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## Introduction

The B Sc Marketing at the DIT School of Marketing has produced over 2,500 graduates in past three decades, many now at the forefront of marketing practice nationally and internationally. Often their first in-depth engagement with marketing research and practice comes with their final year dissertation task. The dissertation allows the students to define, shape and research a marketing issue in great depth, using leading-edge theory to formulate a research question. This question is examined 'out there' in the world of marketing practice and consumer reality through the use of appropriate research methods. Such as engagement with research defines and differentiates these graduates and the 'black book' ensures that graduates have demonstrated the core marketing competences needed at the highest level.

This second edition features twenty-seven insightful, innovative and thought-provoking pieces of research by final year marketing students.

As well as featuring contemporary marketing issues, the range of methods used to investigate these issues reflect advances in research techniques. Traditional empirical quantitative methods of enquiry sit alongside qualitative methods and case studies as well as emerging methods such as discourse analysis and netnographic studies.

Students have provided a summary or abstract of his or her work in their own words. Their academic supervisor is also listed. If you are interested in any particular work you should contact myself or the staff member concerned. Details can be found on <http://www.dit.ie/marketing/staff/>

I hope you find the students' work stimulating and interesting.



Roger Sherlock,

Head of Department of Marketing Studies,

DIT College of Business,

School of Marketing.

# **Comparative Study of the Commercial Effectiveness of Provincial Rugby Sponsorship on the Consumer's Purchase Intentions.**

**Author: Claire Shannon**

**Supervisor: Laura Cuddihy**

## **Abstract**

Sponsorship research to date has predominately focused on the impact of sponsorship on brand awareness, consumers' opinion towards the sponsors' brand and image congruency. A limited focus has been placed on examining the effect of sponsorship on the consumers' intention to purchase the sponsors' brand.

Drawing on IMC, branding, sponsorship, sport sponsorship and consumer behaviour literature this paper will explore the relationship between sport sponsorship and supporters' purchase intentions towards the sponsors' products and services. This is a comparative research study, comparing the opinions of Munster and Leinster rugby supporters' opinion towards sport sponsorship and purchase intentions. Respondents were asked to complete an online survey, which asked them to fill in questions regarding their team identification, attitude towards sponsorship and their purchase intention towards the sponsors' product offerings. These surveys were examined using various marketing analysis techniques such as PCA, linear regression and crosstabs.

Findings from this research highlight the contrasting opinion between Munster and Leinster supporters, which regard to their team's title sponsors. However, this did not impact on their willingness to purchase products or services from companies that sponsor their provincial rugby team. Other factors such as team involvement and performance of the rugby team was also examined with regard to purchase intentions. There was no relationship between performance and purchase intentions as there had been in previous sport sponsorship research studies.



# **Dropping an Anchor: Liminality, Identity and Alcohol Consumption among Male College Students**

**Author: Conor Kavanagh**

**Supervisor: Dr. Kevina Cody**

## **Abstract**

The challenges of the postmodern environment have had a dramatic effect upon how the self functions in marketplace cultures. Consumers today can no longer claim identities; they must work to construct them.

The following qualitative research aims to investigate how male third level students construct identity amid liminality: a time in an individual's life when he is moving from one role to another. This experience is examined through male students' consumption of alcohol. An Interpretive Phenomenological Approach to research was taken which viewed interviews and focus groups as lived experiences (Yardley, 2000). Building upon traditional self-concept literature and incorporating areas of relevance such as symbolic interactionism, consumer identity projects, liminality and information relating to alcohol consumption in Ireland.

An exploratory approach to research was adopted in order to garner insights from discussions with students which had not been constrained by pre-defined categories. Three focus groups were conducted amongst participants between 18 and 21 years of age who were regular consumers of alcohol. These participants were able to retell their liminal experience with alcohol. Additionally, two semi-structured interviews were carried out with male students to ensure that the focus group dynamic was not directing participants' opinions in a direction counter to their own. A coding system of open coding and memo writing as well as axial and selective coding was utilised to categorise the collected data and establish themes relative to the research objectives.

The research found that the relationship between the consumption of alcohol and the consumer becomes more important in liminal experiences. This research has concluded that the self, facing uncertainty, remains acutely aware of surrounding social structures and the practices or patterns of consumption that are important to those structures. The consumption of alcohol was found to shorten the liminal period in that it facilitates social interaction and entry into new social groups. Furthermore, branded alcoholic drinks were seen as having a highly associative power within this environment, influencing self-perception and group responses. Thus, beyond the physical effects of alcohol consumption, the practice can anchor individuals to their new roles.

# **Creativity on TED.com; A Discourse Analysis of Thought Leaders' Speeches**

**Author: Julie O'Halloran**

**Supervisor: Dr. Brendan O'Rourke**

## **Abstract**

The overall goal of this dissertation is to examine the literature on creativity and investigate through the use of discourse analysis how thought leaders talk about creativity in the social world. This research highlights how creativity is something which is universally sought after but not universally defined. The literature reveals a multitude of perspectives which shape creativity research. The innovative online website, TED.com is the platform used to source the videoed speeches thought leaders made on creativity. The research, carried out to study how do thought leaders on TED.com represent creativity, is documented in five chapters as briefly summarized below.

Chapter one is an introduction to this research and the outlines the structure the rest of the research takes. Chapter two is a review of the literature on creativity with an emphasis on discourses of creativity. Chapter three describes the methodology of the research and explains the rationale for the data selection and analysis methods. Chapter four contains the discourse analysis of the thought leaders' speeches on TED.com. It looks at how the thought leaders' use language to construct an identity and credibility for their selves and the representations of creativity that are espoused through identified interpretive repertoires. Chapter five concludes the research with some suggested recommendations for practitioners, policy makers and for theory and also recommendations for the method.



# Location Based Services: An Exploration of Attitudes and Usage Intentions Among the 25-32 year old Segment

**Author: David Macken**

**Supervisor: Donncha Ryan**

## **Abstract**

With the introduction of Smartphones the role of the mobile phone is rapidly changing. Globally, Smartphone adoption is rising substantially, with Smartphone penetration currently at 37 per cent in the American market alone. This study explores the attitudes and usage intentions of consumers aged between 25 to 32 years old. The study uses the frameworks of the theory of reasoned action and the theory of planned behaviour to assess the role various attitudes and other variables play in the intention of those surveyed to use location-based service.

The purpose of this dissertation is to examine the consumers' behaviour towards location-based services (LBS) on mobile devices through the theoretical frameworks of the theory of reasoned action (TRA) and planned behaviour (TPB). A survey will be conducted of at least 100 respondents, where the independent variables will consist of descriptive questions and questions focused on one's attitude, beliefs and perceived behavioural control, while the dependent variable will be one's intention to use LBS. In order to allow other methods of analysis, which have greater marketing implications, other variable will be used such as demographic, economic, education and validity questions.

While studies have been presented showing the application of the TRA and TPB within the context of mobile marketing, only a sparse amount of work has been published investigating consumer's attitudes towards the use of their location, in this case to provide better targeted marketing communication. This study has implications from both a social science and marketing perspective, although the theoretical frameworks adopted were developed within the field of social science.

## **Significance of the Study**

There are four overriding reasons why this dissertation adds to the scholarly literature within the field. Much research has focused on consumer's behaviour towards older communications platforms within the mobile paradigm, however, this study focuses on the growing area of GPS targeting. This focus will help to supplement past research, adding to the current body of research. By studying some of the main factors that allow mobile communication to be more personal, this paper will highlight key difference between mobile marketing and other forums of digital communication. There will be a focus on the consumer's attitudes towards these distinct differences.





# **Do they really 'Like' it? A Quantitative Study of Self-Presentation on Facebook and the Implications for Targeting by Online Marketers**

**Author: Louise Fry**

**Supervisor: Dr. John Byrne**

## **Abstract**

This research dissertation involves gaining an insight into how individuals use Facebook and ascertaining if the online self of the individual is different to the offline self. This representation of the self online is a relatively new topic and the implications of this are of relevance for online marketing. If the results of this research find a difference between the online and offline self, this information could be of importance to those who advertise online using social networking sites.

The research problem is to identify if the differences between the online and offline self are significant, the way Facebook and its features are used and the attitudes of Facebook users towards marketing on Facebook. A quantitative study was carried out to gain an insight into these areas. A survey was distributed online and 202 respondents took part.

It was discovered in the course of this research that there is a significant difference between males and females and how they project the self online. There is a larger discrepancy between the male online and offline self. A result of interest to marketers using Facebook ads was that targeting consumers on Facebook who already 'Like' at least one brand, are 60 per cent more likely to click on an ad on Facebook. These results may be of relevance for online marketers and may also lead to future research in the area.



# **The Point Behind the ‘Points’; An Investigation into the Role of the Globally Successful Brand Weight Watchers in One’s Self Formation and Presentation**

**Author: Laura Faulkner**

**Supervisor: Dr. Kevina Cody**

## **Abstract**

In this study, the researcher evaluated and explored the relationship between peoples engagement with the globally successful weight loss program Weight Watchers and its influence on how they presented themselves in everyday life. This broad objective was explored upon an age group ranging from women in their twenties to mid thirties.

The first chapter strives to briefly introduce the topic area and the format in which this dissertation will follow. The Literature review is divided into two main sections: Firstly it will introduce the reader to the self concept and its omnipresence’s within consumer research. In addition to this the relevant connectional theories of the self concept will be explored along with their application within consumer research literature. This chapter will also explore the idea of Brand community since it is viewed as a relevant connectional measure to this study.

Chapter Three, the second section of the literature review, will explore the industry within which Weight Watcher competes. In addition to its competitive position, the researcher will present the rationale behind its existence, by exploring the area of body dissatisfaction, the media contribution to the ‘thin’ obsession and the history of body ideals.

The methodology chapter will outline the key objectives of this study. It will also inform the reader of the type of research methods employed, the researcher’s rationale and the motivation behind the research.

The data analysis section will then provide a concise synopsis and analysis in concise detail of the data which was generated from the primary research in order to gain an understanding of the topic and satisfy the research question in hand.

The primary research consisted of five in depth interviews with a purposive sample of three respondents in their twenties and two in their thirties. This study committed to a phenomenological approach and has created many interesting insights into Women’s body image, the influences behind their desire to be thin and their reliance on the consumption of Weight Watchers to meet this desired self.



# **Social Influence and Herd Behaviour Online: The Value of Customer Reviews in Hotel Bookings.**

**Author: Laura McQuaid**

**Supervisor: Donncha Ryan**

## **Abstract**

The ever-growing pervasiveness of the internet in the lives of consumers has made it a topic of great importance and significance amongst market researchers. Bonabeau (2004) identified social influence as having a powerful force over the behaviour of consumers with the internet vastly increasing the scale and scope of social influence and herd behaviour.

This study investigates social influence and herd behaviour through online consumer-to-consumer (C2C) communication in the form of customer reviews when booking holiday accommodation online. Use of and dependence on customer reviews is a fast growing area with the potential for companies to heavily market this area. The study was undertaken as a major gap was identified in research conducted in the area up to now. Quantitative research was conducted amongst a sample of 115 users of either Booking.com or Expedia.com or TripAdvisor.com which allowed for investigation of the use of customer reviews on both online travel agents (OTAs) and opinion websites.

The study found negative reviews to have the greatest impact on choice than positive reviews and found that customer review design was an antecedent to reliance on customer reviews. There were also interesting results in relation to the use of such websites by certain age profiles and use by gender. Motivation behind use of customer reviews and herding behaviour were discovered including goal of approval and risk reduction. Finally, though investigation into consumers' reaction to company deception in relation to customer reviews, it was found that it would result in negative backlash against the company.



# **Nothing Tastes as Good as Skinny Feels The Media, Celebrities and Female Adolescent Body Image**

**Author: Laura Goucher**

**Supervisor: Dr. Margaret- Anne Lawlor**

## **Abstract**

The main aim of this research study was to explore the effects that idealised images in the media have on female adolescents aged sixteen and seventeen, with specific reference to celebrity endorsement. Body image dissatisfaction has become an increasing problem among adolescents in recent years, with the use of idealised images in the media suggested as a major contributing factor. This dissertation will seek to investigate how these images containing celebrities contribute to how female adolescents shape their body image ideals.

The first chapter of this dissertation will briefly introduce the research gaps discovered in the chosen topic area, and will also explain the literature review format with the aid of a diagram. The literature review consists of two chapters. The first will introduce the reader to the theory of the self concept and body image, which is central to this study. The second chapter in the literature review will explore how the media dictates the ideal body image and also celebrity endorsement.

The methodology chapter will inform the reader what research methods the author employed and the overall research aim of the study. The analysis and findings chapter will provide a summary and thorough analysis of the primary data generated in an aim to satisfy research objectives.

Primary research consisted of four in-depth interviews and two friend pair interviews, with participants aged sixteen and seventeen. The in-depth interviews were semi- structured in nature and produced interesting insights on both the opinions of adolescent females towards the used of idealised images and the effects these idealised images have on their body image.



# **An Exploratory Research into How a Brand is Engaging Emotionally with Consumers Through Social Media**

**Author: Sinéad Duffy**

**Supervisor: Rosie Hand**

## **Abstract**

Making a connection with consumers is harder than ever for a brand today yet there has never been so many points of contact between the two. Yesteryear was a time for the advertising industry when the one-way conversation dominated from brand to consumer and consumers were thought to process advertising messages in a rational, linear way. Today the advertising industry has evolved and many within it are starting to move away from the staunch assumption that human behaviour was conscious, sequential and rational. New research has shown that it is emotions that guide and bias a consumer's decision making. As a result brands have taken advantage of TV ads to use emotions such as humour to execute, now very famous, ads that have made that emotional connection with a consumer. As a result many within the advertising industry are becoming very interested in areas such as behavioural economics, human behaviour and social influence.

The advent of social media has turned the advertising industry on its head. Never before have consumers been given such ample opportunities to be heard, to self-publish and also to co-create with a brand. Social media has enabled the communicator within us all. Therefore the key word among advertisers is 'engagement' and consistency is what is required with a brands strategy.

The objective of this research is to investigate how brands are engaging with consumers in an emotional way through the new medium that is social media, are brands able to leverage this new media and connect the same way they have done through successful TV advertising. The first chapter focuses on traditional advertising whilst the second chapter focuses on what social media has meant for the advertising industry.

# **Some Women are Born to Succeed. A Qualitative, Cross-cultural Examination of Female Leaders**

**Author: Sinéad Gilbert**

**Supervisor: Mary Lawlor**

## **Abstract**

**Purpose** – The purpose of this paper is to provide a theoretical explanation and a qualitative study of gender and leadership and the factors that lead to female leadership success.

**Design/Methodology** –A cross-cultural qualitative approach was used, using in-depth interviewing to help explain the factors that contribute to female leadership success.

**Findings** – The findings support the theory on female leadership success and women gaining prominence in the corporate world, in particular.

**Research Limitations** –The findings obtained from the research included a small sample

**Originality/Value** – The study focuses on women three different cultures in order to gage a cross-cultural perspective.



# **The Utilisation of Experiential Marketing by O2 Telefonica Ireland 'From Brand X to Brand Ex' A Case Study Approach**

**Author: Aisling Quigley**

**Supervisor: Valerie Gannon**

## **Abstract**

The primary purpose of this study is to explore how and why companies implement experiential marketing. This originated from a realisation by the researcher that this area as a relatively new concept is still academically under-researched. Therefore the purpose of this dissertation is to provide an addition to the somewhat scarce existing literature, through the researcher's exploration from a real-business perspective.

The first two chapters will consist of a literature review that will examine the available literature on the topic, firstly as a definition to attempt to provide an insight of what it is comprised of, and secondly to examine the various methods of how various authors on the topic suggest it is utilised. A significant result of the literature review is the claim made by one specific researcher that experiential marketing is something that will 'make or break brands of the future.'

The methodology employed to present the findings is a case study research approach. In order to gain a holistic view from the collection of primary data the researcher utilised personal interviews, a focus group and a participant observation as well as various other physical artefacts. A single case study on the telecommunications brand O2 Telefonica Ireland was the medium employed. This was as a result of unique access afforded to the researcher, and as the brand's exemplary nature from its utilisation of experiential marketing throughout its business model.

The conclusions drawn from the study are based on four primary objectives for the research of experiential marketing: to investigate the definition of the concept according to the different players within the case of O2; to examine O2's specific utilisation; to explore the factors contributing to their choice of it over other methods and to identify if these are consistent with factors outlined in existing literature; and to gain an understanding of the its fit within their marketing mix. The most important result of the study is the position in which O2 holds the utilisation of experiential marketing within their marketing mix.



# **An Exploratory Study of how Social Media has Transformed the Public Relations Industry in Ireland**

**Author: Bláthnaid Ni Nualláin**

**Supervisor: Mary Lawlor**

## **Abstract**

The emergence of two-way communication processes via Social Media platforms has had a dramatic impact on the business environment, affecting in particular the practice of Public Relations. As well as organisations publishing content now through Social Media platforms, power has shifted to consumers thus allowing for the creation of user generated content.

The following qualitative research study aims to investigate how Social Media and its platforms have impacted on the relationship between an organization and its publics. Building on traditional Public Relations literature and incorporating areas of relevance including Web 2.0, eWOM and PR 2.0 this research study intends to highlight an area of potential development in current Social Media literature.

In order to gain an understanding of how Public Relations Practitioners are utilizing Social Media platforms to enhance their communication processes with consumers, in-depth interviews were carried out by the researcher. Furthermore, interviews were held with industry practitioners in order to gauge the impact which these platforms have had on both the business world and on consumers. A coding system was undertaken by the researcher in order to categorize the data to further establish reoccurring themes.

The research found that Social Media platforms have indeed strengthened the relationship between an organization and its consumers. This was found to occur as a result of two-way communication processes, which are taking place between both sides. The increase in engagement between both sides allows both sides of the spectrum to seek greater benefits than before. The development of the web has facilitated this evolution and has witnessed Public Relations as a practice, to develop from PR to PR 2.0. This advancement however, has not changed PR itself but has seen an increase in the tools used in order to reach and connect with individuals.





# **Exploratory Study into the Importance of Co-Creation in a Convenient Sample of 18-24 Year Old Dublin Students**

**Author: Avril Murphy**

**Supervisor: Conor Horan**

## **Abstract**

Co-creation is a relatively new concept, there has been very little research conducted on this topic to date. Changes in marketing such as movement into a new service dominant logic has allowed for the concept of co-creation to develop; the idea that the consumer is an equal (Vargo and Lusch, 2004). There is no definitive definition for co-creation as it is dependent on the context and participants of the exchange.

The first few chapters of this dissertation will develop an understanding of co-creation. Chapter Two will discuss examples of the varying forms of collaboration between consumers and companies. While Chapter Three and Four will review the literatures that will help define the research objectives used in the data collection stage of this project.

The main objective of this research was to determine the importance of co-creation to a convenient sample of 18-24 year olds. Sub objectives were further developed from an analysis of the literature discussed in the previous two chapters. These objectives frame the analysis of the data collected.

Detailed analyses of the findings are discussed in Chapter Seven. The emerging factor to co-creation is that not all consumers are as active in their interactions with companies as the literature states, especially in virtual mediums or online. These mediums have created a way for the consumer to be passive in these interactions. The initiation of the interaction between these participants was looked into as an important aspect of co-creation. The research shed light onto the fact that a consumer needs to have a level of trust in order to want co-create with a company. Co-creation is a process, not a spontaneous step for a company (Bhalla: 2011).



# **An exploration into the motivations behind Irish teenage girl's participation on Facebook and their attitudes and behaviours toward marketing tactics on this site**

**Author: Christina Clarkin**

**Supervisor: Dr. Margaret Anne Lawlor**

## **Abstract**

This study has been conducted to analyse why teenage girls participate on Facebook today. There are so many social media sites available today such as Twitter and Google + and so the author wants to know why teenage girls are remaining loyal to Facebook. The main area of interest for the author is attitudes that teenage girls have toward the marketing tactics on Facebook. The author has narrowed the tactics down to pop-up advertisements, banner advertisements and brand pages. Diffley et al, 2011 is just one example of authors who have carried out research in this area thus far. The attitudes which they identified were quite negative with a minority of participants showing a positive attitude toward these tactics. This study investigates if there are more negative attitudes and more importantly more positive attitudes that have not yet been discovered. The final area that the author will look at is Electronic Word of Mouth. The author will be exploring if teenage girls engage in this activity and if so why do they do so and how do they perform this activity. Secondary research was first conducted in order to help the author gain a firm understanding of the different areas. Primary research was then performed, using the qualitative approach. Six interviews were carried out among teenage girls aged between 15 to 17 years. The overall result is that the girls do have more positive attitudes to share in relation to the chosen marketing tactics and that they do engage in EWOM. Other results were found and will be discussed further on in the dissertation



# **A Quantitative Investigation into a Consumer's Motivations to Join a Brand Community on Facebook**

**Author: Gareth O'Reilly**

**Supervisor: Mary Lawlor**

## **Abstract**

Over the past decade or so a substantial amount of interest and hype has surrounded the universe that is social networks. Their growth and the increasingly important role they play in the lives of millions of people around the world has understandably not only caused businesses and brands to stand up and pay attention but has also lead to a large increase in the amount of research being conducted on the topic. However due to relatively new nature of this apparently unstoppable medium research is still in its embryonic stage with many areas of interest still to be discovered and analysed.

The aim of this study was to investigate the motivations behind a consumer's decision to join a brand community on Facebook. Taking existing literature and research on brand community five predetermined motivational forces were chosen, these were; loyalty, incentive seeking, functional value, entertainment value, and social value. The empirical research was conducted on the UN Sports Nutrition community within the social network site Facebook and an online questionnaire was used to collect the data of 190 respondents. The questionnaire included questions on respondent's behaviour, motivations and loyalty.

The results of the study show that the strongest motivational force to join a brand community on Facebook is that of loyalty. Loyalty is followed by the functional value the community offers, which is followed by incentive seeking, social value and finally entertainment. The results also showed that within the community two levels of loyalty exist, those who are loyal to the brand and those who are exceptionally loyal to the brand. The implications and recommendations are presented in the final chapter.



# **Irish women, filmed media and product placement- An insight into attitudes towards product placement.**

**Author: Jennifer Keating**

**Supervisor: Joe Dennehy**

## **Abstract**

The aim of this study is to give a broad insight into how Irish women view the practice of product placement within movies and TV shows. With the recent boost in sales of digital TV, Internet streaming sites, online rental sites such as Netflix, pay-per-view channels and traditional bricks and mortar movie rental stores, today's consumers have a wide variety of options and availability of entertainment regarding both TV shows and movies. As such Ong (2004) argues that brand communities are presented with a number of openings for promotion where the traditional TV advert no longer gains much attention from consumers due to channel surfing and fast forwarding.

While the practice has been deemed deceptive and subliminal, it has seen rapid growth which Scott Dontan, editor of Advertising Age referred to as being similar to 'a gold rush', comparable to that of the Internet upon its launch (Nessenbaum, 2004). The intention of this study is to look at the attitudes Irish females have towards the practice which has been seen in US created media and more recently available in Irish media.

The secondary research discussed will include a review of previous academic research related to placements and an overview of the product placement industry to gain a greater understanding of the opposing views that exist and to help in selecting relevant research objectives. Following this a qualitative method of primary research was employed to find the attitudes of Irish females towards the practice utilizing in-depth interviews. In the final section of this study the analysis findings, conclusions and future research recommendations for future related potential research topics are discussed

# Online Display Advertising Targeted By Behaviour and Interests: A Quantitative Investigation into Irish Student Attitudes and Privacy Concerns

**Author: Linas Zemaitis**

**Supervisor: Donncha Ryan**

## **Abstract**

During the past decade, we have seen a rapid increase in global internet adoption and significant advances in the field of online advertising (Internet World Stats, 2011). However, the effectiveness of online advertising remains limited (Bateman, 2010; Chaffey, 2011). Furthermore, little academic research was done about online behavioural targeting and web users online privacy concerns to date.

This research paper investigates online advertising avoidance behaviour and explores Irish student attitudes towards online display advertising targeted by behaviour, their interests and concerns about online privacy.

One of the most significant findings that emerged from the study of 105 Irish students is that the majority of respondents are concerned about internet privacy and are generally not comfortable with behavioural targeting. Around 40% of all students were found to be strongly concerned about their online privacy and not comfortable with being displayed behaviourally targeted online advertising. Students are not fully aware that their personal information might be collected by a third party for advertising purposes. This group also exhibited substantially negative attitudes towards Google AdSense and Facebook advertising.

These findings suggest that, a significant part of Irish students, and possibly web users in general, may not be fully aware of how behavioural targeting works. As a result, they exhibit more negative attitudes towards online advertising and exaggerated concerns about online privacy. Further research, regarding the role of web users attitudes towards online privacy and its impact on attitudes towards different online advertising formats is strongly recommended.

In general, this dissertation substantially adds to our understanding of Irish student attitudes towards online display advertising targeted by behaviour / interest and their concerns about the online privacy. Cho and Cheon (2004) identify students as opinion leaders in technology adoption. Thus, the findings of this study could benefit anyone looking to gain a insight into contemporary web users concerns about behavioural targeting and online privacy. This study also confirms previous Ducoffe (1996) suggestions and contributes to the understanding of the underlying nature of web users attitudes towards different online advertising formats.



# **A Qualitative Investigation into the use of Experiential Marketing within Online Shopping**

**Author: Michelle Kearney**

**Supervisor: Siobhan McCarthy**

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the use of experiential marketing within the online shopping environment; the effect experiential marketing has on consumer behaviour in an online store and whether online shopping creates a similar experience to that of a physical store.

Following a comprehensive literature review, both visual data and semi-structured interviews were used in order to research the issue. Respondents were asked to complete an online shopping task and following this the respondents were asked to discuss their opinions and experiences in relation to online shopping.

The research found that the communication dimensions that are used in online stores aided in creating the online experience for consumers. Experiential marketing also showed to have an effect on the emotions involved in shopping, finding that the emotions conveyed in a physical store environment also occur in an online environment. The complementary relationship between online and offline shopping was also discovered, showing the need for communication across these two mediums of consumption.

The study was from a sample of female consumers aged 16-34 and the results are limited in terms of the generalizability to the website used in the research. Future research on experiential marketing in online shopping could involve the study of the use of mobile phone marketing in particular. Further research could prove invaluable to both academics and marketers alike.



# Is Green the New Black? An Investigation into Ireland's Consumers of Ethical Fashion

**Author: Orla Donohoe**

**Supervisor: Dr. Paul Donnelly**

## **Abstract**

Literature examining ethical consumption has increased in recent years; however there is a significant gap in the literature regarding the consumption of ethical fashion. The main aim of this research was to explore the consumption practices of ethical fashion wearers. Studies to date have been quantitative revealing an attitude behavior gap with ethical consumers. This study aimed to offer an alternative insight into ethical fashion from a conscientious buyer's perspective.

This study drew from the concepts of consuming in the postmodern world, the self and the consuming experience. In order to explore the consumption experience of ethical fashion wearers, six in-depth interviews were conducted. The six respondents identified themselves as conscientious fashion consumers. The main aim of the research was to explore respondents past experiences and opinions on ethical consumption and understand the motivation behind purchasing ethical clothing.

The main objectives of this study were: to understand the ethical consuming experience, to explore respondents opinions on Irish fashion trends, to examine respondents' opinions on large corporations and to discover how respondents utilize their voting power.

Findings revealed that ethical consumption is not as selfless a phenomenon as it might seem. Respondents revealed the main influences behind their ethical consumption patterns to be: comfort, disillusionment with Irish society and the country's consumption patterns and the attempt to distinguish themselves from consumers of fast fashion.

The interviews also revealed a significant amount of support for small-scale producers. Corporations were blamed for putting these small-scale producers out of business. Findings are discussed in relation to existing literature on ethical consumption and suggestions for future research are provided.

# **‘Prosumed Experiences Give You Wings’ Exploring the Narratives of Consumers’ Brand Expressions Throughout the Infinite Experiential Journey**

**Author: Rachel Lynch**

**Supervisor: Laura Cuddihy**

## **Abstract**

Watkins (2007) states that beyond the ownership of a defined and active brand, the success and life of the experience relies on thinking outside-in instead of inside-out. Thus, the researcher did just this. Rather than focusing energy on the brand experience implementation and in a sense attempting to prove the literature, this researcher took a unique and less travelled route. This led the researcher down a path of discovery, one of looking at brands and its created experiences through the lens of the consumer. There exists a clear space in the literature in relation to the consumer’s perspective of experiential marketing calling to be filled and this research is the author’s story of attempting to fill parts of this gap.

This researcher notes how consumers embark on a journey with experiences and rather than talk to consumers, the decision was made to travel this journey also, to observe and interpret based in a non-obtrusive manner. Thus, the researcher engaged with and used netnographic data, participant information and physical artefacts. These approaches allowed this researcher into the natural undisturbed world of consumers and their brand experiences. The differing methods too allowed the researcher access to all touching points of the experience.

On completion of the analysis the researcher allowed the findings and conclusions to emerge naturally from her observation and interpretation. This researcher told her story in the form of a thematic show with linkages forming throughout. This then allowed the researcher contribute to the story and identify areas of the consumer experience which had not been emphasised previously. Thus the researcher highlights the importance of the prosumer, the co-creator and the surrounding times to the actual experience. A discovery of the active and anticipative consumer willing to create their own experience emerged, but more so the researcher noted their willingness to advocate the impact post experience through reflection and conversation.





# **Sports Supplements and the Pursuit of Masculinity**

**Author: Robert Gray**

**Supervisor: Dr. Paul Donnelly**

## **Abstract**

Today men flock to the gym in a desperate bid to obtain ideal physiques. Gyms, fitness and leisure centres, men's magazines, websites and many others profit from offering men a wide range of sports supplements that promise to help men achieve their goals faster.

In the past such sports supplements were associated with only elite athletes and hardcore bodybuilders. However, today they are marketed to all men as essential sports nutrition.

In this dissertation the author investigates how a group of men associate their consumption of sports supplements to their pursuit of a masculine identity. Data was collected through interviews with six recreational athletes who use sports supplements.

The author interpreted the men's narratives through the lens of figurational sociology. Thus analytical attention is paid to how today's discourses and practices of sports supplementation are underpinned by social understandings of masculine bodies in a time of perceived crisis for masculinity.

# **Corporate social responsibility and its role in managing a crisis – An investigation in the context of British Petroleum**

**Author: Robert O'Neill**

**Supervisor: Dr. John Byrne**

## **Abstract**

This dissertation seeks to investigate the power of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and the role that it can play in managing a crisis that a corporation may be facing.

The author takes the case of BP PLC which for over two years has been attempting to deal with a corporate and environmental crisis that came about as a result of an un-natural disaster whilst BP were “drilling for oil” off the east coast of America.

This disaster has caused serious reputational harm for BP as a company, has affected the lives of those living on parts of the east coast and has damaged natural ecosystems found along the east coast of America.

BP PLC has been attempting to respond to this corporate and environmental crisis largely by engaging in CSR related initiatives and communications.

The researcher immersed himself in BP’s official facebook community profile page and carried out a cloaked netnographical based analysis of this community. The author took a qualitative research approach and analysed discourse and extracting meaning from conversations that took place on the BP facebook profile page.

The author implemented the above firstly in relation to archived social media activity prior to the crisis occurring (2009), then in relation to archived social media activity at the acute stage of the crisis (mid 2010) and finally in the present day where the crisis is of more of a chronic nature (mid 2012).

The author discovered that the way in which people utilise BP’s facebook profile page and their attitudes towards BP as a corporation change for the better over time where the BP continue to heavily engage in CSR related communications and initiatives.



# **A Case Study of the 2011 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show: A Creative Extension of the Brand Experience.**

**Author: Roisin Moloney**

**Supervisor: Rosie Hand**

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to explore the planning and staging of a global event- the Victoria's Secret Fashion Show and to investigate the Victoria's Secret brand's use of event marketing in contributing to the brand experience.

The author chose to do a case study on this particular event due to a long held passion for event marketing and a fascination with the scale and quality of the annual Victoria's Secret Fashion Show. The author had the opportunity to work on the event team in the lead up to and at the live event of the 2011 Victoria's Secret Fashion Show and this provided for further insight into the case. The author was then able to use her contacts from this experience to organise the in-depth interviews for her analysis, across the various teams involved in the planning and staging of this event who work internally at Victoria's Secret.

The research found that a strong focus on collaboration across functions, in combination with expertise in production and marketing and of course design contributes to delivering a piece of branded content that engages the consumer and immerses them in the fantasy of the fashion show. The research also highlighted that the partnership between the TV production company Done and Dusted, and Victoria's Secret is crucial to the creating the show. This is due to the fact that there not only has to be a successful live event but it also has to translate to the small screen in order to connect with the millions of consumers who watch it on TV around the world. The author learned that Victoria's Secret is very in touch with their consumer, and by communicating with her throughout the year and learning what they would like to see in the show, they elevate the consumers' brand experience.



# **Discourse analysis on how marketing managers construct the decision whether to localise or standardise cross-cultural advertising**

**Author: Ruth Maguire**

**Supervisor: Dr. Brendan O' Rourke**

## **Abstract**

This research aims to identify how marketing managers approach the decision whether to localise or standardise cross-cultural advertising. It does this through the analysis of six active interviews with six highly qualified marketing managers of a global telecommunications company. This analysis discovered three major ideological dilemmas which were thought to be of major interest in regards to the localisation/standardisation decision. These were as follows; global versus local, product versus service marketing and bureaucratic versus entrepreneurial culture.

In-depth active telephone interviews were used as the data collection method. Active interviewing was chosen as it acknowledges the effect the interview as a whole has on the participants' answers (Rapley, 2001). As a result a more authentic understanding of the information is achieved. Telephone interviews were thought to be the most effective way to obtain the data as the participants were scattered across the Caribbean. Also very little research of this sort has been conducted via in-depth telephone interviews and here lies another reason for the interest in conducting such interviews (Garbett and McCormack, 2001).

Discourse analysis was used to extract a more insightful understanding of the talk of the participants. This was thought to produce the most genuine and interesting results allowing the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of the research topic.

The plentiful supply of academic sources regarding this area of research and with the added knowledge of the highly experienced sample the researcher was able to gain an enriched answer to the research question.

# Emotion's, Consumption and Downward Mobility

**Author: Siobhan Duffy**

**Supervisor: Dr. Paddy Dolan**

## **Abstract**

The current economic downturn has dominated the global news since early 2007. Irish consumers are facing a relatively new phenomenon of downward mobility both in terms of income and in some scenarios in social class. Economic experts and consumers alike have all offered their opinions on the causes of the recession. However, the result it is having on the individual consumer has gone remarkably undocumented.

Three main research questions were composed in order to identify the main areas of the study. They are as follows:

1. How do the effects of the recession differ between those who have seen downward mobility in income, those who have suffered a fall in social class and those who have not witnessed any form of downward mobility?
2. What have been the emotional effects of downward mobility?
3. What have been the direct effects on downward mobility on consumer's consumption?

Five participants who have been affected differently in light of the recession were questioned using qualitative interviews. The analysis illustrates four specific themes that were discovered in relation to downward mobility. These themes include consistent consumption, key emotions, the use of 'you' versus 'I' and lastly, positive effects, which are explained in the study.

It was established that while there were similar effects on consumption throughout all forms of downward mobility, there were clear differences in the emotional effects of the recession. It was proven that the emotional effects differ depending on the form of downward mobility. The social background and habitus of the individual consumer played a role in the effect the recession took.

The research also revealed that parents are particularly concerned with maintaining their children's level of cultural activity, in cases of downward mobility. Where a fall in class is concerned, fighting class boundaries and maintaining status of the child is considered of paramount importance to the parent.

It was ascertained that consumers will often distance themselves from any negative effects of downward mobility by talking a more general form of 'you' rather than a more personal 'I'. There was also a number of positive effects documented, including a return to a more collectivist society.

