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The 1st Disrupting Thinking Research Conference Presentation TU Dublin - An investigation of the personality traits that could identify vulnerable young people who will be susceptible to undue influence by social media influencers (SMIs)

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Roundtable on The 1st Disrupting Thinking Research Conference

Dublin (Ireland), December 15th, 2020 at 10am Dublin Time (Online Event)

“Covid-19 Global Challenges – The Economic and Financial Dimensions”

Welcome

Dr Eoin Langan

Head of School of Accounting and Finance. Technological University Dublin.

Invited Speaker

Dr Jon-Hans Coetzer

Team Leader Online Learning and Education (Division for Peace) United Nations Institute for Training and Research
(UNITAR)

Research Theme: A Qualitative Review of Peace Education Concept

Roundtable Chairs

Prof. Bernadette Andreosso-O'Callaghan (Themes 1 to 3)

Jean Monnet Chair of Economics at the University of Limerick and Director of the Centre for European Studies at the University of Limerick. International Research Scholar at Ruhr University in Germany.

Prof. Jacques Jausaud (Themes 4 to 6)

Centre for Analysis on Transition and Trade. Université de Pau et des Pays de l'Adour

Theme 01: Art & Education

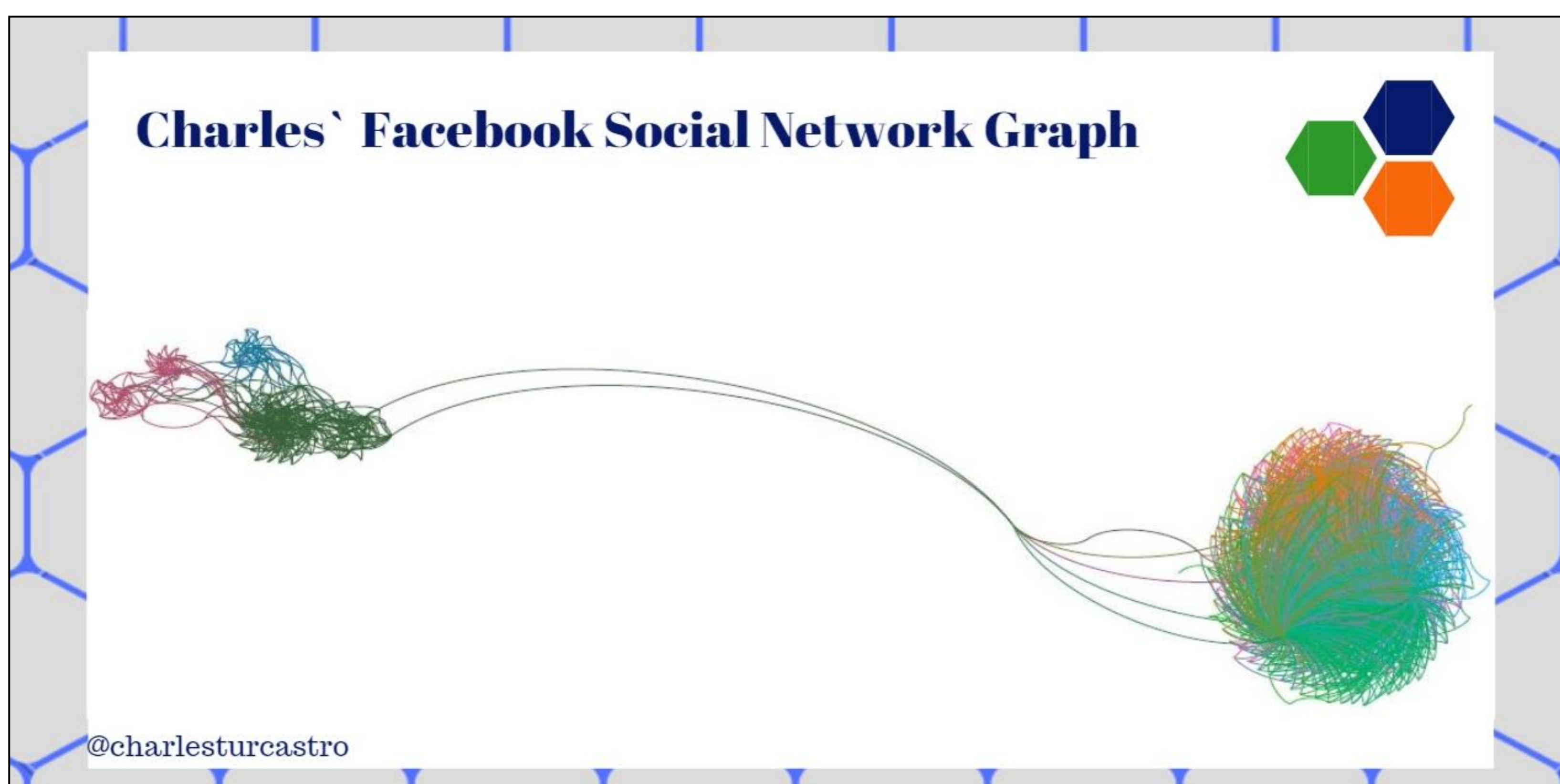
- ❖ *"The Global Educational Divide as a Result of Covid-19."* MORALES Lucía Technological University Dublin, Ireland; RAJMIL Daniel, Universitat Oberta de Catalunya, Spain; COETZER, Jon-Hans, United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR); Switzerland.
- ❖ *"Chocalheiro and Deformed Transparent"* by GONCALVES Alexandra, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo, Brazil.
- ❖ *"An Investigation of the Personality Traits that Could Identify Vulnerable Young People Who Will be Susceptible to Undue Influence by Social Media Influencers (SMIs)"* ALVES DE CASTRO, Charles & CARTHY, Aiden, The Research Centre for Psychology, Education & Emotional Intelligence, Technological University Dublin, Ireland.
- ❖ *"Understanding the Reality and Challenges of eLearning in Nigeria: An Action Research Study"* OLUDIPE Olubunmi. University of Liverpool, UK.

An investigation of the personality traits that could identify vulnerable young people who will be susceptible to undue influence by social media influencers (SMIs)

Charles Alves de Castro¹ – B00139249@mytudublin.ie; Dr. Aiden Carthy² – Aiden.Carthy@tudublin.ie.

INTRODUCTION

This study aims to further the overall understanding of social media influencers (SMI's) and to specifically predict who will be susceptible to influence by them. While some studies have investigated the tendency of some people, especially students, to become SMIs, none to date have focused on the susceptibility of some young people to undue influence by SMIs.



Young people often have large and complex social networks, making it difficult to ascertain the sources of information that they are being exposed to. Equipping them with skills to think critically and reflect on the nature of their online connections is vital. This graph is an example of the author's Facebook social network. The various social groups the author is a member of are colour coded, highlighting the complexity that is typical of such social networks and the difficulties for parents and educators in monitoring the online connections young people may have.

OBJECTIVES

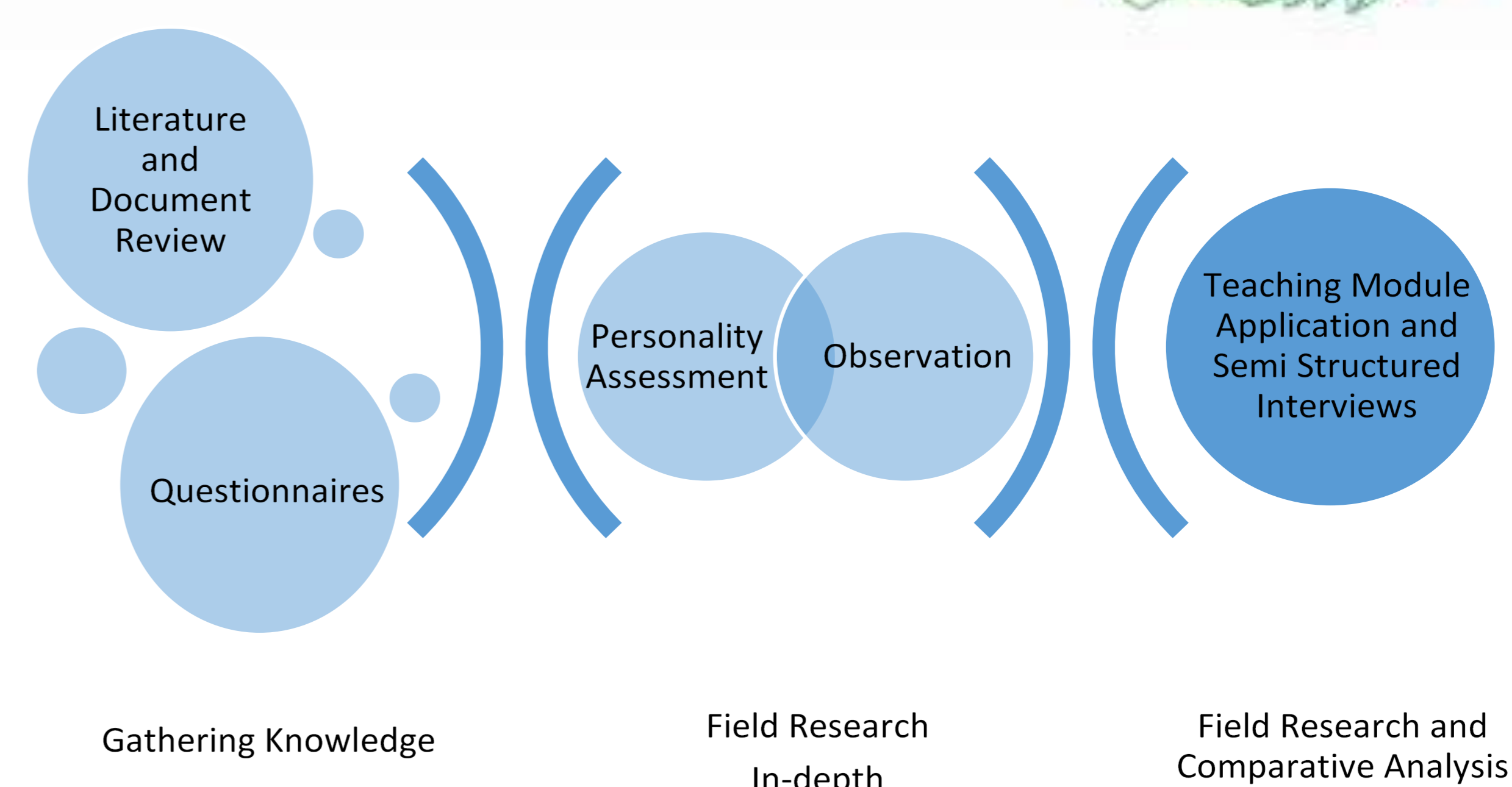
1. Determine whether there is a specific personality profile that predisposes young people to undue influence by social media influencers.
2. Analyse the effectiveness of a training module at enabling young people to recognise harmful content online and avoid undue influence by SMI's.
3. Ascertain who the social media influencers that young people are currently following are and determine how frequently they post potentially harmful or unhealthy content, if they do at all. Also, analyse why young people are choosing to follow these particular SMI's and what is making them SMI's.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research has been funded by the Technological University Dublin Postgraduate Fund.

METHODOLOGY

A multimethod methodological approach will be employed relying on both quantitative and qualitative methods divided into two phases. The total sample will be 160 adolescents (14 - 17 years old).



DISCUSSIONS & RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research intends to discuss and answer the following potential research questions:

- What personality traits or profiles are associated with susceptibility to undue influence by social media influencers?
- Are there gender differences with respect to Irish youths' reactions to social media content?
- What are the factors that motivate young Irish people to follow their preferred social media influencers?
- How frequently do the social media influencers that young Irish people follow post content that may be deemed harmful (e.g. violent content, promotion of unhealthy body image)?
- How effectively does the provision of a specifically designed training programme enable young Irish people to recognise potentially harmful online content?
- How effectively does the provision of a specifically designed training programme enable young Irish people to avoid undue influence by social media influencers?

CONCLUSION

This research is the first of its kind and makes a unique and novel contribution to the fields of marketing and psychology. Additionally, this project relates to contemporary issues such as the influence of SMI's in young people's lives. This project has the potential to make a positive contribution towards enabling young people, both in Ireland and elsewhere, to protect themselves from undue negative influence. As this study will be the first of its kind, it also serves as a potential foundation for future research projects in this field.