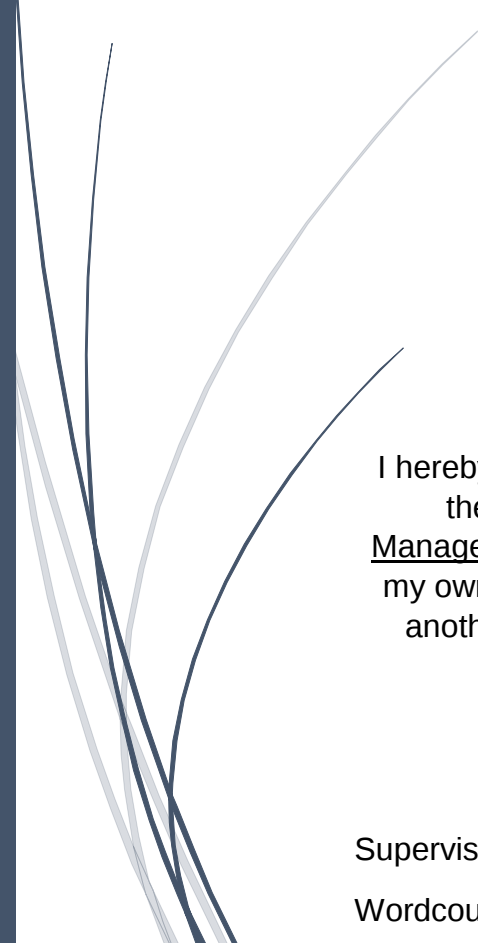


BCom Honours in Management

Social Media Influencer Marketing as a potential strategy for new cosmetic brands to create brand awareness and gain legitimacy among consumers.

By

Lweji Pemba



I hereby declare that the Research Report submitted for the Bachelor of Commerce Honours degree in Management to the Independent Institute of Education is my own work and has not previously been submitted to another university or Higher Education institution for degree purposes.

Supervisor: Dr. Marizanne Grundlingh

Wordcount: 15,100

Table of content

Abstract	1
1. Introduction	2
2. Background	3
3. Rationale	4
4. Research problem	4
5. Research goal and research question	5
6. Research objective	5
Literature Review	5
7. Theoretical foundation	5
7.1 Social comparison theory	6
7.2 Source credibility theory	7
8. Literature review	8
8.1 Liability of newness	8
8.1.1 Legitimacy	9
8.2 Social Media Influencer marketing	11
8.3 Instagram	12
8.4 Social media and businesses	12
8.4.1 Monitoring and listening	13
8.4.2 Content	13
8.4.3 Brand awareness	14
8.5 Social media and Consumers	14
8.6 Conclusion	15
9. Conceptualization	16
Methodological approach	17
10. Research paradigm	18

11. Research tradition	19
11.1 Research aim	20
11.2 Research design.....	20
12. Population	21
12.1 Sampling.....	21
13. Data-collection method	23
14. Data analysis method	24
15. Trustworthiness	26
 Research findings.....	 27
16. Presentation and Interpretation of Findings	27
16.1 Conclusion.....	37
17. Ethical implications	38
18. Limitations of the study	39
19. Heuristic value	39
20. Reference list	40
 Appendix A.....	 45
Appendix B.....	47
Appendix C.....	50
Appendix D.....	51
Appendix E	52

Abstract

A lack of knowledge and understanding of new brands forms part of the difficulties consumers face when purchasing products from new cosmetic brands. This qualitative study explores the effectiveness of content created and shared by beauty influencers, specifically on Instagram, in generating awareness and legitimacy for new cosmetic brands among consumers. The data collection was done by means of in-depth, semi-structured interviews with five consumers. To analyse the data, the findings were applied to the broad constructs of the social comparison and source credibility theories. The findings of this research suggested that participants use influencers' content as source of brand information. The findings further indicate that influencers who are perceived as trustworthy, experts, passionate about their work and possessing characteristics that are similar to participants are considered as more reliable sources of brand information. Findings further show that through influencer marketing, participants appear to not gather sufficient information regarding new cosmetic brands that could lead them to consider these brands as legitimate market players. The findings demonstrate that influencer marketing is indeed effective in creating brand awareness, but ineffective in providing sufficient brand information that can create the necessary levels of cognitive legitimacy amongst participants.

1. Introduction

Consumers are members of a large society. Consequently, their purchase decisions are heavily influenced by opinions and behaviours of others (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, and Hogg, 2006). Consumers' preferences are shaped by reference groups, by their desire to please and be accepted by others and by the actions of celebrity individuals that they have never met (Solomon et al, 2006). Accordingly, information or recommendations to use and/or avoid a product or brand are gathered from conversations amongst people, rather than in advertising messages (Solomon et al, 2006).

Social media is accelerating communications amongst consumers. Social media is making it easy for consumers to engage via online conversations and, in so doing, it is creating a platform for consumers to promote brand and products amongst themselves (Morales, Sosa—Frey and Farias, 2017). Moreover, social media facilitates and enhances the exchange of product information because it enables consumers to communicate their opinions to others who are enquiring about a product or service. As a result, consumers rely on other consumers' opinions, as well as on their past experiences with a brand or product to make informed purchase decisions (Hutter, Hautz, Dennhardt and Füller, 2013).

There are countless social media websites, however, this research focuses on Instagram due to its significant popularity in the cosmetic industry and in South Africa (Goldstruck and Wronski, 2016; Launchmetrics, 2018). On Instagram, consumers rely on product information provided by beauty opinion leaders, who have thousands of followers on this social media platform (Lim, Radzol, Cheah and Wong, 2017). Beauty opinion leaders are personalities that consumers follow and admire, who through their Instagram posts can create organic conversations about cosmetic brands, leverage the power of word-of-mouth and are likely to influence the attitudes and beliefs of their followers (consumers) (Abidin, 2015; Garcia, Daly, Sánchez-Cabezudo, 2016; Lim et al, 2017; Murphy and Schram, 2014).

This study is structured as follows: the first section consists of a brief background of the emergence of social media influencers, the rationale of this study and the problem to be investigated. In the second section, the research goals, research questions and research objectives are presented. The third section discusses the selected theories along with a review of the relevant literature and the conceptualisation of key terms. In the fourth section the methodological approach as well as trustworthiness are discussed. The fifth section

consists of the presentation and interpretation of findings, followed by the conclusion, ethical considerations and limitations of this study.

2. Background

An individual or a group, who in other people's judgement, holds opinions and values similar to their own are classified as reference individual/group (Moschis, 1976; Van Rooy, Wood and Tran, 2016). The reference group construct forms the foundation of some of the global marketing features of the cosmetic industry. Before the internet was widely accessible, interaction amongst consumers of the same reference groups was mainly through face-to-face contact (Hsu, Lin and Chiang, 2012; Morales et al, 2017). However, with the advancement of social media sites it became possible for consumers to engage in conversations via online platforms, to share product information, to evaluate products, to make use of online recommendations when purchasing products and to acquire products online without face to face contact (Hsu et al, 2012; Morales et al, 2017).

Social media can be defined as a group of online-rooted applications, created on the philosophies and technological grounds of Web 2.0, that enable its users to share content generated by them (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2012). It consists of collaborative projects, blogs and micro-blogs, content communities, social networking sites, virtual game worlds, and virtual social life (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2012). The arrival of social media created the idea of influencers. Abidin (2015) describes influencers as every day, ordinary internet users who have many followers on blogs or social media sites, and through using texts and/or visuals describe their personal lives, engage with their followers on these websites and, consequently, monetise their following by integrating sponsored content into their posts.

Businesses introduced the concept of influencer marketing and started using content created and shared by influencers in their online networks (Murphy and Schram, 2014). Consequently, influencers emerged as sources of product information, by regularly updating their followers with the latest information, (Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard, and Hogg, 2006; Lim et al, 2017). Additionally, influencers emerged as third-party endorsers because consumers consider them as credible and reliable sources of information due to their ability to build rapport with consumers (Hsu et al, 2012).

As a result, consumers reach for opinions of beauty influencers when searching for information on products (Solomon et al, 2006). The case in South Africa is similar, where many consumers depend on beauty influencers for news, entertainment and trends (Mposo,

2018). According to Mposo (2018), South African consumers look for inspiration from individuals they can identify with. Thus, this study considers the role that Instagram influencers play on consumers behaviours towards new cosmetic brands, in a South African context.

3. Rationale

This research is relevant because it studies the impact that influencer marketing, specifically on Instagram, has on increasing brand awareness and brand knowledge amongst consumers. Likewise, this study is relevant because it analyses the relationship between influencer marketing, brand knowledge and consumers' brand attitudes.

Analysing this relationship is critical because a recent study conducted by Lim et al (2017) found that influencers can have a high effect on consumers attitudes, and that consumers attitude is directly linked to purchase intention. Hence, the importance of understanding the why and how of this interrelation regarding new cosmetic brands, from consumers' opinions.

This research can potentially provide an appropriate understanding of the influence that reference individuals, in the beauty sector, have on consumers perceptions and decisions to accept or reject new cosmetic brands. This study presents an opportunity to explore a marketing strategy that is growing in popularity amongst businesses, particularly within the cosmetic industry.

Additionally, this study is important because it focuses on the cosmetic industry, an industry which is known for making extensive use of influencer marketing. Furthermore, Morales et al (2017) argue that online strategies have more noticeable impact on products that have many followers, which is the case for cosmetic products. Hence, the importance of studying the results of influencer marketing in raising awareness and legitimacy in such a colossal market.

4. Research problem

Consumers have a tremendous need for product information. Research has shown that consumers are less likely to purchase brands that do not offer clear and concise information about its products in the market (Shepherd and Zacharakis, 2003; Zimmerman and Zeitz, 2002). Unfortunately, new cosmetic brands will most likely have limited information in the market regarding the performance and benefit of its products (Dibrell, Craig, Moores, Johnson and Davis, 2009; Shepherd and Zacharakis, 2003; Zimmerman and Zeitz, 2002).

Information is critical because a lack thereof means that consumers are unable to make informed purchased decision from new cosmetic brands, due to uncertainties regarding product performance and lack of knowledge regarding a new brand's offering.

5. Research goal and research question

The purpose of this study is to establish if Instagram influencer marketing is an effective strategy to increase awareness and provide necessary brand information that will lead consumers to accept new cosmetic brands as legitimate market players.

The main research question that this study attempts to answer is:

Why would influencer marketing be an effective strategy to create brand awareness and legitimacy for new cosmetic brands among consumers?

To help answer the main research question the following sub-questions were developed:

Why do followers consider beauty influencers as sources of brand information?

How do followers perceive beauty influencers?

6. Research objective

This study aims to explore if influencer marketing is a strategy capable of tackling consumers' lack of knowledge regarding new cosmetic brands. This will be done by analysing the extent to which influencer marketing helps increase new brand's awareness and legitimacy among consumers. This study is not only going to help to understand the impact that beauty influencers have on consumers, but also their impact on the attitudes consumers create regarding new cosmetic brands.

Additionally, it is the intention of the researcher to provide insight and greater understanding of influencer marketing, since it is a relatively new area of study in the academic arena. Thus, this study aims to obtain new insights of influencer marketing and create deeper understanding of it by providing basis for the current theoretical literature.

Literature review

7. Theoretical foundation

In this section, two theoretical perspectives are discussed, namely the theory of social comparison and the source credibility theory.

7.1 Social comparison theory

In 1976, Moschis conducted a study on the effect of group influences based on Festinger's theory of social comparison. Even though it is an old study, it provides a good explanation of what the Social comparison theory entails. According to Moschis (1976) this theory argues that people constantly compare their opinions, behaviours and beliefs against that of the other individuals around them to judge the consequence(s) of their own behaviours; particularly when physical evidence is not enough to generate sufficient indications.

A more recent study conducted by Van Rooy et al (2016) states that this theory raises the solidity of one's decision, because individuals rate their decisions according to shared values and opinions of reference individuals or groups. Individuals see the need to become part of groups or associate themselves with certain individuals who they believe that have opinions and values like their own (Moschis, 1976; Van Rooy et al, 2016). Moreover, Moschis (1976) describes that social comparison entails two distinct processes of reference group evaluation, namely reflected appraisal and comparative appraisal.

In the reflective appraisal process, individuals' personal evaluation is generated around the behaviours that other individuals demonstrate in their face-to-face interactions (Friedkin, 2011; Moschis, 1976). Conversely, through comparative appraisal individuals' evaluation relies on the attitudes, abilities and emotions gathered from observing the reference person(s) (Friedkin, 2011; Moschis, 1976). The comparative process does not require interaction between the evaluation seeker and the reference person, so the other individual might not be aware that is being used as a reference for someone else (Moschis, 1976).

The social comparison theory relates to this study because based on the reflected appraisal process, consumers are more likely to seek product information from friends or family members that they perceive as similar, to reduce the risk of uncertainty in purchasing a product or service. Furthermore, social comparison theory relates to this study because with the advancement of technologies and subsequent emergence of social media, consumers are using the opinions of beauty influencers to make informed purchased decisions, which indicates that they may be using comparative appraisal processes to measure the appropriateness of their purchases.

Focusing on the comparative appraisal process, we can see that consumers might be using beauty influencers as point of reference because influencers hold the same values about cosmetic products as consumers. In this case, there is no face-to-face interaction between

influencers and consumers, but through online communications/engagement and from information provided by influencers on Instagram there is a greater likelihood of interpersonal communications that to an extent could exert an influence on consumers attitudes.

7.2 Source credibility theory

The source credibility theory states that message receivers are more likely to believe in the content of the message if they see the sender as a credible source (Epega, 2008). This theory analyses the impact of source persuasion and defends that credible sources can change the opinions of message receivers more than non-credible sources (Umeogu, 2012). According to this theory, content shared by credible beauty influencers advertising new cosmetic brands could affect their followers' beliefs, opinions, attitudes and behaviours towards the brand.

Many companies have been investing in endorsement deals with influencers since it has been found that consumers are more reactive to content shared by influencers due to faith that followers place in the influencer's opinions' (Ranga and Sharma, 2014). Umeogu (2012) describes this situation as the followers' acceptance of an idea or opinion based on who the idea or opinion came from. Therefore, in an industry such as the cosmetic industry (which aims to deliver products to enhance the beauty features of individuals) consumers are more likely to accept ideas from opinion-leaders or even experts in this area.

According to Epega (2008), the first studies on source credibility revealed that it consists of three specific dimensions, namely expertise, trustworthiness and attractiveness. In terms of expertise, a recent study by Lim et (2017) revealed that their participants acknowledged that influencers do not have sufficient knowledge of the products they endorse as a result this had a negative impact on participants' trust on influencers as well as on their attitudes to the endorsed brand. These results accentuate how vital it is for influencers who advertise new cosmetic brands to have a certain level of product knowledge and provide explanations of the benefits and drawbacks of the products because consumers' acceptance or rejection of the new brands depends on it (Epega, 2008; Umeogu, 2012).

Epega's (2008) research showed individuals have a more positive opinion of a business if the spokesperson appears to be trustworthy. Trustworthiness is described as the perceived levels of honesty and believability of the communicators (Epega 2008). According to this construct, Umeogu, (2008) defends that a beauty influencer perceived as reliable by his/her

followers, leads to higher acceptance rates of messages delivered. Therefore, content shared by influencers who usually express their honest opinions of the performance of cosmetic products could potentially generate higher rates of consumer acceptance.

In terms of attractiveness, Lim et al (2017) agree with other academics that there is a positive relationship between influencer attractiveness and consumer brand attitude (Epega, 2008; Umeogu, 2012). Where, physical attractiveness refers to the bodily characteristics of the communicator (Epega, 2008; Lim et al, 2017; Umeogu, 2012). According to Epega (2008), physical attractiveness can have a positive or a negative effect on the communicator credibility with the audience. Pradhan, Duraipandian and Sethi (2016) suggest that the physical appearance of influencer endorsers should be aligned with the image of the cosmetic brand they promote, to get more favourable brand attitudes from consumers. Hence, to increase the persuasiveness of their marketing messages, the image of the beauty influencer should be compatible with the nature of the new cosmetic brand that is being promoted (Umeogu, 2012).

8. Literature review

The first part of this literature review deals with the term “liability of newness” and what legitimacy entails for new cosmetic brands. The second section analyses influencer marketing, followed by a consideration of businesses integrating social media into their overall marketing strategy. The next section focuses on the impact of social media on consumers and ends with the conclusion of this literature review.

8.1 Liability of newness

New businesses face some challenges due to their age, a phenomenon referred to as the “Liability of newness” (Abatecola, Cafferata and Poggesi, 2012). According to researchers, the “liability of newness” is a construct developed by Arthur Stinchcombe in 1965, and it predicts that failure rates are higher in the first years of the organisation’s lifecycle (Abatecola et al, 2012; Dibrell et al, 2009; Ehrmann, Haas and Harms, 2002; Wang, Song and Zhao, 2014; Shephers and Zacharakis, 2003).

Abatecola et al (2012) suggest that the liability of newness changes the focus of academics and practitioners to comprehend not just why and how business ideas arise, but also why and how business ideas fail. Essentially, this construct suggests that the failure of new businesses is due to costs of learning new tasks, the features of the new product, the new organisational structure and the assignment of organisational roles (Abatecola et al, 2012;

Dibrell et al, 2009; Ehrmann et al, 2002). Furthermore, higher dependency on cooperation with strangers, low levels of legitimacy, and the degree of organisational stability are also factors that contribute to the failure of newly established businesses (Abatecola et al, 2012; Dibrell et al, 2009; Ehrmann et al, 2002).

According to Abatecola et al (2012) partnering with beauty influencers can be considered as cooperating with strangers. Consequently, such a partnership represents a risky collaboration because it will be based on relations of trust, trust which will be untested between the parties (influencer and brand) (Ehrmann et al, 2002). Additionally, a new cosmetic brand would not have firm ties with consumers because consumers would have never used its products before (Abatecola et al, 2012). Thus, affiliating a new brand with beauty influencers who are perceived as credible communicators may represent an opportunity to educate potential consumers, who are unaware of the brand and the functionalities of its products.

Umeogu (2012) states that influencers serve as reference individuals. Hence, beauty influencers can impact consumers' existing social systems by means of leading consumers to adopt new cosmetic products. They can make consumers aware of the channels of ordering, the performance of the beauty products, as well as of the difference in prices between a new brand's products and the products of an established brand (Abatecola et al, 2012; Umeogu, 2012).

Furthermore, a study by Shephers and Zacharakis (2003) supports other scholars' impression that new businesses fail due to lack of legitimacy (Dibrell et al, 2009; Ehrmann et al, 2002; Abatecola et al, 2012; Umeogu, 2012). Shephers and Zacharakis (2003) suggest that through acquiring legitimacy from stakeholders, new businesses can easily gain access to resources, attain customers and compete in the market. Based on this, Guercini and Milanesi (2016) consider legitimacy as an asset for a business. An asset that new cosmetic brands may gain by partnering with beauty influencers who can spread brand knowledge and convince consumers that a brand's products are worth purchasing. The next section further explains legitimacy.

8.1.1 Legitimacy

New businesses can overcome the liability of newness by gaining legitimacy (Dibrell et al, 2009; Ehrmann et al, 2002; Shephers and Zacharakis, 2003). Upon attaining legitimacy new businesses can access additional resources and respond to market threats (Dibrell et al,

2009; Ehrmann et al, 2002; Shephers and Zacharakis, 2003; Wang, Song and Zhao, 2014). According to certain researchers, legitimacy is an industry status, consisting of buyers' acceptance, suppliers seeing start-ups as viable partners and fellow competitors seeing start-ups as firms of some importance (Dibrell et al, 2009; Shepherd and Zacharakis, 2003).

Wang and colleagues (2014) state that there are three types of legitimacy: cognitive, regulative, and normative legitimacy. Firstly, cognitive legitimacy refers to the spread of knowledge and belief systems about the new venture (Shepherd and Zacharakis, 2003; Wang et al, 2014). This type of legitimacy is measured by the degree of public awareness, which is based on knowledge of the organisation, and it can be positive, negative or neutral (Shepherd and Zacharakis, 2003). Shepherd and Zacharakis (2003) suggest that brand knowledge can be spread through influencer marketing efforts. Accordingly, influencers may serve as a frame of reference for potential customers, may generate word of mouth and consequently, impact purchase decision (Shepherd and Zacharakis, 2003).

Secondly, regulative legitimacy derives from standards, regulations, rules and expectations created by government, professional bodies, credentialing associations and powerful organisations (Wang et al, 2014; Zimmerman and Zaitz, 2002). According to Zimmerman and Zaitz (2002), new cosmetic brands can acquire regulative legitimacy by partnering with beauty influencers and conducting these collaborations according to the respective laws and protocols, to be recognised as good citizens.

Lastly, normative legitimacy results from norms and values to conduct business (Wang et al, 2014). These norms and values are acceptable by society, the operating industry, and the market environment (Wang et al, 2014). Normative legitimacy comes from addressing norms and values on the output, processes, technical and managerial forms, choices of interaction, employees, endorsements and network (Wang et al, 2014). One source of normative legacy is the network of ties between new cosmetic brands and associations outside the firm, particularly, through influencer marketing (Zimmerman and Zeitz, 2002). Zimmerman and Zeitz (2002) suggest that through influencer marketing, an influencer's legitimacy may be transferred to the new cosmetic brand that is being promoted.

Additionally, attaining these three form of legitimacy enables new cosmetic brands to conduct business more effectively and efficiently (Dibrell et al, 2009). As they guarantee to suppliers, buyers, and service providers these brands' potential for stability (Dibrell et al, 2009; Wang et al, 2014). Thus, allowing new brands to access other resources needed to grow and survive (Dibrell et al, 2009; Wang et al, 2014). Consequently, new cosmetic brands

can strive for legitimacy through influencer marketing efforts. The next section provides an overview of what influencer marketing entails.

8.2 Social Media Influencer Marketing

Nowadays, with the development of Web 2.0 and social media everyone can be an influencer (Murphy and Schram, 2014). Everyone can be of value for marketers as long as they have an extensive influence, a vast network and a solid presence on social media sites (Murphy and Schram, 2014). The Web 2.0 and social media websites combined with existing marketing strategies and studies led to the creation of influencer marketing (Ranga and Sharma, 2014). A marketing strategy focused on influential individuals rather than on the entire target market, as one Influencer can reach a wide audience due to its vast network (Ranga and Sharma, 2014).

Ranga and Sharma (2014) define influencer marketing as the process of establishing relationships with influential individuals, who can impact an extensive number of potential buyers, which would not be possible with a common person. Additionally, Murphy and Schram (2014) use the term “sponsored social” and defend that it relates to rewarding influencers and publishers for mentioning, promoting, or reviewing a product or brand through their social media channels.

In terms of brand content, Murphy and Schram (2014) argue that promoted content is created and distributed by the advertiser, while in sponsored social media, the content is created by an influencer and it naturally spreads to their followers. Moreover, influencer marketing provides brands with new, lasting and unique brand content from a trusted influential source (Murphy and Schram, 2014).

According to Lim et al (2017) influencers can efficiently communicate to niche markets because of their role in driving product engagement and brand loyalty. Therefore, influencer marketing can coordinate content spread on different platforms and target micro niches and loyal partners that care and share (Murphy and Schram, 2014).

Selecting the influencer is seen as a central task in this marketing strategy, for which cosmetic brands should keep in mind its objectives as well as its product or service characteristics (Ranga and Scharma, 2014). Ranga and Scharma (2014) recommend knowing the new cosmetic brand’s objectives and recognizing how potential buyers buy to better decide where to position the influencer content. According to scholars, selecting the right influencers will bring trust into the buying process, because influencers share

meaningful, quality content that can be monetised (Ranga and Scharma, 2014; Murphy and Schram, 2014).

Furthermore, scholars have determined that consumers are more likely to have positive attitudes to businesses endorsed by influencers (Lim et al 2017; Pradhan et al, 2016; Murphy and Schram, 2014). Scholars have found that positive attitudes directly affect consumers' purchase decision (Lim et al 2017; Pradhan et al, 2016; Murphy and Schram, 2014). Thus, new cosmetic brands should explore the benefits of getting people with influence and good networks on board of their Instagram marketing efforts.

8.3 Instagram

Launched in 2010, Instagram is a network in which users can post and share photos and videos using their smartphones (Hu, Manikonda and Kambhampati, 2014). Instagram provides users with a unique way to share their life moments with friends, through pictures and videos (Hu et al, 2014). It allows users to add captions to describe their pictures and videos, to tag or mention other users using the @ symbol, to follow any number of other users and to send private messages to users who follow them (Hu et al, 2014).

This platform has more than eight hundred million users worldwide (Instagram, 2018). According, to Launchmetrics (2018) Instagram is the most popular channel for influencer strategies within the cosmetic industry. This might be due to this platform creating a new visual approach to beauty products, whereby consumers are able to share their beauty moments with other consumers. Additionally, Instagram users have a big desire to create Instagram moments (Hu et al, 2014). Thus, beauty products can help users create a photogenic image of themselves, which they are encouraged to capture and share with others.

The introduction of functionalities such as Instagram stories and Instagram shopping makes this platform convenient for consumers to share product opinions and buy products used by others (Hu et al, 2014). Hence, new cosmetic brands should devise influencer marketing strategies tailor made for Instagram to help increase customer knowledge of new brands. The following section addresses businesses marketing efforts within social media sites.

8.4 Social media and businesses

In recent times, business interactions and exposure to marketing campaigns increasingly take place within social media sites (Cawsey and Rowley, 2016). This is due to the revolution of the internet, which has changed and dominated the way businesses communicate in the

market place (Morales et al, 2017). This revolution makes important that businesses know how to use social media to their advantage and to be mindful of the risks involved with it (Morales et al, 2017).

8.4.1 Monitoring and listening

Recently, Cawsey and Rowley (2016) conducted a research on social media brand building for business-to-business organisations. In this study, participants hinted at the importance of monitoring and listening as part of analysing the market in the starting phase of their social media activities (Cawsey and Rowley, 2016). Additionally, participants revealed that they audited their consumers media consumption and monitored their conversations, a phenomenon denominated “social listening”, to identify what consumers were talking about on social media channels (Cawsey and Rowley, 2016; Morales et al, 2017).

According to Morales et al (2017), monitoring can assist new cosmetic brands in generating valuable research and customer knowledge. Likewise, listening can enable brands to intelligently analyse chat conversations, to know individuals and group thoughts of the brands and to identify opinion leaders on social media platforms (Morales et al, 2017).

Furthermore, Morales et al (2016) argue that new cosmetic brands should collect information on consumers behaviour to adapt their products and services to market demand. Similarly, social listening can create opportunities to analyse the online actions of competitors, to develop quick response to customer feedback, and to rapidly identify and react to negative comments (Morales et al, 2017).

8.4.2 Content

Content can be in the form of blog posts, tutorials, videos, podcasts and competitions (Cawsey and Rawley, 2016). Through social listening, new cosmetic brands could create relevant, interesting, compelling and timely brand content that is noticeable, and that satisfies the needs of the people (Morales et al, 2017). It is beneficial that new cosmetic brands understand how to disseminate positive brand stories online (Gensler, Völckner, Liu-Thompkins and Wiertz, 2013). This in turn reveals the need for new cosmetic brands to identify and approach a network of influencers to spread positive content created by such individuals (Gensler et al, 2013).

Respondents from a research by Cawsey and Rowley's (2016) revealed that it is important to have a more informal tone on social media strategies and to add a face to the brand because consumers react better to people than to faceless corporations. These opinions

align with the idea of Gensler and colleagues (2013) that marketers should implement consumer-generated brand stories into their social media strategies, to create compelling content that can potentially benefit the brand.

8.4.3 Brand awareness

One of the main purposes of marketing is to make consumers aware of the brand label. This can be done through brand awareness which is any situation that leads consumers to experience a brand (Hutter et al, 2013). Brand awareness is represented by the presence of a brand in consumers' minds and reflects consumers ability to identify the brand in diverse situations such as the ones created online, through advertising or promoting a brand on social media sites (Hutter et al, 2013).

Social media activities not only increase traffic on a brand's website but also provide identity and quick exposure to the brand (Cawsey and Rowley, 2016). This results from accentuating a brand's profile and increasing touchpoints by means of meeting Google's search criteria when frequently used, tagged or linked to other sites (Cawsey and Rowley, 2016; Morales et al, 2017). Therefore, raising awareness for a new cosmetic brand could increase the possibility that this brand will be part of the basket of brands that are familiar to potential consumers, when considering purchasing a beauty product.

Moreover, social media marketing is considered a less intrusive strategy in comparison to traditional marketing (Gensler et al, 2013; Hutter et al, 2013). This is because consumers have control over their exposure to the social media content (Gensler et al, 2013; Hutter et al, 2013; Morales et al, 2017). Consequently, new cosmetic brands need to aim at entertaining consumers with their marketing content - to keep their attention (Gensler et al, 2013). This could be done by posting content created by influential individuals.

Additionally, new cosmetic brands need to be diligent in terms of enjoyment and annoyance of adverts (Hutter et al, 2013). Enjoyment represents a pleasant response to the exposure to the content whereas annoyance is an unpleasant reaction to subjective overexposure to a certain content (Hutter et al, 2013). This paragraph leads to the next section which analysis social media in the context of consumers.

8.5 Social media and Consumers

Currently, the nature of social media promotes the active engagement of consumers while encouraging them to establish relationships and build communities (Gensler et al, 2013). Morales et al (2017) state that social media enables consumers to interact directly with

businesses to voice their opinions and provide their feedback in the form of liking, commenting or sharing a post. Moreover, scholars defend that social media exerts an important role in consumer decision-making via user-generated content and business-generated content (Gensler et al, 2013; Hutter et al, 2013; Kaplan and Haenlein, 2012; Morales et al, 2017).

According to Hutter and colleagues (2013), information from social media influences the different phases of the hierarchy of effects. The hierarchy of effects refers to the order in which consumers perceive, process and respond to an online advert (Hutter et al, 2013). There are three phases to the hierarchy of effects which are: first, thinking; second, feeling and third, doing. In terms of consumers and new cosmetic brands, the hierarchy of effects entails: firstly, consumers becoming aware and knowledgeable of a new cosmetic brand; secondly, consumers developing positive or negative feelings to the new brand; lastly, consumers creating attitudes that lead to purchasing and using or to declining and avoiding the brand (Hutter et al, 2013).

Furthermore, Hutter et al (2013) explain that electronic word of mouth delivers information on product performance, on societal and inner consequences of a possible purchase decision. Electronic word of mouth is affected by tie strength, whereby positive or negative information is more effective when shared by strong ties (Hutter et al, 2013). However, scholars defend that weaker ties are more appropriate when the risk is minimal and overall reach is important, as it is in the case of implementing influencer marketing to promote new cosmetic brands (Hutter et al, 2013).

Not long ago, Gensler et al (2013) revealed that positive content is more often shared than negative content and, that the desire to communicate such content was one of the main reasons why consumers used social media. Additionally, entertainment was another main reason for consumers to create their own content, while other motives were to express their personal identities, to seek social interaction, care for other consumers and for financial incentives (Gensler et al, 2013).

8.6 Conclusion

This literature review demonstrated how social media has revolutionized the way business and consumers communicate. It revealed that social media created platforms, such as Instagram, that allow new brands to monitor and listen to their market, to share compelling

content in their social media efforts and to identify and react to negative comments that can have an impact on the brands.

Furthermore, social media gave rise to influencer marketing. A strategy which new cosmetic brands can potentially use to increase consumer brand knowledge and enable consumers to make informed purchased decisions as well as to gain acceptance from consumers and overcome being new in the market.

From the perspective of a consumer, this literature review showed that social media allows consumers to share their opinions and experiences with products or services, which other consumers rely on before making a purchase decision. In addition, it displayed that influencers are consumers; therefore, their opinions can incite trust and influence other consumers' decision to buy. Hence, with their extensive network of followers, influencers can share their brand content and reach millions of consumers worldwide.

9. Conceptualisation

Brand awareness: described as the strength of brand knowledge in consumers' memory, which involves the recognition of a brand (Wang and Yang, 2010). Represents a buyer's capacity to identify a brand within various contexts or situations but with enough details to make a purchase decision (Wang and Yang, 2010).

Brand: defined as a name, term, sign, symbol, design or any other characteristic that distinguishes the goods or services of one seller from those of other sellers (Bennett, 1988, quoted in Wood, 2000).

Cosmetic industry: simply defined as all companies that manufacture, distribute and sell makeup products, fragrances, personal hygiene, hair and skin care products to target consumers (Kumar, 2005).

Cosmetic products: defined as any substances or preparations intended to be put into contact with the various external parts of the human body or with the teeth and the mucous membranes of the oral cavity, which mainly aims to clean, perfume, change their appearance, correct body odours, protect them or keep them in good condition (Health Science Authority of the Singapore, 2017). These include bath products, toothpastes, hair products, makeup items, fragrances and others (Health Science Authority of the Singapore, 2017).

Influencers: defined by Abidin (2015) as every day, ordinary internet users who have many followers on blogs or social media sites, who use texts and visuals to describe their personal lives, engage with their followers in and out of social websites and monetise their following by integrating sponsored content into their posts.

Instagram: defined as a network in which users can post and share photos and videos using their smartphones (Hu et al, 2014).

Legitimacy: defined as the acceptance, desirability and appropriateness of the actions of an entity based on socially constructed values, norms and beliefs. (Guercini and Milanese, 2016). For new cosmetic brands, this type of social judgement consists of buyers, suppliers and fellow competitors accepting the new brand as a viable partner and competitor (Dibrell et al, 2009).

Marketing strategy: defined as a plan of action, which focuses on market segmentation, targeting, and positioning a brand in the market and addresses the issues of how to compete to gain advantages in the long run (Casadesus-Masanell and Ricart, 2010; Varadarajan, 2010).

New ventures: defined by Klotz, Hmieleski, Bradley and Busenitz (2014) as *ventures* that are in the initial phases of development and growth. These ventures are still creating their organisational procedures and are in the process of introducing their initial products or services to the market, as well as in the process of forming their customer base (Klotz et al, 2014). The terms *new venture*, *new firm*, *start-up* and *new brands* are used interchangeably in this study.

Social media: defined as a group of online-rooted applications, that are created on the philosophies and technological grounds of Web 2.0, that enable its users to share content generated by them (Kaplan and Haenlein, 2012).

Stakeholders: defined as internal and external individuals or a group of individuals who can directly or indirectly affect or be affected by an organisation's activities (Neville, Bell and Mengüç, 2006; Zutshi and Sohal, 2004). Usually incorporate shareholders, consumers, employees, business partners, governments, media, local communities and the natural environment (Zutshi and Sohal, 2004).

Methodological approach

This section outlines the research paradigm, research tradition and design as well as the research population, data collection methods, data analysis and the trustworthiness of this study.

10. Research paradigm

A research paradigm represents a research tradition (Wahyumi, 2012). It is a thinking framework, a set of beliefs and assumptions that guides the behaviour of the researcher (Wahyumi, 2012). According to scholars, the main idea of the interpretivist paradigm is to understand human behaviour, while creating an opportunity to further comprehend how individuals experience a social context (du Plooy-Cilliers, Davis and Bezuidenhout, 2014; Kelliher, 2005). This study adopts an interpretivism paradigm because it aims to understand the role that beauty influencers play on consumers awareness and acceptance of new cosmetic brands.

Interpretivist research is known to generate thorough knowledge of a social phenomenon, by recognizing that humans are different from objects (du Plooy Cilliers et al, 2014). Thus, humans should be studied in their environment rather than in laboratories (du Plooy Cilliers et al, 2014). This paradigm is suitable for this study because it allows the researcher to create an in-depth understanding of influencer marketing by analysing each participant's sense of reality. A reality based on participants' experiences with brand-content posted by beauty influencers on Instagram.

Golafshani (2003) stated that results from interpretivist studies are often criticized in terms of validity, reliability and generalization. Where, validity analyses how truthful research findings are and if the research measured what it was planned to measure (du Plooy Cilliers et al, 2014; Golafshani, 2003). Reliability involves testing the findings of quantitative data and generalisation relates to applying the results beyond the context in which the study was conducted (du Plooy Cilliers et al, 2014; Golafshani, 2003).

According to du Plooy Cilliers et al (2014), interpretivist studies do not aim to generalise its results; thus, validity and reliability are not applicable to this type of studies. Instead, interpretivist researchers use trustworthiness to measure the reliability and validity of qualitative studies, which is dealt with in section fifteen of this report (du Plooy Cilliers et al, 2014; Kelliher, 2005).

Furthermore, the interpretivist paradigm works with qualitative data, which allows the researcher to collect non-numerical data, through in-depth interviews (Golafshani, 2003;

Wahyumi, 2012). The data collected contains detailed descriptions and direct quotes from a group of consumers, which makes impossible to test the legitimacy of the findings.

The interpretivist paradigm is suitable for this study because allows the researcher to provide contextual depth to the current body of knowledge (Wahyumi, 2012). This was done by means of attaining inside perspectives from consumers' opinions, since they are the ones exposed to this marketing strategy. Nonetheless, it is important to acknowledge that repeating this study, with different consumers or in another country will not generate the same results, because individuals have unique opinions based on their personal ideas and experiences with Instagram influencer marketing (Golafshani, 2003; du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014).

Similarly, this study adopts an inductive approach to interpret the findings. Inductive research moves from the ground up - starts from particular observations and moves to general theory (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014; Hyde, 2000; Wahyumi, 2012; Woiceshyn and Daellenbach, 2018). In this study, inductive research was conducted firstly, by collecting the data from participants; secondly, by analysing the data and lastly, by interpreting the data in a manner that connects to the chosen theories (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). This reasoning direction enabled the researcher to develop an interview schedule focused on answering the research questions, and on linking the data collected to the findings of this study (Woiceshyn and Daellenbach, 2018). Furthermore, inductive reasoning enabled the researcher to better understand the interrelationship between influencer marketing, brand awareness and legitimacy.

11. Research tradition

Qualitative research focuses on understanding complex human experiences, the characteristics of individual experiences and the meanings associated with a specific phenomenon (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). Qualitative research is usually associated with "Why?" questions (Barnham, 2015). Therefore, the qualitative approach is suitable for this study because enables the researcher to ask questions that will generate deeper levels of information necessary to understand and gain insight into the phenomenon of beauty influencers.

Barnham (2015) states that in qualitative research consumers can express their thoughts in a more detailed manner, and that such thoughts can only be reached through discussions which can deliver a deeper interpretation of consumers' opinions. Hence, the qualitative

approach allowed the researcher to conduct in-depth interviews to capture all the details of the process whereby beauty influencers create brand awareness and legitimacy amongst participants. Additionally, this approach created an opportunity to explore how each participant perceives and attaches meaning to cosmetic brands advertised by beauty influencers who they follow. Effectively, it also enabled the researcher to discover factors that each participant considered as important before purchasing cosmetic products promoted by beauty influencers.

11.1 Research aim

Du Plooy-Cilliers et al (2014) suggest that exploratory research is a valuable method when studying a new or unknown field. Therefore, this study takes an exploratory approach due to the limited literature available on influencer marketing in the context of new businesses. The researcher believes that this approach renders an ideal platform to provide contextual knowledge with respect to the promotion of new cosmetic brands by beauty influencers, while helping to find a practical solution to consumers lack of new brand knowledge.

11.2 Research design

Aligned with the research approach is the research design. A research design is a strategy or a plan that moves from the fundamental theoretical assumptions to specifying the selection of participants, the data collection methods as well as the data analysis methods to be used (Maree, Creswell, Ebersöhn, Eloff, Ferreira, Ivankova, Jansen, Nieuwenhuis, Pietersen and Clark, 2016). This study takes on a phenomenology design, which according to scholars is a design that focuses on the details of everyday human experiences and the meanings that individuals associate to it (Goulding, 2005; Maree et al, 2016). Hence, this design is suitable for this study because the researcher wants to conduct a profound analysis and provide a comprehensive description of the experiences consumers have with brand-content created and distributed by Instagram beauty influencers (Padilla-Díaz, 2015).

According to Goulding (2005), phenomenological researchers are not theorists, consequently, their studies do not aim to develop theories. Similarly, this study does not intend to generate a theory, rather aims to provide a direct description and interpretation of consumers experiences (Goulding, 2005; Padilla-Díaz, 2015). Furthermore, phenomenology design enhances this study by empowering the researcher to move beyond describing and providing core concepts of influencer marketing, to interpreting and seeking

meaning rooted in participants experiences with Instagram beauty influencers (Maree et al, 2016; Reiners, 2012).

Additionally, a research design involves a time frame. According to Levin (2005), the cross-sectional design has a reputation for being less time consuming and applicable to studies that are carried out only at one point in time. As a result, this study takes the form of a cross-sectional research because it was conducted for a period of one year and, because participants were interviewed only once, during the year of 2018. Levin (2005) believes that a cross-sectional design is useful to generate objectives for future research and to assist in indicating association. Thus, this is the appropriate design to demonstrate the linkage that may exist between influencer marketing, consumer awareness and brand attitude.

12. Population

A population is defined as the entire group of people, entities or social artefacts from whom information is required (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). This study is interested in knowing the role that influencer marketing plays on consumers awareness and acceptance of new cosmetic brands. Therefore, this information can only be gathered from consumers, users of cosmetic products who have experienced influencer marketing.

Hence, the population of this study includes all cosmetic users, who have been exposed to brand content created and posted by beauty influencers. This population is appropriate for this study because only these individuals can provide the information required to answer this study research question and sub-questions. To better answer the research questions, this study requires individuals of the population to follow beauty influencers on Instagram.

In addition, the target population of this study includes all users of cosmetic products in South Africa, who follow beauty influencers on Instagram and are between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five years old. This age bracket was selected because research shows that individuals within it spend more time on social media sites and; therefore, have a higher probability of being exposed to influencer marketing (Ranga and Sharma, 2014). Lastly, the accessible population of this study includes of all those who fall within the target population and are in Cape Town (South Africa), due to ease of access for the researcher who lives in Cape Town.

12.1 Sampling

A sample is a subset of the population, considered to be representative of the population (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014). According to scholars, a study of this nature requires non-

probability sampling (Vehovar, Toepoel and Steinmetz, 2016). Vehovar et al (2016) defend that in this type of studies there is no arbitrary sample selection and the researcher needs to use strategic assortment to choose the appropriate sample elements. In the initial stages of this study, the researcher planned to use two types of non-probability sampling, namely purposive and snowball sampling, instead, the researcher used convenience, snowball and volunteer sampling due to difficulties in getting the desired number of participants.

At first, the researcher implemented convenience sampling by means of sending WhatsApp messages, inviting individuals who she knows and has contact with, to be part of this study. This resulted in a convenience sample consisting of three acquaintances of the researcher, namely Participant J, L and P. These participants were relatively easy to access since the researcher knew them beforehand and was aware that they represented the unique characteristics of the target population. Additionally, the researcher recognizes that the convenience sample might be biased due to their acquaintance with the researcher. However, it could be argued that familiarity is a strength of qualitative research as participants are more comfortable sharing their experiences.

Afterwards, the researcher had to implement snowball sampling because she was unable to get five participants with the convenience sampling method. For this study, snowball sampling entailed an acquaintance of the researcher suggesting two participants, who fitted the population parameter and could and wanted to participate in this research. From this sampling method, the researcher was able to interview Participant R, who is not associated with the researcher. However, the second suggested participant was not available to be interviewed at the time. This required that the researcher used volunteer sampling to reach the desirable sample size.

Lastly, the researcher used volunteer sampling and as the name suggest it consists of putting together a sample unit who volunteered to participate in a research (Vehovar et al, 2016). For this method, the researcher placed an announcement on her WhatsApp status, requesting individuals who follow Instagram beauty influencers and live in Cape Town to send her a message to be invited to participate in this study. This resulted in Participant K volunteering to be part of this study.

In all, this research sample consists of five participants, all females, between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-five years old, who use cosmetic products and follow beauty influencers on Instagram. All participants have different experiences, views and perspectives depending on different factors such as age, gender, education, cultural

background and others. Two participants are South Africans, while two are Angolans and one is from Zimbabwe. They are all students at different tertiary institutions in Cape Town and are pursuing different qualifications. Additionally, there is a connection between the researcher and four participants, some are close friends while others are acquaintances.

13. Data-collection method

To provide a comprehensive analysis of this research problem, qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews. Boyce and Neale (2016) state that in-depth interviews are appropriate when there are a few respondents and when the researcher wants to see how each respondent interprets a specific phenomenon. As we can see, this is in line with the purpose of this study, thus, in-depth interviews are the most appropriate data collection method for this case. The interviews had a duration of half an hour, hence, it was convenient to conduct it with acquaintances of the researcher, due to the length of the process.

The researcher had three conditions to conduct the in-depth interviews: (1) the participants needed to be aware of the purpose of this study, (2) the questions needed to be properly worked on and (3) anonymity had to be guaranteed with respect to interviewees' responses. To meet the first condition, days before the interviews, all five participants received a participant consent form, which can be found on Appendix, providing all the information in relation to this study. Participants had to sign this consent form as proof that they acknowledge the objective and purpose of this study.

To meet the second condition, an Interview guide was created, which can be found on Appendix A. This interview guide consists of open-ended questions, based on the available literature to ensure a fit between the interview questions, the purpose and the research questions of this study. The interview guide was tested with Participant J to check and adjust for vagueness and doubts, resulting on more questions being added to the guide. Furthermore, to satisfy the third condition the researcher did not record the names of the participants during the entire research process.

Boyce and Neale (2016) believe that things like time, environment, clothing choice and climate can affect the interview negatively. Most interviews were conducted during the month of July because participants had free time available due to school holidays. In terms of environment, due to bad weather conditions one of the interviews had to be conducted at the respective interviewee's house and another one at the researcher's house.

Participant R was interviewed at the Kauai branch in Rondebosch. This interview was interrupted once because the researcher did not disable her cell phone and had to answer an important call. Likewise, Participant J's interview was conducted at Riverside mall, also in Rondebosch and the researcher had to interrupt the interview a few times because of surrounding noise. Nonetheless, all interviews were recorded in the form of audio files and later transcribed, and notes were taken during the interviews as well.

All participants received some questions in common, but the interview guide gave the researcher the flexibility to ask additional questions to make maximum use of the time available to enrich the data. During the interviews the researcher tried to speak as clearly as possible, repeated and paraphrased some questions to ensure that the interviewees understood the questions. Despite some changes in the questions asked, the focus of the study never changed.

Additionally, in-depth semi-structured interviews allowed participants to openly express their opinions regarding beauty influencers and new cosmetic brands. Similarly, it enabled the researcher to collect rich data containing detailed information with participants' views, experiences and opinions. Moreover, open-ended questions enabled the researcher to ask more in-depth questions and participants to provide as more detailed information as possible (Boyce and Neale, 2016).

The researcher chose to conduct in-depth semi-structured interviews instead of focus groups because participants might not have felt comfortable to express their opinions in a group session. The researcher believes that individual interviews helped participants to comfortably discuss the topic since they could openly express their opinions with the researcher, free of judgements or dominant views from other participants.

14. Data analysis method

According to Braun and Clarke (2006), thematic coding allows the researcher to group together the data that is linked to a repeated pattern of meaning. Maree et al (2016) state that thematic coding enables the researcher to analyse large volume of data, which in this case was generated from the long interviews. For this study, thematic coding was conducted based on the six phases of thematic analysis proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), which are: data familiarisation, generating initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes; and, producing the report.

In the first phase, data familiarisation started with the researcher transcribing the recorded interviews into written form. Transcription entailed typing out all the verbal and the significant non-verbal actions of participants, in a way that was true to its original form (Braun and Clarke, 2006). To increase familiarisation, the researcher read the textual data several times, while writing down ideas for coding.

In the second phase, the researcher generated initial codes based on the initial list of ideas elaborated while reading the data. The process of coding consisted of the researcher making notes on the transcripts and later using the notes to create themes. After coding all transcripts, the researcher grouped and assigned the codes to the relevant themes.

In the third phase, after all the data was coded and grouped, the researcher wrote on each transcript the different codes that were identified. Then, the researcher assigned all the codes from each transcript to six potential themes and grouped all the relevant coded data into those themes.

The fourth phase entailed the researcher revising the themes identified. This revision was conducted at two levels, first, at the level of the coded data extracts and second, at the level of the entire data set. At the coded extract level, the researcher read all the data grouped together to establish if they formed a pattern. This was done by excluding themes that did not have enough data to support it and by merging themes that could form one. At the entire data level, the researcher read the entire data again to revise the themes to ensure that they fitted the data being analysed.

In the fifth stage, defining and naming themes began when all the different themes fitted together and told the overall story of the data. This phase entailed searching for literature to provide scope and content to each theme and to clearly define the final themes and subthemes of this study. As a result, the themes were named: brand awareness, brand trend, in-store research, purchasing price, product benefits and trust on influencers.

The last phase entailed the production of a findings report which consisted of a final analysis of the data, based on the fully defined themes. The findings report included extracts of the data which were selected and analysed according to the final themes to ensure that they were aligned with the research questions and the literature. However, after submitting a draft of the report and getting it revised by the supervisor, the researcher was advised to conduct a new thematic analysis.

15. Trustworthiness

In qualitative studies, trustworthiness is enhanced according to four criteria, namely credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Firstly, credibility deals with the accuracy of which the researcher interprets the data (Maree et al, 2016). Secondly, transferability relates to the findings being applied to a similar study and generating similar results (du Plooy-Cilliers et al, 2014; Maree et al, 2016). Thirdly, dependability speaks about the successful integration of the research design with the data collection method and the data analysis process (Maree et al, 2016). Lastly, confirmability refers to the degree of which the findings are shaped by the participants' opinions (Maree et al, 2016).

In this study, the researcher increased credibility in various ways. One of these ways was through adopting a qualitative research design that fitted the problem investigated. Another way to enhance credibility consisted of giving participants a brief overview of this study at the beginning of each interview. Also, by asking participants for their consent to participate in the study and for their permission to record the interviews. During the interpretation phase, the researcher received guidance from her supervisor which helped to better interpret the data and combat potential bias. The findings reflect the opinions and experiences of participants supported by theoretical literature.

In terms of transferability, this study does not ensure generalisation because it focused on understanding participants' unique experiences and perspectives. Nevertheless, the researcher provided detailed descriptions of the process of collection and interpretation of data. The researcher described in detail the impact that influencer marketing has on participants' attitudes towards new cosmetic brands to enable readers to decide the extent of transferability of this study. Additionally, transferability was enhanced by using three different sampling methods to ensure that all participants share the population characteristics. Nevertheless, the researcher was aware that there might be a certain level of bias due to the sampling methods used.

Lastly, dependability was promoted by providing a literature review of the topic, which served as context to interpret the data collected. Furthermore, dependability was enhanced by testing the proposed interview protocol, by using the same interview schedule for all interviews and repeating the data analysis process to ensure consistency and proper interpretation of the data gathered. Besides, the researcher kept all the notes of the research decisions taken during the study and consulted with her supervisor during each phase of

the research process. Likewise, participants' quotes were used for the interpretation of findings to support the arguments at hand.

Research findings

This section covers the presentation and interpretation of the data collected, it outlines the ethical implications, the limitations as well as the heuristic value of this study.

16. Presentation and Interpretation of Findings

After going through the six phases of thematic coding, the following themes were identified: reference individuals, beauty experts, doubt regarding new cosmetic brands, trust and shopping intention. These themes enabled the researcher to connect the constructs of the chosen theories (social comparison and source credibility theories) to the relation between beauty influencers and consumers' brand attitudes.

Firstly, the social comparison theory defends that individuals tend to use opinions, behaviours and beliefs of other individuals to judge the appropriateness of their own opinions (Moschis, 1976; Van Rooy et al, 2016). The need for comparing leads individuals to choose a reference person whom they use to evaluate the suitability of their opinions (Chan, 2008; Moschis, 1976). This was evident in Participant L's statement regarding an influencer: *"Like literally, especially with Mhlahli, she is my Instagram [idol]. I like make-up, so she is like a make-up influencer. So, every time she recommends something I literally go to the shop, check it out and I try it out"*.

Participant P shared a similar sentiment, she stated: *"Sometimes you have something [an event], [or] you have a party. I go to Instagram and I see the things [products] that they are using and maybe I have [the product]. Maybe I can make [recreate] that look, maybe I can make that makeup. I do that [and] it really works"*.

Participant R also expressed the importance of having a reference individual. She expressed the following: *"I'm more inclined to listen to someone I know or can associate with, better than someone who is in a different country, with a lifestyle different to my own. I don't know, I think it is because if you think of a celebrity who is overseas, they have access to a lot more than we have. However, if you're taking influencers who are in South Africa, taking products that they use that are in South Africa then it is a lot easier to relate to them, because you're [aware that the product] is actually accessible"*.

It became evident that participants use beauty influencers as a reference group and reference individuals. Participants evaluated and compared influencers' standing with respect to beauty products against their own opinions. This process is consistent with comparative appraisal of the social comparison theory, as it does not necessarily entail the evaluation seeker asking another person directly for an evaluation of his/her values, but rather the evaluation seeker observing the behaviour of the reference person without a need for face to face interactions (Moschis, 1976).

Accordingly, through brand-content posted by beauty influencers on their Instagram, participants become aware of and accustomed to the influencers' opinions of cosmetic brands and products as well as to the specific products that influencers use and reasons they use such products. Subsequently, participants use this as points of reference to rate their product opinions. This was clearly stated by Participant J. She stated that, *"I follow them [beauty influencers] because I want to see how they are doing their makeup, what products they use. Because some of us have skin problems and we want to see what other people are using to remove blemishes and stuff. So, it is also very informative in terms of skin care"*.

Moreover, the social comparison theory explains how shared information is produced and maintained. According to this theory, information is maintained by groups through social interactions, specifically, information from reference individuals whose values and outlook are similar to the evaluator's own values (Moschis, 1976; Van Rooy et al, 2016).

It became evident that beauty influencers are used as reference points to an extent where participants need to assimilate. The data gathered revealed that participants often become aware of new cosmetic brands from influencers mentioning, promoting, reviewing new brands on Instagram; therefore, developing the presence of these brands on the participants' minds.

Participant P hinted at the importance of self-evaluation in relation to several beauty influencers. She said: *"Even when I don't know [a product] I will still [know it]. Because, for example if Lweji [an influencer] is posting about this product, then they all [beauty influencers] [post about] the same thing. I don't know why but if one influencer posts a product today, next week a different influencer will also post about the same product, and so on. [Consequently,] it feels like you know the product even though you have never seen it"*. Participant J shared similar sentiments. She stated: *"Most of the times I don't know the brands because there are many new brands right now. Everybody is just creating stuff*

[brands/ products] but because you start seeing everybody trying it out you kind of start knowing the brands, in a way”.

Additionally, participants’ drive for self-evaluation forces them to learn about new cosmetic products, which occurs from interacting with content posted by influencers on Instagram. According to Van Rooy et al (2016), this constitutes an adaptive social process. A process whereby influencers distribute information and knowledge related to new cosmetic brands to develop stronger mutual links with followers, which ideally leads to socially validated information (Van Rooy et al, 2016).

Social validation of brand information can serve as an indicator of social acceptance which is driven by the underlined forces of consumers’ values and behavioural traits (Saravanan and Nithyaprakash, 2015). Consequently, the likelihood that new cosmetic brands will be accepted amongst followers of beauty influencers depends on the way followers interpret and judge the brand information (Saravanan and Nithyaprakash, 2015). This was evident in Participant K’s statement, she said: *“I would want to know what is going on, what is the product all about because more than one influencer is talking about it. Obviously, there is a rave going on. It must be a good product if they [influencers] talk and are reviewing it [product from a new brand]. So, [yes] it would get my attention”.*

As we can see, by providing brand information, influencers not only validate a new cosmetic brand in the eyes of consumers, but also pave the way for consumers to accept the brand. This was expressed by Participant L, when she stated that *“I guess you second guess [scepticism regarding a new cosmetic brand], maybe I should try it [product of a new cosmetic brand] because everybody is talking about it”.*

Secondly, the data gathered revealed that participants are more likely to create positive attitudes towards new cosmetic brands if positive brand-content is released by their reference influencers. This may result from the credibility of the beauty influencers contributing to the persuasiveness of the brand message they send. This constitutes the underlying concept of the source credibility theory which states that the information presented by a credible source can affect consumers’ opinions, beliefs and attitudes (Lim et al, 2017).

One of the three dimensions of source credibility is expertise (Lim et al, 2017). According to scholars, expertise refers to the extent to which the message sender is knowledgeable of a specific topic (Lim et al, 2017; Umeogu, 2012). Lim et al (2017) defend that influencers

perceived as experts tend to be more persuasive and capable of driving purchase intention. Participant R demonstrated this by stating that *“I’m not someone who does makeup very well. However, when I went on Instagram I saw a lot of people doing tutorials, I spoke to a lot of my friends who are incredibly good at doing their makeup and they advised me to watch this person [beauty influencers] on Instagram, to watch their [Instagram] stories. Then, you go [to Instagram], you watch their [beauty influencers] stories and they break it down for you so easily and they recommend products. Subsequently, you go [to a store] and try those products. So, it is really cool [useful] to see someone actually doing their makeup”*.

According to Participant K, beauty influencers share product information to educate consumers regarding the product, its performance and benefits. She stated that *“I would think the purpose of them [beauty influencers] showing a picture of the product they use, or the end result [of reviewing the product] is to give followers an idea of how it should be used or how it should look”*.

Based on the responses gathered, we can see that participants perceive beauty influencers as individuals who possess certain levels of competence with beauty products. For example, in terms of make-up products, all participants revealed that they look upon beauty influencers who possess great skills in that field for product recommendations and to improve their own makeup skills. Thus, participants not only saw influencers as individuals who possessed skills and competence but also as individuals who made correct assertions in terms of cosmetic products, (Umeogu, 2012). The data gathered confirms the idea of Lim et al (2017) that product expertise has a positive effect on participants trust in influencers and on their attitudes to new cosmetic brands since participants rely on influencers’ recommendations when searching for products and methods to enhance their beauty.

Nonetheless, during one of the interviews, Participant R revealed that when it came to skin care products she does not rely only on information provided by beauty influencers. According to Participant R, beauty influencers hold no training or qualification in dermatology. She stated that *“[Beauty influencers were recommending] Apple cider vinegar as a facial toner; nonetheless, all these people [beauty influencers] are not qualified skin specialists. [However, if] you google ‘apple cider vinegar as a toner and [if] you ask dermatologists and other doctors they will [tell that it is] the worst thing that you can [use] on your skin. So, here you have [several] YouTube videos, many different posts about the benefits of apple cider vinegar for your face when actual professionals, [experts are stating that this can cause damage] to your skin, [are advising you to] stop using it. [That is why] I*

always have to do extensive research [on online recommendations] because yes, a lot of people are following something, but it doesn't [mean that it is] actually good". This statement serves as evidence that beauty influencers considered as reference individuals are not enough to lead certain consumers to trust their brand messages. Besides, this demonstrates that trustworthiness also depends on influencers' adequate or inadequate knowledge of the products they promote.

In their study, Lim et al (2017), revealed that influencers lack knowledge of the advertised products impacted their credibility in the eyes of consumers as well consumers attitude to promoted brands. Similarly, in relation to skin care products, Participant R does not see beauty influencers as credible sources of information and as a result, this participant needs to do extensive research or consult skin specialists before purchasing skin care products recommended by beauty influencers.

To note that, the research conducted by Lim et al (2017) also found that influencers' expertise has a positive effect on the purchasing intention of respondents, however, this is not the case for new cosmetic brands. As previously mentioned in the liability of newness section of the literature review, consumers face difficulties in creating firm ties with newly-established cosmetic brands (Guercini and Milanesi, 2016; Shepherd and Zacharakis, 2013). This occurs because new cosmetic brands lack cognitive legitimacy which is measured by public awareness and earned through cooperation with external stakeholders (Guercini and Milanesi, 2016; Shepherd and Zacharakis, 2013). This was clear from participants responses. Participant L told that *"Well, I would be sceptical [regarding a new brand] because I don't know this brand. I'm cautious in that department [cosmetic brands], so I would rather stick to brands that I know because I know that they have [many] reviews, [rather] than a brand that I don't know because it is all new"*.

Participant P had a similar view, she emphasized that she would consider buying the product of a new cosmetic brand based on two circumstances: firstly, if the product had been offered to her and if she enjoyed the product results and; secondly, if one or several non-influential consumers recommend the product to her. She stated that *"If it is a new product it will be easier if [someone] gives it to me, [for example as] a gift, [so] I will try it out. If it works, of course I will be buying another one. But [if I go buy the product] with my money, it is because I have seen a lot of people using it or maybe you as a friend [recommended it to me saying] 'Participant P, I have tried it and it works'. [So], if I have the money and I have seen a lot of people posting [about the product, I will also consider] trying it to see if it works". [But then*

again, I will not go buy from a new brand] just [because] I saw someone on Instagram advertising it. I will think twice [about purchasing from a new cosmetic brand]”.

Evidently, influencer marketing appears to be effective in generating and sharing knowledge of new cosmetic brands, thus, helping new brands to create public awareness and consequently some degree of cognitive legitimacy. However, the researcher noticed that influencer marketing was ineffective in creating high levels of cognitive legitimacy. To remember that, cognitive legitimacy entails consumers being knowledgeable about products and services to the extent that (information about) such products and services are taken for granted (Shepherd and Zacharakis, 2003). In other words, influencers' efforts only created new information but not to a point whereby participants were confident enough about the quality of a new brand's products to believe that all future products of that new brand will be of the same quality.

In addition, during the interviews, participants raised their concerns regarding influencers' motivation to promote cosmetic brands. On this, Umeogu (2012) asserts that motivation is one of the primary elements of trustworthiness. Trustworthiness is the second dimension of source credibility and refers to the honesty and believability of the source of the message. According to Umeogu (2012), an influencer's trustworthiness depends primarily on their followers' perception of her or his endorsement motivations. This can be seen from Participant P's statement. According to her, *“Most [beauty influencers] are [sharing product information] for money. First, they start doing [it] for fun [but later, their intentions change and] you can see when they are trying to lie to [us]. [For example], there [is this] lady, [an influencer] that I have been following since 2012. [Initially], she was real, she [used to tell] everything [regarding the products] but now [every product she reviews is] good. I like her, but now [I] can see that [she] is just doing this for the money”.*

Furthermore, participants demonstrated difficulties in recognising influencers as reliable sources of brand information based on promotion motivation because they believe that different influencers have different reasons to share brand-content on their Instagram accounts. These reasons can be monetary, informative or for pleasure. Participant J stated that *“Some [beauty influencers] actually like beauty product or they [enjoy] makeup, or skin care routines, but there are some who just do it to promote their pages, to gain more followers and sometimes to gain money out of it”.* Likewise, Participant K said that *“I trust them to a certain extent because [influencers do not say] the whole truth. For example, [in the case of] paid partnership they might just be saying things to please the brand or [maybe]*

the more people [influencers] get to buy the product the more [they] get paid. So, that may be factors that influences the whole situation”.

It is evident that participants are less persuaded by influencers who they perceive as being motivated by self-interest compared to influencers who appear to enjoy what they do and who can transfer their passion for beauty products to their followers. This is clear from Participant J's example, she expressed that *“For example, with makeup I will definitely trust [an influencer] who enjoys doing their makeup, ‘beating their face’ [enhancing their beauty with make-up products]. If they show me that, I will definitely trust their judgment. But, for example, if someone who just posts pictures of themselves and randomly [starts] promoting a company or a brand, it [would be] very tricky [because] I have never seen them doing [promotions before]”*. Therefore, participants responses were aligned with Epega (2008) and Umeogu (2012) sentiments that for the brand-message to have the desired effect, followers need to believe that influencers have nothing to gain from promoting new cosmetic brands.

Trustworthiness also refers to the communicator's perceived sincerity, and objectivity (Lim et al, 2017; Umeogu, 2012). In source credibility, honesty relies on the willingness of the receiver to attribute truth and neutrality to the information received (Umeogu, 2012). Most participants recognised the importance of receiving honest product reviews from beauty influencers. Participant K stated that *“I don't want them to sugar coat the product. When I watch videos about product reviews, I want to know the pros and the cons about the product. [Influencers must not] give me [only] the positives, the roses and sun shines about the product. I want to know the good and the bad, therefore, when an [influencer] does this it makes me trust them more”*. Participant R had a similar argument. She stated that *“The most important thing [for me] is [that the influencer is using the product and] giving an open and honest review. Because you don't want someone to review [a product] and give it a good [rate] just because they are getting it for free. That is something that I always look at, if [the influencer is] being honest with reviewing the product because there is no point in false advertising for [the influencer's] benefit. So, I think influencers have the responsibility to be as honest as possible”*.

The statements above show that participants expect beauty influencers to give their honest and unbiased opinions about the brands and products they promote. However, the data demonstrates that participants were not certain regarding the honesty of influencers. Some participants acknowledged that some beauty influencers are honest providers of brand information. According to Participant L, *“If Maybelline or Mac gives products [to Instagram*

influencers] some of them [will be] genuinely honest about the product. Even if the product doesn't work for [the influencers], they may [state that they] don't like the way the product looks on them [or that] it doesn't work [for them] but [that you, the follower] could try [the product] and it [might end up flattering you]". Participant J had a similar argument. She stated that "Sometimes [influencers] are really honest [about the products]. I think the brands don't pay them when they [give their honest reviews]. And, if they are really not enjoying [the product] they will just say [that the it is] not [a] good [product] and [that they cannot] lie to [us] because [they are] getting money".

Conversely, Participant P implied that certain Instagram influencers are dishonest about their physical appearance. She expressed that some influencers induce their followers into thinking and believing that they can get similar beauty features to the influencer by purchasing the products promoted by them. Participant P stated that *"I also want to look like that. That's why people [believe that they should buy the advertised products]. [They believe that by using the product they may] look like [the influencer] but sometimes [they are unaware that influencers] are lying [on Instagram]. [Influencers] are [using] photoshop and [altering their photographs]. And we [followers] think that the product is [helping them enhance their beauty], making them look like this, but not"*.

These findings confirm the importance of the targeted audience perceiving the source of the message as an honest provider of information as proposed by Umeogu (2012). These findings also confirm that participants rely on influencers to gain knowledge of cosmetic products and as a result, expect influencers to provide honest and objective product information. Furthermore, the data establishes that influencers who give honest product reviews can create high credibility in the eyes of the participants. As a result, high credibility can lead to participants creating respect and tending to more readily accept the words of influencers (Umeogu, 2012).

Unexpectedly, Participant L hinted that it is impossible to know when beauty influencers are being honest. According to her, *"you never really know [when are influencers giving an honest product review]. It is a 'take your risk, take your chances' type of situation. Because not all influencers will specifically say [that the product is good or bad]". At the end of the day [influencers] cannot speak bad about the product if it's given to [them] for free number one, and number two it is given to [them] so that [they] can advertise it and not tell people not to buy it"*. It is evident that there is no way of being certain that influencers are providing neutral product information. Therefore, consumers' trust in content provided by influencers is purely

based on their discernment of the message and of the influencer itself, hoping that the information is accurate.

Participant L's experience coincided with the findings of the study done by Lim et al (2017) which revealed that the credibility of social media influencers has an insignificant relationship with consumers' attitude. This was evident from Participant L's argument which showed that followers create attitudes towards cosmetic brands based on messages conveyed by influencers, irrespective of how honest they believe influencers are.

Surprisingly, only Participant K raised the idea that having a good-looking influencer promoting a cosmetic product increases the credibility of the information. She stated that *"I would not want, an influencer marketing or promoting a product that is scruffy looking. To be honest, I would not trust them, and I probably would not buy the product. I feel like the way [the influencer] looks plays a big role in actually getting the product across, marketing the product and convincing your followers that this is a good product and that they should buy it"*. Participant K's sentiments agree with the literature that the physical attractiveness of the beauty influencer plays a role on consumers' evaluation of the advert and the product being advertised (Pradhan et al, 2016; Umeogu, 2012).

Additionally, this statement demonstrated that for Participant K the appearance of influencers stimulates her attitudes towards the products because they represent the attractions Participant K desires from the products promoted. This is further consistent with a prior study conducted by Pradhan et al (2016), which revealed that celebrity attractiveness that correctly matched the brand had a positive effect in purchase intention or the preference of the brand. Parallel to Pradhan's et al (2016) study, Lim et al (2017) found that source attractiveness of social media influencers is not a powerful dimension to generate purchase intention, but it leads to positive attitudes. The researcher believes that other participants did not see physical attractiveness as a requisite for source credibility because influencers considered as non-attractive would be able to demonstrate how they make use of cosmetic products to enhance their beauty.

In their study, Lim et al (2017) analysed the impact that meaning transfer of social media influencers had on consumers attitude and subsequently purchase intention. According, to the construct of meaning transfer, an influencer's effectiveness often relies on his/her ability to convey product meanings alongside the endorsement process (Lim et al, 2017). The idea is that consumers tend to consume products that are endorsed by their idols (Lim et al, 2017). This was evident by Participant P's statement that *"I think [trust] is also about which*

[beauty influencer] you like the most. Because if [my favourite influencer says that she] likes every [product she reviews] I [may believe that she is saying] the truth. Since, if [I] follow someone is because [I] like something that this person is doing". Initially, this construct was not part of the scope of this research, however, the data gathered suggested that participants may generate positive attitudes for new cosmetic brands if they believe that its products help define the style of their favourite influencers (Umeogu, 2012).

Meaning transfer also suggests that similarities between an influencer and its followers can lead to positive brand attitudes (Pradhan et al, 2016). This was evident in Participant J's statement that *"not everything will suit me. I don't think I will purchase because of the influencer, especially if they don't look like me"*. Participant R expressed the importance of the beauty influencer having a skin condition similar to hers. She stated that *"[Many] beauty influencers are very personal with their journey and they will share that they have this skin condition [or that] problem. If [a beauty influencer] has a similar story to mine it's a lot easier to relate [to the influencer] and maybe try [the products he or she is promoting]"*.

The data showed that the meaning transfer of beauty influencers is relatively significant. It showed that participants are more likely to accept meanings from new cosmetic brands promoted by beauty influencers whom they admired or see as a resemblance to themselves. Accordingly, participants with favourable attitudes towards beauty influencers generally harboured favourable attitudes towards the endorsed beauty products and brands, which Lim et al (2017) found to lead to an intention to purchase.

Lastly, in this study social comparison and source credibility significantly mediated the relationship between brand content from influencers, consumers attitudes to advertised brands and brand legitimacy. The two theories demonstrated that consumers use beauty influencers as a frame of reference for understanding the concept of new cosmetic products. This serves as evidence that influencer marketing can provide greater information regarding new cosmetic brands as well as regarding the performance, benefits and drawbacks of its products. Thus, this strategy can fulfil consumers need for information related to the products of new cosmetic brands.

These findings suggested that influencer marketing can lead participants to create low but favourable attitudes towards new cosmetic brands. There was evidence that these favourable attitudes can lead to shopping intention. According to Participant L, *"[A beauty influencer] will post a video and will show a picture of how [the product] looks. [Participant L] usually writes [the name of the product] on [her] notepad [with a description of what the*

product is]. Then, [she] will go to the shops and actually look and test it out". Participant P also demonstrated shopping intention by stating that *"If [the product is] something that interests [her], [she will] go [to a store] to see [the product]"*. Participant K also showed that favourable attitudes lead to buying intention. She stated that *"if I like what I see, [I will] probably go to the store and [then] make the final decision there"*.

For this study, the researcher decided to use Schmid and Axhausen (2017) definition of shopping; they explain shopping as the process of collecting information on product attributes before making a final purchase decision. This process also involves individuals' decision to either visit a store or shop online (Schmid and Axhausen, 2017). According to the data gathered, influencers' opinions will mostly impact participants' decision to go into a store to evaluate the products of a new cosmetic brand, where they then make a final purchase decision. This may be due the fact that cosmetic products are categorised as experience products, which are products that usually induce a higher intention to purchase in-store because of the inability of getting the dominant product features online (Schmid and Axhausen, 2017).

16.1 Conclusion

Influencer marketing was found to be an effective strategy to place the name of new cosmetic brands in the mind of participants. The data collected showed that participants used beauty influencers as reference individuals with which participants develop connections and rely on their brand-content to keep themselves updated with regards to the latest beauty trends, the newest products and its functionalities.

Most participants perceived influencers as beauty experts, as individuals who know how to use cosmetic products to enhance their beauty. Participants believed that influencers have different personalities. Consequently, influencers may have dissimilar reasons to promote cosmetic brands. The reason(s) (e.g. for financial benefits or for enjoyment) could impact the levels of honesty of their product information. Furthermore, a beauty influencer who appeared to provide truthful product information, being it positive or negative, and showed non-financial motivations to promote a brand could induce participants to create positive attitudes.

The data shows that meaningful relationships and similarities between influencers and participants contribute to participants identifying themselves with influencers, increasing the believability of the brand information published. Accordingly, beauty influencers who are

knowledgeable about cosmetic products, whose promotion efforts are driven by non-financial factors, who give their honest opinions and with who participants better identify are the most viable and persuasive sources of brand information. Influencers with these characteristics can enhance a new brand's awareness, create positive brand attitudes and lead to possible shopping behaviours.

Additionally, participants demonstrated that in the case of new cosmetic brands, positive attitudes do not necessarily lead to shopping intentions. Irrespective of influencers' efforts, participants remained hesitant about new cosmetic brands because such brands had not proven themselves in the market, and this, consequently evoked feelings of uncertainty amongst participants regarding the quality of new brands and their products.

Surprisingly, it appears that influencer marketing cannot create satisfactory cognitive legitimacy for new cosmetic brands. It is evident that content uploaded by Instagram beauty influencers is inadequate to convince participants into trusting that the products of a new brand possess the quality desired by them. Nevertheless, influencer marketing can create initial levels of cognitive legitimacy by developing a knowledge base with primary information, which allow consumers to be well-informed about new cosmetic brands and the characteristics of its products.

17. Ethical implications

Prior to collecting the data, the researcher had to gain ethical clearance from the IIE ethical committee. After gaining ethical clearance but prior to conducting the interviews, participants were requested to sign an Informed consent form. This form assured participants that their identities would be kept confidential and that they could withdraw from the study at any stage.

The researcher acknowledges that certain responses might have been influenced by the ideas of the researcher because of pre-existing acquaintances between the researcher and the participants. Nonetheless, participants were encouraged to express their honest opinions at all stages of the data collection process.

This study had a non-sensitive nature; yet, the researcher opted to not mention or record participants' names and to refer to them by the initial letter of their names at any stage of the research process. Furthermore, the researcher did not change the data to lessen the data analysis period or to get the desired results. Likewise, the researcher avoided bias by following the applicable ethical procedures outlined by the IIE code of research ethics.

18. Limitations of the study

The researcher is aware that the data analysed could have been gathered from a larger sample size to produce highly extensive results. Nevertheless, the sample size was adequate as this is a qualitative study which did not aim to generalise its findings.

Participants' background was a restricting factor because all participants were students, with no jobs and minimal income. Hence, they may not have been a good indicator of shopping intention. Additionally, participants responses were partial, based on their prior experiences with beauty influencers and cosmetic brands; consequently, impacting the data collected.

Furthermore, one of the participants faced language barriers during her interview because English is not her home language. As a result, the researcher encouraged the participant to provide her opinions in a detailed and uncomplicated manner.

Another limitation was lack of relatable literature resulting in the researcher using broader academic articles, related to social media strategies, consumer purchase decision, and celebrity endorsement, to compile this research report.

19. Heuristic value

This study contributes to this new era of marketing by increasing the current knowledge of influencer marketing. The findings of this study provide an understanding of the interaction between beauty influencer and their followers on Instagram. Additionally, it clarifies the role beauty influencers play on consumers perception and attitudes to new cosmetic brands.

Future researchers could consider administering an experiment with a fictitious cosmetic brand to eliminate the potential bias that could impact participants' responses. Furthermore, this experiment could analyse consumers knowledge and acceptance of a new cosmetic brand before and after the implementation of influencer marketing. Besides, future researchers should diversify the range of participants to get a sample that better represents the population. For example, the sample could include male participants to achieve more generalised results.

The findings suggest that for new cosmetic brands, brand managers and their teams can integrate influencer marketing into their Instagram marketing strategy to increase customers knowledge of the brand's products. Even so, to increase legitimacy, management team and influencers should conjointly prioritise to build customer knowledge of the brand itself.

20. Reference list

- Abatecola, G., Cafferata, R. and Poggesi, S. 2012. Arthur Stinchcombe's "liability of newness". Contribution and impact of the construct. *Journal of Management History*, 18(4): 402-418.
- Abidin, C. 2015. Communicative intimacies: Influencers and Perceived Interconnectedness. *Ada: A Journal of Gender, New Media, and Technology*, No.8.
- Barnham, C. 2015. Quantitative and qualitative research. Perceptual foundations. *International Journal of market Research*, 57(6):837- 854.
- Boyce, C. and Neale, P. 2016. Conducting in-depth interviews: A guide for designing and conducting in-depth interviews for evaluation input. Watertown: Pathfinder International.
- Braun, V. and Clarke, V. 2006. Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3 (2):77-101.
- Casadesus-Masanell, R. and Ricart, J.E. 2010. From strategy to business models and onto tactics. *Long range planning*, 43(2-3):195-215.
- Cawsey, T. and Rowley, J. 2016. Social media brand building strategies in B2B companies. *Marketing Intelligence & Planning*, 34(6):754-776.
- Chan, K. 2008. Social comparison of material Possessions among adolescents. *Qualitative Market Research: An International Journal*, 11(3):316-330.
- Connelly, L. M. 2013. Limitation section. *Medsurg Nursing*, 22(5):325-336.
- Dibrell, C.; Craig, J. B.; Moores, K.; Johnson, A. J. and Davis, P. S. 2009. Factors critical in overcoming the liability of newness: Highlighting the role of the family. *The Journal of Private Equity*, 2(12):38-48.
- du Plooy-Cilliers, F.; Davis, C. and Bezuidenhout, R. 2014. Research matters. Cape Town: Juta.
- Ehrmann, T. Haas, F. and Harms, R. 2002. The bases of successful market entry: The liability of size and of newness in E-commerce. *The International Journal on Media Management*, 4(4):203-211.
- Epega, T. 2008. Factors influencing the perceived credibility of public relations message sources. Graduate thesis and dissertations. [Online].

<https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/6f94/8e10d7863476b1a88d7f6346e514eca1a1ca.pdf>
[Assessed 17 April 2018].

Friedkin, N. E. 2011. A formal theory of reflected appraisals in the evolution of power. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 56 (4):501-529.

Garcia, M. F.; Daly, A. J. and Sánchez-Cabezudo, S. S. 2016. Identifying the new influencers in the internet era: Social media and social network analysis. *Revista Española de Investigaciones Sociológicas*, 153:23-40.

Gensler, S.; Völckner, F.; Liu-Thompkins, Y. and Wiertz, C. 2013. Managing brands in the social media environment. *Journal of Interactive Marketing*, 23:242-256.

Golafshani, N. 2003. Understanding reliability and validity in qualitative research. *The Qualitative Report*, 8(4): 597-606.

Goldstruck, A. and Wronski, M. 2016. South African social media landscape 2016. Johannesburg: World Wide Worx.

Goulding, C. 2005. Grounded theory, ethnography and phenomenology. A comparative analysis of three qualitative strategies for marketing research. *European Journal of Marketing*, 39(3/4):294-308.

Guercini, S. and Milanesi, M. 2016. Interaction approach and liabilities: a case analysis of start-up firms. *Journal of Business-to-business Marketing*, 23:293-309.

Health Science Authority of the Singapore Government. 2017. Cosmetic products. Health Science Authority of the Singapore Government. [Online]. Available at: http://www.hsa.gov.sg/content/hsa/en/Health_Products_Regulation/Consumer_Information/Consumer_Guides/Cosmetics.html [Accessed 17 May 2018].

Hsu, C.; Lin, J. C.; Chiang, H. 2012. The effects of blogger recommendations on customers' online shopping intentions. *Internet Research*, 23(1):69-88.

Hu, Y.; Manikonda, L. and Kambhampati, S. 2014. What we Instagram: A first analysis of Instagram photo content and user types. In: AAAI, 1-4 June 2014, Michigan. *Eight International Conference on Weblogs and Social Media*. n.a: AAAI Press, 595-598.

Hutter, K.; Hautz, J.; Dennhardt, S. and Füller, J. 2013. The impact of social media in brand awareness and purchase intention: the case of Mini on Facebook. *Journal of Product and Brand Management*, 22(5/6):342-351.

- Instagram. 2018. About us. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/about/us/> [Accessed 16 May 2018].
- Kaplan, A. M. and Haenlein, M. 2012. Social media: back to the roots and back to the future. *Journal of Systems and Information*, 14(2):101-104.
- Kelliher, F. 2005. Interpretivism and the pursuit of research legitimization: An integrated approach to single case design. *The Electronic Journal of Business Research Methodology*, 3(2):123-132.
- Klotz, A. C.; Hmieleski, K. M.; Bradley, B. M. and Busenitz, L. W. 2014. New ventures teams: A review of the literature and roadmap for future research. *Journal of Management*, 40(1): 226-255.
- Kumar, S. 2005. Exploratory analysis of global cosmetic industry: major players, technology and market trends. *Technovation*, 25:1263-1272.
- Launchmetrics. 2018. The state of influencer marketing in fashion, luxury & cosmetics 2018. New York: Launchmetrics.
- Levin, K. A. 2005. Study design III: Cross sectional studies. *Journal of Evidence-Based Dentistry*, 7:24-25.
- Lim, X. J.; Radzol, A. R bt; Cheah, J. and Wong, M. W. 2017. The impact of social media on purchase intention and the mediation effect of customer attitude. *Asian Journal of Business Research*, 7(2):19-36.
- Maree, K.; Creswell, J. W.; Ebersöhn, L.; Eloff, I.; Ferreira, R.; Ivankova, N. V.; Jansen, J. D.; Nieuwenhuis, J.; Pietersen, J. and Plano Clark, V. L. 2016. First steps in research. 2nd edition. Pretoria: Van Schaik Publishers.
- Morales, K.; Sosa-Frey, J. and Faria, J. 2017. Social media: Are the benefits worth the risks for business? *International Journal of Business and Public Administration*, 14(1):87-97.
- Moschis, G. O. 1976. Social comparison and informal group influences. *Journal of marketing research*, 13:237-244.
- Mposo, N. 2018. "Instafamous"- The big business of beauty SA. IOL, 18 January 2018. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.iol.co.za/lifestyle/style-beauty/instafamous-the-big-business-of-the-beauty-industry-in-sa-12787633> [Accessed on 24 September 2018].

- Murphy, T. and Schram, R. 2014. What is worth? The value chasm between brands and influencer. *Journal of Brand Strategies*, 3(1):31-40.
- Neville, B. A.; Bell, S. J. and Mengüç, B. 2006. Corporate reputation, stakeholders and the social performance-financial performance relationship. *European Journal of Marketing*, 39(9/10):1184-1198.
- Padilla-Díaz, M. 2015. Phenomenology in educational qualitative research: Philosophy as science or philosophical science? *International Journal of Educational Excellence*, 1(2):101-110.
- Pradhan, D.; Duraipandian, I, and Sethi, D. 2016. Celebrity endorsement: How Celebrity-Brand-User personality congruence affects brand attitude and purchase intention. *Journal of Marketing Communications*, 22(5):456-473.
- Ranga, M. and Sharma, D. 2014. Influencer marketing- A marketing tool in the age of social media. *Abhinav International Monthly Refereed Journal of Research in Management & Technology*, 3(8):16-21.
- Reiners, G. M. 2012. Understanding the differences between Husserl's (Descriptive) and Heidegger's (Interpretive) phenomenological research. *Journal of Nursing and Care*, 1(5):1-3.
- Saravanan, D. and Nithyaprakash, V. 2015. Fashion trends and its impact on society. International Conference on Textiles, Apparels and Fashion. [s.a]. Tamilnadu: [s.n.].
- Schmid, B. and Axhausen, K. W. 2017. In-store vs. online shopping of search and experience goods: A Hybrid Choice approach. *International Choice Modelling Conference*. 3-5 April. Cape Town: Choice Modelling Centre.
- Shepherd, D. A. and Zacharackis, A. 2003. A new venture's cognitive legitimacy: An assessment by customers. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 41(2):148-167.
- Solomon, M.; Bamossy, G.; Askegaard, S. and Hogg, M. K. 2006. Consumer behaviour: A European perspective. 3rd edition. Madrid: Prentice Hall Europe.
- Umeogu, B. 2012. Source credibility: A philosophical analysis. *Open Journal of Philosophy*, 2(2):112-115.

- Van Rooy, D.; Wood, I. and Tran, E. 2016. Modelling the emergence of shared attitudes from group dynamics using an agent-based model of social comparison theory. *Systems Research and Behavioural Science*, 33:188-204.
- Varadarajan, R. 2010. Strategic marketing and marketing strategy: domain definition, fundamental issues and foundational premises. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science*, 38(2):119-140.
- Vehovar, V.; Toepoel, V. and Steinmetz. Non-probability sampling. In Wolf, C.; Joye, D.; Smith, T.W. and Fu, Y. 2016. *The SAGE handbook of survey methodology*. London: SAGE Publications.
- Wahyuni, D. 2012. The research design maze: Understanding paradigms. Cases, methods and methodologies. *Journal of applied management accounting research*, 10(1):66-80.
- Wang, T.; Song, M. and Zhao, L. 2014. Legitimacy and the value of early customers. *Journal of Product Development & Management Association*, 31(5):1057-1075.
- Wang, X. and Yang, Z. 2010. The effect of brand credibility on consumers' brand purchase intention in emerging economies: The moderating role of brand awareness and brand image. *Journal of Global Marketing*, 23(3):177-188.
- Woiceshyn, J. and Daellenbach, U. 2018. Evaluating inductive versus deductive research in management studies: Implications for authors, editors and reviewers. *Qualitative Research in Organizations and Management: An International Journal*, 13(2):183-195.
- Wood, L. 2000. Brands and brand equity: definition and management. *Journal of Management Decision*, 38(9):662-669.
- Zimmerman, M. A. and Zeitz, G. J. 2002. Beyond survival: Achieving new venture growth by building legitimacy. *Academy of Management Review*, 27(3):414-431.
- Zutshi, A. and Sohal, A. 2004. A study of the environmental management system (EMS) adoption process within Australasian organisations-2. Role of stakeholders. *Technovation*, 24:371-386.

Appendix A

Interview schedule

Thank you for being willing to be part of this research.

It is important that you answer all questions as honestly as possible. Responses will be used only for the purposes of this study and will be kept as confidential. Names of participants will not be mentioned in this study.

The interview will take forty-five minutes and will be recorded for transcribing purposes at your permission.

The purpose of this study is to gain insight of the impact that brand-content uploaded by Social Media Influencers on the Instagram platform has on their followers' acceptance of a new business in the cosmetic industry. The aim of this study is to understand how online influencers can shape consumers' opinions of a new business. Moreover, it also aims to comprehend if consumers will consider a new business as legitimate based on content posted by online influencers on Instagram.

Please bear in mind that participation is voluntary, and you can cease your participation at any time. Should you have any questions, you may contact the researcher on: XXXXXXXXX@hotmail.com or XXX XXX XXXX.

Question 1

Why do you use Instagram?

Question 2

Where do you usually get information on new products?

Question 3

Do you follow influencers? If yes, why?

Question 4

Why do you think influencers share brand-content on their Instagram accounts?

Question 5

What do you think of influencers getting benefits for advertising products on their Instagram?

Motivate

Question 6

How does it affect your opinion of the influencer and of the products being advertised?

Question 7

Why do you think a new cosmetic business would partnership with an Instagram influencer?

Question 8

What do you usually consider before buying a cosmetic product? Motivate why.

Question 9

Do you believe that you seek to get the “look” shown by an influencer when they advertise a cosmetic product? Motivate.

Question 10

What would you consider before buying a beauty product endorsed by an influencer? For example: price, benefits, location, ordering process and others. Motivate.

Question 12

Between an advert (done by a brand) and a picture or video posted by an influencer, which one would persuade you more and why?

Question 13

What drives you to share product information with your friends?

Question 14

What drives you to purchase a cosmetic product from a brand that you have never purchased before?

Appendix B

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

RESEARCH TITLE: Social Media Influencer Marketing as a potential strategy for new cosmetic businesses to create brand awareness and gain legitimacy in the market.

1. INTRODUCTION

You are invited to participate in a research study about Social Media Influencer marketing as a potential strategy for new cosmetic businesses to create brand awareness and gain legitimacy in the market. The main purpose of this study is to comprehend if consumers will consider a new business as legitimate based on content posted by online influencers on social media platforms. And to understand how online influencers can shape consumers' opinions of a new business.

The information in this consent form is provided to assist you in deciding whether you would like to participate in this study. If you decide to participate, you will be required to be part of an interview. You will be asked questions about your experiences of influencer marketing on Instagram.

It is important that you fully understand what is involved if you agree to participate in this study. If you have any questions that you feel are not addressed or explained fully in this consent form, please do not hesitate to ask the researcher for more information. You should not agree to participate unless you are completely comfortable with the procedures followed. The contact details of the researcher are as follows:

Email address: Lweji Pemba

Contact number: xxx xxx xxxx

2. THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The primary goal of this study is to of this study is to gain insight of the impact that brand-content uploaded by Social Media Influencers on the Instagram platform has on their followers' acceptance of a new business in the cosmetic industry.

3. EXPLANATION OF PROCEDURES TO BE FOLLOWED

The interview will be approximately forty-five minutes. You will be interviewed by the researcher. You will be asked various questions related to your experiences with influencers who advertise cosmetic products on their Instagram accounts.

4. RISK(S) OR DISCOMFORT INVOLVED

There will be no risks or discomfort involved in the interview process. And you may leave the study at any time you want.

5. POSSIBLE BENEFITS OF THE STUDY

Your participation in this study will contribute towards what is currently known about influencer marketing, its effect on consumers' attitudes and buying decisions.

Your participation will be beneficial in understanding what consumers reflect on before accepting or rejecting a new business advertised by an influencer.

6. WITHDRAWAL CLAUSE

- Your inclusion in this study is purely voluntary;
- If you do not wish to participate in this study, you have every right not to do so;
- Even if you agree to participate in this study, you may withdraw at any time without having to provide an explanation for your decision.

7. CONFIDENTIALITY

ALL information gathered in this study will be held in strict confidence and only the researcher will have access to the original data. Results will only be retained for as long as required for the research purpose and will thereafter be depersonalised and presented in such a way that you will not be identifiable.

8. CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY

I have read the information presented to me in a language that I understand, and I understand the implications of participating in this study. The content and meaning of this information have been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and am satisfied that they have been adequately addressed. I understand that I am under no obligation to participate in this study and that I can withdraw from this study at any stage without having to provide an explanation for my withdrawal. I hereby volunteer to take part in this study.

I have received a signed copy of this informed consent agreement.

PARTICIPANT

Full Name and Surname: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix C

Ethical clearance letter

Appendix D

Final Research Report Summary Document Table

TITLE: Social Media Influencer Marketing as a potential strategy for new cosmetic brands to create brand awareness and gain legitimacy among consumers.

Research Purpose	Primary Research Question	Research Rationale	Seminal Authors	Literature Review	Paradigm	Approach	Data Collection Method	Ethics	Findings	References
Establish if Instagram influencer marketing can increase awareness, provide necessary brand information and lead consumers to legitimate new cosmetic brands	Why would influencer marketing be an effective strategy to create brand awareness and legitimacy of new cosmetic brands among consumers?	This study is relevant because it analysed the relationship between Instagram influencer marketing, brand awareness and consumers attitudes to new cosmetic brands.	K. Hutter, J. Hautz, S. Dennhardt and J. Füller. 2013. T. Cawsey and J. Rowley. 2016. X. J. Lim, A. R. Radzol, J. Cheah and M. W. Wong. 2017.	Theme 1: Liability of newness Theme 2: Social Media Influencer marketing Theme 3: Instagram Theme 4: Social media and businesses Theme 4: Social media and consumers	Interpretivism Epistemology: Understand views and facts that impact participants' experiences. Ontology: Participants' opinions were influenced by their culture, past experiences and perceptions of beauty influencers. Axiology: Each participant' options were valued.	Qualitative, exploratory research. Population Population Parameters: all cosmetic users, exposed to brand content created by beauty influencers, who are also followers of beauty influencers on Instagram.	Thirty minutes semi-structured, In-depth interviews with an interview guide.	Consent forms were sent prior to being interviewed; Study gained ethical clearance from the IIE ethical committee; Participants were motivated to express their honest opinions.	Instagram influencer marketing can create brand awareness. However, it cannot provide sufficient brand information to lead consumers to approve new cosmetic brands as legitimate market players.	Hutter et al. 2013. The impact of social media in brand awareness and purchase intention: the case of Mini on Facebook. Morales et al. 2017. Social media: Are the benefits worth the risks for business?
Research Problem	Secondary Questions/Objectives	Key Concepts	Key Theories			Sampling	Data Analysis Method (s)	Limitations	Heuristic Value	
inability to make informed purchased decision from new cosmetic brands, due to lack of information and uncertainties regarding a new brand's offering.	Why are beauty influencers sources of brand information? Influencers as capable of tackling lack of knowledge regarding new cosmetic brands.	Brand awareness. Cosmetic products; Influencers; Instagram; Legitimacy;	Social comparison theory; Source credibility theory.			Non-probability: Convenience; Snowball; Volunteer sampling. Size: 5 participants	Unit of Analysis: People Data Analysis Method(s): Thematic coding analysis	Participants may not represent a good indicator of shopping intention. Responses were based on previous experiences with influencers and other cosmetic brands.	Clarifies the role of beauty influencers on consumers perception and attitudes to new cosmetic brands; Future researchers can include males in their studies.	

