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EXPLORING SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCES ON COLOUR COSMETICS PURCHASE DECISIONS FOR FEMALES AGED 45+

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ABSTRACT

"You wouldn't have thought that's make-up, they've clearly had work done on their face." The purpose of this paper is to explore the effects of social media on colour cosmetic purchase decisions of the over 45 females. This group are the fastest growing demographic using social media (Safko, 2012), and are the largest consumer group for that industry (Mintel, 2016).The colour cosmetics industry is evolving at a phenomenal rate. Since the UK economy has entered recovery, retail value sales are currently worth £1.84bn and predicted to reach £2.5bn in 2021 (Mintel, 2017). Kantar (2014) revealed that out of 26,853 surveyed, 87% of women agreed they take great pleasure in looking after their appearance; and this was more prevalent with the older demographic.Yet, previous academic research has only investigated the uses, implications and purchase decisions of social media influences on a younger audience, (18-25 year olds) with little or no research being carried out on the older demographic.A mixed methods approach has been adopted, using online questionnaires and focus groups. The research explores the colour cosmetic habits of the over 45 females, as well as the significance of brands functional and emotional values, then onto the influence social media has on the colour cosmetic purchase decisions. The findings reveal that consumers are not directly influenced by social media, but indirectly influenced, through third party social media users such as children and grandchildren. Participants expressed strong beliefs that they make their own decisions and are not influenced by social media, with trust being the main concern. Due to this lack of trust, it appears that consumers display enhanced brand loyalty with colour cosmetic brands. *Keywords: colour cosmetics, consumer decision making, social medi*

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INTRODUCTION

For centuries women have used cosmetics to enhance their physical appearance, combat ageing and assert social status. Today, we occupy a societal context with the increasing globalisation, technology, increased life expectancy and society's pressures of maintaining a youthful image (Woodhead 2003; Daum 2006) growing the UK cosmetics market into the £1.84bn industry it is today (CPTA 2016).

A "cosmetic product" today is defined by the CPTA (Cosmetic, Toiletry and Perfumery Association 2016) as:

"any substance or mixture intended to be placed in contact with the various external parts of the human body exclusively to cleaning them, perfuming them, changing their appearance and/or correcting body odours and/or protecting them or keeping them in good condition." This includes products that are applied to; epidermis, hair system, nails, lips, external genital organs, teeth and mucous membrane of the oral cavity.

According to Mintel (2016), facial skincare is the most commonly purchased beauty product, their sales peaking among women aged 45 -64, proving to be a profitable market for this demographic. Kantar (2014) revealed that out of 26,853 surveyed, 87% of women agreed they take great pleasure in looking after their appearance. This proves to be a very attractive industry for brands, in particular towards this older demographic.

The rise in social media has created a hub for individuals to engage with brands in a way that they have not been able to before. Social media incorporates; Social Networking Sites (SNS), online communities, video sharing sites, review sites, and virtual gaming (Krishnamurthy and Dou 2008). Those aged 54 and older are the fastest growing single demographic using social media (Safko 2012), which presents an opportunity for the colour cosmetics industry to effectively target this rising cohort. With 40% of 3,200 U.K individuals surveyed actively ignoring social posts or advertisements from brands, as they feel "constantly followed" (Hobbs 2016), brands need to identify new ways to engage with these consumers.

Mintel defines the 'older demographic' as those aged over 55 (Mintel 2016). This demographic provides an opportunity for the colour cosmetics industry, with over 55s being the largest consumer group for that industry (Mintel 2016). However, 1 in 5 over 55s felt that beauty departments only cater to young women (Mintel 2015). For the purpose of this research, the older demographic will be defined as those aged 45 years and over. There has been research conducted that provides evidence that the over 55 demographic are active on social media; however this research intends to examine if there is a difference in social media habits as consumers reach different age categories after 45 year

RATIONAL

There has been some research conducted on the over 45-year-old female demographic with regards to their colour cosmetic purchase habits. However, it is yet to be explored the reasons behind these purchase behaviours and how these might be influenced. Previous studies on social media behaviours have focussed on millennials and there has been little study on the influence of social media on purchase behaviours of the over 45-year-old demographic.

This research intends to fill this gap and understand the colour cosmetic purchase behaviours of the largest colour cosmetic consumer group and explore if social media is an influence for these behaviours. This research will provide insight for colour

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cosmetic brands to understand how to effectively target and build relationships with this older demographic.

This paper will first discuss and analyse current literature on the colour cosmetics industry, including; the value of brands, the consumption habits of the over 45 consumers, as well as social media and its influence on purchase behaviours. It will then discuss the methodology used to conduct the primary research before detailing the findings and analysing these against the research objectives and previous literature.

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Colour Cosmetics

This industry is growing rapidly, and since the UK economy has entered recovery the market has been performing well with increasing innovation and fashion trends. UK retail value sales increased by 7% in 2016, with sales currently worth £1.84bn and predicted to reach £2.5bn in 2021 (Mintel 2017). One reason for this rise in sales is due to the current trends of colour correction and matte lipstick. These trends have led to the growth of facial and cosmetics sales (Mintel 2017).

Furthermore, the strong performance within this industry is due to the constant innovation (Mintel 2016). Make-up has become more multifunctional, with products offering several additional benefits such as UV protection and anti-ageing treatments (Mintel 2016). Make-up products have developed from purely functional to now encompass other added benefits, attempting to further cater for the growing older demographic.

According to a recent Mintel report (2017), the sales growth in colour cosmetics lies within prestige products, growing twice as fast as mass-market. However mass- market still dominates market share within this industry, with 64% of sales. The market leader within the mass-market sector is L'Oréal, including their sub-brands; Maybelline New York, Essie, L'Oréal Paris, and NYX Professional Make-up (Mintel 2017). L'Oréal are parent to the prestige make-up brands including; Lancôme, Yves Saint Laurent Beauté and Urban Decay (Mintel 2017).

It has been examined through Mintel's (2016) research that consumers display high brand loyalty when it comes to base make-up such as foundations and powders. This could be due to the higher cost of these products meaning consumers are more cautious of switching. It was also highlighted that there is a strong interest in beauty and make-up with 49% of those asked aged 16+ enjoyed spending time browsing beauty departments (Mintel, 2016). However, as perceptions of age are beginning to change, and brands begin to cater to this growing older demographic, women of this age are becoming more experimental with make-up (Mintel 2015).

This evidence suggests that this industry is growing exponentially, with the older demographic providing large revenue potential for brands. However, to target this audience effectively, it is important to understand the lifestyles, values, and motives of these consumers within the colour cosmetic industry.

Brand Values

According to De Chernatony (2010), a brand's success is based upon the blending of both functional and emotional values. Competitors can easily imitate the functional values so a brand should seek to build on emotional values to connect with consumers. Emotions have a distinguished impact on brand selection for consumers (De Chernatony 2010; Franzen and Bouwman 2001; Hill 2008). Consumers choose brands based on how these values fit into their lifestyles (De Chernatony 2010). The Boston Consulting Group (BCG) (2011)

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explored the area of functional and emotional values of a brand further by developing the Brand Benefit Ladder. The ladder outlines how brand benefits support one another to enhance the consumer experience and lead to purchases being made. This model consists of technical attributes, referring to the physical characteristics of a product, functional benefits, referring to how the product features are experienced, and the emotional benefits, referring to the feelings that are inspired by the product (BCG 2011).

This model not only considers the emotional and functional benefits (De Chernatony 2010), BCG (2011) have developed this model to include the fourth 'Social Brand Benefits' element. This element considers how the product makes the consumer feel regarding their values, self-expression, and the social groups they are part of (BCG 2011). This is increasingly relevant with the developments within the digital landscape, with a focus on social media and its use of self-expression (Back et al. 2010; Gosling et al. 2007). The social brand benefits consider how consumers are perceived by others and who they are connected with (BCG 2011).

An earlier study conducted by Roberts (2004) suggests that strong emotional bonds between consumer and a brand strengthens loyalty and creates advocacy. Further studies have supported this, stating that to build strong brand relationships with consumers, brands need to incorporate high levels of emotional content within their television advertisements (Heath et al 2006; Mangold and Faulds 2009). Therefore, not only do brands need to ensure that their emotional values correlate with that of their target consumers (De Chernatony 2010) but they must embed these in their communications to ensure strong brand relationships are formed (Heath et al 2006; Mangold and Faulds 2009).

There has been research conducted on the older consumer with regards to their purchasing habits and behaviours, in particular looking at Socio-emotional selective theory (Carstensen et al. 1999). This research highlights that under conditions where people perceive time to be limited, they are more likely to pursue goals that are emotional over knowledge orientated (Drolet et al. 2007; Fung and Carstensen 2003; Williams and Drolet 2005). This is relevant to the older consumer as they are aware of their own time limitations, prompting them to react more positively to emotional advertisements over knowledge orientated messages. Moreover, studies show that an older demographic have greater recall for emotional over rational advertisements (Fung and Carstensen 2003; Williams and Drolet 2005). In contrast, previous research stated that older adults are more likely to prefer information over emotional advertising messages (Moschis 1994). A more recent study was conducted by Sudbury-Riley and Edgar (2016) using the Homebase brand as a focus, different advertisements including lighting, furniture and gardening were used. It identified that 63% of adults over the age of 50 demonstrated a clear preference for rational over emotional appeals. However, similar research has not been conducted on the cosmetics industry in specific, which could present different results, thus presenting a gap in research.

The literature shows contradictory evidence proposing whether the older consumer reacts better to either emotional or knowledge based information. Therefore, highlighting that additional research needs to be conducted to gain a clear understanding of this demographics influence of these functional and emotional values.

Consumer Decision Making

Cox et al (1983) formed the Consumer Decision Making Process model which

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suggests the consumer decision making process is multi-staged and begins with a problem recognition. This model is still relevant as a core to the decision-making process of consumers, however there are criticisms that this model does not consider other external influences that may affect the decision-making process, such as social media and word-of-mouth. This model can be adapted as a concept to inform this research, to include De Chernatony's (2010) functional and emotional values as well as the adaptation from BCG (2011) to include the social benefits. According to previous research these elements may influence purchase decisions, depending on how they match with the consumers' values.

Current research outlines there is a vast gap focusing on the older demographic and the influences of their colour cosmetic, particularly on how social media may impact these decisions. When understanding the consumer decision making process as well as considering other variables that influence purchase, such as emotional and social elements as well as social media, brands can target this demographic effectively to increase purchase and brand loyalty. This research intends to investigate the purchase behaviours of this older demographic based on this model, and understand if these behaviours are influenced by social media as an external factor.

There has been seminal work around the influence of life changes on consumer behaviour (Granbois 1963; Andreasen 1984; Reilly et al. 1984; Kotler 1992; Mathur et al. 2008), stating that consumption behaviours of consumers change depending on their life course. Stampfl (1978) indicates that the information sources used and the intensity of search will vary based on the consumers' family lifecycle stage. Additionally, the number of brands considered in search is less in the older group than the young and single. Hypothesising that age is relative to the information processing speed and learning (Phillips and Sternhal 1977). Based on this theory that consumer life cycle stages influence consumer behaviour, this research intends to look at the influence these different stages have on those aged 45 and over.

Carstensen et al. (1999) suggest the older demographic prefers well-known brands over attempting to process new brands. A more recent study conducted by Lambert- Pandraud and Laurent (2010), looked at the over 60's demographic and their perfume brand preferences in comparison with a younger demographic. This study highlighted that the older demographic remains attached to brands for a longer period in comparison to the younger demographic. In addition, the older demographic is more likely to stick with well-known options as this eliminates any risk of trying new brands. This differing to the younger demographic who are more likely to try more recent options.

This research provides an insight into the older demographics' brand preferences, suggesting that they are more likely to express brand loyalty. However, this research is limited as it is specific to the perfume industry, which may differ when looking at colour cosmetics. Therefore, once more highlighting this gap for research to understand motives of brand preferences in the colour cosmetics industry.

Purchase Habits

Kantar (2014) conducted primary research, which contains many insights into the 45+ demographic, across all areas including; purchasing habits and preferences, media consumption, values and lifestyle and others. Some interesting relevant insights come from the lifestyle and appearance category, with relevance to this study. For instance, out of the 26,853 individuals surveyed aged 45+ in the UK, when asked if they take great pleasure

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from looking after their appearance, only 13% disagreed. This highlights that the majority of those aged 45+ years old enjoy looking after their appearance and therefore are more likely to invest in products that fulfil this, including cosmetics aimed at improving their appearance.

When asked if other people's opinions on their appearance were important to them, only 21% agreed compared to 35% of those aged 15-34. This suggests that the older demographic relies less on gratification from others on their appearance, whereas this is more important to the younger demographic. If this older demographic are less concerned about others opinions on their appearance, it leads to question the motives behind their enjoyment of looking after their appearance, presenting a gap for research.

When asked about which make-up they had used in the past 12 months, 36% had used lipstick/lip gloss, which is almost identical to the number of those aged 15-34 that used this product. This evidence highlights that lipstick/lip gloss is not just aimed at a younger audience, it is equally used by an older demographic. The second highest product used was foundation/face powder, which 31% of those 45+ had used within the past 12 months, only 8% lower than those aged 15-34.

This survey presents interesting insights into the purchase habits of this older demographic, however this is slightly out-dated as it was conducted 3 years ago. To provide reliable insights regarding this demographic, further primary research should be conducted to understand if these purchasing habits have changed and how. This research is limited as it was only quantitative data, therefore this research will explore more deeply the reasons behind their colour cosmetic purchases and how these fit with their values using in-depth qualitative data.

2.5 Social Media Engagement

Chris Pirillo (cited by Safko 2012, p.547) stated that "It's not just being there, it's really getting to what the tool is and where it fits", emphasizing that it is important to understand your audience and the most effective tools for a given demographic, to ensure a successful presence on social media.

Vivek et al (2012) states that consumers involved can then develop an enhanced attitude toward the brand, increasing loyalty. There is furthermore current evidence to suggest that organizations which invest in developing a social media community can benefit from strengthened customer-firm relationships, brand loyalty, brand trust and overall increased sales, (Kumar et al. 2016; Laroche et al. 2013; Rapp et al. 2013; Sonnier et al. 2011). Consequently, it is important that extensive research is carried out on consumers' usage of social media; how this affects consumer behaviour and the implications this has on organisations.

It has been studied that social media has a significant impact on the enhancement of consumer-based brand equity (Bruhn et al. 2012; Kim and Ko, 2012). Therefore proving to be a vital tool for brands to capture their target audience and build this brand equity, with aim to increase brand loyalty. It also shows as evidence that social media can therefore influence consumers purchase decisions, due to this enhanced brand equity.

Consumer Behaviour & eWOM

There is a wealth of research that examines social networks and consumer behaviour. Previous research has suggested that social networks are used by consumers to fulfil the needs of; affiliation, self-expression, and self-presentation (Back et al. 2010; Gosling et al. 2007). This research is limited however, as both studies were specific to one social media channel, Facebook. As well as this, they only

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focused on the younger demographic, particularly undergraduate students. Therefore, this data may differ when looking at an older demographic, leaving a gap for further research to understand the reasons behind why an older demographic use social media channels.Social media has provided brands an opportunity to reach a mass audience, “grabbing the megaphone” (Bourdieu 1980; Burgess and Green 2009; Snickers and Vonderau 2009). Offering an outlet for consumers to access and share text, pictures, and videos to this mass audience. Due to this, consumers increasingly use social media to obtain information about brands (Baird and Parasnis 2011; Naylor et al. 2012; Barreda et al. 2015).

Research has been conducted on the relationship between social media and its influence on purchase intentions. The digital marketing agency, ODM Group, found that 74% of consumers use social media platforms to guide their purchase decisions (Beese 2011). There has been evidence to suggest a positive relationship between gratifications and purchase intensions, in which social media plays a big role offering these social interactions (Cheung and Lee 2009; Huang 2008). A study conducted on wedding dress shoppers highlighted that word-of-mouth information influenced purchase decisions (Thomas and Peters 2009). This however is limited as it only focusses on the wedding dress industry and does not signify this theory is relevant to other industries.

Yang et al. (2016) researched into the impact social media has on the quality of life for older adults, proposing four functions that can benefit older adults; relationship building, information searching, knowledge sharing, and communication. With participants’ motivations of using social media being to feel less lonely, enriching their personal life (Yang et al. 2016).

However, Xie et al. (2012) looked into the perceptions of social media for the over 65 year olds, and found that the general feedback of this age group was rather negative. The main concerns of participants being lack of privacy, lack of technology, and a lack of trust. Fisk et al. (2009) alludes that there are correlations between the processes of ageing and the disconnections between older consumers and digital media, with barriers to digital media relating to its complexity for older consumers (Goodman et al. 2003).

Passive consumers make the “silent majority” of the internet (Venkataraman et al. 2012), defined as individuals that “consume” content rather than “produce” (Burke et al. 2011). With only a small number of consumers producing the majority of user- generated content on social media (Courtois et al. 2009). Various studies suggest that there is a low level of contribution and participation on social media, with the main area of input being through consumption (Heinonen 2011; Jones et al 2004; Joyce and Kraut, 2006; Preece et al 2004).

However, these studies focus on Millennials and do not consider the older growing demographic. With this older demographic being the fastest growing in social media (Safko 2012), it is evident that they are present on social media, however it is yet to be explored as to how passive or active they are and the reasons behind their social media use. This study aims to investigate this, and understand if social media is influential to their colour cosmetic purchase habits.

2.7 Research Gap

Previous research regarding social media is based on a young audience, therefore further research should be carried out on a growing older demographic. The 54+ year olds are the fastest growing single demographic in social media, as well as having the greatest amount

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of disposable income (Safko 2012), thus proving to be a desirable market to investigate their uses of social media and also how they can be targeted most effectively by cosmetic brands.

Based on Cox et al. (1948) Consumer Decision Process model, there is a basic outline of the process consumers go through when making purchase decisions. However more recent criticisms of this model suggest that these processes differ depending on the consumer as well as the consideration of external influences. It is therefore beneficial for the colour cosmetics industry to understand if social media is an external influence of their largest consumer group. This will be explored through the outlined objectives of this research.

METHODOLOGY

Research Aim

Exploring social media influences on colour cosmetics purchase decisions for females aged 45+

Research Objectives

To explore the consumer behavioural habits of colour cosmetics of the over 45 females within the UK.

To define whether functional or emotional motives influence or shape the colour cosmetic purchase decisions of the over 45 females within the UK.

To investigate if social media platforms influence the over 45 females' colour cosmetic purchase habits.

If social media does influence the colour cosmetic purchase habits of the over 45 females and to what extent.

Research Philosophy

A subjectivist ontology was used, in which focusses on the individuals own reality created through their own emotions and experiences (Saunders et al. 2016). This epistemological position, looks at what is regarded as acceptable sources of knowledge (Bryman 2016). This research is aimed at understanding the colour cosmetic purchase behaviours of the over 45-year-old females, and how these behaviours might be shaped or influenced by social media usage. It is recognised that this method is subjective and therefore cannot be regarded as complete fact.

Research Strategy

A concurrent triangulation method has been used, in which both quantitative and qualitative research methods were used within the same phase of data collection (Saunders et al. 2016) enhancing the research strategy, resulting in a greater confidence in findings (Bryman 2016). Qualitative data was collected in the form of focus groups, to get a deeper understanding behind the meanings of the colour cosmetic purchase behaviours of this demographic. Whilst quantitative data was collected in the form of an online questionnaire, to offer insights into what the purchase habits were of these consumers and to identify any patterns. Qualitative data was used as the key "counter-point" to quantitative methods, to "enrich and brighten the portrait" (Jick 1979, p609). Qualitative data provides a deeper understanding whilst quantitative data analyses patterns in responses (McCusker and Gunaydin 2015). Although this triangulation method can be considered costly and time-consuming, it allowed for greater research integrity in which each method alone would not achieve.

Data Collection

The sample used for this research, and to test these objectives, were females aged 45 years and over in the UK. Self-selection sampling

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(Saunders et al. 2016) has been used to recruit participants. An advertisement was placed in Chichester library as well as through social media.

Participants responded to this advertisement and volunteered themselves to take part in the focus group as well as taking part in the online survey. The online questionnaire was shared on social media, to gain the greatest number of participants, so gain the most representative sample (Saunders et al. 2016). In addition, this ensured that respondents were those active on social media and therefore most appropriate for the study.

The only requirements stated on this advertisement was that the participants needed be female, aged 45 and over, and have previously purchased colour cosmetic products. There was a mix of participants that were active on social media as well as those that were not active. This was to provide subjectivity to research discussion and to understand the colour cosmetic purchase behaviours of those who are not active on social media and other potential influences.

Online Questionnaires & Focus Groups

An online questionnaire was conducted using Google Forms to achieve objectives 1 and 2, and consisted of 13 questions both open-ended and closed questions. A total of 91 responses were collected from this online questionnaire, across various locations in the U.K.

This method had many benefits including its fast and low cost nature, in addition to this, it also had the benefit of providing a wide geographical reach. As the focus groups were held in 2 locations within West Sussex, this online survey allowed for responses to be gathered from across the country. This method was used to collate quantitative data on this demographics' behavioural habits within the colour cosmetics industry, as well as their social media habits. Another benefit with this method was that it was more anonymous than the focus groups. The closed questions provided quantifiable data (Bryman, 2016) with regards to participants' colour cosmetic habits including; products purchased, frequency of use and brand types. The open-ended questions invited participants to give more detailed explanations for their choice of methods of colour cosmetic purchases, as well as their feelings towards the influence social media has on their colour cosmetic purchases.

The online questionnaire was carried out prior to the focus groups. Consequently, the results from this questionnaire gave insight into what would be expected from the focus group data and the focus group guide was adapted accordingly.

A great benefit of using focus groups over other research methods is that it allows the researcher to gain meaningful insights that can be gained from group discussion and opinion sharing, in which commonalities and differences can be understood (Carson et al. 2001). This collective interaction is referred to as the 'group effect' (Carey 1994), in which deeper motivations and complex behaviours (Carson et al. 2001) can be established within discussion. Based on this, focus groups have been used in this study to meet objectives; 2, 3 and 4.

The focus groups were used to create discussion amongst the group and to understand the reasons behind their colour cosmetic purchases.

Three focus groups were conducted with four female participants aged 45+ years in each, this number of participants being recommended as being the most efficient. Having small groups, referred to in literature as 'mini-focus groups' (Krueger and Casey 20015) is easier to manage and gives opportunity for all participants to actively discuss within the group (Smithson 2008). However, the limitation of using these smaller focus groups is that it provides a smaller data set and may not result in reaching saturation (Krueger and Casey 2015).

Data Analysis

Daymon and Holloway (2011) suggest 5 steps to analysing qualitative data; transcribing, data organisation, coding, data interpretation, and interpretation evaluation. The focus groups were audio recorded to allow the researcher to transcribe this data ready for coding. During the transcription process the documents and data were labelled in a systematic manner (Daymon and Holloway 2011), to ensure that the data were organised and easily accessible. Thematic analysis has been used on these transcriptions to code the data and pick out themes and patterns of which can be used to answer the research questions (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Once the coding had been completed, the data was then analysed and interpreted to ensure that it was meaningful and answered the research objectives. The quantitative data from the online survey was analysed by coding the categorical data, similarly to the focus group transcripts, to highlight patterns within the data (Bryman 2016).

Authenticity and Trustworthiness

The quantitative data was measured in terms of its reliability and validity. This was anonymous, with the participant never meeting the researcher. The validity was furthermore increased through the triangulation strategy adopted, of which allowed for cross-analysis to ensure that the data was consistent throughout.

Credibility was achieved by using a triangulation research strategy, in which the online questionnaires, focus groups and the literature were used. Using this strategy enhanced validity, which of its soundness and rigour, as all methods complemented each other to create rich, comprehensive data and a source for interpretation.

Authenticity, that of how true the data reports the participants' views and feelings, was achieved through the triangulation strategy, aiming to offer a true report of the participants' opinions and feelings (Daymon and Holloway 2011). Making comparisons between both data collection methods data and relating this to previous literature to ensure there was consistency.

During the focus groups, two print make-up advertisements were presented to participants to understand their feelings towards each advert. The first advert was from L'Oreal and featured an edited and airbrushed image of Julia Roberts aged 69. The second advert was from Boots No.7 with a business women named Ali aged 68, without the use of airbrushing, showcasing her wrinkles and imperfections. The use of visual aids was to increase the engagement with participants and to encourage further interaction.

The use of debriefing at the end of focus group discussions to clarify any points and ensure that the interpretations from the researcher were correct and authentic, ensuring participants were comfortable. Participants were offered refreshments during the focus groups as well as being rewarded with chocolates and flowers at the end of each focus group as a thank you for taking part.

Limitations

A limitation of using online questionnaires was that it does not provide in-depth results, as respondents are only being asked a limited amount of questions (n=13) with some being multiple choice (n=4). Therefore, participants did not have the opportunity to expand on their answers, and provide explanations for their responses, offering limited insights but providing answers that were quantifiable. However qualitative data was collected with this method in the form of focus groups, to allow for a greater depth in data (Bryman 2016).

Another possible limitation is that the views expressed as a group may differ from the private views that would be expressed through individual interviews (Temple 1998; Smithson 2000). Individuals can influence others in a group and therefore discourage them from being honest (Kruger and Casey 2015). In addition, the focus groups were audio recorded, and when this equipment is in view it could affect participants' responses (Nicholls 2017). However, it was ensured that throughout the focus groups that the audio equipment was kept discretely to avoid making participants feel uncomfortable. In addition, confidential online questionnaires were conducted to ensure that these views are consistent both through focus groups as well as through the online questionnaires.

FINDINGS & ANALYSIS

Thematic analysis was carried out on the primary research to highlight key themes from the results, of which will be discussed against each research objective. A coding table was formed which lists the codes picked out from the qualitative analysis alongside its relative colour, these codes were then narrowed down into 5 separate themes and marked against each research objective.

Objective 1: To explore the consumer behavioural habits of colour cosmetics of the over 45 females within the UK.

An online questionnaire was used to provide quantitative and qualitative data to answer the first objective of the colour cosmetic behavioural habits of this demographic. Such questions included, their method of purchase, product preference, and brand loyalty. The focus group outcomes were used to support the findings from the online questionnaire for this objective.

Habitual

Figure 1 demonstrates that participants are likely to display brand loyalty when it comes to colour cosmetics, with 41% agreeing that they stick to the same make- up brands.

When asked about which make-up they had used in the past 12 months, 36% had used lipstick/lip gloss, which is almost identical to the number of those aged 15-34 that used this product. This evidence highlights that lipstick/lip gloss is not just aimed at a younger audience, it is equally used by an older demographic. The second highest product used was foundation/face powder, which 31% of

<u>Figure 1.</u>

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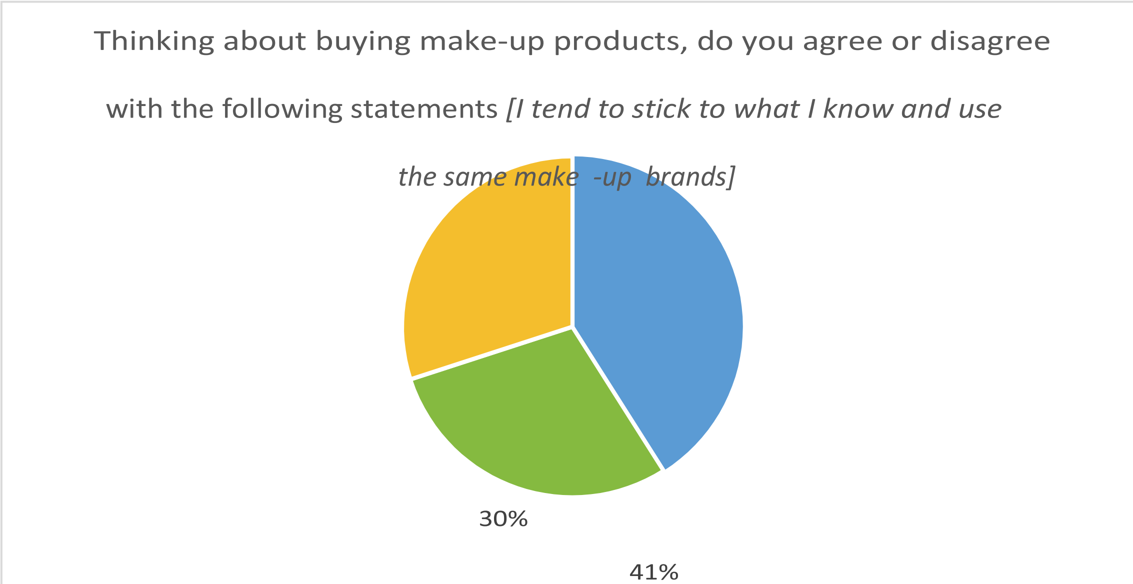

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Qualitative data was also gained from conducting focus groups, which supported the findings from the questionnaire. When discussing with participants about their make- up habits one common theme that arose was its habitual nature, supporting the questionnaire findings that consumers display with brand loyalty. Below are some quotes from participants that evidence this;

“It’s all too much for me, I stick with the same thing” – P8, Focus group 2

“If it wasn’t what you use then you wouldn’t buy it” – P10, Focus group 3

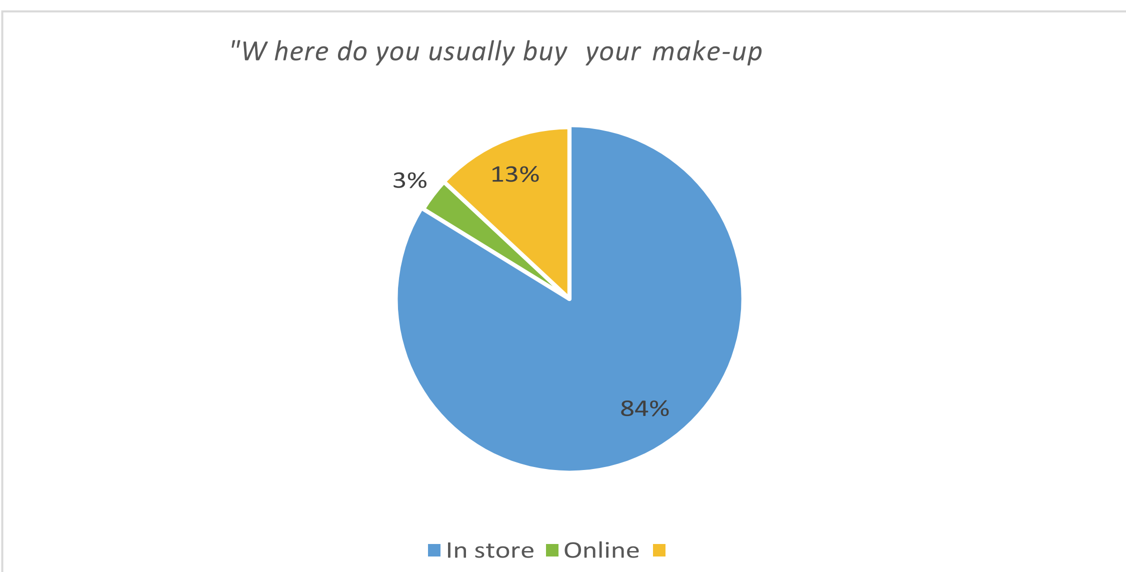
“I tend to stick to a brand until they stop doing what I like” – P4, Focus group 1

Participants conveyed brand loyalty due to their habitual nature when it comes to wearing make-up. This being consistent across all ages over 45, always preferring to stick to the same products and brands (Carstensen et al. 1999; Lambert-Pandraud and Laurent 2010; Mintel 2016). This being due to their satisfaction with the product but also a lack in confidence in trying new products.

In store v online

Within the questionnaire participants were asked if they purchased their colour cosmetic products online or in store. Figure 2 shows that a total of 84% of the 91 respondents preferred to purchase products in store with only 3% using online channels only.

Figure 2



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This was also supported within the focus groups as participants felt very strongly that they preferred to purchase a product in store rather than purchasing online. With participants stating:

That's "I like going in there because those girls they do help" –

Focus group 3

"Get the girl in the shop to actually put it on my face and show me that it would look nice and then I might be convinced" – P9, Focus group 3

"I go into the store, I like to see it" – P4, Focus group 1

Participants stated that they were influenced by the assistance they receive by staff within the stores, showing them how to use the products and recommended products that suited their individual skin tone. With a theme arising within all focus groups of the colour matching service that brands now offer, which matches the foundation colour specific to their skin tone. Therefore, providing evidence that this demographic are looking for not just the quality in the product. They also regard the knowledge from staff as a requirement, offering guidance on the techniques for applying the products, which leads to increased confidence in their purchase.

Objective 2: To define whether functional or emotional motives influence or shape the colour cosmetic purchase decisions of the over 45 females in the UK.

Previous literature had identified that strong emotional bonds between consumer and brand strengthens loyalty and creates advocacy (Roberts 2004).

Previous literature states that to build strong relationships with consumers, brands must correlate their functional and emotional values with their consumers as they choose brands based on how these values fit into their lifestyles (De Chernatony 2010; Heath et al. 2006; Mangold and Faulds 2009).

To answer the second objective, qualitative and quantitative data from the online questionnaire was used, along with further in depth data from the focus groups. Firstly within the questionnaire it was asked the reasons why respondents wore makeup. Figure 3 demonstrates that this demographic rely on the functional benefits from products with 40% of respondents stating this as a factor. However 20% of respondents suggested that it was purely for emotional reasons as well as 40% suggesting it was a combination of the two.

<u>Figure 3</u>

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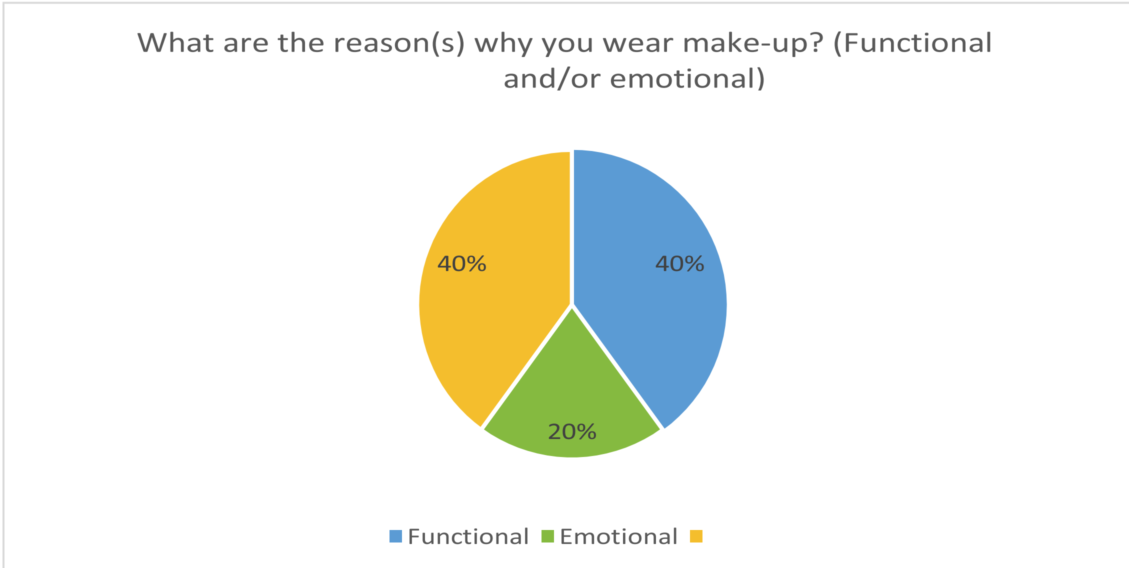

These emotional and functional values were explored in greater detail during the focus groups, asking for further detailed explanations as to what is of greater value.

Emotional

Participants during the focus groups suggested that the emotional value was highly important with regards to their colour cosmetic consumption behaviours. One emotion that was mentioned by various participants within the research was confidence.

"It's a confidence thing" – P10, Focus group 3

"It is definitely more of an emotional thing" – P9, Focus group 3

"It gives you more confidence" – P7, Focus group 2

Participants expressed that they felt confidence when wearing colour cosmetics and this was a big factor in their decision-making process. Stating that if these emotional values were not present they would not purchase colour cosmetics, responding to the emotional factors over the knowledge.

Along with confidence it was mentioned by participants that they considered the process of wearing colour cosmetics as providing a "mask" and an "armour".

"That can become a mask" – P11, Focus group 3 "It's an armour" – P36, Online questionnaire

"I think it provides a bit of an armour, it's like wearing a uniform" – P9, Focus group 3

Thus, providing evidence that this demographic do not just wear colour cosmetics for purely functional benefits, but also to meet this emotional need.

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Objective 3: Investigate if social media platforms influence the over 45 females' colour cosmetic purchase habits.

In previous studies, it has been noted that consumers use social media platforms to guide their purchase decisions (Beese 2011). To understand if social media influenced this older demographics' colour cosmetic purchases, focus groups were carried out to gather rich qualitative data. Participants were asked questions on their social media habits and if they felt that this was an influence on their purchase behaviours. Participants expressed a negativity towards social media with concerns of its lack of privacy as well as the irritation of advertisements (Xie et al. 2012; Fisk et al. 2009).

"Adverts on there irritate me" – P2, Focus group 1

"You hear of all these scams and it frightens you" – P11, Focus group 3

"You get bitten, we would be sceptical" – P10, Focus group 3

Although expressing this negativity, participants still remained active on social media as a method of communication with their family.

Individuality

Qualitative data from the online questionnaire was used to support the findings from the focus groups. Within the questionnaire participants reacted strongly when asked if they felt social media influenced their colour cosmetic purchases. Participants disagreed with this, making such comments as:

"I am my own woman" – P13, Online questionnaire "I make my own choices" - P30, Online questionnaire

"I'm 54 and don't follow the pack" – P50, Online questionnaire

This was a consistent theme throughout with participants during the focus groups also expressing views against the idea that they were influenced by social media.

"We like what we buy" – P11, Focus group 3

"I like to make a decision…It's a very personal trip to the shop"-

P9, Focus group 3

"You dress now for yourself, it's not for anybody else, you have got your own independence" – P11, Focus group 3

These findings provide evidence that participants decisions are not influenced by others on a conscious level by social media. Disagreeing with previous literature that suggests consumers use social media to influence their purchases (Beese 2011). Also suggesting that within the proposed adapted consumer decision model, the social values are not of direct influence with colour cosmetic purchases of this demographic as they are not directly concerned about how they are viewed by others. However further findings discussed in greater detail within the next section of this chapter, provide evidence to contradict that this demographic are not influenced by social media at all.

Objective 4: If social media does influence the colour cosmetic purchase habits of the over 45 females and to what extent.

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Children/Grandchildren

It was a common theme that participants felt that they were not influenced by social media with regards to their colour cosmetic purchases. Previous literature states a low level of contribution and participation on social media, with the main area of input being through consumption. This was consistent within this research, with participants using social media to keep in contact with their children and relatives. Although participants confirmed this passivity with regards to social media, there were certain areas in which was picked up during the focus groups that suggested participants are being influenced through social media channels.

The focus groups were carried out to answer this objective, providing detailed explanations to the extent social media has an influence for this demographic. Within these focus groups, when discussing the influential factors for their colour cosmetic purchases, participants had expressed this individuality when making their own decisions however they did highlight their children to be of most high influence.

"I guess I was influenced by my children wearing it" – P9, Focus group 3

"Unless one of my daughters or grandchildren said 'it's about time you went and had your face done, changed your makeup' then I might go and change" – P5, F ocus group 2

"I tend to buy things that, my daughter, recommends" – P4, Focus group 1

During these focus groups, when asked if their children were to upload colour cosmetic content on social media, would this be an influence participants agreed that it would.

"R: So I know you mentioned your children influenced you, what if they uploaded a video of them, like a tutorial or shared some make -up

content?

P10: A certain brand?

R: Any brand P9: Yeah it might do.

P10: Yeah"

This provides evidence that this demographic may not be directly influenced by brands on social media on a conscious level, however they could be influenced by social media channels via a third party such as their children and grandchildren.

Other influential factors of colour cosmetic purchases

Conducting focus groups gave an opportunity for participants to give comprehensive answers to questions and provide additional comments outside the question guide. Consequently, there were additional influential factors highlighted by participants towards their make-up purchasing habits that fell outside of social media. This was something that was not picked up through the online questionnaire.

Television

Within the focus groups participants expressed an influence of television with regards to their colour cosmetic purchases.

"I think for me it's more TV" – P2, Focus group 1

"As well as influence from the television" – P7, Focus group 2

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With participants referencing particular television adverts they remembered from brands; such as L'Oréal with their Helen Mirren advertisement. Participants suggested that television is more of an influence with regards to colour cosmetic advertisements than social media and print advertisements. However, there was a consistent theme of a lack of trust with regards to these advertisements.

"It's not their real faces" – P5, Focus group 2

"You wouldn't have thought that's the make-up, they've had work done" -

P6, Focus group 2

"They must think we are all mad, because we know that's not true" – P11, Focus group 3

Participants reacted strongly, suggesting that brands advertisements were not realistic and that products were being falsely advertised. This lack of trust is a theme that has been consistent throughout this research process, with participants wanting honest and realistic communications with colour cosmetic brands.

Skin sensitivity and changes

One theme that arose from both the online questionnaire and the focus groups was the influence of skin sensitivity and ageing as an influence for this demographic towards their colour cosmetic purchases.

"My skin it either peels or gets a rash quite easily" – P3, Focus group 1

"I wish I could wear lipstick, but as soon as it touches my lips they are sore. I have very sensitive eyes and very sensitive lips" – P12, Focus

group 3

Participants highlight throughout the research process that their ageing skin, and skin sensitivity, is an influential factor for their colour cosmetic purchases to ensure they do not have reaction and that it suits their skin. Thus, suggesting that brands should consider this when targeting this demographic, and ensure their products consider these skin changes marketing effectively to consumers to increase their trust in the brands products.

CONCLUSION

Key Findings

Within this chapter, the key findings will be summarised and evaluated against the research aim.

Habitual

Throughout the research it was highlighted that this is habitual for this older demographic, with consumers basing their purchase decisions on routine and habit. Consumers stick to a routine they have been practicing for many years, tending to purchase from the same brands due to both lack of knowledge but also to trust with their current brand.

It is clear that consumers prefer the service element of the purchasing process, wanting to go into store and see the products as well as get advice from the staff. Being given this advice and knowledge on how to use products is a huge influential factor in colour cosmetic purchases, increasing consumers' confidence to go ahead with the purchase.

Overall, these findings have shown that although consumers are very habitual with regards to their colour cosmetic purchases and they are open to experimenting with new products. To target these consumers', brands must consider this service element when marketing their products, offering assistance within their stores, providing knowledge and evidence of the products benefits to increase consumers' confidence and trust with the brand.

EMOTIONAL

Another key insight gained from these findings is the emotional nature of consumers colour cosmetic behaviours. Although functional values of the products was proven to be important to consumers, they expressed a great importance in the emotional values gained from consuming colour cosmetics. Consumers of this demographic gain emotional benefits from consuming colour cosmetics such as increased happiness and confidence. Consumers do not solely purchase these products based on the functional benefits but also to enhance these emotional values. Providing evidence that within the proposed adapted consumer decision model (see appendix 2), both the functional and emotional values are an influential factor within the decision making process of colour cosmetic purchase for this demographic.

Overall, these findings propose that brands must recognize these emotional motivations in order to offer added value for their consumers. By recognizing these emotional values, brands can target their consumers effectively and enhance their relationships.

Social Media – Third party influence

From these findings it is clear that consumers of this demographic are social media consumers, displaying passive behaviours rather than actively engaging in creating content (Heinonen 2011; Jones et al 2004; Joyce and Kraut, 2006; Preece et al 2004).

There is a great lack of trust for consumers with regards to online channels with consumers feeling uncertain over privacy and internet safety. This is having a negative impact on the engagement with brands through social media for this demographic.

Consumers' colour cosmetics purchases are not consciously directly influenced through social media channels, however there is evidence to suggest they are influenced through a third party medium being their children and grandchildren. This demographic are highly influenced by their children and grandchildren when it comes to their colour cosmetic behaviours. Within this study confirming that if their children or grandchildren posted colour cosmetic content on social media that this could influence their purchase behaviours of these products.

This is a valuable insight for brands, knowing that it may not be this older demographic that they need to directly market to, but through their children and grandchildren instead to effectively target this older demographic.

Trust

A consistent theme throughout these findings were the consumers' lack of trust with colour cosmetic brands, in particular through advertisements and social media. Consumers feel that they are being falsely advertised with brands using unrealistic images within their advertisements of younger women or celebrities that have been edited and airbrushed to remove any wrinkles and imperfections. By doing so, this is discouraging this cohort to purchase certain colour cosmetic products as they feel they will not function as advertised.

In addition, older consumers have a lack in trust with social media and online channels. They have a decreased trust with brands online, with concerns of scams and privacy issues. To effectively target this demographic online, brands must increase this trust with consumers making communications clear and honest.

Limitations and future research recommendations

From this research, it was highlighted that this demographic tended to be passive consumers

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of social media rather than actively posting and sharing content. Further research could be conducted on the social media behaviours of this older demographic to establish in detail how passive and active consumers are and how this might influence their purchase behaviours.

One key insight gathered from this research was the potential for social media influence through this older demographic's children and grandchildren. From this, further research should be carried out on the children and grandchildren demographic to understand their responses and colour cosmetic purchase behaviours, and to further explore the extent to which this influences the older demographic.

It would also be recommended that the emotional values of consumers towards colour cosmetics be discovered further. Emotional values are a significant factor to this older demographic with regards to colour cosmetics, and should be explored in more detail to offer further clarification for brands in understanding how to effectively target this older demographic.

This research exposed that this older demographic demonstrate brand loyalty with colour cosmetics products, mostly due to the lack of trust consumers exhibit with brands. These consumers preserve feelings of suspicion when it comes to brands activities and communications, considering it to be a high risk to try new brands, thus maintaining this brand loyalty. It is important that forthcoming research be carried out on the ageing consumer regarding their brand loyalty. As the age gap gets less significant between generations, and the older getting younger, these behaviours may alter over time.

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