

Research on Contemporary Marketing Issues

M Sc Marketing

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Introduction

Welcome to this fourth edition of Contemporary Research in Irish Marketing from students of the M. Sc. Marketing at DIT.

This is Ireland's premier 'conversion' programme, recruiting graduates from non-business disciplines such as arts, engineering, media and science and developing their capabilities as excellent marketers in twelve months.

The dissertation task, a central feature of learning and research at the School of Marketing, 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 word of marketing industry practice and consumer reality through the use of appropriate research methods. Such an engagement with research defines and differentiates these graduates and the 'black book' produced by them ensures that these graduates have demonstrated the core marketing competences needed at the highest level.

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/>

This year's collection features a range of themes such as Pinterest usage amongst the over sixties, experiential marketing practices, social media discourse and the Irish diaspora's tourism decision-making.

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



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An Exploratory Study of the Views and Behaviours of 60+ Pinterest Users

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Supervisor: Dr. Kate Uí Ghallachóir

Abstract

This dissertation explores the views and behaviours of Pinterest users aged 60+. Crucially, this research is concerned with understanding why older adults are engaging with this platform.

More than ever, older adults are isolated from marketing communications, despite noted growth in the 60+ demographic engaging with social media. Using a qualitative method design incorporating in-depth interviews, data was collected from 7 adults aged 60+ who identified as Pinterest users.

Findings highlight that 60+ Pinterest users reject many social network philosophies and are not motivated by social connectedness to engage online. Equally, the users are motivated to use the platform as a means of restful solitude in which to explore their own interests and achieve a sense of intrinsic satisfaction. The 60+ Pinterest users showed adequate knowledge and awareness of online platforms, dividing the digital landscape into search and social functions. The users interacted with Pinterest through 'create and collect' style behaviour, searching for and saving images associated with personal interests.

Overall, the phenomenon of 60+ Pinterest users is explained by individuals desire to fulfil intrinsic psychological needs and to escape from the monotony of everyday life or social pressures other online platforms project. This research has found that 60+ Pinterest users are a potentially lucrative market for brands, and should not be discounted by stereotypical assumptions of lack of computer literacy.

Keywords: Pinterest; Pinterest user; older adults; online marketing; social media; online behaviours; online motivations;



An Exploratory Study of Consumer Perceptions of Amplified eWOM in Fashion and Beauty Blogs and Vlogs

Author: Janine Mc Bennett

Supervisor: Edel Foley

Abstract

The primary aim of this research was to investigate consumer interpretation of sponsored blog posts and vlogs. Furthermore, the research aimed to uncover the factors that motivate and influence consumer trust of these sources and their impact on consumer brand evaluation.

In-depth interviews with Irish consumers who frequently engage with blogs and/or vlogs were used to generate the findings presented in this research. The results of the primary research showed that source credibility is an important factor in determining consumer trust of a sponsored recommendation post. Consumer trust of a blogger or vlogger is motivated by their relatability, interaction with consumers, and a consumer desire to emulate their style and lifestyle.

The results also demonstrated that when consumers have high brand awareness of the products featured in a sponsored blog post or vlog, consumers have positive attitudes towards sponsored posts, which improves purchase intention. Consumer trust of a blogger/vlogger also leads to a favorable consumer response to unfamiliar brands featured in a sponsored post, therefore increasing consumer brand awareness.

The findings of this research adds to the current body of literature on sponsored recommendation posts within the blogosphere, and provides both marketers and fashion and beauty brands with an insight into consumer attitudes towards this form of advertising and promotion, thus providing them with the opportunity to harness the power of the Internet and focus their efforts on the increasingly popular bloggers and vloggers that consumers are currently engaging with.



Exploring Digital Content Consumption Behaviour Among Generation X Consumers in Ireland

Author: Katie Kilbride

Supervised by: Dr. Etain Kidney

Abstract

Digital content marketing is expected to be the single most important marketing tool for 2015. With this, it is forecasted to grow at a rapid pace, as digital content expenditure and budgets continue to rise. However, while digital content marketing receives a great deal of attention within industry discourse, its presence within the literature is sparse.

Creating engaging content is universally cited as the biggest challenge facing content marketing strategy today. Thus, this dissertation will seek to understand consumer digital content consumption behaviour to in turn determine what content consumers perceive as valuable and engaging.

This research used qualitative digital diaries among Generation X consumers to firstly explore what type of content these consumers engage with, their purpose for engagement, at what intensity they engage, as well as the outcome of digital content consumption. The primary data was analysed using both a predetermined and emerging thematic analysis. The findings highlighted the importance of utilitarian digital content appeals for Generation X consumers. With this, the findings supported Uses and Gratification theory which presents content orientation, relationship orientation and self-orientation as the main purpose for content engagement.

The results found irritation, immediacy and routine as key variables affecting consumption and engagement intensity. Overall the findings indicate that there is a distinct correlation between digital content affinity, consumer brand relationships and brand sentiment.

This research contributes to the content and digital marketing literature as well as informing digital content marketing strategy. The findings will support marketers in creating more valuable content, which consumers are more inclined to engage with. With this, the findings will also provide insight to the under researched market segment which is that of Generation X.



A Critical Discourse Analysis of the Media's Construction of Discourse Surrounding Discount Stores and Social Class in Ireland during the Recession

Author: Ashley Redmond

Supervisor: Dr. Olivia Freeman

Abstract

The middle class demographic and the media initially portrayed a somewhat subdued stigma towards the discount stores at the beginning of the recession and during the Celtic Tiger era. After the recession began, the media appeared open to being swayed by the discount stores' attempt to attract middle class consumers.

The analysis allowed for a deeper insight to be gained from the media's representation of the discount stores. The trends that appeared verified the change from negative connotations to increasingly positive ones. The efforts of Lidl and Aldi to please the Irish consumer by providing premium ranges and locally sourced products resulted in the media taking a positive approach to their representation of the discount stores. Middle class consumers had to change to the way they shopped due to financial hardship and austerity measures imposed on them as a result of the recession. For many Lidl and Aldi was a source of help for struggling households.

Previously the middle class consumer may have held the opinion that discount stores were meant for lower income families. Aided by the media's representation of discount stores in an increasingly favourable light, the middle class consumer's wariness regarding their social class image and lifestyle was challenged and they accepted the discount stores.

The analysis proved the media changed the discourse surrounding social class and discount stores from a negative to a positive outlook and caused much of the stigma to dissipate. This was constructed throughout their discourse over time as shown by the critical discourse analysis, thus answering the primary research question: did the Irish media change the way in which discourse surrounding discount stores and social class was constructed during the recession?



An Exploratory Study of Brand Personality on Social Media in Ireland

Author: Peter Hunt

Supervisor: Dr. Etain Kidney

Abstract

The emergence of social media in the twenty first century has provided marketers with a new means of communicating with consumers and fostering relationships. The proliferation of social networking websites and platforms means that this area of marketing is now viewed by managers as an essential component of the brand building process.

Consequently, there has been a large shift of marketing activities towards these social media channels leading to new challenges and opportunities for organisations. The intimate nature of social media has led to discussions among academics on the importance of brand personality, particularly in the portrayal of human attributes with relation to brand representation through a computer screen.

This dissertation aims to uncover what social media managers understand about their brand's persona in terms of planning, representation and engagement in order to explore the effects of personality on the brand to consumer relationship.

The findings in this research provide valuable insights into the thought processes adopted by managers with regards to online portrayal and communication as well as providing a foundation for future research into notable areas of focus which have been identified by the author.



To Determine the Importance of Social Media in Building Brand Awareness of Health and Functional Foods Among Young Irish Adult Consumers

Author: Bethan Cunningham

Supervisor: Dr. Kevina Cody

Abstract

The extensive use by and exponential growth of the number of social media users in the last decade, particularly among the young adult consumers, provides increasing opportunities to brand marketers to develop an online presence, personality and the mechanism to build brand awareness, equity and ultimately brand loyalty.

Given the ongoing move away from traditional marketing media towards social networks, new and emerging products and brands need to engage with consumers through these platforms. Health and Functional Foods are a relatively new, emerging and innovative market sector in the area of low involvement products that can exploit opportunities to develop market presence and brand awareness through identification of their targeted market online.

This study will seek through quantitative methods to determine the importance of social media in building brand awareness for Health and Functional Foods among young Irish adult consumers.



The Croke Park Experience: A Qualitative Study into Experiential Marketing Practices Employed by the GAA.

Author: Stuart Curran

Supervisor: Aileen Kennedy

Abstract

The vastness of experiential marketing attractions in the Irish Culture and Heritage Tourism industry is undeniable. Popular tourist attractions have elevated their offering by creating engaging experiences celebrating the rich history of Irish culture. The Guinness' Storehouse tour is one of many examples of how an organisation which is deep rooted in Irish history has formed a customer experience which teaches, entertains, displays its features and allows customers to escape into the world inside St. James Gate Brewery.

This report begins with an in-depth review of the existing literature on experiential marketing. In Chapter 2 overview of the Gaelic Athletic Association (GAA) is given, offering a layout of the history, structure, branding activity and organisational values.

In Chapter 3 the research process is examined in detail with reference to numerous experts in the field of marketing research. The research question and objectives are identified and discussed.

In Chapter 4 the findings of the research are discussed. The findings are split into two separate sections: Organisation Samples and Consumer Samples. A thematic approach is adopted in order to display the significant findings from the data collected. Following on from this is a discussion of the findings. In this section, the information is then tailored into answers for the each of the objectives. The researcher uses the literature (previously reviewed in chapter 1) to offer a comprehensive analysis of the findings. This analysis is then used to offer a response to the research question.

The final sections of the report then detail the limitations of the research and suggestions for future paths of study in the experiential marketing field.



Gathering the Gone: An exploratory study into the Motivating Factors that Influence Diaspora Tourist's Decisions to Visit and Recommend their Genealogical Homeland.

Author: Barry O'Neill

Supervisor: Prof. Aidan O'Driscoll

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the increasing amount of Diaspora marketing as an affective driver of tourism potential with specific relation to Ireland's 'The Gathering' initiative of 2013. It also aimed to determine what the underlying causal factors were that influence this groups decision to return to their origin homeland and whether they were more likely to gain affinity with the country in the aftermath of their visit. Initial research was conducted by reviewing and analysing literature concerned with experiential marketing and to investigate whether the experience of visiting a nation could be orchestrated much like the experience of visiting a business. To investigate this question a study was undertaken using a sample of 4 selected participants of differing ages and generational heritage to Ireland.

Based on an in-depth analysis of the interviews conducted the paper concludes that positive attitudes toward Ireland and its brand are demonstrated by its Diaspora however there does remain some hesitation in the long term viability of this brand dyad in light of stronger social considerations. While these considerations do not affect short term considerations of choosing to visit or recommend Ireland as a destination event for other tourists they may impact the long term likelihood of these Diaspora wishing to return to Ireland to take residence.

Finally, the paper concludes with a study of the implications of the results in detail with reference to the theoretical considerations presented in the paper and concludes with recommendations on further future research into the topic area.

