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Introduction

Welcome to the seventh edition of Contemporary Research in Irish Marketing from students of the B Sc Marketing at DIT for 2018. These abstracts of their dissertation work illustrate the range, depth and rigor which characterizes the research undertaken by over one hundred students each year.

The infographic captures this year’s themes of identity, connection, and the creation of meaningful relationships with and between consumers, the role of brands, often through the lens of an online entity and the dominant concerns of this millennial generation.

I hope you find the students’ work stimulating and interesting. Feel free to follow with myself or the staff if you wish to explore any work further.

Roger Sherlock,

Head of Department of Marketing Studies,

School of Marketing, DIT College of Business
Functional Or Dysfunctional? A Matter Of Sales And Marketing Perspective

Author: Katie Boland

Supervisor: Laura Cuddihy

Abstract

Today’s market conditions are becoming increasingly competitive with inherent dynamism that requires firms to address their organisational capabilities as a mode of response. Managers face challenges to coordinate and align intra-firm functions as a result. Yet whilst serving as the two primary customer-contact functions, “little is known about the interface between separate marketing and sales departments” (Homburg, Jensen and Krohmer, 2008), of which this dissertation seeks to change.

Despite increasing calls for collaboration between the two departments in a firm due to their large contribution to firm performance, difficulty can ensue in its implementation if either department does not understand each other’s contribution to the relationship. This issue is heightened when managers attempt to coordinate intra-firm functions without acknowledging that the sales and marketing interface frequently varies across firms. As a result, the two departments may take on different roles with their relationships displaying different characteristics as a consequence that affect business performance.

Issues such as negative perceptions of one-another and psychological distances often characterise the relationship, leading to widespread managerial dissatisfaction at cooperation levels (Biemans and Brencic, 2007). Addressing these issues however involves understanding the dynamics that have created such conditions from those in the midst of the conflict themselves (Malshe, Johnson and Viio, 2017).

Through an analysis of pertinent arguments surrounding the interface, an understanding of the dynamics that affect the marketing-sales interface are provided in addition to recommendations regarding how to optimise it- an issue that is of “paramount important to academics and practitioners alike” (Malshe et al., 2017, p.145).

Primary qualitative research in the form of four in-depth interviews with sales and marketing personnel in two organisations conducted provides insight into the conditions that affect how B2B firms have achieved a certain level of integration between their Sales and Marketing departments, or lack thereof- taking into account the impact organisational structure may have. Research about the conditions in which firms enhance cross-functional coordination can therefore help managers to better coordinate resources across functions and respond in a timely fashion to market pressures (De Luca and Ataherne-Gima, 2007).
Investigating Modern Right-wing Attitudes Among Working-class Youth in Ireland.

Author: Seán Bridgeman

Supervisor: Professor Paul Donnelly

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to assess whether the right-wing sentiments held by working-class populations across the Western world, which created a shift in leadership from left-wing Neoliberal ideology to right-wing Conservatism, exist among working-class youth in Ireland. The salience of this right-wing sentiment among participants was also documented, as well as the influence these attitudes may create regarding consumer product choices. These assessments were made by combining pre-existing literature with transcripts from in-depth, unstructured interviews with working-class respondents between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-seven.

Rather than conforming to wider Western trends, Ireland continues to present itself as having a unique political outlook relative to the rest of the world. Due to a myriad of factors, the Irish working-class interviewed resoundingly rejected these right-wing ideals and spoke to a trend of increasing left-wing ideology among themselves and their peers. However, both the literature and the sentiments of participants also foreshadowed the potential for right-wing growth in Ireland, based on the potential emergence of right-wing candidates and increasing levels of immigration into the country.

Finally, despite Irish respondents showing an increasingly politicised perspective, their opinions towards brands becoming involved in issues salient to their target markets, were ambivalent at best. This was in stark contrast to the literature review, which showed American consumer product choices were heavily driven by their political ideology.
They wear me down - an exploration into the parent-child purchase relationship

Author: Ellen Burke

Supervisor: Dr Margaret Anne Lawlor

Abstract

This study aims to explore the parent-child purchase relationship from the parent’s perspective. This work will commence with an overview of previous literature concerning the parent child purchase relationship, specifically focusing on the phenomena known as pester power.

This study will approach these issues from the parent’s perspective, to further understand the parent’s experiences of this phenomena through their narratives. This study used qualitative methods to further explore the area. Findings are presented through an interpretive research approach with parents of children between the ages of 5-12.

This research suggests that both the parent and child understand the interactions that occur when a child makes a purchase request. This research also suggests that parents feel motivated to purchase due to emotional drivers, such as guilt from working. The children approached the parent in making a purchase request through many tactics congruent with previous literature.

Furthermore, this study finds that the outcome of the parent child purchase relationship is viewed of in a positive manner by the participants in this study.
The Role of Nostalgia in Millennial Consumption of Retro Brands: Disney’s Beauty and the Beast

Author: Stephanie Burns
Supervisor: Adrienne Czerwin Abbot

Abstract

The use of Nostalgia and Retro has become increasingly prevalent across industries in the past decade. The world of Media and Entertainment is no exception, with remakes, reboots and revivals currently making up most of the Box Office successes. A driving force behind this trend are Millennials, who are described as looking at culture through a rear view mirror.

Looking at an exemplar Retro product from the past year, Disney’s Beauty and the Beast, this study aims to understand and explore the role of Nostalgia in Millennials’ consumption of retro brands.

Chapter two begins with a contextual overview of the current trend of Nostalgia and Retro in the media and entertainment industry. The researcher then explored a breadth of literature in the realms of Nostalgia, Retro and Millennials, providing a theoretical framework for the study. Chapter three details the research methodology undertaken. Saunders’ Research Onion (2012) was used to formulate and illustrate the stages of research. A rationale and justification for the primary research approach is presented, detailing the Qualitative methods used for the purpose of this study.

Through exploratory research, insights were gained through semi-structured in-depth interviews. Both an industry and Millennial consumer standpoint was captured, on the influence of Nostalgia, and a look at Millennials media consumption habits. Findings were presented in chapter four following thematic analysis.

Chapter five discusses these findings in detail. Findings are supported by the outcome of the primary research and a review of the Literature from chapter two. This research provides illuminating insights on the Nostalgic tendencies of the Millennial generation, and its valuable use in the Retro Branding strategy. This chapter also provides recommendations for industry and further research.
The Female Social Identity Project: Constructing Social Identity and Gaining Social Capital on Instagram

Author: Aoife Coburn

Supervisor: Tara Rooney

Abstract

The overall aim of this undergraduate research dissertation is to explore the social identity project in order to understand how women use Instagram to construct their social identity and gain social capital. This research will be conducted through the lens of social identity theory and social capital theory.

Digital diaries were conducted by seven research participants over a period of two weeks so that the researcher could observe the process surrounding women’s self presentation and social identity building on Instagram.

Following the completion of the diaries interviews were then carried out with the same participants to get a better understanding of why women do this, why Instagram is chosen, if they tend to change their identity claims online, whether or not this is to gain social capital and finally to understand if social capital adds to their sense of self worth.

The findings of this research add to current literature surrounding social identity theory and social capital theory whilst modernising the current body of literature by focusing on Instagram, an under researched platform.
An Investigation Into The Adoption Of Electric Vehicles In Ireland

Author: Orlagh Cramp

Supervisor: Ciara Nolan

Abstract

Electric vehicles (EVs) are an environmental innovation that have the potential to reach mass market and entirely replace internal combustion engine vehicles. Environmental degradation from climate change has resulted in a responsive push from government bodies to incentivise the uptake of EVs.

Regardless, the uptake of EVs in Ireland has been exceptionally low. A quantitative analysis of 113 EV adopters and 144 non-adopters was conducted in order to understand why some people are more likely than others to purchase an EV in Ireland.

The Theory of Planned Behaviour and the Diffusion of Innovations Theory are used in tandem as following on previous environmental innovation research. The findings suggest 12 purchase reasons for an EV including economic value, government incentives and driving experience. Environmental concern and subjective norms were found to have no substantial effects on EV adoption.

Non-adopters in Ireland are largely unaware of the implications of adopting an EV and therefore have not formed explicit opinions. Marketing recommendations include opportunities for cross selling and awareness campaigns.
An Exploration of Cultural Intermediary Processes Practiced by the Leaders of the GirlGains Instagram Community

Author: Ciara A Delaney
Supervisor: Dr. Olivia Freeman

Abstract

The aim of this research project is to identify, formalize, and explore the range of cultural intermediation devices at work within the activities of selected health and fitness digital cultural intermediaries (DCIs). Due to the lack of previous academic research available on cultural intermediaries within the digital realm this research project is one of the first of its kind and applies the theory of cultural intermediation to social media influencers within the cultural field of fitness.

Netnographic research, supported by a mixed method analytical approach of visual discourse analysis and qualitative content analysis, was implemented to collect and analyse the images, videos and captions posted by the selected health and fitness DCIs on the Instagram platform.

The findings of this research provide descriptive and rich explanatory insights into how cultural intermediary devices occur within the Instagram activities of the selected health and fitness DCIs and make evident areas of similarity and difference regarding current academic understandings of cultural intermediation work.

These findings can act as a foundation for future academic research and exploration of digital cultural intermediaries within the social media realm. Within a business context, these findings provide marketing implications for understanding how digital cultural intermediaries communicate with their audiences and the different ways they work to promote goods and services on their platform.
Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore consumer’s impulse purchasing behavior in an online environment. The literature review identifies the lack of consensus with regards to the definition of impulse purchasing, it also discusses the characteristics and the factors that influence this behaviour.

The literature review then incorporates Mehrabian and Russell’s (1974) Stimulus-Organism-Response Framework to provide a good understanding of the way in which environmental stimuli affect impulse purchasing online. The review of the literature highlighted the extent of available research with regards to the traditional bricks and mortar setting compared to that of the online environment. For this reason, the researcher used a combination of online and offline consumer behaviour literature for the analysis.

An exploratory qualitative study (in-depth interviews and field notes) with 6 female participants was employed to allow the researcher to achieve the stated research objectives.

The findings suggest that there are various factors that influence impulse purchasing online. The researcher found that the activity was complex and it involved many aspects of human behaviour which contributed to a particular response. Environmental stimuli such as web atmospherics and sales promotions had a significant impact on participants.

Many of the themes align with traditional impulse purchasing literature with themes such as trust and competition also emerging. This information highlighted an under researched topic in relation to impulse purchasing in an online environment and thereby presents an opportunity for future research.
The aim of this study is to investigate the previously established theory of the consumer decision making process, a process which has evolved over time as both consumer culture and the consumer environment is forever changing. This study will explore the effects of social media influencers and their ability to affect the purchasing patterns of millennial consumers in Ireland. This study will also investigate social media influencers while focusing on determining factors of credibility online.

Finally, the study will investigate the theory of parasocial relationships and their competence in igniting relationships between audience and influencer. An exploration into the nature of such relationships on individual social media platforms will also be conducted.

In order to provide background and context to this study an in depth literature review was pieced together along with a contextualisation chapter. Previously established literature focusing on the consumer decision making process, parasocial relationships, the new digital environment and social media influencers was compared and critiqued. Gaps were identified while examining the literature, these gaps formed the basis for the overarching research question and the study’s three objectives.

The research method used in this study was one of a quantitative approach. An online survey was distributed to millennial consumers in Ireland. A total of 100 respondents were acquired and the data that was collected was analysed in specific way in order to answer the overall research question and each of the three objectives. The findings of this research have updated and supported the previously published literature as well providing new insights.
Enjoy yourself (it’s later Than You Think). Music, Advertising, Brand Personality & Emotion.

Author: Kristofer Hassett

Supervisor: Dr. Serge Basini

Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the extent to which the music used in advertising can communicate brand personality traits, evoke a meaningful emotional response on behalf of the consumer and impact upon consumer sentiment towards the brand.

The literature directly relevant to brand personality is particularly sparse and as such, investigation into this area of research was deemed appropriate by the author. Furthermore, frameworks were borrowed from existing literature and deployed via an online questionnaire which sought to explore the relationship between the music used in audio visual advertising and the consumer.

A related sample was also deemed necessary in order to further validate the findings. As such, a means of exposing respondents to visual and audio content proved challenging. However, once a suitable method had been decided upon, the data was collected through quantitative means and analysed using IMB SPSS 24. Analysis primarily consisted of the use of McNemar’s Test, Bivariate Correlation Tests, Non-Parametric Tests and Tests for Marginal Homogeneity.

What resulted from the study was the discovery that the use of music in advertising can communicate different and distinct brand personality traits across different industries. Furthermore, the use of music can also evoke emotions which can then help to influence consumer sentiment towards the brand in question. And in conclusion, the lyrics featured in licensed songs which are used in advertising were found to contribute to emotional responses and were seen to help sustain the narrative of the advertisement.
The Beauty Of Influencer Marketing: An Exploration Into The Parasocial Relationships Between Beauty Influencers And Their Followers

Author: Ellie Haughney

Supervisor: Dr. Valerie Gannon

Abstract

This dissertation explores the parasocial relationships between beauty influencers and their followers. The aim of this research is to investigate the nature of these relationships. This will include the perception followers have of a beauty influencers’ credibility, their expertise, and the effect the self-concept has on these parasocial relationships. The research will also examine the effect beauty influencers have on the buying behaviour of their followers, and discuss how this differs from traditional celebrity endorsement.

Chapter 1 begins with a review of the relevant literature and will provide secondary data for the project. The literature focuses on areas such as parasocial relationship theory, the self-concept, traditional celebrity endorsement and social media influencers.

Chapter 2 will give context to the study, discussing the current social media influencer landscape and the beauty industry, both offline and online. It will also provide mini case studies pertaining to the use of beauty influencers by cosmetic brands. Chapter 3 will outline the research question and objectives, consider the literature relating to different research approaches and designs before providing a framework and rationale for the chosen methodology. Qualitative research was deemed appropriate due to the nature of the research. Five semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted with individuals who take an interest in beauty influencers and engage with them regularly.

Chapter 4 will present the data analysis and findings, and includes visualisations of the key themes and subthemes, and quotes from the transcribed interviews. The findings will be discussed in relation to the key themes and the corresponding literature reviewed in Chapter 1.

Finally, Chapter 5 will draw conclusions from the findings and discussions under each of the research objectives, suggesting areas for future research and recommendations for marketers.
An Investigation Into Digital Music Streaming And Its Effect On Personal Music Consumption Behavior

Author: Dara Hayden
Supervisor: Adrienne Czerwin-Abbott

Abstract

With constant technological advancements influencing the music industry annually, the format in which people consume music shifts regularly. Throughout the past number of years music streaming services are becoming more commonly used amongst music consumers.

Because of this, this dissertation intends to delve into the relatively new concept of music streaming and its effect on music consumption behaviour in relation to the topics of both traditional and digital music collecting, the industry phenomenon of service-exclusive music releases and finally a look into music streaming and its effect on music consumers’ piracy behaviour.

Using old research regarding the concepts of collecting and technology adoption as well as new research based directly upon streaming, this dissertation uses the literature reviewed to guide the researcher into the primary quantitative element to gather the appropriate results and findings.
An Exploration into Online Impression Management and the Selective Self-Presentation Strategies of Generation Z on Instagram

Author: Brian Heffernan
Supervisor: Dr Tara Rooney

Abstract

The primary aim of this research was to investigate how and why generation Z selectively self-present and manage impressions on Instagram. The research aimed to determine the primary motivations to selectively self-present, the strategies that are implemented, and understand the relationship between an individual’s online and offline identity.

Semi-structured interviews were utilised to generate the findings presented in the analysis. The results of the primary research highlighted the various internal and external factors motivating individuals to selectively self-present and manage impressions. Constant exposure to idealistic presentations and external pressures from peers causes generation Z to portray a certain image that they believe is desirable. Further motivations include to archive experiences, improve self-esteem and express physical characteristics, self-concept and their personality.

The results also outlined an interesting contradiction that exists in the perception that generation Z have regarding the relationship between online and offline selves. They believe that their Instagram profile is a good representation of who they are, but that others are selective and calculative in their presentation. The primary research identified a shift in this relationship between online and offline selves, as online identity formation is significantly affecting offline behaviours. It also highlighted a concerning potential for harmful upward comparisons and negative psychological effects. Furthermore, the results demonstrated that Instagram as a platform, and the various features available on the application, are facilitating strategic online impression management and due to the significant influence of dynamic feedback loops, the online self is essentially being co-created.

The findings of this research add to the current body of literature on self-presentation and impression management and provides marketers further insight into the relevance of these concepts, particularly in relation to Instagram. Thus, providing them with further understanding of the complex self-presentation behaviours online, of a generation that have grown up with technology and are using Instagram as a primary self-presentation medium.
Compare to Prepare: An Investigation into the Self and Social Comparisons in Motherhood

Author: Jessica Kelly
Supervisor: Dr Conor Horan

Abstract

The purpose of this research was to explore how a woman’s self-identity changes throughout motherhood and how social comparisons impact on not only the woman’s development of herself as a mother, but also the impact they have on the many aspects of her life.

Semi structured interviews were used to unveil the experience that pregnant women and mothers have with these issues (both first time and more experienced mothers).

These interviews provided detailed insight into the transition of self that women endure as they become a mother and what part social comparisons play in their new role. The results showed that a becoming a mother changes and even removes many aspects of a woman’s identity and that women have little control over who they are once the baby is born.

Additionally, it was found that social comparisons play a huge role in how women adapt to these changes, and helps women to identify what to buy, what to do and how to do it. Furthermore, the study suggests that social comparisons can have both negative and positive implications for mothers, and that social media plays a huge role in how women compare and how this affects them.

The results from this study both contrast and complement the literature which will be presented in chapter 2.
Exploring Consumer Responses to a Brands Use of the #BlackLivesMatter Movement in their Communications

Author: Sophie Martin

Supervisor: Professor Paul Donnelly

Abstract

The following dissertation is concerned with consumers reactions and feelings towards brands that use social movements as part of their marketing strategy. In particular, the research focused on the Black Lives Matter social movement and 4 brands that used the social movement as part of a marketing strategy were analysed: Pepsi, Ben and Jerrys, Ports 1961 and Pandora Music.

The research began with a discussion of the literature review around three fundamental areas: Branding, social movements, and social media. The literature review gave a deep understanding into theoretical perspectives, models, and areas of future research.

The research was conducted by means of netnography through Twitter to give a broad understanding of consumers’ immediate reactions to brands exploiting the social movement. Tweets were chosen due to their informational and on-topic content and coded to interpret the Tweets effectively. Each brand and the consumer responses towards the campaign were looked at individually to identify overall feelings towards each brand. The reoccurring attitudes from customers between all 4 brands were then interpreted into 4 categories that expressed how consumers felt about brands using social movements in their strategies.

The findings of this research found that only one out of the four brands that were analysed was perceived positively by consumers. Consumers perceived Ben and Jerrys in a positive light whilst Pepsi, Ports 1961 and Pandora were all perceived negatively. This is due to consumers expressing cynicism, brands not acting authentically, consumers felt that the movement was commodified, and the brands ads or strategy appropriated the movement.
Exploring Irish Golfers Motivations and Factors Affecting Membership Renewal Decision’s

Author: Keith McCabe
Supervisor: Donnacha Ryan

Abstract

The purpose of this research dissertation is to answer the research question, what are Irish golfer’s current motivations to participate and analysing what factors affect golf club members’ renewal intentions?

In this particular context there is a limited amount of research conducted. Previous quantitative research suggests that a survey should be deployed to answer research question. Therefore, this dissertation entails utilising a quantitative measure, a survey to answer research question.

The survey was distributed to over 600 golfers using a judgemental sample to act as a representation of the overall target population Irish golfers. The target population was restricted to access, thus a judgemental approach was utilised and the sample size of 150 respondents was achieved.

An analysis of current literature gave an insight into the state of the Irish golf industry. With Lunn and Kelly (2017) producing a report on the participation rates in Irish golf illustrated golf is a sport in decline in Ireland. Also, research from Clem (2011) developed a model for understanding country club member’s renewal intentions which was applied in this research to the Irish golfing context.

The primary research findings suggest that ‘Self Motives’ are the main motivations to why golfers participate. Commitment is the best predictor of member’s intentions to renew. Finally, ‘Sunk Costs’ is the switching cost dimension considered the most by members when considering switching membership.
An Investigation into Consumers’ Motivations Behind Watching Online Video Game Streams

Author: Seamus McDermott
Supervisor: Dr. Ayman Tobail

Abstract

The primary aim of this research is to investigate consumers motivations for watching video game streams online. This research will be conducted using the uses and gratifications theory which portrays how people consume forms of media. The primary research conducted employed a survey in order to gain an understanding of people’s motivations and habits surrounding playing video games and watching video game streams.

The analysis found that the main motivation under the uses and gratification theory for watching online video game streams was the affective motivations which relate to the entertainment value from watching these streams. The following motivation was the cognitive motivation which involves obtaining information such as watching video game streams to learn new strategies. This was then followed by the tension release motivations which revolve around watching video game streams as a form of escaping everyday life and as a distraction.

The video games industry has grown significantly in recent years along with the video game content industry. The two industries from research show no signs of slowed growth proving that these industries futures are very bright.
An Investigation into the Importance of Authenticity & Trustworthiness in Influencer Marketing

Author: Alana Moriarty
Supervisor: Adrienne Czerwin Abbott

Abstract

As consumers, we live in an era that is dominated by the internet’s power to influence our life-aspirations and materialistic desires. Generation Y are known as the Internet Generation because online technologies and social media have become intrinsic to everyday life for this cohort. This group of individuals rely on the internet and social media for socializing, entertainment, researching, keeping up to date with current affairs and for marking purchase decisions. An online influencer is a popular individual within the social media world that has a large following and a significant amount of influence over their audience.

Generation Y consumers often rely on these individuals for inspiration and information relating to commodities. Many brands have identified the opportunities that social media presents in terms of engaging and influencing an audience and their purchase decisions. The have begun using these online influencers as vessels to communicate with their audience in a less explicit manner than traditional marketing communications. The primary purpose of this dissertation is to explore the concept of Influencer Marketing and how important trustworthiness and authenticity is to Generation Y consumers in these types of transactions.

Secondary research was first carried out through a thorough review of the existing literature relating to the relevant concepts and theories, as well as the context in which Influencer Marketing activities occur in most often. Primary research was conducted through in-depth interviews with six Generation Y females.

The overall finding was that in order for Influencer Marketing to be effective, the audience must perceive the influencer as being trustworthy and credible. For an Influencer to be perceived in this way by their audience, they must be transparent and honest with the public in relation to their collaborations with companies. In situations where the consumer feels deceived by an influencer, it usually results in very negative consequences, primarily for the influencer but also for the brand involved, in many cases. The complete findings of the research are elaborated on within the dissertation.
Does political ideology matter: A quantitative study of environmentally friendly consumption

Author: Molly O’Byrne

Supervisor: Michele Crepaz

Abstract

Consumers have always been identified based on specific traits which make it easier to market and sell products and services to them. Traditionally, these characteristics are age, gender, income level, education, socio-economic background, to name a few. This study proposes that consumers’ political ideology should be considered in this as it may further influence consumer behaviour and choice.

With politics becoming increasingly polarised, it is making up a growing portion of a consumers defining values and therefore represents an opportunity for more accurate and specific segmentation of the market.

This research presents the findings of a quantitative analysis of the relationship between consumer’s political ideology and purchasing habits. The findings of this indicate that there is a correlation between consumers who identify as left wing and environmentally friendly consumption. Left wing consumers are more likely to take ethical considerations when grocery shopping, to engage in environmentally friendly waste disposal habits, and to purchase environmentally friendly products when cost-monetary or otherwise, is increased. This study also found that consumers with an internal locus of control are more likely to engage in these same behaviours.

The implications of these findings are discussed, along with recommendations for future research.
Consumer Identity and Religion: Exploratory Interviews with Irish Buddhists – A Thematic Analysis

Author: Dermot O’Neill

Supervisor: Dr. Brendan O’Rourke

Abstract

This research sets out to explore the consumer behaviour of Buddhists practicing their religion in contemporary Ireland.

In recent years, consumption has become ever more central to the meaningful practice of our everyday lives. Individuals construct personal and social identity through consumption, attempting to bridge the gap between their real self and ideal self. The spread of individualism throughout society has perpetuated this trend as life and self-definition become ever more constituted by what we have rather than by who we are.

While self is constructed through consumption in contemporary society, Buddhism advocates the concept of no-self. This is contradictory of the concept of self in western society and so highlights Buddhism as an interesting religion to study from a consumer culture point of view. Hence what the researcher hopes to explore is how this misalignment of values plays out in a consumer context and to discover what consumer behaviour is prevalent within this group.

Furthermore, this research hopes to gain an understanding of what motivations are underlying the consumption present, and to discover what decision criteria are important for Buddhists in making consumer decisions.

For this research, a qualitative approach was taken using exploratory in-depth interviews to find out about the consumption of Buddhists. The data gathered was coded and analysed thematically, and comparatively with themes discovered in the literature review.
Specialty Coffee: An Exploration of this Subculture of Consumption from a ‘Producer’ Perspective

Author: Kevin Reardon
Supervisor: Roger Sherlock

Abstract

The recent explosion of specialty coffee in the Ireland café scene has led to the creation of many new coffee shops. This dissertation aims to explore the subculture of consumption surrounding these cafes and in doing so, looking at this concept through the lens of the ‘producer’, this being the coffee shop owner.

Initially, in the first chapter, the industry will be discussed to gain a sense of the context in which this dissertation is centered around. In chapter two, the extensive literature will be examined pertaining to this topic. Schouten and McAlexander’s (1995) detailed research will be debated through Burgh-Woodman & Brace-Govan’s (2007) perspective of subcultures of consumption. Diving in deeper to the notions surrounding subcultures of consumption, such as rituals, connoisseurship and finally the concept of co-creation will also be debated through many scholars, including Cova and Pace (2006).

Following this will be chapter three, in which the methodologies will be detailed, as well as the interpretivist philosophy and the methods in which the data will be analysed and the limitations of the study will also be included.

Chapter Four will highlight the main findings gathered from the data analysis. These findings suggested a juxtaposition between what was initially thought and what was understood from the findings. The suggestion that followed hinted that the subculture of consumption was not as thought about for the ‘producer’ as much as one understood from the outset. Finally, Chapter Five debates the comparisons between the literature to date and the findings that were uncovered in this study.
A Critical Discourse Analysis of Pro-Choice Twitter Campaigns Concerning the Eighth Amendment to Irish Constitution

Author: Nicola White
Supervisor: Dr. Brendan O Rourke

Abstract

This justification as to why this study was carried out is to examine the significance of the concept of choice initially from a general consumer behaviour perspective and to then consider its relevance to other fields and ideologies. The overall purpose of the study is to discover how the “right to choose” is constructed in political twitter campaigns.

The key points that were discovered from the literature is that choice is central to a number of fields and ideologies including consumer behaviour, economics, cognitive science, sociology, neoliberalism and feminism. The research found that multiple perspectives on choice exist. The notion of choice can empower and liberate individuals however it can also conceal an individual’s participation in their own downfall.

Three pro-choice twitter accounts were selected from within an Irish context and were interpreted by means of critical discourse analysis. Tweets that included choice or decision making as a subject matter were gathered and analysed with regards to how they constructed the concept of choice.

The main findings were organised into our discourse, these were (i) constructions of choice as a right, (ii) constructions of choice as a medical decision, (iii) constructions of choice as something to be trusted and (iv) constructions of choice as something that is personal.
That’s the Spirit! Exploring Craft Gins and Their Pursuit of Differentiation in the Irish Marketplace

Author: Emma Yourell

Supervisor: Dr. Olivia Freeman

Abstract

Branding has been defined as more than a simple function of advertising and marketing. It elicits emotion, drives consumer engagement, transfers meaning through symbolism and shares values through consumption. However, the branding realm has evolved over time to become not just a mediator of meaning, but a culturally connected icon. Holt (2004) proposes that emotional branding has paved the way for cultural branding models to emerge. Cultural branding maintains that brands build their identity based on cultural norms, codes, historical contexts and ideologies that personally connect to the consumer and is argued fundamental to competitive advantage in a culturally influenced world.

A detailed analysis of the discourse surrounding branding was carried out in this study where cultural branding took centre stage. The concept of competitive advantage through branding led to the context selection of the newly flourishing craft gin industry in Ireland. This category revitalisation has led to the emergence of multiple craft gin brands across the country. There now exist pressures for each of these brands to become distinctive in the marketplace and this provided a premise for the research.

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore how craft gins are employing branding approaches in their pursuit of differentiation. A qualitative study was undertaken in which four semi-structured interviews with craft gin brand managers were conducted. The thematic analysis generated themes that represented craft gin branding approaches in the Irish marketplace.

The findings suggest that craft gins are employing a multitude of cooperative branding approaches that provide them with various platforms of uniqueness where storytelling lies at their core. Additionally, these approaches were found to be heavily influenced by cultural connections, heritage and identity. These findings support and extend the literature surrounding progressive and cultural branding while also providing an interesting outlook of craft gin brand behaviour in the Irish marketplace.