmetic companies?" From the above figure, 86% of respondents answered Yes to following cosmetic companies accounts on the social media application Instagram while 14% of respondents answered No. This result supports the claim made by Abidin (2016) that among avid mobile phone users, Instagram is the fastest growing social media application. Therefore, it could be argued that Instagram has been chosen as a PR content environment based on its prevalence.

Figure 5

Q5 Which of the following Irish cosmetic companies do you follow on Instagram

This question was created in order to gain further detail regarding what Irish cosmetic companies have generated the most awareness from posting PR content on Instagram. Figure five shows the follow up question to the previous question illustrated in figure 4. This question asked which Irish cosmetic accounts that the respondents follow on Instagram, SOSU By Suzanne Jackson (78.41%), BPerfect Cosmetics (52.84%), Dripping Gold Luxury Tan (49.43%), Carter Beauty Cosmetics (39.20%), LUNA by Lisa Jordan (39.20%), Cocoa Brown Tan (35.23%), Blank Canvas Cosmetics (31.25%), Bellamianta (25%), Sculpted by Aimee Connolly (14.77%) and BiaBelle Beauty (9.66%). These results demonstrate that the most followed Irish cosmetic accounts on Instagram are SOSU By Suzanne Jackson of female respondents in the 18-24 age category followed by BPerfect Cosmetics and Dripping Gold Luxury Tan. As Yongqi Gu (2016) suggested that research from questionnaires can be insightful and this has been the case for

this research study. The results of this question observe which Irish cosmetic companies are the most popular to follow on Instagram.

Figure 6

Q6 How do you receive information about a cosmetic company launching a new product?
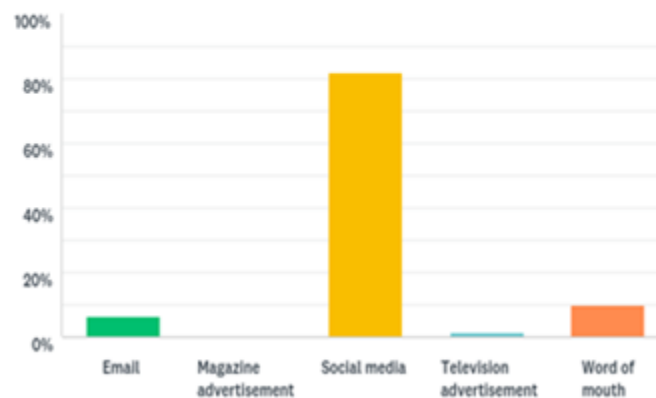
This question was produced in order to answer research question one of this study. The majority of the respondents (81.91%) receive information about a cosmetic company launching a new product through social media, followed by word-of-mouth (10.05%), email (6.53%), television advertisement (1.51%), while magazine advertisement received 0% among the respondents. This indicates that social media is the most common way respondents receive information about a product launch and therefore it could be concluded that social media is the preferred method of cosmetic companies to communicate product launches to their target audience. This result supports the statements of the authors in chapter three such as Scott (2015) and Breakenridge and Solis (2009) that social media has advanced the way PR works today as this communication method disseminates information faster than traditional methods.

Figure 7

Q7 Which method do you think is most effective to launch a new product?

Word mouth Online email advertising Instagram event
Social media Social influencers Facebook

Mentions

Social media
Instagram
Influencers
Email
Facebook
Advertising
Events
Word of mouth
Online
Social

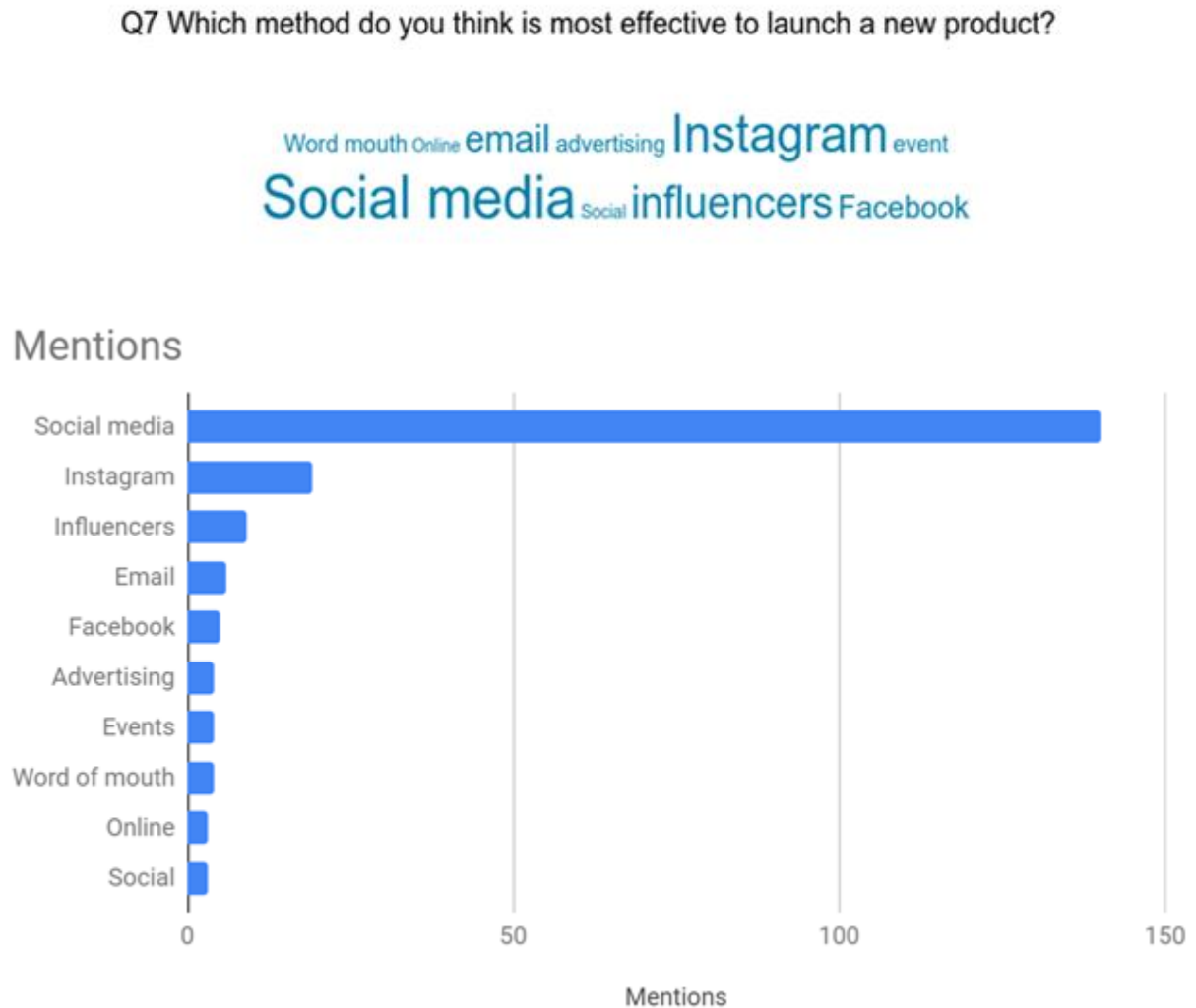0   50   100   150

Mentions

Figure 7 shows the open-ended question which asked respondents to write which method from

the previous question they think is the most effective to launch a new product. This question

was created with the purpose of answering the research question one of this dissertation, which is "Why is Instagram a chosen PR tool for cosmetic companies?"

From the data a word cloud of the responses and a common theme was observed. Social media (72.54%) being the most common answer among the respondents. This was followed by Instagram (9.84%), influencers (4.66%), email (3.11%), Facebook (2.59%), advertising (2.07%), events (2.07%), word mouth (2.07%), online (1.55%) and social (1.55%). This indicates that social media is believed by a majority to be the most effective method for launching a new product for a cosmetics company which illustrates the claims put forward by the authors in chapter two. This result supports the argument of Scott (2015) that smart companies use the Internet for PR to their advantage by allowing them to directly communicate with consumers.

Table 1 – Comments from Question 7

Comments
"Social media like Facebook or Instagram"
"Social media (Instagram)"
"Events to show the new products"
"Social media influencers"
"Social media or a giveaway"
"Have influencers promote it"
"Instagram stories"
"Video reveal of the products"
"Through 'influencers' on social media"
"Social media and word of mouth"
"Launch party"
"Use of product by bloggers/ social media launches
"Social media announcement"
"Social media, emails after an event"
"Social media campaigns"
"Social media or collaborations with influencers"

| |
|---|
| "Launch party discount code" |
| "Through social media via influencers" |
| "Social media and reviews" |
| "Social media and PR events" |
| "Sponsorship deals with make-up artists" |

The comments from Table one confirms the claims made by Aronczyk et al., (2017), Fitch (2017) Scott (2015) and Sherman and Perlman (2010) who support the idea that social media has played a crucial role in making public relations 'public' and the use of Influencers in PR campaigns has proven to be significantly beneficial for both a brand's awareness and sales.

The majority of the comments involve visual media that are easily accessible and free. The most popular social media, such as Instagram, is free to download and use, whereas traditional media like magazines and newspapers require a purchase to be made.

Even though the public know that Influencers are often paid to appear in a brand campaign or post sponsored content, the public like the environment that has been created on social media that informs them of new products that will be launched. As Ghidotti (2017) claims that Influencer marketing returns 11 times greater return on investment in comparison to traditional advertising methods.
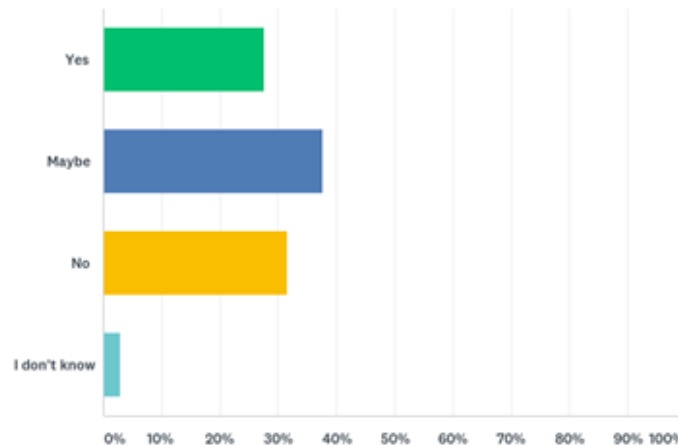
Figure 8

Q8 Many cosmetic companies use Influencer to launch new products and campaigns. Do you trust the opinion of an Influencer who is affiliated with a cosmetics brand?
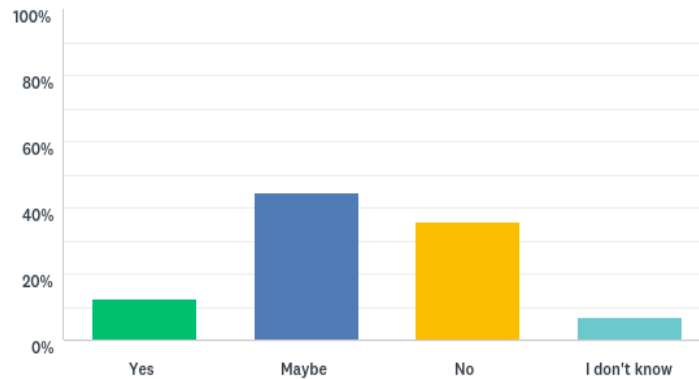
Regarding how trustworthy an Influencer who is affiliated with a cosmetics brand is, figure 8 indicates that the majority identifies to Maybe (44.5%) trusting the opinion of an influencer who is affiliated with a cosmetics brand followed by not trusting the influencer's opinion (36%), (12.5%) of respondents would trust the opinion of an influencer and (7%) did not know if they did. This finding disagrees with Carter's (2016) claim that influencers are 'trusted voices'. The result of this question could suggest that there could be an ongoing shift in how Influencers are being perceived by Instagram users. As Carter (2016) noted a report carried out by Augure in 2015 that 84% of brands had the intention of running Influencers campaigns in that same year. It could be argued that the Influencer market could be affecting a brand's reputation if the public are not viewing their 'influence' as trustworthy.
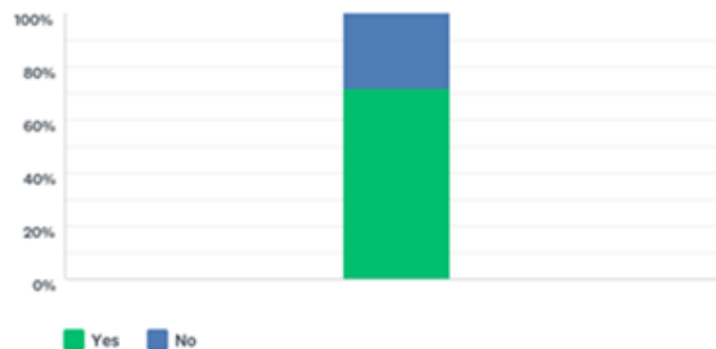
Figure 9

Q9 Would you purchase a cosmetic product based on the influencer involved in the brand campaign?

The majority of the respondents (37.69%), as shown in the figure above identify that they might buy a cosmetic product based on the Influencer involved in the brand campaign, followed by (31.66%) that would not purchase a cosmetic product based on the influencer involved in the brand campaign (27.64%) answered Yes that they would buy a cosmetic product based on the influencer in a brand campaign and (3.02%) did not know. This result implies that Influencers who work with brands for PR content have a purchasing influence on social media users which supports the claims of Sherman and Perlman (2010) that the public like to identify with successful people and Carter (2016) that it is assumed that Influencers' opinions can be trusted. However, it must be noted that 'No' received more responses than 'Yes' which disagrees with Ghidotti (2017) statement that Influencer marketing generates 11 times greater return on investment than traditional methods.

Figure 10

Q10 Have you ever purchased a cosmetic product recommended by an Influencer from content posted on Instagram?

Finally, figure 10 was a follow up question to the previous one. This question has been asked in order to answer the research question two of this dissertation, which is "Why has Instagram been the chosen social media application for PR content for cosmetic companies?" The data from figure 10 shows that 72% of the respondents have previously purchased a cosmetic product recommended by an Influencer from content posted on Instagram, while 28% have never done so. This result supports the claim by Ghidotti (2017) that Influencer marketing is financially beneficial for a company and reveals that the combination of posting PR content on Instagram and working with Influencers has a positive effect on generating sales for a cosmetic company.

When analysing the data retrieved from figure 9 and figure 10, there seems to be a conflict of information. In figure 10, 72% of respondents identified that they had previously purchased a cosmetic product recommended by an Influencer from content posted on Instagram. However, in figure 9, 31.66% of respondents identified that they would not buy a cosmetic product based on the influencer involved with a brand's campaign compared to 27.64% who answered Yes, that they would buy a cosmetic product based on the influencer who is affiliated to a brand's campaign.

4.3 Qualitative Data Research and Analysis

The two interviewees who participated in separate interviews as part of this research study are Careen Farrell who works for Burrell PR based in Dublin and Alex Crofton who works for The Publicity Loft located in Dublin. These agencies deal with consumer PR and this is one of the reasons why I interviewed PR executives from these two agencies. Both interviewees were asked eight questions that further answers the research questions of "Why has Instagram been the chosen social media application for PR content for cosmetic companies?" and "What features does Instagram provide for PR content?"

The first question that was asked to Crofton and Farrell, "Do you think social media has advanced the PR industry for the better?" to observe if they would be in agreement or have different opinions to those of the authors discussed in chapter three such as Archer (2016) Breakenridge and Solis (2009) and Scott (2015) who believe that social media has made a substantial impact to the PR industry of today.

Farrell articulated that social media has expanded PR's reach, "*Yeah I think so definitely. It can reach such a wider audience. I think before when it was just magazine and paper it was limited to the kind of audience you could reach. I think with social media you can target your market better. Say beforehand if you were advertising a product like on Stellar magazine, Stellar magazine has women between 20 and 40 reading it, whereas if you're using Instagram, you can target a certain audience, you can filter it down more.*"

Solis (2009) agrees with Farrell that PR has advanced from 'broadcast marketing and generic messaging' to specifying the audience one wants to reach and social media applications like Instagram has given this opportunity to companies to do so. Scott (2015) theory that PR had previously solely relied on the media supports Farrell's opinion. Farrell states that Instagram enables PR content to be more precise to the brand's target audience. As Archer and Harrigan (2016) stated that organisations use the combination of Instagram and Influencers to connect with consumers it could be suggested that this is a reason why cosmetic companies use Instagram as a PR tool as there is a direct link to the consumer.

Crofton voices a similar sentiment while also addressing the negative side of social media, *"Yes and No. Yes in terms of brand awareness as brands are using social media as their main*

communicative channel and has removed barriers that once existed between brands and their consumers however also leaves the door open for negative messaging to be articulated. Consumers spend so much time on social media and people's thoughts, perceptions and actions are influenced by what they see which makes it evident that social media is a tool that can be utilized in an extremely positive or negative way if it is controlled properly."

Archer (2016) agrees with Crofton when it comes to social media has enabled 'true dialogue' between organisations and the public. Therefore, it could be argued that social media applications like Instagram allow companies to be more transparent with their target audience and develop brand awareness on a deeper scale through various visual methods that feature on Instagram such as posting images, videos, Instagram stories and Instagram TV. However, Crofton also discusses the negative impact that social media can have on society's perspectives and this is applicable to the case of cosmetic companies who have influential power with the type of images they post on social media applications like Instagram. Given the results from the questionnaire that the majority of respondents who use Instagram are females in the 18-24 age bracket, cosmetic companies have an effect on how young females perceive themselves.

Follow-up question for Farrell, "Is it easier to measure the success of PR through social media than traditional media?

"Yeah definitely especially with your swipe up to links and your engagement you can judge if that product has sold well whereas beforehand if it was just in a paper or magazine you wouldn't be able to tell what had sold from that being in the magazine."

This question was created in order to find out if the hypothesis that Instagram is the preferred social media platform for PR content especially for cosmetic companies. "In your opinion, which social media application is the most suitable for PR content?

Farrell stated that *"Yeah definitely Instagram, I think everyone is going to say that. It's just brilliant, it can just reach such a wide audience. I think even now they have such different features on it that work so well. They seem to be updating it all the time and they have new features that just work like Instagram stories and Instagram videos and TV are working so well*

lately. They seem to update it to what people want the whole time so it's never staying the same."

Crofton agrees with Farrell that Instagram's features have made it suitable for PR content, *"Instagram. Instagram allows for static posts that will be on the feed forever, videos, live takeovers and in recent years has totally out run any other platform such as Snapchat, Twitter and Facebook. Snapchat is classified as a 'dead' platform as it seemed to lose its popularity almost overnight. Obviously, every campaign has different requirements/target markets to reach and a different end result but in terms of popularity Instagram would always be a key part of any contractual agreement for PR content."*

Both Crofton and Farrell give an insight into why Instagram is the preferred social media application for PR content by stating the reasons as to how it has been more successful than other applications as it has incorporated various visual elements such as Instagram stories, videos and Instagram TV. Carah and Shaul (2016) support Crofton's opinion that Instagram as an 'image machine' allows for visual content that is almost never ending.

From the questionnaire, it was concluded that the majority of respondents (98.99%) use the social media application Instagram. This finding brought up the question of "Why do you think Instagram has been singled out as the most popular social media application for PR purposes?" in order to answer the research question, "Why has Instagram been the chosen social media application for PR content for cosmetic companies?"

Farrell articulates her view, *"I think the shop directly feature, I think that definitely works, you're able to shop directly if you see something you like there it is there and then, you don't even have to think about it."*

Scott (2015) is in agreement with Farrell as he claims that nowadays PR that works well aims to reach the consumer directly and social media has enabled direct access to information about products and inevitably this has lead to features like direct to shop link.

Crofton stated that *"People of all demographics use Instagram as their main social media platform. Twitter is seen as a customer service platform that people turn to for getting answers*

rather than actually sharing content. Snapchat surged in popularity with influencers for a while however has been totally left behind in the PR world with very little to no PR activity. Facebook would be replicated with the same content that is used on Instagram as there is a certain older demographic that still use it."

Crofton takes a different approach to Farrell, giving an insight as to why other social media applications have not has the same success as Instagram as a PR tool. It could be suggested that Instagram is used as a PR tool for cosmetic companies as it is attracts a wide range of consumers that can be targeted through various visual elements as Sherman and Perlman (2010) refers to as creating a 'buzz' through Influencers.

This question was created in order to answer the research question of 'What makes Instagram the chosen social media application for PR content?"

"What features does Instagram contain that makes it suitable for PR content, especially for cosmetic companies?"

Farrell stated that *"Brands can see what worked if an influencer put a link. They can see oh she only sent this amount of people so we won't work with her again, like they're not wasting money on someone who isn't working for them. They know what works for them and they can put their money towards someone that does really well."*

Crofton stated that *"Insights, Analytics, Engagement statistics are a key part of monitoring any Instagram campaign. Each video, image, IGTV that is uploaded is monitored and compared to previous posts of the brand. It gives a great insight into what people are engaging with, what they want to see and what products are popular as people will tag, share, save or like the content."*

It could be argued from the perspectives given by Crofton and Farrell that the technology for monitoring activity on Instagram provides an insight for PR agencies and brands alike as to what campaigns, Influencers and products work well for each company and can enhance future

projects. This could be another reason as to why Instagram is the preferred platform used for PR purposes.

This question was put to the PR executives as they work closely with cosmetic and fashion brands and have real time insights as to what effect Instagram is having from a company's perspective, "Are there any disadvantages to using Instagram for PR purposes?"

Farrell stated that *"I don't personally think. I know I work for a lot of those online websites like Pretty Little Thing and Boohoo, if you look at their Instagram posts it is literally just people commenting being like 'where is my product?' So I think that's mostly what their comments are so in that way yeah it could be. A lot of brands have to be careful with what is posted on Instagram."*

Crofton articulated that *"Yes, we have seen a lot in the past few months that Influencers are taking paid work with brands whom they don't believe in and don't support and it is quite visible to the general public that these promoters of the brand may have never spoken or previously spoken badly of the brand they are now being paid to talk about in a negative light. Consumers are becoming more aware of the lack of transparency and authenticity."*

Crofton raises an interesting point in that consumers are becoming more aware of Influencers who are lacking authenticity and therefore could have a negative impact on the brand they are working with. This theory is seen in question nine of the questionnaire where 31.66% of respondents stated that they would not buy a cosmetic product based on the Influencer involved in the brand campaign compared to 27.64% who answered yes. Crofton and Farrell provide interesting opinions regarding the disadvantages of Instagram being used as a PR tool and highlights the opinion of Mackson et al., (2019) that further research examining Instagram's influence should be conducted.

This question was asked to Crofton and Farrell as they are working in the PR industry and could provide relevant recommendations, "Is there anything you would change about Instagram from a PR perspective?"

Farrell highlights the issue of hidden posts that can have an effect on Influencers content and engagement which inevitably affects the brands that work with Influencers, "*I suppose a lot of people talk about posts can't be seen a lot of the time. I know a lot of influencers speak about that as well, a lot of posts can be hidden. I suppose it's got to do with if someone is following a lot of accounts, they're not going to see everyone's posts so if there was something they could do with all posts are seen or something like that. Other than that, I think it's great.*"

Whereas Crofton believes that if Instagram removed likes and followers brands would be able to see the true influence that Influencers have, *"Removal of likes and followers. Brands need to solely focus on engagement figures and the number of people these sponsored posts are reaching rather than bought followers and bought likes which are both very common in the industry. Some brands are still oblivious to the thought that an awful lot of these 'sought-after' influencers have actually fake followers."*

As of July 2019, Instagram have started a trial in Ireland with the hiding the amount of likes. This move by the social media application could prove to be advantageous for brands in order to filter out Influencers who may be buying likes or followers as Crofton pointed out.

(Weckler, July 2019, independent.ie).

This question was created to find out the opinions of Crofton and Farrell regarding Influencers and whether they agreed with the authors discussed in chapter three who view Influencers as powerful 'real time billboards' as noted by Abidin (2016).

"What do you think about the surge in use of influencers in PR campaigns?"

Farrell articulates that "*I think it's great. I think from a fashion brand point of view it really works. I know from being in Whatsapp groups myself my friends would be like screen-shotting stuff and like oh did you see this or get this or even word-of-mouth, oh did you see Niamh Cullen wearing that dress and everybody wants to buy it so definitely I think it works. They're just so much more well-known now. I know that Nasty Gal did a campaign with Emma Louise Connolly, who would be a big influencer and that done so well, and a lot of brands are looking to do that now. I think they're more popular now than a lot of celebrity collections.*"

Ghidotti (2017), Scott (2015) and Sherman and Perlman (2010) all Farrell's opinion that word-of-mouth has noteworthy power online especially as Farrell has noted when an Influencer promotes a brand's product or when a collaboration is formed whether it be a clothing line or cosmetic product. In addition, consumers like to share their experiences with products both online and offline.

Crofton stated that *"Instagram is becoming incredibly saturated and a visible selling tool. Every second feed is sponsored posts or somebody trying to sell you something with paid content that is getting boring and actually creating a negative conversation around the brands whom are paying six to seven people at the one time to promote it. Conversations are happening online on private Facebook groups such as (Galzwhosnap) defaming these brands due to Influencers whom are being associated with them."*

Crofton's opinion highlights Mackson et al's (2019) theory that there has been little research carried out on Instagram's influence, that being both positive and negative regarding PR content posted on brands social media accounts. This opinion can also be seen in question nine of the questionnaire where 31.66% of respondents would not buy a cosmetic product based on the Influencer involved in the brand campaign compared to 27.64% who answered yes.

Follow-up question for Crofton, "Do you think Influencers have made a significant impact to the industry?"

Crofton stated that *"For sure, they are a key part in any PR campaign, if the fit is natural and they believe in the brand. Influencers with a reputable voice in the industry are highly powerful in terms of promoting brands as a lot of eyes believe in what they say."*

This opinion from Crofton that Influencers play a crucial role in any PR campaign is supported by the claim put by Carter (2016) in a report published by Augure in 2015 that 84% of brands had intention to use Influencers in their campaigns. It could be argued that this percentage would have seen an increase in the last four years.

This question was devised for Crofton and Farrell as they are working in the PR industry right now and may have relevant information to form future potential for the relationship between Instagram and PR, "Have you got any predictions for the future of PR and Instagram?"

Farrell stated that, "*I just think it's going to grow bigger and bigger unless another social media outlet comes along. I know YouTube is getting quite popular as well, but I feel that there's definitely room for both of them. I feel like Instagram just seems to be able to adapt all the time and they're freshening things up whenever they need to.*"

Crofton claims that, *"Brands will hold back on paying influencer to promote their brand and try to regain credibility and brand awareness through credible reviews and authentic word of mouth. Instagram will always be a key part in PR should no other social media platform pop up as it will also be a talking place and a place anybody in the industry will go to share and experience or seek recommendations.*"

Farrell reiterates that a reason why Instagram has been successful is down to their adaptable and innovation of adding new features to the application. Whereas Crofton address the need for brands to rely more on the power of word of mouth instead of primarily paid content produced by an Influencer. Aronczyk (2017) agrees with Crofton's opinion on word of mouth, claiming that consumers themselves can be just as powerful when they share brands videos, images or articles.

Follow-up question for Farrell, "Do you think that right now if the age group between 18 and 24 as they age and their influencers age will they still be involved with them and want to know what's going on in their life or do you think it will always be more of a younger age group that will be interested in influencers?

Farrell stated that "*I think they'll grow with their audience, like there will be new influencers coming along and it'll be the younger generation liking them but I know there's a few young girls coming up now whereas they would not be my style but I'd like the older girls my age so I think it will grow with your followers and keep going. Say even like Rosie Connolly, I remember speaking to her about a tanning brand, she was like 'Since I announced my second pregnancy*

my engagement has gone like so much better', like a lot of young mums following her. So, I think just as you grow and adapt, your followers will grow with you."

Crofton and Farrell have provided this research study with relevant and up-to-date information about the relationship between the PR industry and social media, in particular Instagram, and their responses were insightful in answering this study's research questions.

4.4 Content Analysis

In total, three Irish cosmetic accounts on the social media platform Instagram were used for this study. The three accounts are as follows; BPerfect Cosmetics, LUNA by Lisa Jordan and SOSU By Suzanne Jackson. Each image selected fit into one of two categories of people and products with a sub-categories formed for people which included age, gender, occupation and skin colour. For the content analysis, 50 images from each account posts from July 11th 2019 and onwards were selected and analysed to identify what kind of content was being posted by Irish cosmetic companies on Instagram for public relations purposes. "With Instagram, the images do the talking." (Scott, 2015, p. 2)

4.4.1 SoSu By Suzanne Jackson

One of the Irish cosmetic company accounts selected for this content analysis was SoSu By Suzanne Jackson. Findings from the questionnaire concluded that 78.41% of respondents follow this account on Instagram. SoSu By Suzanne Jackson is an Irish cosmetic company which was set up by an Irish blogger Suzanne Jackson in 2016 and is based in Dublin. The account has 251,000 followers.

Out of the 50 posts selected from the account, 32 posts involved images of people while 18 were product posts. All of the images selected involving people were people with white skin. This result highlights the need for this Irish cosmetic company to be more diverse when it comes to the content that is posted on their account as it is the most followed account from the results in the questionnaire of this study.

Only young females were featured in the content analysed from this cosmetic account. This result conforms Wolf's (2002) belief that it is a challenge to find an older woman's face in advertisement images in the 1990's and it could be suggested that this is the case with PR content on Irish cosmetic company's Instagram accounts of today. 34% of the images featuring people were influencers while 22% were make-up artists.

The four images selected to analyse in greater detail were selected as they received the most likes among Instagram users. Three out of the four images include Influencers which supports the theory of Sherman and Perlman (2010) that if a brand can manage to get a celebrity or Influencer to wear the brand's products, this could encourage demand from consumers who like to identify with successful people.
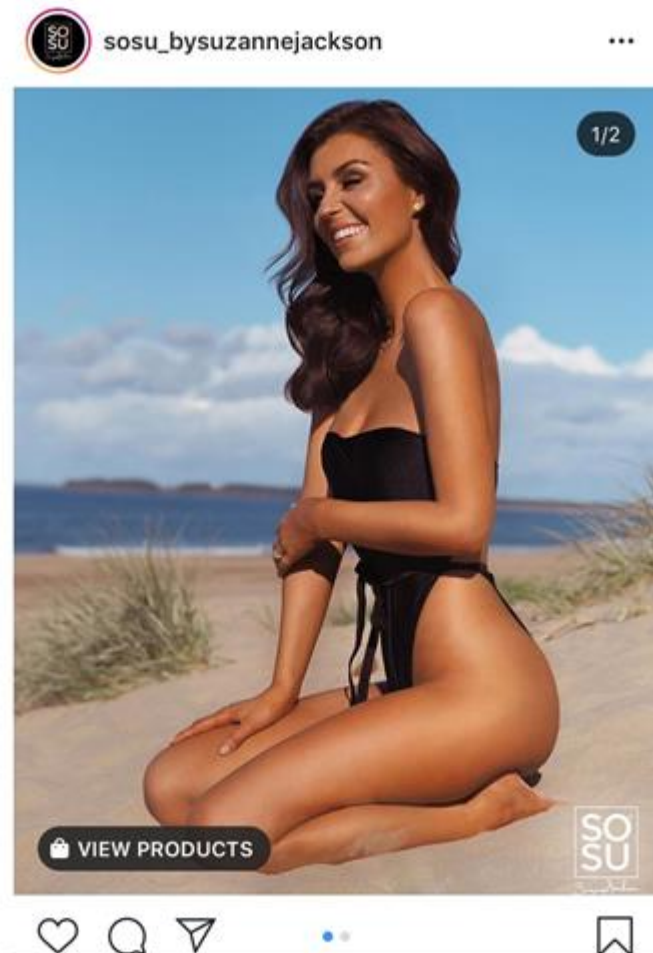
Figure 11
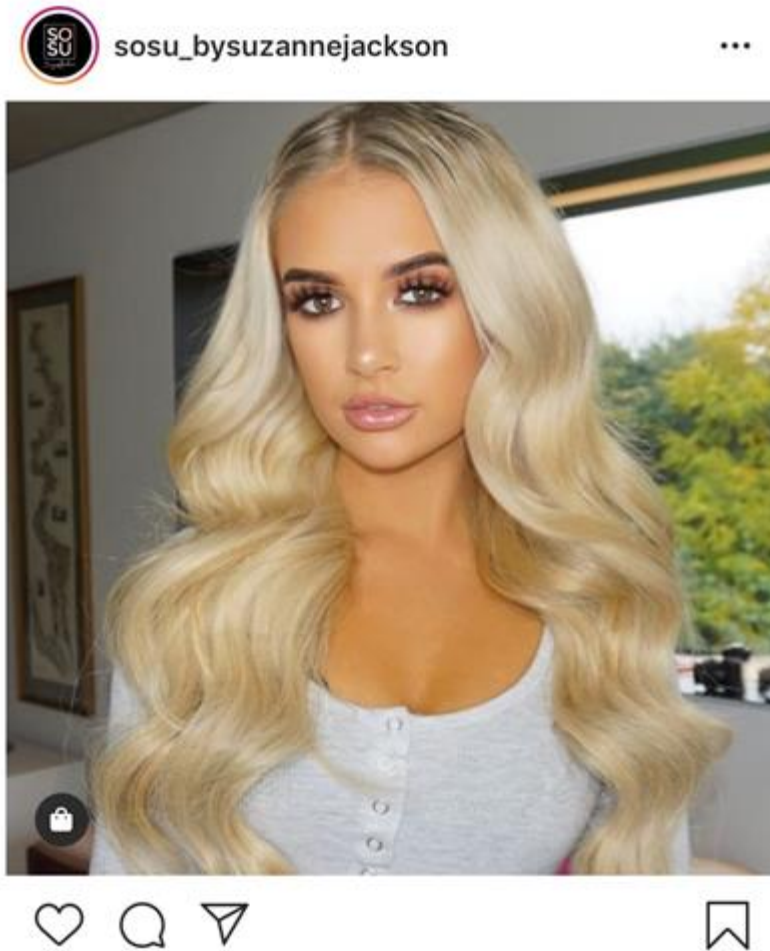
The image above in figure 11 features a young, female Influencer who is currently a participant on the reality television programme *Love Island*. The image received 10,708 likes and 12 comments from Instagram users. As this is the most popular image on the company's account, it supports the theory of Sherman and Perlman (2010) that it is common to want to identify with successful people and celebrities. The caption of this image, "What did you all think of @mollymaehague and @tommytntfury reunion on #loveisland last night? 😭 Molly is wearing our 3D Hailey lashes 😍 These lashes have extra 3D volume and a fluffy finish 😍

This image supports Wolf's (2002) theory that cosmetic companies rarely feature older women and that society's depiction of beauty is closely linked to youth and many companies promote products that claim to retain one's youth.

Figure 12

This image above in figure 12 features an Irish influencer who has collaborated with SOSU by Suzanne Jackson to create a tanning product. The image's caption, "Glow like a Caribbean Queen 🕸 🍤 Introducing Bahama Body by @terriemcevoy 🦐 🍤 😍 Self Tanning Mousse 😍 😍". The image received 6,129 likes and 47 comments from Instagram users. The interest generated from this image supports the statements made by various authors in chapter three such as Carter (2016) who claims that Influencers are 'trusted voices' who can work in

conjunction with a company's PR objectives that Sherman and Perlman (2010) articulate are to be trustworthy and to create distinctiveness.

Taken from Mulvey (1971) and Wolf's (2002) perspectives that there is pressure on women to adhere to certain ideologies of beauty, it could be argued that the 'beauty myth' for Irish women includes being tanned and Irish cosmetic companies have taken advantage of this desire held by many Irish women for their skin to appear bronzed in colour and thus have created tanning products which benefits them financially.

Another element that could be suggested from this image is Mulvey's male gaze as the female is positioned in a submissive way and perhaps it could be suggested from Mulvey's (1999) theory that this position emulates a strong visual impact that aims for 'to-be-looked-at-ness'.

Figure 13

The image above is the product post that received the most likes with 5,346 and 2,451 comments among Instagram users. The engagement generated from this image highlights the interest among the company's Instagram followers in tanning products. The caption of the image, "COMPETITION TIME 🎎 🎇 WIN Bahama Body by Terrie McEvoy - Dark & Ultra Dark Mousse 😍". This product is a collaboration formed between the cosmetics brand and an Irish influencer. This image supports the theory stated by Ghidotti (2017), Scott (2015) and Sherman and Perlman that Influencers have the power to generate significant interest for a company's target audience.

Figure 14

The image above features an Influencer and reality TV contestant. The image generated 3,180 likes and four comments among Instagram users. The image's caption, "Did you catch @keilidhmua latest YouTube video doing @danidyerxx makeup using our SOSUbySJ products? 😍 How fab does Dani look wearing: 🦋 SOSUbySJ X Dani Dyer 'babe' lashes 🦋". The image is promoting the brand's collaboration with the young female featured. This image concurs the statement of Sherman and Perlman (2010) that the public love to identify with celebrities and will emulate the clothes or products that they are seen wearing. SOSU By Suzanne Jackson has

identified this connection has she has formed a product collaboration with the celebrity featured in the image above.

The most popular visual content that has been selected from SOSU By Suzanne Jackson's Instagram account involves Influencers and brand collaborations with Influencers. This result supports the claims made by Archer and Harrigan (2016) that influencers provide a brand with an 'influential' voice that connects the brand with consumers directly. Solis' (2009) notes that great PR is about telling a story, perhaps it could be argued that from the visual content of SOSU By Suzanne Jackson on Instagram, this cosmetic company tells a story that it is successful as it is connected with celebrities and Influencers and it can provide you with tanning products that are valued by an Influencer as it was in collaboration therefore it can be trusted.

4.4.2 BPerfect Cosmetics

BPerfect Cosmetics is one of the Irish cosmetic companies selected to analyse for this research study. The company is located in Belfast and was founded in 2013 by Brendan McDowell. 52.84% of respondents who participated in this research study's survey follow BPerfect's account on Instagram. The cosmetic company has 219,000 followers on their Instagram account.

Out of the 50 posts selected from the account, 30 involved images featuring people while the remaining 20 were product posts. Regarding the images featuring people, 90% were people with white skin with 10% featuring people of colour. 26 female and four males, who were all young, featured in the content of BPerfect Cosmetic's Instagram content.

The four images selected to analyse in greater detail were selected as they received the most likes among Instagram users. Three out of the four images selected to analyse feature creative and colourful make-up looks that exhibit the artistry expression and skills related to using make-up and cosmetic products. Out of the people featured in their content, 11 were make-up artists and nine were Influencers.

Figure 15

The image above in figure 15 features a young, white female modelling a creative eyeshadow and lip make-up look that is inspired by colours from a sunset. The image's caption, "SUNSET FANTASY 👜 @nataliemillsmakeup used the @bperfect X @staceymariemua#CarnivalPalette to create pure MAGIC 😍 Can we make this eye/lip combo a new thing?!". The image received 4,842 likes and 64 comments. It could be suggested here that BPerfect Cosmetics is telling a story that it emulates the creativity and artistry skills involved in the cosmetic industry. This

argument is supported by the results that portray more make-up artists than influencers can be found in the content that has been analysed for this research study.

Figure 16

In the image featured above in figure 16, a young, white female is modelling a creative eye make-up look using blue and purple colour eyeshadows on one eye and yellow and orange eyeshadows on the other eye. The focus of this make-up look is the eyes as the rest of the face

is kept minimal. The image's caption, "🖌Life is all about using the whole box of crayons @mianjelica capturing the true essence of the #CarnivalPalette and unlocking her inner creativity with this gorgeous colourful eye look! 💙💙🤍". The image received 4,274 likes and 33 comments. The interest generated by followers of this cosmetic company reiterates the idea that make-up and cosmetics are used as a form of artistic expression. The caption of the image uses 'unlocking her inner creativity' to appeal to their target audience that by using BPerfect Cosmetic products, they too can express their creativity.

Figure 17

Figure 17's image features a product post containing eyeshadow swatches of the colours available in one of the brand's eyeshadow palettes which is a collaboration with a well-known make-up artist. The image's caption, "The first TEN @staceymariemua shades revealed If you haven't signed up for exclusive access to presale and first glimpse of shades - link in bio You do not wanna miss this! Get ready to 'Unlock your creativity'." The image received 4,168 likes and 164 comments. The opinion of Crofton and Farrell that a feature of Instagram with a direct link to purchase a product is a reason why the application works for PR content. It can provide a company with the information how a product is being perceived by consumers.

Figure 18

The image in figure 18 above features a young, white, female make-up artist, who has a significant following of over 900,000. She is modelling a colourful eye make-up look incorporating green, blue, purple and orange. The image's caption, "Umm... OBSESSED with this look @bybrookelle ~ 'unlocking her inner creativity' using the BPerfect @staceymariemua#CarnivalPalette 🖌 The colour Queen from Down Under ᴀᴜ 😍If you didn't know, we're celebrating the #CarnivalBirthday all week! 🎂🎁 we've been really quiet on the matter 🥺 but we have an AMAZING Birthday Bundle for you all to shop as a thank you for the continued carnival support! Simply click the link in our bio to shop." The image received 4,070 likes and 42 comments. The image is another example of Sherman and Perlman's (2010) theory that consumers like to identify with celebrities and successful people and in this case

BPerfect Cosmetic's has collaborated with a well-known make-up artist to produce content using one of the brand's eyeshadow palettes.

It could be argued from the selected images from the BPerfect Cosmetics Instagram account that this cosmetics company focuses on the power that make-up gives to creativity and to express oneself and showcases the artistry skills of make-up artists. This story is not only depicted in the images but also in their captions with the phrase of 'unlocking your creativity' used in two out of the four posts selected to analyse. Out of the three Irish cosmetic companies chosen, BPerfect Cosmetics is the only company that features males and people of colour in their content that is posted on Instagram.

4.4.3 LUNA by Lisa Jordan

LUNA by Lisa Jordan is an Irish hair and beauty company based in Cork and was founded by blogger Lisa Jordan in 2017. Results from the questionnaire conducted as part of this research study shows that 39.20% of the respondents follow this account. The company's Instagram account has 44,000 followers.

Out of the 50 posts analysed from content on LUNA by Lisa Jordan's Instagram account, half of the images featured people while the remaining half were product posts. All of the images involving people were white, young and female with ten being influencers while eight were make-up artists.

The four images selected all feature the same white, young, female Influencer who is the founder of the cosmetics company. Even though the company employs brand ambassadors, it could be argued that Jordan already having created a successful reputation as a blogger herself, has transported this valued opinion and reputation she has attained through her following on to her cosmetics brand. This result supports the claim made by Hughes et al (2019) that bloggers and influencers build up a loyal following that values their opinions.

Figure 19

The image in figure one features the founder of the company, a white, young, female Influencer holding her baby in a hospital bed. The image's caption, "😭😭😭😭 We can't cope! Huge congratulations to our Queen @justjordan.ie A new addition to Team Luna." The image received 6,649 likes and 43 comments. It could be speculated here that this image has generated interest due to the female in the image being self-employed running her own brand while also being a mother and it could be celebrating the image of a modern women who can identify with having a career while also being a parent.

Figure 20

Figure 20 features the founder of LUNA who is a white, young, female Influencer in a long, golden embellished gown. The image's caption, "CANNOT. COPE. Queen 👑". The word 'Queen' that is used in the caption could be reminded of the concept that singer Beyoncé has created with her persona as 'Queen Bey', a powerful and successful woman whose music deals with themes regarding women's power in today's society. The image received 4,703 likes and 29 comments. This image could be an example of the argument put forward by Wolf (2002) that women want to embody this ideal of 'beauty' as men want women who embody it.

Figure 21

The image in figure 21 features a smiling, white, young, female Influencer wearing a pink and red short sleeved top, a white skirt with red polka dots and long red earrings. The image's caption, "We're celebrating @justjordan.ie's birthday all weekend with some fabulous special offers on your favourite products! Head over to lunabylisa.ie." The image received 1,660 likes and five comments.

Figure 22

Figure 22 features a close-up image of a white, young, female Influencer who is wearing a soft glam make-up with pink lipstick and pink blush being the focal point of the make-up look. The image's caption, "Pearl & Glowin' ☆ Available online and in stores now." The image generated 1,223 likes and two comments.

The top four images from the Instagram account of LUNA by Lisa Jordan all feature the founder of the cosmetic company, Lisa Jordan who is an Influencer. Two out of the four images selected use the word 'Queen' in the captions, referring to the brand's owner. It could be suggested that the account supports the idea of a working mom as the most liked image is Lisa in hospital with her new-born baby while also being linked to the concept created by singer Beyoncé with the

modern woman challenging preconceive ideas of women's status and power in today's society. "Giving birth had a liberating effect, and Beyoncé felt more confident and empowered sexually. The outcome is the album that revels in female sexuality and owning that sexuality in mainstream music as opposed to women being objectified as per usual." (Jackson, 2016, medium.com)

To conclude, this chapter has looked at a questionnaire with 200 respondents, two separate interviews with PR executives working in agencies located in Dublin and a content analysis of three Irish cosmetic accounts in order to answer the research questions of this study. The combination of these three research methodologies and their results have enabled this study in answering the research questions of 'Why has social media been a success for the public relations industry?' And 'Why is Instagram the chosen social media application for PR content for cosmetic companies?'. The conclusion from results and analysis will be discussed in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

5.1 Overview

The final chapter of this research study will summarise the findings and conclusions from the literature review and the research findings from chapter four. There will also be a discussion about recommendations for future research.

To restate my research questions;

- Why has social media been a success for the public relations industry?
- Why is Instagram the chosen social media application for PR content for cosmetic companies?

5.2 Points of note in the Literature Review

According to Breakenridge and Solis (2009) social media has given rise to 'PR 2.0' which has propelled the industry into a communication revolution. Kaul et al (2015) claims that social media "has emerged as an engine for change in the world and also in our own PR industry (Kaul et al, 2015, p. 461) Sherman and Perlman (2010) note this change in the communication methods as social media facilitates a two-way conversation between a company and their consumers while Scott (2015) maintains that it has enabled PR to be 'public' again as previously the focus was exclusively on media. Sherman and Perlman (2010) state that PR makes for a more straightforward interaction between a company and their consumers so therefore with the arguments put forward by the authors mentioned above, it could be suggested that social media plays an integral role in the industry as it enables PR to fulfill its objective with easier and faster communication.

Abidin (2016) and Mackson et al (2019) support the opinion that Instagram has become a prevalent social media application among social media users. Carah and Shaul (2016) describes the social media platform as an 'image machine', visual medium that has a constant stream of

photos and videos. Papasolomou et al (2012) state that social media applications, such as Instagram, give companies the opportunity "to interact in an informal and more personal way" (Papasolomou et al, 2012, p. 320)

Abidin (2016) defines Influencers as young women who document their lives through visual and textual content on Instagram and liken them to 'real-time billboards.' Influencers play the role as an influential third party with a 'trusted voice' that filters by the media to create 'buzz' about a company's product while increasing brand awareness. Carter (2016) states that the Influencer industry is growing at a rapid pace discussing a report carried out in 2015 which notes that 84% of brands had the intention to use Influencers in their campaigns. Hughes et al (2019) claim that followers of Influencers have chosen to obtain information posted on social media applications like Instagram as they value their opinion or identify with them.

Wolf (2002) associates beauty as a 'currency' which supports Papasolomou et al (2012) claim that social media allows for a company to capitalise from the content posted on social media of its products, which is applicable to cosmetic companies. Cosmetic companies capitalize on women's desire to adhere to unrealistic ideas of 'beauty' which is stimulated by what Mulvey (1971) determines as 'the male gaze' that society has formed through products targeted at females and posting images on their Instagram accounts depicting these beauty ideals.

5.3 The Methods Chosen

All three methods which were chosen as part of this research study have combined to give a deeper insight into the topic which connects the PR industry of today, the social media application Instagram and the role of Influencers who all have a profound effect on young females of today.

A questionnaire was created for the purpose of this research study to get the consumer's perspective on the topic and to attempt to get answers to the research questions. A questionnaire was created on SurveyMonkey which asked respondents ten questions about social media, Instagram and Influencers relating to PR content. The questionnaire had 200 participants who provided this research study with answers to the research question.

Questionnaires can provide a research study with relevant information and agree with Yongqi Gu (2016) that questionnaires are insightful as a research method.

According to Berger (2000) interviews, "are unique in allowing researchers to get inside the minds of people and to gain access to material of considerable importance." (Berger, 2000, p.125) The interviews conducted as part of this research study support this claim as Crofton and Farrell are currently working in the PR industry. Their input has therefore given this research study access to relevant information about the landscape of working with social media applications, such as Instagram on a daily basis and they can observe the real-time effects.

MacNamara (2015) states that many research studies have examined how mass media can influence buying behaviours. As Instagram is a visual medium, a content analysis of the images posted was an integral element to this research study. The analysis of three Irish cosmetic companies has incorporated the theories of Instagram and Influencers having cultivated the ideal environment for PR content while addressing Wolf and Mulvey's perspectives when it comes to beauty as a currency and the male gaze.

5.4 Discussion of Results

The key findings from the study reveal that;

- Instagram's features such as Instagram stories, Instagram TV and live takeovers enable brands to produce visual PR content for avid social media users
- Influencers on Instagram play an integral role in PR campaigns to disseminate information as an influential third party
- Irish cosmetic companies are capitalising on young female's desire to live up to beauty standards

The questionnaire was designed through SurveyMonkey, through which 200 respondents participated. The questionnaire was made up of 10 questions which dealt with the topics of social media, Instagram and Influencers. The questionnaire is a quantitative form of research and the results were presented in graphs with a discussion following. Key findings from the questionnaire concluded that;

- Mackson et al (2019) theory that the biggest users of Instagram are aged between 18-29 was supported as 53.81% of the questionnaire participants belonged to the 18-24 category with 20.30% who answered to the 25-34 category.

- The majority of respondents (98.99%) questionnaire said they use the social media application Instagram. This result agrees with Mackson et al (2019) claim that Instagram has become pervasive among social media users.

- 86% of respondents follow cosmetic company accounts on Instagram. Link between the age group, cosmetic companies making money from young female's desire to adhere to society's ideals of 'beauty'.

- Majority of respondents (81.91%) receive information about a new cosmetic product launching through social media and 72.54% agree that this is the most effective method to do so.

This study conducted two separate interviews with PR executives Alex Crofton and Careen Farrell. Each interviewee was asked eight questions in order to investigate the research questions of this study and the questions asked allowed them to express their opinions on the topic. Key findings from the interviews concluded that;

- Both Crofton and Farrell agree with the authors discussed in chapter two, that social media has advanced the PR industry for the better.

- The unanimous verdict to which social media application is the most suitable for PR content is Instagram. They outlined the features such as Instagram stories, Instagram TV, live takeovers and the swipe to shop link as being the reasons why.

- Crofton indicated that as Instagram is becoming saturated with Influencers and paid posts, consumers are being wary of transparency and authenticity. This could suggest a possible shift in Influencer brand campaigns, and which could lead to companies relying on word of mouth and credible reviews more than now.

The content analysis was based on the analysis of 150 posts from three Irish cosmetic accounts on the social media platform, Instagram. According to Scott (2015), great PR is about telling a story and when it comes to Instagram the images do the talking. All the images selected fit into

one of two categories, people or product with sub-categories for people which included age, gender, occupation and skin colour. The content analysis was a mixed method form of research as the results were presented in qualitative and quantitative forms. The coding for the analysis was made up of the types of content that is produced for PR purposes on cosmetic companies Instagram accounts. Key findings from the content analysis concluded that;

- The content of SOSU By Suzanne Jackson featured all young, white females. Three out of four of the most liked images on their Instagram account were of Influencers which supports the theory held by Sherman and Perlman (2010) that we like to identify with successful people and in the eyes of today's society, Influencers are seen to be successful. It could be suggested from this brand's content that they tell a story that successful people are associated with SOSU By Suzanne Jackson and if you want to appear like this, you can buy their cosmetic products.

- BPerfect Cosmetics was the only cosmetic company to feature both females and males as well as people of various skin colours. This finding supports Wolf's (2002) belief that there is now pluralism when it comes to the beauty myth. It could be suggested from the content analysis that this cosmetics brand tells the story of make-up as a form of creative expression as three out of four of their most liked images on Instagram involved colourful, creative make-up looks and the phrase of 'unlocking your inner creativity' was stated in their posts captions.

- LUNA by Lisa Jordan only featured young, white females. The four most liked images from this brand's Instagram account were all of the founder, who is an Influencer. This finding supports Carter (2016) claim that influencers are 'trusted voices'. 'Queen' was a recurring word in this brand's captions to describe the founder. It could be suggested from the content of LUNA that their story encapsulates the concept of female empowerment as the account documents the founder through various milestones in her life while producing product content.

5.5 Recommendations

Future studies under the topic of PR and Instagram could further detail the implications of Instagram's visual features such as Instagram stories and Instagram TV as well as Influencers possible negative effect on a brand's reputation.

If time had allowed, I would have liked to have conducted a focus group with females from various age categories and ethnic backgrounds to examine their opinions on the current 'beauty myth' and what they think about the PR content from cosmetic companies that is posted on the social media platform Instagram. A focus group of this nature could also explore the concept of Influencers affecting a brand's reputation.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Graphs

Chart 1. Gender

Chart 2. Age category

Chart 3. Users of social media application Instagram

Chart 4. Followers of cosmetic company accounts on Instagram

Chart 5. Followers of Irish cosmetic companies on Instagram

Chart 6. Method of receiving information about a product launch

Chart 7. Most effective method for a product launch

Chart 8. How trustworthy is an Influencer who is affiliated with a cosmetics brand

Chart 9. Purchasing a cosmetics product based on an Influencer brand campaign

Chart 10. Purchasing history based on an Influencer's recommendation from Instagram content

Appendix 2: Images

Figure 11. SOSU By Suzanne Jackson, Molly-Mae Hague

Figure 12. SOSU By Suzanne Jackson, Terrie McEvoy

Figure 13. SOSU By Suzanne Jackson, Bahama Body Tan

Figure 14. SOSU By Suzanne Jackson, Dani Dyer

Figure 15. BPerfect Cosmetics, Sunset Fantasy

Figure 16. BPerfect Cosmetics, Mia Anjelica

Figure 17. BPerfect Cosmetics, Stacey Marie eyeshadow palette colour swatches

Figure 18. BPerfect Cosmetics, Brookelle McKenzie

Figure 19. LUNA by Lisa Jordan, Lisa Jordan

Figure 20. LUNA by Lisa Jordan, Lisa Jordan

Figure 21. LUNA by Lisa Jordan, Lisa Jordan

Figure 22. LUNA by Lisa Jordan, Lisa Jordan

Appendix 3: Interview Information Sheet

Information Sheet

Title of Research Study:

"Power of the post: Instagram is the chosen social media platform for PR content of cosmetic companies"

Researcher: Diane Burke

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

Dear interviewee,

You are invited to take part in a research study to examine why Instagram is the chosen public relations tool for cosmetic companies. I would like to interview you to ask you about your experiences of managing a cosmetic company and your thoughts on Instagram as a public relations tool. This research is part of a Master's Dissertation in Journalism and Public Relations for Griffith College, Dublin.

Before you decide whether to take part in the study it is important that you understand what the research is for and what you will be asked to do. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep. You will also be asked to sign a consent form. You can change your mind at any time and withdraw from the study without giving a reason.

The purpose of the research study is to examine your thoughts about Instagram as a public relations tool for cosmetic companies to product their brand and their brand's products. You have been chosen because of your experience in working in the cosmetic industry at a time of great technological change with the advancement of social media platforms. If you choose to take part, the interview will last approximately 30 minutes and will be arranged at a time to suit you.

Information from the interview will be used to assess the impact of Instagram as a public relations tool for cosmetic companies. The interview will be recorded and transcribed.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you need further information

Yours sincerely,

Diane Burke

085-1611478

Dianenburke24@gmail.com

Consent Form

Researcher: Diane Burke

- The aim of this study is to examine Instagram as a public relations tools for cosmetic companies. It will examine why Instagram has been the chosen social media platform and how its success is measured.

- You will be asked 10 questions about your work in the cosmetic industry and how you use Instagram as a public relations tool. The interview should last around 30 minutes.

- This research will be of benefit as it draws on the experience of cosmetic companies who are working at a time of change in the industry. There is a gap in the research on how and why Instagram has become the chosen public relations tool for cosmetic companies. This research provides an opportunity to hear the perspectives of cosmetic companies.

- All information will be kept in a password protected computer.

- Taking part in this research is voluntary and there will be no consequences for withdrawing.
- If you have any questions about this research, please contact:
- Diane Burke: dianenburke24@gmail.com (researcher)
- Bláthnaid Nolan: Blathnaid.Nolan@griffith.ie (research supervisor)
- This project has been approved by the Faculty Research Ethics Committee.

Participant Signature _____

Researcher Signature _____

Appendix 5: Table

Table 1. Table of responses of question seven from questionnaire participants