Perceptions of the Guinness Brand as Determined by Young American Drinkers

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To Arthur!

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Abstract

This research presents vigorous and unique insight into the Guinness brand as perceived by young American drinkers, a recently targeted demographic for the brand. The established literature and current marketing practitioners alike have recognized the importance of examining brand perceptions in recent years. The ways in which country of origin and heritage influence brand perceptions is necessary to understand in order for future marketing activities to be properly tailored to improve or reinforce currently attractive perceptions of brands.

An in-depth case study of the alcohol industry, developed by the use of in-depth interviews, a research diary, and observations, was used to gather data in qualitative form. The result of the study reveals imperative insight into the Guinness brand, in which Guinness’ robust heritage and Irish origin had profound, positive effects on the ways in which the brand is perceived by American drinkers newly legally allowed to consume alcohol. The results of this study provide Guinness, and in fact all alcohol brand managers, with an understanding of perceptions of desirable alcohol brands as well as an understanding of Guinness’ extensive history and the Irish origin’s effects on perceptions, which were entirely positive. Brand managers of the Guinness brand should continue to emphasize the brand’s history and Irish origin in future marketing plans, in which current marketing practices implemented by the brand are virtually unnoticed by young, newly-legal American drinkers.

(Total Word Count: 20,613)
Chapter 1: Introduction and Justification of Study

The introductory Justification of Study chapter seeks to provide readers with the reasoning behind this study, while also delivering a justification of its importance. What makes this research exciting and imperative knowledge for the future of branding with an emphasis on heritage and global brands is addressed.
The researcher’s main objective with this research is to provide an insightful discussion of the way young American drinkers perceive the Guinness brand, and how these perceptions compare and differ to those of their preferred brands of alcohol. The research also seeks to gain insight into the effects of Guinness’ robust heritage and Irish origin on perceptions of the brand as determined by the targeted demographic. This research will help Guinness brand managers to best suit future marketing activities to either change negative or reinforce positive perceptions of the brand that the newly-targeted demographic, young American drinkers, hold. De Chernatony (2006, p. 47) also maintains that thought needs to be given to the way customers perceive a brand because their perception (brand image) may be different from the intended projection by the brand managers (brand identity). Brand managers will be able to better match the image the demographic holds of the brand to the identity the brands set forth to drinkers upon receipt of this research, as determined necessary by Nandan (2005). This study will also provide valuable insights to managers of other beer and alcohol brands, and those managing any global and/or heritage brands operating within the American market.

While chapter one seeks to introduce the study and its intentions to readers, chapter two provides a critical review of the literature along with a look into the concepts and models to be employed and modified with this in-depth case study of the alcohol industry. The methodology section of this research, presented in chapter three, presents and justifies the chosen methodological considerations, whereas chapter four provides a discussion of the findings, recommendations for future marketing activities for Guinness while also addressing implications for other alcohol brands, and a recognition of limitations of this study as long as a number of suggestions for future brand perception research within the areas of alcohol marketing and global marketing and branding in general. This research adapts Simms and Trott’s brand perception model, which offers an improved understanding of how brand
perceptions are developed (2006, p. 228), to the alcohol industry, and Guinness in particular. The fifth chapter of this thesis presents a reflection on the dissertation process, data sources, the formulation of the dissertation, and lastly the researcher’s own learning. Chapter six presents the appendices of this paper, including informational tables and the bibliography.

The Guinness brand was chosen for this study due to its relative importance in the global market, in which it exists as an alcoholic beverage on every continent, its rich history, and the abundance of literature on the objective of attracting young American drinkers to the brand. The lacking literature and studies on perceptions of the brand as determined by the demographic made it an attractive area for the researcher to dive into.

Brian Duffy, Global Brand Director of Guinness, recognizes the importance of attracting the new generation of drinkers to the brand, stating that “…there are lots of opportunities in the U.S. and elsewhere, and we are working to translate detailed consumer insights into sales strategies” (‘In Focus: Guinness’, n.d.). Patrick Hughes, U.S. Brand Director of Guinness, says that new Guinness products are being aimed at American drinkers (Kesmodel, 2010). For example, Taylor Global Inc. (2012) states on the company’s website that Guinness’ marketing goal in its 3-17 Proposition, a scheme to make St. Patrick’s Day a national holiday, was to present the brand to a youthful demographic, particularly 21-29 year old males, and to re-establish the brand to the next generation of drinkers. These new products released in the American market include the Guinness Foreign Extra Stout, Guinness Black Lager, and a limited edition 250th Anniversary Guinness Stout.

Guinness sales have suffered in recent years, indicating an uncertain future for the brand. The brand has been hit by deteriorating demographics, with younger drinkers turning away from stout in general and instead developing a growing preference towards wine and spirits (Hollensen, 2008, p. 398). The market has also seen a general shift towards off-trade consumption, in which alcohol is consumed at home rather than out at bars, clubs, and
restaurants (Hollensen, 2008, p. 398). Recent marketing activities, highlighted in chapter one (page 9), prove that Guinness is increasingly interested in attracting young American drinkers to the brand, as brand managers believe this is a hopeful demographic for the future survival and success of the global Guinness brand.

The literature recognizes a widespread belief that brand perceptions strongly influence buying behavior (Romaniuk and Sharp, 2002, p. 218). In simple terms, brand perceptions are said to hold the total impression of the brand to consumers (Van Gelder, 2004, p. 41). Brand perceptions are determined by Van Gelder (2004, p. 44) to be the starting point for all branding strategies. Studying brand perceptions allows marketers to understand how their brand fits in with needs and wants of the market (Franzen and Moriarty, 2009, p. 147), making it an exceptionally important concept to be studied and truly understood.

Advertisements in the past have successfully persuaded drinkers that Guinness is the drink to be seen with (Simmons, 2006, p. 11). Guinness’ iconic advertising has persuaded drinkers that Guinness is good for you, that not everything in black and white makes sense, and that you can achieve just about anything if you believe (Simmons, 2006, p. 11). With proper insight into perceptions of the brand as determined by a promising future demographic, Guinness will be able to tailor future marketing to appeal to a next generation of Guinness fans, 20-something year old Americans.

The researcher has determined three research questions to be of key consideration in this research:

**Research Question 1: How do young American drinkers perceive the Guinness brand?**

**Rationale:** The researcher is concerned with studying brand perceptions of Guinness as determined by young American drinkers for a number of reasons. The literature recognizes that Guinness is interested in attracting young American drinkers to the brand. The literature (Anana and Nique (2010); de Chernatony and McDonald (2003); Franzen and Moriarty
Research Question 2: How do young American drinkers perceive their favorite brand(s) of alcohol?

Rationale: The literature (Anana and Nique (2010); de Chernatony and McDonald (2003); Franzen and Moriarty (2009); Jacoby (2012); Lowe and Lamb (2000); Rao (1972); Romaniuk and Nicholls (2005); Romaniuk and Sharp (2002); Simms and Trott (2006); Ueltschy (1998); Van Gelder (2004) emphasizes the importance of understanding brand perceptions, which leads to
successful engagement with a brand’s target audience(s).

Research Question 3: How does Guinness’ heritage drive perceptions of the brand?

Rationale: The literature (Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry (2003); Liebrenz-Himes, Shamma, and Dyer (2008); Simms and Trott (2006); Urde, Greyser, and Balmer (2007); Wiedmann et al. (2011) determines heritage to heavily influence perceptions of brands with a rich historic background. With Guinness being one of the oldest brands in the world (Richards, 2011) it is necessary to understand the effects of heritage on brand perceptions in order to determine whether the brand’s heritage should be featured or downplayed in future marketing activities aimed at the targeted demographic.

Research Question 4: How does Guinness’ Irish origin drive perceptions of the brand?

Rationale: The literature (Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2011); Dimofte, Johansson, and Bagozzi (2010); Koschat-Fischer, Diamantopoulos, and Oldenkotte (2012); Nagashima
(1970); Kumara and Canhua (2010); Paul and Dasgupta (n.d.); Saran and Gupta (2012); Saydan (2013); Ueltschy (1998); Van Gelder (2004) recognizes that a global brand’s country of origin drives perceptions, and since Guinness is sold in all geographic regions across the world (Hollensen, 2008, p. 398), understanding how its country of origin, Ireland, impacts perceptions is vital information for the brand’s managers.

A single, in-depth case study on the alcohol industry, supported by four interviews, was used to answer the four research questions. Case study research was deemed most appropriate for this paper due to the fact that it gave the researcher a detailed, diverse, and complex understanding of the context (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 117; Saunders and Lewis, 2012, p. 117). A non-probability, purposive sample was used and the four interviews were conducted one-on-one, face-to-face, and in a semi-structured manner. A multi-method, qualitative approach by use of triangulation was employed with interviews, observations, and a research diary. Free association tasks, probing, and projective interview techniques were exploited throughout the interview process, and are discussed in detail on page 50.

Brand managers in numerous categories will benefit upon receipt of this research. Managers of the Guinness brand will gain deep insight into their brand as determined by their attracted market. Brand managers of other beer and alcohol brands will also benefit from this research, and those managing global and heritage brands will especially appreciate the scope of this research. International marketers of all types will be interested in the results of this study, especially those originating from Ireland. Recipients of this research also include Dublin Business School staff, and the researcher’s advisor, Joyce Byrne-Walsh, in particular.

The researcher is participating in the Marketing MBA stream at Dublin Business School, has work experience in international marketing, and has an overall interest in the area, proving suitability for conducting the study. This project will greatly benefit the
researcher in her future career, in which she plans to enter the international marketing industry upon reception of her postgraduate degree from Dublin Business School.

It is clear from this chapter that the academic and marketing world is in need of this research. Brand perceptions have become an increasingly vital consideration for marketers, and the Guinness brand is in dire need of an understanding of perceptions determined by young American drinkers. The researcher has recognized the necessity for this study, and plans to provide recipients with rich insights into brand perceptions within the alcohol industry.
Chapter 2. Critical Review of Literature

The critical literature review presented in chapter two provides readers with a detailed overview of the different facets of this study. The concept of brands will be touched upon, followed by a detailed look into the benefits of brands and the equity provided by brands to organizations of all types. The concept of brand perceptions will be discussed in detail, followed by a look into the ways in which heritage and country of origin influences perceptions of historic and global brands. The chapter closes with an examination of American drinking habits and Guinness’ standing within the American market.
2.1 Brands

The literature has recognized the importance of brands for over 50 years. The most widely known definition of brand, proposed in 1960 by The American Marketing Association, articulates a brand as ‘a name, term, sign, symbol, or design, or a combination of them, intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors’ (De Lencastre, 2010, p. 401). de Chernatony and McDonald (2003, p. 25) state that a successful brand is an identifiable product, service, person, or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant, unique, added values which match their needs most closely. de Chernatony (2006, p. 37) states that successful brands represent a point of view, and their positioning reinforces it.

Building strong brands has become a priority for organizations for over half a century due to the number of advantages that they provide (Saydan, 2013, p. 79), in which they blend functional, performance-based values with emotional values (de Chernatony, 2006, p.5). de Chernatony (2006, p. 11) indicates the ‘brand iceberg’ as a useful tool for understanding the nature of brands, in which an iceberg is drawn with 15% visible above the water, representing parts of a brand such as logo and name, while 85% of the brand is invisible beneath the water, that being values, intellect and culture.

de Chernatony and McDonald (2003) claim that buying is a process of problem solving, with consumers initially becoming aware of a problem, seeking information, evaluating the information, and finally making a purchase decision to solve their problem (p. 58). The authors state that brands offer consumers a means of convenience by allowing them to minimize information they subconsciously sort through during the search and evaluation processes, in which they use a brand name held in their memory to allow for minimal effort in making a purchasing decision (p. 58).
Wilson (2012) also emphasizes the importance of brands. The author states that brands are significantly tied to organizations' bottom lines (p. 148), and understanding how customers recognize and understand brands is key for successful engagement (p. 138).

2.2 Brand Equity

The added value and competitive advantages that brands provide is conceptualized in brand equity (Nandan, 2005, p. 264; Bradley, 2003, p. 113), which implies a long-term commitment to a brand (Bradley, 2003, p. 114). Brand equity is a multidimensional concept and a complex phenomenon (Saydan, 2013, p. 81), consisting of dimensions such as brand loyalty, brand awareness, perceived quality, and brand associations (Paul and Dasgupta, n.d., p. 40). Paul and Dasgupta (n.d., p. 38) state that the equity of a brand depends on how consumers perceive that brand in their minds. Brand equity has been found to positively influence purchase intentions (Holchonnur and Raymond, 2009, p. 174), making it an area that cannot be avoided by brand managers.

Keller (1993, p. 1; 2003, p. 596) states that brand equity occurs when a consumer has a differential effect of brand knowledge in response to marketing, which is conceptualized in terms of brand awareness and brand image. The author further states that brand equity occurs when the consumer is aware of the brand and holds some favorable, strong, and unique brand associations in memory (Keller, 1993, p. 17), where high levels of brand awareness and a positive brand image increase the probability of the brand being chosen for purchase (p. 8). Keller's Dimensions of Brand Knowledge construct is presented below.
Keller (1993, p. 12) conceptualizes two approaches to measuring brand equity. The indirect approach measures brand knowledge by determining brand awareness and brand image and identifying what aspects cause the response, and the direct approach assesses the impact of brand knowledge on consumer responses to marketing, i.e. the nature of the response. Keller (1993, p. 12) recommends the use of free association tasks, probing techniques, and projective techniques in assessing the type, favorability, and strengths of brand associations, which have been used in this study and are detailed on page 52.

Aaker (1996) proposed the Brand Equity Ten as a set of brand equity measures motivated by the dimensions of brand equity (loyalty, perceived quality, associations, and awareness) that were presented in the author’s book (Aaker, 1991, p. 103).
As seen above, the *Brand Equity Ten* consists of ten sets of measures grouped into five categories. Eight constructs based on buyer perceptions are presented and organized under the four dimensions of brand equity (Aaker, 1996, p. 117). The first four categories represent customer perceptions of the brand along the four dimensions of brand equity, while the fifth represents market-based information (Aaker, 1996, p. 105). Aaker (1996, p. 114) supports Keller’s findings in re-affirming the importance of brand awareness, which is said to effect both perceptions and attitudes, to be an important component of brand equity.
Aaker (1991, p. 109) and Nandan (2005, p. 267) also support Keller’s (1993) finding in stating that brand associations aid consumers in purchasing decisions by allowing them to process, organize, and retrieve information from memory to form a brand image. Since brand image is a component of brand perceptions, as discussed below in Section 2.3 (page 24), this notion has been further examined by the researcher in relation to the alcohol industry, and the Guinness brand in particular.

Holehonnr, Raymond, Hopkins, and Fine, nearly 20 years after Keller’s initial study, further explored brand equity. Their research supports Keller in that their findings prove that brand awareness, a component of brand knowledge, and attitudes, a component of brand image, were proven to drive brand equity (p. 175), with attitudes being the strongest (p. 174). They also support Keller in stating that brand equity positively influences purchase intentions (p. 174). The authors proposed a conceptual model depicting the drivers of brand equity and the influence of these variables on purchase intentions, Figure 3.
Keller (2003) mentions the brand-leveraging process, or the consequences on consumers of linking a brand to another person, place, thing, or brand, to be of increasing importance in the marketing world (p. 595). The author states that linking a brand to another entity affects brand knowledge by creating new brand knowledge or affecting existing brand knowledge, with marketers often attempting to increase their brand’s equity by essentially
borrowing equity from others (p. 595). Figure 4 displays common secondary sources of brand knowledge as determined by Keller (p. 120).

**Figure 4: Secondary Sources of Brand Knowledge**

James Wagner states that while Guinness’ brand equity strategy is simple, with black as the dominant color, the harp as its logo, and a unique opening ceremony, it is effective in symbolizing an elite Guinness loyalist club (Richards, 2011). The literature has recognized the importance of brands and the equity they provide for decades. This research will provide...
deep insight into the Guinness brand and its equity as determined by young American
drinkers.

2.3 Brand Perceptions

According to Jacoby (2012), brands are not just what they say they are, but rather what consumers say they are, with a brand’s true identity lying in its perception. Ueltschy (1998, p. 14) contends that no object or product is ever perceived exactly as it is, and a product’s success depends on its perception. Positioning strategies can be aimed at either influencing brand perceptions or influencing the choice criteria of consumers (Franzen and Moriarty, 2009, p. 174). de Chernatony (2006, p. 28) mentions that monitoring customers’ perceptions of brands allows the given organization’s input to be either rectified, closing any gaps with customers’ perceptions, or reinforced through stressing the issues of particular relevance to the target customers. The belief that brand perceptions strongly influence buying behavior is widespread (Romaniuk and Sharp, 2002, p. 218), and this belief provides reason for brand perceptions being the starting point for branding strategies (Van Gelder, 2004, p. 44).

In simple terms, brand perceptions hold the total impression of the brand to consumers, making it the main area marketers seek to influence (Van Gelder, 2004, p. 41). Anana and Nique (2010, p. 9) state that the term ‘perception’ corresponds to the attributes that consumers value the most in a set of choice alternatives. Likewise, Rao (1972, p. 209) says that an individual's brand perceptions are represented by similarity judgments on all possible pairs of brands. Franzen and Moriarty (2009, p. 244) contend that the observable reality, the manifestation of the brand in the world - everything the brand says, does, and shows - is the source of all brand perceptions.

Studying brand perceptions allows marketers to understand how their brand fits in with needs and wants in the market (Franzen and Moriarty, 2009, p. 147). Brand perceptions
also prove beneficial in evaluating the success of advertising, primarily due to the fact that short-term sales are affected by non-advertising factors such as price, and the vast number of people exposed to advertising may not have the opportunity to purchase the advertised brand (Romaniuk and Nicholls, 2005, p. 180).

Romaniuk and Sharp (2002, p.227) suggest that a ‘bank’ of perceptions that consumers hold about a brand be developed in the long term. The authors state that this will build the ‘share of mind’ for the brand, making it the one that will be thought of and more difficult for competitors to have access to the mind of customers.

Past literature consistently highlights the importance of brand perceptions and the components of these perceptions, including brand image and associations (Simms and Trott, 2006, p. 229). Despite the clear importance of brand perceptions, researchers have failed to develop a consistent measurement technique to assess them (Lowe and Lamb, 2000, p. 350).

Simms and Trott (2006) developed a model in attempting to provide comprehensive insight into brand perceptions. The model considers a number of prior frameworks (p. 229) and links together the different elements of the concept found in the literature (p. 235). Their model, presented in Figure 5, presents a different perspective on brand perceptions in that it links specific brand associations to the image that is developed by consumers, and finally links this to how the image appeals to consumers (p. 235). The research highlights the importance of product-based associations and the brand’s personality to perceptions of the brand (p. 234).
Simms and Trott (2006) identified three key interrelated elements of perceptions of the Mini automobile brand (p. 233), image, associations, and personality. These elements are conceptualized in the below models, which again have been used in this study and adapted to the Guinness and preferred brands of alcohol.
**Figure 6: Summary of the Key Elements of the Mini’s Brand Image**

![Summary of Key Elements of the Mini’s Brand Image](image)

*Note: Figures in brackets refer to number of times factor was mentioned by interviewees.*


**Figure 7: A Summary of the Brand Associations of the Mini**

![Summary of Brand Associations of the Mini](image)

*Note: Figures in brackets indicate the total number of times that this brand association was identified.*

The Mini’s brand image developing from a number of key associations supports Aaker’s (1991) findings. Simms and Trott (2006) and de Chernatony (2006) differ from Keller (1993), Aaker (1996), and Holehonnur (et al., 2009), in determining brand personality to be an important part of brand perceptions, state that people often perceive brands in terms of human characteristics (Simms and Trott, 2006, p. 229). The authors’ determination of associations to be a key component of brand image supports Aaker’s (1991), Nandan’s (2005), and Keller’s (1993) studies.

Simms and Trott (2006) recognized that these findings were specific to the Mini brand, and therefore suggested that the model they presented be adapted and applied to the analysis of other brands in order to relate the different areas of the literature on brand perceptions and to develop and refine a comprehensive model of brand perceptions (p. 235). Simms and Trott (2006) have also recognized a need for further research in identifying the
importance of heritage associations to perceptions of other brands (p.235). The researcher has recognized these needs for further research and therefore the researcher is adapting this model to the Guinness brand and further testing the effects of heritage and country of origin on brand perceptions. In reviewing this literature, the researcher determined answering how young Americans perceive Guinness and their preferred brands of alcohol (research questions one and two) and how Guinness’ heritage and Irish origin influence these perceptions (research questions three and four) to be crucial questions shaping this research.

de Chernatony (2006) also discusses the importance of brand personality in determining a brand’s image. The author explains that brand personality acts as a symbolic or self-expressive function, with people purchasing because of the meanings of status and lifestyle represented by a brand (p. 245). de Chernatony (2006) further states that when choosing between competing brands, customers assess the fit between the personalities of competing brands and the personality they wish to project (p. 41). de Chernatony (2006, p. 226) comprehends brand personality with the brand pyramid, presented as Figure 9.
Anana and Nique (2010, p. 8) explain the brand pyramid in stating that when managers market a new brand, they are initially concerned with unexploited gaps in the market, therefore attempting to deliver unique attributes but, as time goes on, consumers are less concerned with attributes and more concerned with the benefits gained by purchase of the brand.

de Chernatony and McDonald (2003, p. 42) mention that brand perceptions are affected not only by how consumers perceive a brand in their own way, but also through interactions with both brand users and their peers. Bird, Channon, and Ehrenberg (1970, p. 314) determined that non-users of a brand need to be persuaded to share the same set of images as its users, so that they will then become users.
Nandan (2005, p. 264) mentions brand identity and brand image to both be essential ingredients of strong brands. Keller (1993, p. 3) and Nandan (2005, p. 267) say that consumers construct an image of a brand from their subjective perceptions that derive from a set of associations, while brand identity represents the way the brand managers perceive the brand they set forth to consumers. Nandan (2005) concludes that it is imperative for the gap between brand identity, or company reality, and brand image, or consumer perceptions, to be minimized or eliminated (p. 268) because it implies that the consumers understand and agree with the brand message (p. 271). de Chernatony (2006, p. 47) recognized a problem associated with seeking to develop a brand through minimizing the gap between brand identity and brand image in that an image refers to a customer's perception only at a specific point in time.

Graeff (1996) recognizes the importance of self-concept, a person's perception of his or her own personality, appearance, and characteristics, in studying brand perceptions (p. 482). The self-concept theory contends that people act in ways that define, maintain, and enhance their self-concept through the products they use, in which consumers hold symbolic meanings of themselves, of products, and of the types of consumers who purchase and use certain products (p. 482). Graeff further states that the greater the congruence between brand image and self-image, the more favorably the brand is evaluated (p. 493), with publicly consumed brands benefiting most by the said congruence (p. 481). Simms and Trott (2006, p. 230) support Graeff in recognizing that people relate to a brand based on how it relates to their self-concept.

The researcher determines the study of this theory to be crucial in thoroughly displaying brand perceptions to recipients of this research, and therefore discusses this concept in relation to alcohol and Guinness in particular in the findings section of this work, to be seen on page 60.
From the review of literature on brand perceptions it is clear that there is a lack of understanding in relation to perceptions of the Guinness brand as determined by young American drinkers, a newly targeted demographic for the brand. This is imperative knowledge for managers of the Guinness brand in developing marketing plans for the future. Therefore, the researcher has determined the first two research questions this study seeks to address to be “How do young American drinkers perceive the Guinness brand?” and “How do young American drinkers perceive their favorite brand of alcohol?” An understanding of brand perceptions will allow the Guinness brand managers to gain insight into how the identity they set forth is perceived, therefore allowing congruence between identity and image and in result successful engagement between marketers and drinkers.

2.4 Drivers of Brand Perceptions

2.4.1 Brand Heritage

Brand heritage is becoming an increasingly studied topic in the literature (Simms and Trott, 2006, p. 237). Urde, Greyser, and Balmer (2007, p. 16) state that brand heritage is an often unrecognized and frequently under-utilized corporate asset. Brand heritage is defined as a dimension of a brand’s identity found in its track record, longevity, core values, use of symbols, and particularly in an organizational belief that a brand’s history is important (Urde, Greyser, and Balmer, 2007, p. 4).
Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry (2003, p. 20) state the brand heritage is perceived as using marketing-mix variables that invoke the history of a particular brand, including all its personal and cultural associations. Wiedmann (et al., 2011) determines brand heritage to be an important driver of brand perceptions, in which it has a positive influence (p. 208), with the effect on brand image being significantly strong (p. 215).

Simms and Trott (2006, p. 231) determine heritage to be a key component of perceptions for certain brands, in which it shapes both image and personality. Simms and Trott (2006, p. 238) further state that brand associations can be divided into those associated with heritage, and those that are product-related.

Urde, Greyser, and Balmer (2007, p. 4) and Wiedmann (et al., 2011, p. 205) mention that companies with heritage should take advantage of it because heritage brands are perceived to be more credible, trustworthy, and reliable than brands lacking heritage. Heritage is also said to positively enhance a brand by providing distinct positioning and inherently competitive advantage, and also helping to build relationships with non-customer stakeholders, for example giving the ability to recruit and retain employees (Urde, Greyser, and Balmer, 2007, p. 12; Wiedmann et al., 2011, p. 205). Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry (2003,
recognize that technology and eased imitation eradicate the potential of first-mover advantage for a brand, but that heritage provides a competitive edge gained by trust and loyalty that consumers hold toward old brands.

It is clear that the literature recognizes marketing advantages attributable to a brand with a rich history. However, numerous authors question the future consequences of heritage that brands face. Liebrenz-Himes, Shamma, and Dyer (2008) mention that while heritage brands may appeal to consumers in the present, maintaining appeal for future generations is a difficult task (p. 41). The authors claim that heritage brands bring up the dilemma of whether heritage will continue to provide an asset in the form of brand equity, or if the appeal of heritage only applies to past and current consumers, with heritage shifting to a liability for future generations (p. 41). This claim is also discussed in relation to Guinness in the findings section of this work, page 70.

Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry (2003, p. 29) state that in times of threat or of sociocultural and economic turbulence, nostalgia towards heritage brands provide a sense of comfort and close-knit community, a safe haven in an unsafe world, but that in launching new or improved products, aspects of heritage shift to a liability for a brand (Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry, 2003, p. 20).

Guinness is one of the oldest brands in the world, having recently celebrated its 250th birthday. Guinness brand managers have in recent years placed a hefty emphasis on the brand’s heritage in marketing initiatives. Creative Director James Wagner claims that Guinness’ heritage, brand management and unique experience has allowed the brand to achieve and maintain brand excellence (Richards, 2011). An understanding of consumer thoughts and feelings towards heritage alcohol brands, and the Guinness brand in particular, is crucial knowledge for marketers.
Guinness has recognized an absence of brand dynamicity and a lack of relevancy in the premium beer category and therefore has celebrated its heritage publicly in attempt to gain brand reappraisal and to recruit the next generation of drinkers to the brand (Taylor Global Inc. 2012). Guinness has emphasized its history to consumers in a number of different ways since 2009. Guinness attempted to celebrate its anniversary in the spotlight by releasing a limited edition, six month only, 250th anniversary stout in the American Market. Nick Lake, vice president of beverage alcohol for Nielsen, supported the release. Lake says that the anniversary stout "has the making of a very successful initiative", citing consumer preferences for more variety and the brand's heritage, along with a trend of U.S. consumers increasingly wanting fuller, tastier beers like stouts as reasoning (NBC News, 2009).

Guinness’ first-ever global campaign was focused on Arthur Guinness’ 250th birthday, and culminated on September 24th, 2009 in parties held across the world (Handley, 2010, p. 21). Arthur's Day was intended to attract a new demographic to the brand, males in their mid-20s that consume Guinness on St. Patrick's Day but not at other times of the year (Handley, 2010, p. 21). Ronan Beirne, Global Marketing Manager of Guinness, says that the campaign was intended to create a distinctive day to celebrate the brand, stating "[Guinness] was born from the brand and it is about the brand, our founder. It is a past that is a rich and ownable platform to celebrate, which is probably even more distinctive than St Patrick's Day" (Handley, 2010, p. 21). Beirne further says, "You can treat an anniversary as a narrative about history that is quite old- fashioned, or you can use it in a way that is exciting and dynamic, where you have a contemporary conversation with consumers” (Handley, 2010, p. 21). Guinness states that the Arthur’s Day celebration resulted in a 3% rise in brand affinity globally in the four months following the campaign (Handley, 2010, p. 21).

Guinness has even further celebrated its history by launching a special society to celebrate its heritage. The 1759 Society allows loyal Guinness drinkers to register in order to
access vintage beer labels from the past 250 years and to collect special edition cans
(‘Guinness 1759 Society’, n.d.).

After a 91-year absence, Guinness also decided to re-introduce the Foreign Extra Stout variety to the American market, citing the growing interest in a wide range of beer styles as reason for the release (Stambor, 2013). Guinness Brand Director Patrick Hughes says that "Americans are looking for beers with substance and history and this beer [Guinness Foreign Extra Stout] has both of those covered" (Stambor, 2013).

Guinness has recently taken a number of marketing initiatives to make drinkers aware of Guinness’ momentous history. The literature lacks an understanding as to how young American drinkers perceive old brands in general, and alcohol brands and Guinness in particular. The researcher has recognized the need to answer the research question “How does Guinness’ heritage drive perceptions of the brand?” due to the lack of insight in the literature. This knowledge is presented starting on page 70, and will greatly assist Guinness and other international alcohol brand managers in planning for the future.

2.4.2 Country of Origin

One of the oldest and most persistent concerns in international marketing is whether the origin of a global product makes it more or less preferable to consumers (Koschate-Fischer, Diamantopoulos, and Oldenkotte, 2012, p. 19). The country of origin of a brand is known to significantly influence brand perceptions and purchasing decisions (Saydan, 2013, p. 80; Kumara and Canhua, 2010, p. 345) while also affecting the formation of overall brand equity (Paul and Dasgupta (n.d., p. 37). The literature recognizes the need for global brand managers to use country images to their advantage while also effectively managing perceptions regarding the country of origin (Saydan, 2013, p. 87; Ueltschy, 1998, p. 21; Van Gelder, 2004, p. 39; Kumara and Canhua, 2010, p. 343).
One of the first conceptualizations of the country of origin phenomenon was that of Nagashima (1970). The author defined the image that consumers associate with a given country of origin as ‘the picture, the reputation, the stereotype that businessmen and consumers attach to products of a specific country’ (p. 68). The familiarity and availability of a country's products affects perceptions of its image, which forms a basis for stereotypes placed on the country (Nagashima, 1970, p. 74; Kumara and Canhua, 2010, p. 346).

Ueltschy (1998) mentions that there is a tendency to reject domestic goods and embrace imports in some markets (p. 12), with a person’s culture greatly influencing perceptions related to country of origin (p. 14). Dimofte, Johansson, and Bagozzi (2010) analyzed perceptions of global brands in the United States (p. 82) and found that being perceived as global has positive affects in the American market (p. 100). Saran and Gupta (2012, p. 72) state quality, prestige, durability, product design, customer service, brand trustworthiness and product uniqueness to be attributes that drive consumers to prefer global over local brands.

The information processing theory maintains that consumers use product cues, both extrinsic and intrinsic, to form beliefs and evaluations about products (Paul and Dasgupta, n.d., p. 40; Saydan, 2013, p. 78). Extrinsic cues are product-related but external to the physical product, such as the country of origin, the brand name, or the price while intrinsic cues refer to the product’s inherent attributes that cannot be modified without changing the physical product, such as its ingredients (Koschate-Fischer, Diamantopoulos, and Oldenkotte, 2012, p. 23). The concept of country of origin is viewed as an important extrinsic cue that impacts the consumer decision-making process (Saran and Gupta, 2012, p. 66; Koschate-Fischer, Diamantopoulos, and Oldenkotte, 2012, p. 23). The country of origin effects on brand perceptions in relation to Guinness in the American market have been examined in this research, and are revealed in the conclusion chapter, page 70.
Ueltschy (1998) states that when consumers learn a product’s country of origin a substantial amount of time before receiving other information, they form an evaluation of the product based purely on its country of origin, which could have negative consequences (p. 15). The author states that it is possible to mitigate the potentially negative effects a country of origin attributes by providing additional product information to consumers from the beginning, which is shown to have a direct effect on purchase intentions (Ueltschy, 1998, p. 21).

Balabanis and Diamantopoulos (2011) mention that recent country of origin research shows that customers often do not know the true origin of many brands and that they frequently categorize a brand to the wrong country of origin (p. 95), which can also have devastating effects on brand perceptions. The results of their study show that both misclassification and non-classification have adverse consequences on brand evaluations and purchase intentions (p. 95). The authors suggest that companies educate and/or remind consumers of their brand’s true country of origin to avoid being associated with a country with a weaker image (p. 111).

Guinness is one of the markets only truly global beer brands (Hollensen, 2008, p. 398), in which it is sold in over 100 countries worldwide (Nason, 2010). All Guinness products being sold in the United States are brewed at Guinness’ Dublin brewery (Stambor, 2013), making it a truly Irish product. The literature states that understanding country of origin effects on foreign-made brands is essential for marketing purposes. It is imperative for Guinness’ brand managers, and in fact all brand managers of Irish alcohol brands, and Irish brands in general, to understand the way in which 20-something Americans perceive Ireland as a country, and Irish brands in particular. The researcher seeks to add to the current literature on country of origin by addressing the research question “How does Guinness’ Irish origin drive perceptions of the brand?”
Heritage and country of origin have proven to drive perceptions of brands in past literature. These notions have not been studied in relation to Guinness, an iconic Irish brand sold throughout the world. 2009 marked Guinness’ 250th anniversary, proving rich heritage and making Guinness one of the oldest brands in the world. It has not been studied whether Guinness’ Irish-origin and age attributes success or harm to the brand in the American market with newly legal drinkers, whom Guinness has mentioned as a targeted demographic for the brands future success.

2.5 American Drinking Habits

The United States accounts for 15.3% of the global beer market value, and in 2016 the market is forecasted to have a value of $82 billion, an increase of 4.1% since 2011 (Mintel, 2013). Two-thirds of Americans reported that they consume alcohol at least occasionally, according to a poll conducted by Gallup in 2012 (Gannon, 2012). When asked which kind of alcohol they drink most often, 39% of those surveyed said beer, with 55% of male drinkers stating they most often drink beer (Gannon, 2012). In 2010, the average American drank about 168 pints (Zmuda, 2011), and an astounding $1.25 billion was spent on beer marketing in 2010 (Zmuda, 2011).

According to the Beer Institute, beer shipments in the United States rose 1.9% to 141.4 million barrels in the first half of 2012 after falling the past three years (Esterl, 2012). The industry struggled because blue-collar males in their 20s, its key customers, were hardest hit by the recession that devastated industries such as construction (Esterl, 2012). However, the beer industry is recovering, and young (under 24) consumers remain the biggest target for alcohol manufacturers (Mintel, 2010).

Macintosh (2011, p. 57) says: “People don’t just drink beer. They drink the brand that lies behind the beer. And while many image-defining brands are expensive, like Mercedes or Gucci, even the very best beer is still an affordable luxury - a way for the common man to
make a statement without breaking the bank. When someone walks into a bar and steps up to the counter to order a beer, the brand he shouts out says something about him as a person.” If Guinness portrays a favorable image, the younger demographic is likely to try with the brand, as this age group is the most willing to experiment with new types of drinks (Mintel, 2010).

Over 10 million pints of Guinness are enjoyed daily across the globe (Nason, 2010). According to research firm Nielsen Co., Guinness accounts for about 70% of stout volume in the United States (NBC News, 2009). Brand perceptions are recognized in the literature as a crucial topic for marketers to both recognize and seek to influence. The Guinness brand is lacking research in the area of brand perceptions, and since the brand is currently interested in attracting young American drinkers to Guinness products, brand perceptions of the Guinness brand, and the commonalities and differences between these perceptions and those of consumers’ chosen brand of alcohol is imperative knowledge to be discovered. The literature also recognizes the influence that heritage and country of origin has on brand perceptions, which reveals further areas for the researcher to consider in this study.
Chapter 3. Methodological Considerations

The research methodology chapter presents the chosen methodology for this research. It is imperative for readers to understand the reasoning and alternatives considered throughout conduction of the research, while also understanding reliability, validity, and ethical concerns that the researcher overcame during the research period. The chapter also justifies the chosen methodology in relation to the research objectives.
This section of the research outlines the research methodology used in this project. Methodology refers to the process and procedures of the research (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 132), while methods refer to the different ways in which data can be collected and analyzed by researchers (Wilson, 2010, p. 27). The researcher has decided to use the research onion, a metaphor for describing the layers of the research process, in planning this research (Saunders and Lewis, 2012, p.103),

**Figure 11: The Research Onion**


The outer layers of the onion addresses philosophies and approaches, the central layers reflect the need to consider research strategies and choices, and at the center of the onion data collection and analysis are of concern (Saunders and Lewis, 2012, p.103).
3.1 Research Philosophy

In general, a research philosophy is linked to a researcher’s views on the development of knowledge (Wilson, 2010, p. 9). Knowledge of research philosophies assist researchers in specifying design and strategy while also bringing issues to light that effect research design (Blumberg, Cooper, and Schindler, 2005, p. 18; Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 11).

Epistemology defines how knowledge is produced, along with the limits of that knowledge (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 14). In simple terms, epistemology is concerned with the relationship between the research participant and the researcher (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 131). The key question that epistemology asks is “What is acceptable knowledge?” (Wilson, 2010, p. 9). A chosen epistemology is fundamental to the way research is approached and interpreted, making the understanding of it vital (Wilson, 2010, p. 27).

As evident by the research onion, the main epistemologies in research are interpretivism, positivism, and realism. Interpretivism has been used in this study. Interpretivism is best used to gain an understanding of the meanings humans attach to events (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2011, p. 23). Interpretivism is anti-positivist and assumes that all meanings are contextual (Brand, 2009, p. 433), with interpretivists viewing the world as complex and open to interpretation (Wilson, 2010, p. 11).

Using interpretivism for this research was ideal because the flexible structure permitted for changes as research progressed, realized that the researcher was part of the research process, and has lessened concern for the need to generalize (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2011, p. 23), which is key in studying brand perceptions.

However, interpretivism as an epistemology has not been without its drawbacks. Issues of measurement and reliability tend to arise with the use of interpretivism, largely due to the researcher’s need to interpret findings (Wilson, 2010, p. 11). The researcher was aware
of the issue of reliability stemming from the interpretation of the interviews, observations, and research diary, and has taken as objective an approach as possible in interpreting the data.

Positivism was not considered appropriate for this research on brand perceptions as it lacks rich insights due to its use of law-like generalizations (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2011, p. 8). Positivism assumes that all matters are susceptible to being investigated objectively (Brand, 2009, p. 432), in which the research is completely detached from the respondents (Wilson, 2010, p. 10). This approach holds a belief that the researcher is truly independent from the research, which is attractive due to the consequence of truly objective findings and a high level of reliability (Wilson, 2010, p. 10).

While positivism has its advantages due to the credibility of results produced, positivism was not considered appropriate for this particular research as it lacks rich insights due to its use of law-like generalizations (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2011, p. 8). Rich insights are key in studying brand perceptions. Realism was a denied epistemology due to the fact that it stresses the fact that objects exist independently from the mind (Saunders and Lewis, 2012, p. 105), which is an impossible belief in consumer behavior studies.

While epistemology is concerned with what constitutes acceptable knowledge, ontology is concerned with the nature of reality (Wilson, 2010, p. 11). Ponterotto (2005, p. 130) mentions that ontology addresses the question ‘What is the form and nature of reality, and what can be known about that reality?’ Ontario concerns the ideas of existence and relationships between people, society, and the world in general (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 13). The chosen ontology for this research was subjectivism, in which reality is based upon perceptions that differ for each person, with reality focused on individual interpretations (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 13). De Chernatony (2006, p. 37) mentions that people do not react to reality but rather to what they perceive to be reality.
The alternative ontology to subjectivism is objectivism, which implies that social phenomenon is based on external realities that are beyond a person’s reach or control (Wilson, 2010, p. 12). Objectivism is avoided due to the fact that it assumes the social word exists independently of people (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 13). Since this study has a primary concern with the study of consumers, objectivism was not considered in any way appropriate for this research.

3.2 Research Approach

The researcher decided on an inductive approach in conducting the research. Qualitative research is usually linked to an inductive approach to research (Wilson, 2010, p. 13). The inductive approach is completely “bottom up” (Saunders and Lewis, 2012, p. 109), with the collection of data followed by data analysis that leads to a developed theory (Wilson, 2010, p. 7). The researcher was wary of using this approach as there was a slight fear that no useful theory would emerge from the data (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2011, p. 23). Despite this slight concern, the inductive approach was determined most appropriate for this research.

The deductive approach to research expects a hypothesis to be developed based on existing theory, which is followed by a test of the stated hypothesis (Wilson, 2010, p. 7). The deductive, “top down” approach does not permit alternative explanations (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2011, p. 21), which the researcher believes is essential in studying brand perceptions.
3.3 Research Strategy

This study has been conducted in the form of a single case study. The research was completed with an exploratory purpose in which it aimed to gain new insights, ask questions, and assess the topic of brand perceptions in a new light (Saunders and Lewis, 2012, p. 110).

One case study of the alcohol industry was supported by four interviews. Case study research was the chosen research strategy due to the fact that it gave the researcher a detailed, diverse, and complex understanding of the context while avoiding an overly simple design (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 117; Saunders and Lewis, 2012, p. 117). Dubois and Gadde (2002, p. 554) state that the interaction between a social phenomenon and its context is best understood through an in-depth case study.

The case study is a qualitative method frequently and increasingly used in business research (Zivkovic, 2012, p. 98). Case study research is very effective in business, and is especially appropriate for answering “why” and “how” type research questions that seek to answer how a present circumstance, or social phenomenon, works (Blumberg, Cooper, and Schindler 2005, p. 190; Yin, 2009, p. 4). The case study method is also relevant when research questions require an extensive and “in-depth” description of a given social phenomenon (Yin, 2009, p. 4), in which this research does. Blumberg, Cooper, and Schindler (2005, p. 193) state that the main advantage of case studies is that they permit the combination of different sources of evidence, i.e. the multi-method, triangulated approach used in this study.

While the case study strategy was deemed most relevant for this research, there are negative components of the strategy that were considered by the researcher. Zivkovic (2012, p. 94) recognizes a “methodological fuzziness” associated with case studies stemming from the lack of a formal protocol for conducting a case study, which leads to weakness in terms of
the validity of the results produced and reliability of the study in future research. Zivkovic (2012, p. 94) states that triangulation can be used to overcome the validity questions associated with case studies, which was used in this research and is discussed in greater detail on page 47.

Generalizing results produced from a case study also remains a valid critique of the case study method of research. Zivkovic (2012, p. 95) mentions that the issue of generalization arises because case studies are usually relevant to a specific context, in this case young American drinkers, and therefore not widely applicable, even though researchers often attempt to draw comparisons to other contexts. Yin (2009, p. 15) answers this concern in stating that case studies are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes, which must be recognized by researchers conducting a case study. The researcher was aware of this concern throughout conduction of this research, and has therefore stressed that these perceptions were determined purely by American drinkers that are recently legally able to drink.

3.4 Research Choice

A multi-method, qualitative approach has been used in this research in the form of interviews, observations, and a research diary. According to Aaker (1991, p. 146), qualitative research provides the possibility of obtaining non-intuitive insights, leading to improved brand strategy. Aluwihare-Samaranayake (2012, p. 76) states that qualitative research is used as a means to explore and capture a person’s subjective experiences, meanings, and voices. It is often argued that qualitative research gets closer to what consumers ‘really think’ than possible with quantitative research (Barnham, 2012, p. 485). These notions attracted the researcher towards qualitative research in that the method is most appropriate for studying brand perceptions.
The qualitative approach differs greatly from the mindset associated with quantitative researchers. Barnham (2012, p. 485) states that qualitative research achieves more ‘depth’ than quantitative research, in which the interview process goes into more detail due to the fact that it is open-ended in nature. Insight is key in this study, again proving a quantitative approach to this research to be inappropriate.

Barnham (2010, p. 758) mentions that the differences between quantitative and qualitative research are often defined in terms of the methodologies they use, with qualitative research being more subjective while quantitative research is a more objective measurement of consumer behavior. A quantitative approach has been avoided due to its rigidness in structure, its lacking ability to develop deep meanings from respondents, and its inappropriateness for studying the social world (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 171).

**Triangulation** has been employed in this research, as the researcher has interviewed and observed four respondents while keeping a diary throughout the research process. Triangulation entails using more than one research method in order to have greater confidence in findings by essentially cross-checking data (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 397). Zivkovic (2012, p. 94) states that triangulation is useful for overcoming the validity concerns associated with the use of case studies. Triangulation also provides the researcher with increased reliability with the comparison of results from the use of one technique with those gained from another (Boddy, 2005, p. 246). Multiple sources are also beneficial to researchers in that they may contribute to the discovery of new dimensions to the research problem that may not have been realized (Dubois and Gadde, 2002, p. 556). In reviewing the literature, the researcher recognized the undoubtedly positive results that the use of triangulation has on research, and therefore felt that the use of multiple sources was imperative for this study.
Blumberg, Cooper, and Schindler (2005) state that much of what we know comes from observations (p. 278), with the major advantage being that it offers access to information not available to other researchers (p. 194). The authors further state that the versatility of observations makes it an indispensable data source (Blumberg, Cooper, and Schindler, 2005, p. 194). A research diary has been used throughout the research process.

A non-probability, purposive sample was chosen for this research. A purposive, or convenience, sample is a sample chosen because of easy obtainability, not because of appropriateness (Saunders and Lewis, 2012, p. 140). Four interviews were conducted with two males (ages 21 and 22) and two females (ages 21 and 22). The researcher was wary of using a considerably small sample size, consisting of four respondents, and therefore put a great deal of thought into selecting respondents that would best be able to represent the American, newly-legal population of drinkers. Three of the four chosen respondents are college students, which does influence the study due to the typical lack of disposable income associated with the college population. However, all four respondents come from an upper or upper-middle class population, which assumes that they have a decent income to use on recreational spending such as on alcohol. The sample was chosen because of their age, residency, previous awareness of the Guinness brand, and because they are known to consume alcohol on a regular basis. The respondents reside in various regions across the United States, and therefore the findings are as generalizable as possible in representing the population, in this case young American drinkers.

Primary data has been collected by use of interviews, observations, and the up-keeping of a research diary. The four interviews were one-on-one, face-to-face, and semi-structured. Gillham (2005, p. 70) states that the semi-structured interview is the most important way of conducting a research interview because of its flexibility balanced by structure, and the quality of the data obtained. Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 406) state that
semi-structured interviews are more likely to lead to interesting findings and provide alternative explanations. Alternative explanations in explaining brand perceptions of both Guinness and the respondents’ favorite brand(s) of alcohol were necessary in gaining the most truthful insights into alcohol brands.

In semi-structured interviews, an interview guide is used to ensure that the interviewer covers all the necessary areas and asks the questions in a similar or identical manner in all interviews, but the interviewer is free to ask additional, or change the order of, questions whenever considered necessary (Blumberg, Cooper, and Schindler, 2005, p. 294). The researcher saw great opportunity in conducting the interviews in a semi-structured manner, in which she was able to adjust the interview order and questions slightly to fit the respondents’ nature of responses.

According to Gillham (2005), a semi-structured interview is best conducted in terms of a five-stage process (p. 76). The author names the preparation stage, which begins before the interviews takes place, the initial contact phase, which is primarily social in character, the orientation phase, which directs the interviewee in the direction the researcher intends, the substantive phase that is the central core of the interview and the main focus for analysis, and lastly the closure phase, which is partly social and partly cognitive and includes a review that is considered critical (p. 76). In reviewing Gillham’s article, the researcher became aware of the importance of reviewing the data with respondents in the closure stage of a semi-structured interview. The interviewer conducted this stage in order to further confirm fair interpretation of results and to also possibly gain additional insights from respondents, however this was to no avail.

Even though the semi-structured interview was considered ideal for this study on brand perceptions, it is not without its drawbacks. The weaknesses of semi-structured interviewing include its costliness in time (interviewing, transcription, analysis, writing up),
the lengthy question/topic development phase, and the skills and practice required to achieve adequate performance (Gillham, 2005, p. 79). Gillham (2005, p. 72) also recognizes problems construing from overlapping redundancy during interviews, which is avoided when the interview covers a wide range of topics and when each new question presents a clearly distinct topic. The researcher became aware of this threat and in response grouped similar interview questions into topic areas and skipped questions in some cases. This concern arose many times in the interviews with respondents that consider Guinness their favorite brand of alcohol.

Throughout this study, secondary data was collected in numerous forms. Journal articles, books, websites, and recent news periodicals allowed for a well-rounded and detailed set of historical secondary data. Free association tasks, probing, and projective interview techniques were exploited throughout the interview process, as Keller (1996) and Hofstede (2007) suggested in the literature. In the free association section of the interviews, consumers described the brand in an unstructured format, which Keller (1993, p. 12) suggested. Probing was used in terms of “who, what, where, when, why, and how” type questions about the brands discussed and for further explanations when the researcher considered necessary (Keller, 1993, p. 12). Probes were used throughout the interviews when the researcher believed that there was more to be disclosed at a particular point in the interview, as suggested by Gillham, (2005, p. 70).

Levy (1985, p. 69) claims that in some instances, when discussing competitive brands, respondents have difficulty articulating the different images that they have of them. Projective techniques, such as sentence completion and brand personality descriptors, are determined by the literature to be especially helpful in uncovering findings when respondents are unable or reluctant to express their thoughts and feelings by use of straightforward questioning (Hofstede, 2007, p. 301; Keller, 1993, p. 12). With projective techniques,
respondents are asked to respond to stimuli in hope that they will project aspects of their own thoughts or feelings (Boddy, 2005, p. 240). Hofstede (2007, p. 301) further states that projective techniques allow participants to give their emotional and unconscious responses without forcing them to rationalize their opinions, which is important due to the fact that respondents typically lack the vocabulary necessary to explain their views on brand images. Projective techniques allow those being interviewed to express themselves more fully, subtly, and fairly than direct questioning allows, allowing greater validity (Levy, 1985, p. 80). These important notions were recognized and understood by the researcher and therefore explored throughout the data collection process.

Projective techniques are said almost universally by market researchers to be useful (Boddy, 2005, p. 251). The advantages of projective techniques include their ability to get around or under the conscious defenses of respondents and to allow researchers to gain access to important psychological information of which respondents are not consciously aware (Boddy, 2005, p. 247). Project techniques also permit a change of pace and variety in interviews (Levy, 1985, p. 73). Levy (1985, p. 80) mentions a useful projective technique in asking respondents to name public figures, past or present who would use various brands, and why. The researcher used the said technique during the interviews to gain as much insight as possible into the Guinness brand.

However, it is clear in reviewing the literature that researchers must be wary when interpreting data collected through use of projective techniques. Projective techniques emphasize the importance of interpretation, with researchers not just presenting the data but rather focusing on what they think the data implies (Levy, 1985, p. 69). The necessity for intelligent interpretation of data collected by use of projective techniques raises further questions about reliability (Levy, 1985, p. 80). The researcher, prior to her exploitation of the technique, considered these concerns.
Non-verbal behavioral observations, including body movement and motor expressions, such as facial movements and exchanged glances, were noted in addition to extra-linguistic behavioral observations, including pitch and loudness of voice, and rate of speaking, as suggested by Blumberg, Cooper, and Schindler (2005, p. 281). A research diary was used for both jotted notes, in order to remind the researcher to write about events later, and full field notes, which are highly detailed notes, written on the day of the interview and used as a main data source (Bryman and Bell, 2011, p. 447). The diary was also a beneficial source in that it helped to alleviate ethical concerns that the researcher became aware of, see section 3.8 (page 55).

A thematic analysis was used in this research due to the use of research questions. Braun and Clarke (2006) state that thematic analysis is a foundational method for qualitative analysis (p. 4), providing a flexible and useful research tool for gaining rich, detailed, and complex accounts of data (p. 5). Thematic analysis involves searching across a data set to find repeated patterns of meaning (p. 15). Advantages of thematic analysis include its flexibility and relatively easy use for researchers with little experience (p. 37). The below table summarizes the six phases of thematic analysis, as determined by Braun and Clarke (p. 35).
Grounded theory tools have been used for analyzing the data collected by the researcher. According to Eriksson and Kovalainen (2008, p. 306), grounded theory refers to any qualitative approach that develops theory from a set of data. Ponterotto (2005, p. 133) states that grounded theory is one of the most established and respected qualitative methods. Grounded theory allows for multiple interpretations and realities (Ponterotto, 2005, p. 134) and is useful when case studies aim to generate theories (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 157), in which this research does.
The essential element of grounded theory is in the process of coding the collected data (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 160). It is important to note that grounded theory is developed mainly inductively, but also shows elements of a deductive approach (Saunders and Lewis, 2012, p. 119).

In this research, data was coded manually, grouped, structured, and categorized for relationships, and lastly organized into the brand perception models introduced by Simms and Trott in 2006. Coding means that the features, instances, issues, and themes in data are classified and given a specific label (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 128). Each case, or interview, was analyzed and coded individually followed by a cross-case analysis, which searched for similarities and differences from each case study (interview) (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 130). de Chernatony (2006, p. 48) states that it is unlikely for two people to have exactly the same image of a brand, but their images may have common features.

Open coding, in finding key words, phrases, and sentences, was used to break down, analyze, compare, and lastly categorize the data while also allowing for constant comparisons between case studies (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 161). Axial coding was then used to link codes together into categories, again by the use of constant comparisons, followed by the use of selective coding to provide a basis for theory (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 161).

3.5 Time Horizon

The study was completed on a cross-sectional time horizon, in which the subjects were studied at a particular period of time, providing a “snapshot” (Saunders and Lewis, 2012, p. 123). The primary data was collected over a three-week span. A longitudinal study was not possible for this research due to the August deadline set forth by Dublin Business School. A detailed account of time allocations for the study is detailed in Table 2 in the Appendix, page 93.
3.6 Practical Efforts

In order for the researcher to obtain primary data, an interview guide was first created. The respondents were selected and confirmed and an interview time was allotted to each respondent. An interview guide was not given to respondents in attempt to receive more truthful answers. Respondents received a free lunch and drink of choice at a location of their choice. Mero-Jaffe (2011, p. 234) recognizes that a place chosen by the respondent allows for increased feelings of comfort, which may reduce tension.

Re-imbursements of transportation were offered to respondents, though each respondent declined to accept the payment. The researcher’s iPhone was used for recording the interviews. Mero-Jaffe (2011, p. 234) states that the quality of the transcript is influenced by the quality of the recording, and upon consideration of this the effectiveness of the instrument was tested during a mock interview with a family member of the researcher. The pilot test also was helpful in allowing the researcher to improve interview and observation/note-taking skills while also confirming location appropriateness for the use of the audio recording device. Research costs were considered throughout the research and are outlined in the Appendix, table 3, page 93.

The two methods of transcription primarily used by qualitative researchers are referred to as naturalized transcription and denaturalized transcription. Naturalized transcription is a transcription that is as detailed as possible and has a focus on discourse details such as breaks in speech, mumbling, body language, etc. as well as content (Mero-Jaffe, 2011, p. 232). Denaturalized transcription is a flowing, ‘laundered’ presentation of data that removes socio-cultural characteristics of the data, including information that could shed light on the results of the study (Mero-Jaffe, 2011, p. 232). The researcher has chosen to transcribe the interviews in the form of naturalized transcription to avoid the loss of possible findings resulting from social discourses.
3.7 Biases

Through use of a research diary, the researcher has sought to minimize subject and observer biases that inevitably arise in research. Biases are particularly important in business research because the researchers often times have a connection with the organization (or in this case consumers) being studied and therefore may consciously or unconsciously influence the interpretation and presentation of the results (Zivkovic, 2012, p. 95). Subject bias occurs when respondents provide a researcher with unreliable and inaccurate, insight-free data because they think that truthful answers will show them in a bad light, leading them to answer questions in the way that they think the interviewer wants them to (Jacoby, 2012; Saunders and Lewis, 2012, p. 128).

The researcher has attempted to minimize subject bias to the greatest extent by ensuring respondents that the researcher is not affiliated with the Guinness brand, and therefore mentioning negative brand attributes does not provide any offense. Observer, or researcher, bias occurs when researchers potentially interpret the same data in different ways (Saunders and Lewis, 2012, p. 128). Observer bias is avoided with the use of triangulation, which, as mentioned in section 3.4, page 45, allows researchers to cross check data in order to further validate research findings (Eriksson and Kovalainen, 2008, p. 124). The use of a research diary has also aided in understanding and eliminating these biases, and therefore allows the researcher as much objectivity as possible in conducting the study.

3.8 Ethics

Throughout the research, ethics has been of upmost concern to the researcher. The researcher chose to adhere to the most practical ethical option, a situation ethics stance. Aluwihare-Samaranayake (2012, p. 69) states that researchers are obligated to present a balanced amount of knowledge to be acquired by the respondents in order to avoid distress or
other adverse experiences for respondents (2012, p. 69). Respondents have been given the necessary but not extensive information regarding the study, observations, and use of a research diary. The respondents verbally consented to participating in the study, the use of audio recording equipment, and the possibility of direct quotes being published on e-source. The consent script is presented in the appendix, the first part of table 4 on page 93. The researcher adhered to these guarantees, and the verbal consent between the researcher and respondents helped to alleviate any ethical concerns.

Aluwihare-Samaranayake (2012, p. 72) found that ethical or moral distress potentially occurs when the researcher relives his or her own personal experiences through the voice of the participant’s similar experience. The researcher was aware of this potential ethical issue and at all costs avoided presenting personal experiences throughout the interview process.

The respondents were not presented with the opportunity to read over the transcript of their interviews. Mero-Jaffe (2011, p. 240) found the experience of reading transcripts to be embarrassing, stressful, and even threatening to respondents. The author’s study showed that in reviewing their transcripts, interviewees expressed dismay with grammatical errors, and felt some anxiety and embarrassment regarding the conversational flow in the transcript as opposed to more refined speech (p. 240). The researcher was delighted to come across Mero-Jaffe’s work, which allowed her to further develop an ethical study.

Respondents were respected in their ability to avoid any questions or topics deemed insensitive. Respondents were also promised anonymity in their names. Those interviewed were made aware that their age, residency, and gender was noted. Physical harm was alleviated in this study by taking into account tiredness among respondents (Hofstede, 2007, p. 302). Respondents were allowed to take a break from the interview whenever they considered necessary. Disguised observations were used throughout the data collection process, and noted in the research diary.
The researcher put a great amount of effort into developing a study with the most appropriate methodology for answering the research questions. A thematic analysis and grounded theory tools were used in developing this in-depth, qualitative case study on the alcohol industry, conducted in form of four semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Potential biases and ethical concerns also were considered and alleviated to the best of the researcher’s abilities.
Chapter 4. Discussion and Conclusion

This chapter begins with an overview of the researcher’s data collection and analysis processes. A presentation of the findings of the qualitative, primary research is made in the order of the researcher’s four research questions. Simm’s and Trott’s (2006) models are modified to best represent perceptions of the Guinness brand. Recommendations for the future of alcohol marketing are presented, with a focus on recommendations for Guinness’ future. This chapter concludes with a look into limitations of this study along with suggestions for further research.
Following a verbal-consent regarding the respondents’ voluntary participation in the study along with a detailed description of ethical concerns that could arise, the four respondents began their interviews by describing their drinking habits in detail. The researcher believed this area to be important for a number of reasons. First and foremost, it was vital to understand drinking habits and influencers on the respondents’ drinking. It was also deemed necessary to determine how important image was to drinkers, even if it’s an unconscious motivator of purchase. This was determined with questions about what the respondents drink at home verses out in public. The interview guide used throughout the interview process is detailed in the Appendix, table 4, page 93, though it is important to note that this guide varied slightly from respondent to respondent.

The collected primary data, in the form of a research diary, interviews, and observations, provided insightful findings in the areas of international branding in general, brand perceptions and key drivers/influencers on the topic. The data and its analysis will benefit a wide variety of brand managers, detailed in the introductory chapter on page 13.

Data was coded manually upon completion of the naturalized transcripts. The coded data was then grouped, structured, and categorized for relationships, and lastly organized into the brand perception models introduced by Simms and Trotts’ 2006 research. Understanding the limitations of this research is crucial for all recipients and readers of this paper, and are discussed in detail on page 80.
4.1 Data Analysis

4.1.1 Alcohol Consumption Motivators

The interviews began with a look into the respondents’ drinking habits in attempt to close a gap recognized in the literature. The researcher decided that determining what motivates young American drinkers to consume alcohol was an important pre-cursor to examining brand perceptions.

Price, or the amount of disposable income available, was determined to be a key influencer on alcohol purchasing behavior for three of the four Respondents (Respondents 1, 2, and 3). Respondents 1 and 4 also mentioned social pressures as influencing their alcohol consumption behavior, in which they chose to consume when their friends and peers are drinking. Respondent 2 mentioned that stress motivates her choice to consume alcohol.

Price has not been previously mentioned in the literature to be a key influencer on consumption habits for drinkers, and remained a key theme throughout the interviews. Brand managers of alcohol brands should recognize that price heavily influences this demographics’ drinking behavior, and should adapt their marketing to include pricing/promotion information.

4.1.2 Self-Concept and Consumption

The next section of the interviews focused on a study of the self-concept theory as it relates to the alcohol industry. As mentioned in the literature review on page 29, the self-concept theory states that people act in ways that define, maintain, and enhance their self-concepts through the products they use (Graeff, 1996, p. 482). Differences in consumption preferences at home and in public were also considered, as the researcher determined that this area could shed light onto subconscious purchasing decisions that the respondents make to positively enhance or maintain their self-images.
Two common themes were found between the respondents. All four respondents denied purchasing brands that enhance or maintain their self-images. However, Respondents 3 and 4, both males, subconsciously act in ways that protect their self-images. Respondent 3 said that he “…wouldn’t go with those really cheap brands because they’re disgusting and show that you don’t care about the taste at all, just want to get drunk.” This shows that Respondent 3 does act in ways that will not harm his self-concept by avoiding the Pabt’s Blue Ribbon brand. Respondent 4, similarly to Respondent 3, denied that he chooses an alcohol because of the way others will perceive him but also mentioned how image does affect his choices, stating “I don’t really care about what other people think about what I drink but….yeah I wouldn’t drink some super girly drink.” Respondent 3 purchases in ways that avoid femininity.

All four respondents were alike in mentioning that females choose brands of alcohol most based on their self-concepts. This is interesting due to the fact that the male respondents were found to in fact be the ones to purchase in ways that do not destroy their self-images.

Again price was mentioned as a key motivator of consumption here for Respondents 1, 2, and 3, with Respondent 1 stating “I’d rather spend my money on something that tastes good than trying to please others” and Respondent 2 stating “I just drink what tastes best and what I can afford.” Respondent 3 says that he prefers “the best value for price.”

These findings prove that self-concept does come into play in the purchase and consumption of alcohol brands by young drinkers in the American market. The self-concept theory as it relates to the alcohol industry has not been tested in any prior research to date. This finding provides brand managers of all alcohol brands with unique insight into the importance of their brand’s perceptions to young American drinkers.
4.1.3 Perceptions of the Guinness Brand

This study provides a great amount of insight into brand perceptions of Guinness, and therefore was successful in answering the researcher’s first question, “How do young American drinkers perceive the Guinness brand?” The findings are best revealed to readers in the form of the brand perception models introduced by Simms and Trott (2006). This information also adapts the final model to best fit the findings, which varied slightly from the previous research on brand perceptions. It is important to note that this section does not provide evidence of the ways in which heritage and country of origin drive brand perceptions, an important implication of this study. Findings in this area are revealed in section 4.1.4, page 70.

This research reveals that Guinness’ image, both in product-related and symbolic terms, provides a key component to the brand’s perceptions.
The data shows that both product-related and symbolic attributes remain key components of the Guinness brand’s image. de Chernatony (2006, p. 48) states that it is unlikely for two people to have exactly the same image of a brand, but their images may have common features. This remains true with this research in that multiple themes developed throughout the interview process. It is again important to recognize that Guinness’ history and country of origin are major drivers of Guinness’ image, and this information is seen in Section 4.1.4, page 70, and in an additional model, Figure 15, page 71.

Product-related attributes of Guinness prove both beneficial and harmful to the brand’s image. However, Guinness’ symbolic appeal enhances the brand’s image, as all four of the respondents mentioned no negative symbolic attributes of the Guinness brand. Though
the brands image is an important component of drinkers’ choice to purchase the brand, all of those interviewed mentioned the product’s taste as the reason they do or do not choose to consume the brand, proving dominance over the importance of image. Respondent 1 mentions a favorable image of the brand in that she “was hoping she would like the taste of Guinness more” and “think[s] the whole Guinness thing is cool” but is turned off by the taste.

Price was again determined a crucial component of brand perceptions in this area of research. Respondent 1 states “Guinness is a classy beer and if you’re at a college bar no one is going to be drinking a classy beer” and instead they go for something “a little less expensive.” Respondent 2 also states that “buying [Guinness] for home is too expensive and it tastes better at the bar anyway.” Respondent 2 says that Guinness is “one of the most expensive beers out there.” Respondent 2 also mentions that the price of Guinness is “fine for older people but I don’t think people in their 20s can afford to drink it at the price [Guinness is] now.” The literature was lacking this information prior to this research. Brand managers will benefit from this information, while Guinness is provided with an opportunity to adjust the brand’s identity with future marketing activities to better attract young American drinkers to the brand.

Past Guinness advertisements have proven successful in persuading drinkers that Guinness is the drink to be seen with despite the high proportion of people thinking that the drink is unappealing in taste (Simmons, 2006, p. 11). The literature recognizes that many younger drinkers find the taste of Guinness to be too bitter, and in response the brand encourages younger drinkers to mix Guinness with other, sweeter products to create cocktail-like alcoholic beverages (Hollensen, 2008, p. 403). This study re-affirmed the demographics’ belief that the product is bitter, seen above in Figure 12, in that its bitterness was mentioned by all four respondents and a total of seven times throughout the four interviews. Respondent 1 mentioned that she chooses not to consume Guinness because of its excessive bitterness.
When questioned whether she would mix Guinness with another product such as champagne or blackcurrant juice to make it sweeter, she exclaimed “...I’ve never heard anything like that. I should try it!” However, Respondent 3 reacted negatively to the suggestion, saying “I wouldn’t mix Guinness with another drink”, explaining that “it’s gross.” Guinness would benefit from making additional efforts to change the pre-conception young American drinkers have of the bitterness of Guinness.

In September 2011, Diageo launched the Guinness Black Lager to the American market, a lighter, easier drinking beer than the traditional Guinness stout available worldwide. According to Guinness, lagers account for about eight in every 10 beers sold in the United States (Schultz, 2012), proving a justified interest in releasing the niche product to the saturated American market. Schultz (2012) begged the question: How can a brand known for a creamy, dark-as-night Irish stout compete in a lager category traditionally associated with easy-drinking light beers? Guinness’ Brand Director Doug Campbell defended the brand’s decision to enter the new category, saying "We've got a lager consumer who is starting to look around for beers that are more interesting" (Schultz, 2012). When Respondent 2 was asked if she would be interested in trying the Guinness Black Lager, released in attempt to increase grocery sales, she said she would because “it would be interesting to try.”

Brand associations were also determined to be crucial to perceptions of the Guinness brand as determined by young American drinkers. Both product and marketing related associations were mentioned by respondents and proven key to perceptions of the brand. Again, country of origin and heritage came into play in the study of associations of the Guinness brand. The key associations young American drinkers determined for the Guinness brand are summarized in Figure 13.
de Chernatony and McDonald (2003, p. 42) mentioned that brand perceptions are affected not only by how consumers perceive a brand in their own way, but also through interactions with brand users. The researcher chose to note interviewees’ perceptions of the typical drinkers of the Guinness brand. To further gain insight into brand perceptions of Guinness, respondents were also asked to describe the typical Guinness drinker in terms of
traits, characteristics, personality, and demographics. de Chernatony (2006, p. 235) states that a strong brand is likely one in which customers associate with the user’s image in terms of ‘people like me’ ways, in which they feel part of the user group or aspire to be part of the user group. All four respondents mentioned typical Guinness drinkers to be male, and Irish men in particular were associated with the Guinness brand a total of 10 times. It is clear from the data that all of the respondents are attracted to Ireland and Irish people in general as no negative attributes of the people of Ireland or the country itself were mentioned by any of the respondents. The most mentioned association young American drinkers make with Guinness is Ireland, proving that the brand’s origin has a profound effect on perceptions of the brand, which is highlighted in greater detail on page 69 of this paper.

Simms and Trott (2006), in studying perceptions of the Mini brand, grouped key associations of the brand into three categories: the brand’s personality, product-related associations, and the brand’s history/heritage. The researcher adapted the model representing the Mini brand to best represent brand perceptions of Guinness, and instead found it most appropriate to group associations into categories of those that are marketing related, product related, country of origin / heritage related, and those related to the typical drinkers of Guinness.

Aaker (1991), Nandan (2005), Keller (1993), de Chernatony (2006) and Simms and Trott (2006) all found associations to aid consumers in purchasing decisions. de Chernatony (2006, p. 37) mentions that associations may be discovered with functional qualities, or with individual people or events. The findings of this research re-confirm the notion that associations are closely related to brand perceptions and in result purchasing decisions within the alcohol industry.

Simms and Trott (2006) differ from Keller (1993), Aaker (1996), and Holehonnur (et al, 2009), in determining brand personality to be an important component of brand
perceptions, in which they state that people often perceive brands in terms of human characteristics (Simms and Trott, 2006, p. 229). The researcher decided to look into how young American drinkers perceive the Guinness brand’s personality, and found this data to be closely related to both the brand’s image and associations.

Guinness’ personality was described by respondents in terms of the brand’s potential demographics, personality traits, and characteristics. Figure 14 summarizes the Guinness brand’s personality as determined by young American drinkers.
Figure 14: Summary of the Elements of the Guinness Brand’s Personality as Adapted from Simms and Trott (2006)

The personalities of the Guinness brand determined by the young American drinkers interviewed were in fact very similar to one another, providing further insight of the brand to brand managers. The four interviews identified that Guinness’ personality was found to form an important part of perceptions of the brand for young American drinkers, which supports Simms and Trott’s findings on the Mini brand. Both demographics and characteristics/traits of the brand were equally noted, providing rich insight into the brand’s personality and an image for the brand’s identity to aspire a matching to. The Guinness brand’s personality was described as being Irish by all four respondents, proving that Guinness’ Irish origin is both a
key element of the brand’s personality and even further influences perceptions of the brand. The brand’s personality, especially in demographic terms, largely resulted again from Guinness’ heritage and Irish origin, which is discussed in further detail below.

de Chernatony (2006) and Simms and Trott (2006, p. 230) state that people relate to a brand based on its personality and how this appeals to their own personality and self-concept. Respondents recognized both positive and negative characteristics of the Guinness brand, proving that the brand’s personality attributes both harm and desire towards the brand. Future Guinness marketing activities should attempt to eliminate these negative characteristics, and re-enforce the positive ones, in order for perceptions of the brand to be made as positive as possible.

4.1.4 Heritage and Country of Origin Influences on Perceptions

Both Guinness’ extensive heritage and Irish origin were found to have a profound and positive impact on perceptions of the Guinness brand as determined by young American drinkers. The preceding section of data analysis answers the research questions “How does Guinness’ heritage drive perceptions of the brand?” and “How does Guinness’ Irish origin drive perceptions of the brand?”

The study reveals that Guinness’ extensive history and Irish origin drives the brand’s image, associations, and personality, and therefore the ways in which consumers of the researched demographic perceive the Guinness brand. The findings of this study both confirm and add to the current literature on country of origin and heritage influences on brand perceptions.
Guinness’ heritage was found to be a key component of the brand’s image, as evident by Figure 15. Simms and Trott (2006, p. 231), in studying perceptions of the Mini brand, also found the Mini brand’s history to be a key part of the brand’s image. This finding re-confirms the current literature while also presenting it with more validity and reliability in that now this notion has been tested on both the global car and alcohol industries.

Brown, Kozinets, and Sherry (2003, p. 29) recognized that technology and eased imitation eradicate the potential of first-mover advantage for a brand, but that heritage provides a competitive edge gained by trust and loyalty that consumers hold toward old brands. Liebrenz-Himes, Shamma, and Dyer (2008, p. 241) mention that while heritage brands may appeal to consumers in the present, maintaining appeal for future generations is a difficult task. The interviewed alcohol consumers mentioned that Guinness’ heritage appeals to them, with no negative elements mentioned regarding the history of the brand. Respondent
1 mentions that Guinness’ history is appealing to her, saying “It distinguishes itself from the other beer brands out there.” And “If I had to pick between an older or newer [brand] I would probably pick an older” since “most older brands are known for their quality.” Respondent 1 also says that “If a brand has been around for so long than you have to trust that it’s got quality.” Respondent 2 views heritage in a similar and also positive light, saying “older brands for the most part have good reputations.” Respondent 2 mentioned that Guinness history is appealing to her because “it makes it more interesting and clearly it’s a good beer if it’s been around so long”. Respondent 3 states that “Obviously they are doing something right if [Guinness] has been around for 254 years”, which is “impressive” to the respondent. Respondent 4 mentions the history of Guinness to also be appealing, saying “It’s clearly a good quality beer if people have been drinking it that long even with all the recessions and everything”, in which the history “improves the reputation.” A common theme developed during the interview process in that all of the respondents were attracted to and impressed by Guinness’ robust heritage, and heritage brands in general.

Urde, Greyser, and Balmer (2007, p. 4) and Wiedmann (et al., 2011, p. 205) state that companies with heritage should take advantage of it because heritage brands are perceived to be more credible, trustworthy, and reliable than brands lacking heritage. The findings of this study reveal that Guinness’ heritage is appealing to consumers, but instead due most to a belief in quality, which was mentioned to be a result of the brand’s heritage by all four of the young American drinkers that were interviewed for this study.

Patrick Hughes, Diageo Guinness USA Brand Director, says that “[The Guinness brand] is one of sort of strength, staying power and authenticity. We think consumers are really going for brands with that strength and trusted authenticity” (NBC News, 2009). The findings of the study confirm this belief in that all of those interviewed mentioned an appeal attributed to heritage.
Guinness’ first-ever global campaign was focused on Arthur Guinness’ 250th birthday, and culminated on September 24th, 2009 in parties held across the world (Handley, 2010, p. 21). Arthur’s Day was intended to attract males in their mid-20s that consume Guinness on St. Patrick's Day but not at other times of the year, to the brand (Handley, 2010, p. 21). Ronan Beirne, Global Marketing Manager of Guinness, says that the campaign was intended to create a distinctive day to celebrate the brand, stating "[Guinness] was born from the brand and it is about the brand, our founder. It is a past that is a rich and ownable platform to celebrate, which is probably even more distinctive than St Patrick’s Day" (Handley, 2010, p. 21). Beirne’s beliefs also prove true with this research. The brand’s history should be celebrated as all of the respondents’ saw the heritage of the brand to positively accentuate the brand’s image, and perceptions of the brand overall.

Guinness’ Irish origin is also proven to drive perceptions of the brand for young American drinkers, which can be seen again in Figure 15, page 71. The information processing theory contends that consumers use both extrinsic and intrinsic product cues to form brand beliefs (Paul and Dasgupta, n.d., p. 40; Saydan, 2013, p. 78). Extrinsic cues are product-related but external to the physical product while intrinsic cues refer to the product’s inherent attributes that cannot be modified without changing the physical product (Koschate-Fischer, Diamantopoulos, and Oldenkotte, 2012, p. 23). This study proves that young American drinkers use both extrinsic and intrinsic product cues to form their beliefs of the Guinness brand. Koschate-Fischer, Diamantopoulos, and Oldenkotte (2012, p. 23) and Saran and Gupta (2012, p. 66) state that the concept of country of origin is viewed as an important extrinsic cue that impacts the consumer decision-making process. This was also proven true in this study, in which Guinness’ Irish origin greatly influences the respondents’ beliefs and evaluations of the Guinness brand.
Dimofte, Johansson, and Bagozzi (2010) analyzed perceptions of global brands in the United States (p. 82) and found that being perceived as global has positive affects in the American market (p. 100). The findings of this study further investigated and confirm this finding, as the brand’s Irish origin did not show a negative light on the brand in any way. In fact, Respondent 3 mentioned that the most appealing thing about the Guinness brand is “the Irish heritage” continuing that “it’s Irishness and the history of [the brand] make it interesting.”

Saran and Gupta (2012, p. 72) state that quality, prestige, durability, product design, customer service, brand trustworthiness and product uniqueness are attributes that drive consumers to prefer global brands over local brands. The findings of this study reveal that consumers portray the “Irishness” of the Guinness brand to make it “different”, “interesting”, and “special.” Respondent 1 says “I don’t always know where alcohol brands are from but some I do and it intrigues me when I know they are foreign.” Respondent 2 states, “I think Americans are interested in trying brands from other countries, especially with beer.”

The literature recognizes the need for global brand managers to use country images to their advantage while also effectively managing perceptions regarding the country of origin (Saydan, 2013, p. 87; Ueltschy, 1998, p. 21; Van Gelder, 2004, p. 39; Kumara and Canhua, 2010, p. 343). All of the respondents regard Ireland’s country image in positive terms, with no negative representations of the brand mentioned by any of the respondents. Respondent 1 says “I think Ireland is known for good alcohol so [Guinness’ Irish origin] definitely makes me more intrigued with the brand.” and that “Ireland is known for good alcohol so it must be good.” Respondent 3 states that “Ireland is known for drinking an has a lot of really good alcohol, beer, and whiskey brands.” Respondent 4 also says “Ireland is known for really good alcohol. Like Jameson and Guinness and Schmitwicks and Baileys.”
The final model of young American drinkers’ perceptions of the Guinness brand has been adapted to fit the findings of this study. Much of the original model representing the Mini brand is applicable in presenting the Guinness brand’s perceptions determined by young American drinkers.

Figure 16: A Model of Young American Drinkers’ Perceptions of the Guinness Brand as Adapted from Simms and Trott (2006)

4.1.5 Perceptions of Preferred Alcohol Brands

The young American drinkers’ perceptions of their favorite alcohol brands varied greatly from those of the Guinness brand. This area of research provides brand managers of Guinness and in fact managers of all alcohol brands aspirations as to what they should strive for their managed brands to be perceived as, allowing them to tailor future marketing plans to
positively shape perceptions. This section of data analysis answers the research question “How do young American drinkers perceive their favorite brand(s) of alcohol?”

All four respondents mentioned that their favorite brand of alcohol is both “refreshing” and “light.” Respondents 1 and 2, both female, described their favorite brands of alcohol as “fruity” and “feminine,” while Respondents 3 and 4, both male, mentioned their favorite brands of alcohol to be both “local” and “cheap.”

Guinness launched a product-focused advertisement declaring the new Guinness Black Lager product to be "both refreshing and flavorful,” with the tagline "There is just something about black" (Schultz, 2012). Guinness should continue to mention the term “refreshing” in future marketing activities as all of the young American drinkers interviewed mentioned their favorite alcohol brand to be “refreshing.”

4.1.6 Perceptions of Past Guinness Marketing Activities

The next section of the interviews sought to discover young American drinkers’ perceptions of Guinness’ previous marketing activities. Respondents were asked if they could recall any Guinness advertisements, what type of people they thought the advertisements were aimed at, and finally what was most memorable about the mentioned advertisements.

A number of commonalities in this area developed throughout the interview process. Respondents 1, 2, and 4 all mentioned promotional bar items to be a Guinness marketing activity that they remember. Implications of this finding for Guinness’ brand managers are further discussed on page 79. Respondents 1 and 4 also mentioned the Guinness toucan to be a memorable marketing activity created by the brand. Another commonality developed between Respondents 1 and 3 in that they particularly took notice to Guinness marketing around St. Patrick’s Day.

Respondents 1, 2, and 4 mentioned that marketing activities done by Guinness seem to be aimed at attracting males to the brand. Respondent 1 states that the brand is aimed at
anyone “but mostly I think the brand is aimed at males”, while Respondent 2 discloses that the brand is aimed “at older males because that seems to be who drinks Guinness the most.” Respondent 4 says that the brand is “aimed at the typical Guinness drinkers, so adults, men, and Irish people.” Differing to the other respondents, Respondent 3 said that Guinness is “aimed at anybody that would want to drink beer on St. Patrick’s Day.” This finding proves crucial for brand managers of Guinness in that they would benefit from attempting to tailor the marketing activities of their brand to attract females in order to increase the number of potential future Guinness drinkers.

4.1.7 Perceptions of Past Successful Alcohol Marketing

The researcher also recognized the importance of gaining insight into the marketing activities of alcohol brands most admired by young American drinkers. All four respondents mentioned commercials to be their favorite form of marketing done by alcohol brands. Three of the four respondents mentioned that their favorite alcohol commercials are funny/humorous, while Respondent 3 was attracted to the Coors light commercials because of the beautiful women featured in them. Respondent 1 admired the Budweiser horse commercials due to the fact that it is a “classic.” Alcohol brand managers should consider these findings when choosing media forms and content for future marketing plans.
4.1.8 Respondent Recommendations for Future Guinness Marketing Activities

Towards the end of the interviews, the respondents were asked for recommendations for Guinness brand managers in better attracting their generation, young American drinkers, to the brand. They were also asked what changes, if any, they would make to Guinness products if they were in charge of the brand’s future product development.

All of those interviewed suggest that Guinness should increase the amount of advertising that they do in the American market. Interestingly, all of the respondents mentioned that Guinness should advertise with commercials. Respondent 1 also mentioned that billboards would prove helpful for the brand, while Respondent 2 mentioned promotions, such as discounts or free apparel giveaways, to also be a beneficial tactic for Guinness to use in the future. Respondents 1 and 4 recommended that Guinness marketers mention the brand’s rich history and Irish origin in future marketing activities, again proving the positive light these factors have on perceptions of Guinness for young American drinkers. Respondent 2 mentions that focusing on Guinness’ age in future marketing activities would be helpful since “it shows that they are a high quality brand since people keep drinking it for over 200 years.” Respondent 4 states “Everyone knows Guinness is an older brand that’s been around for a long time but I don’t think anyone know its [245 years] old. They should definitely put that in commercials.”

All of the respondents of this study were also reluctant to advise Guinness brand managers to change the Guinness products in any way. They all mention that the taste is what makes the brand’s products distinct in the marketplace and that it would harm the brand to change the taste, even if the taste is not appealing to their personal preferences. Respondents 1, 2, and 3 mentioned that Guinness should become less expensive to appeal to younger
drinkers, while Respondent 4 mentioned that the brand would benefit from capturing the impressive draft taste into bottles or cans.

4.2 The Researcher’s Recommendations for the Future of Guinness

Respondents 2 and 4, the two respondents interviewed that mention Guinness as their favorite brand of alcohol, disclosed that Guinness tastes better on draft compared to bottles and cans sold in grocery and liquor stores. Guinness recognized their Black Lager as an opportunity to increase grocery sales, in which the traditional Guinness Stout relies heavily on bar sales where it is served on draft, while lagers are more likely to be consumed during “sessionable occasions”, for example drinking outside during the day or out at a baseball game (Schultz, 2012). Guinness launched a product-focused advertisement declaring the new Black Lager to be "both refreshing and flavorful,” with the tagline "There is just something about black." (Schultz, 2012). Guinness should continue to mention the term “refreshing” in future marketing activities as all of the young American drinkers interviewed mentioned their favorite alcohol brand to be “refreshing.” Neither of the respondents mentioned that they knew of or consumed the lager. Guinness would benefit from promoting this fairly-new product more heavily in the American market. Guinness would also benefit from continuing to distribute promotional materials to bars as it is clearly a recognized and memorable tactic for the brand’s newly-targeted demographic. The brand should not modify Guinness products in any way.

The Guinness brand will benefit from continuing to celebrate and furthering focus on its impressive heritage and Irish origin in future marketing activities aimed at young drinkers in the American market. All of the respondents in this study viewed the brand’s heritage and origin in a positive light.
Guinness brand managers should tailor future marketing activities to further attract females to the brand. This is an appropriate recommendation due to the fact that both the brand’s personality and the typical drinkers of Guinness were described as male by respondents. Guinness should aim to attract as many young American drinkers to the brand as possible for the future, and therefore should make sure that females are equally interested in the brand.

Price was not mentioned in the literature to be a key influencer on consumption habits for drinkers. Brand managers of alcohol brands should recognize that price heavily influences this demographics’ drinking behavior, and should adapt their marketing and future pricing strategies to fit this notion.

4.3 Limitations and Suggestions for Further Research

The researcher has placed a great amount of consideration on providing the most valid and reliable results possible to recipients of this research. Validity refers to how well a piece of research actually measures what it sets out to measure or how well it reflects the reality it claims to represent (Boddy, 2005, p. 244). Reliability refers to the repeatability of a data set, in which it questions whether different researchers draw the same conclusions from the same sets of data (Boddy, 2005, p. 244).

External validity was of the upmost concern throughout this study. Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 395) define external validity as the degree to which findings can be generalized across social settings. It is important for readers to fully understand that the findings from this research are restricted to the chosen context, the Guinness brand and young American drinkers. There are countless areas of further research in addressing perceptions in relation to international brands. A study on perceptions as determined by older drinkers, non-drinkers, different cultures, different brands, and an entirely different industry could be conducted. The
general “type” of respondents chosen could also be modified, in which further research could be conducted with respondents in the same age category but holding full-time, salary jobs, or respondents with varying socio-economic backgrounds, among countless other considerations.

Aaker (1991, p. 85) states that perceptions cannot be objectively determined because of the judgments about what is important to individual customers. This limits the results of this study. The study is also limited in that the chosen respondents may be unrepresentative of the entire population (Saunders and Lewis, 2012, p. 127), in this case young American drinkers.

External reliability was also considered a concern of the researcher. Bryman and Bell (2011, p. 395) define external reliability as the degree to which a study can be replicated. Scriven and Goodhardt (2012, p. 200) state that only 50% of respondents who expressed an association between a brand and an attribute at one interview did so at the next. It is imperative for the readers of this research to recognize this as a limitation of the study. de Chernatony (2006, p. 47) recognized a problem associated with seeking to develop a brand through minimizing the gap between brand identity and brand image in that an image refers to a customer’s perception only at a specific point in time. It is important for recipients and all readers of this study to understand that this research acts as a “snapshot,” and therefore does not provide a long-term insight on the Guinness and other heritage and foreign-originating brands.

A limitation is also recognized in that three of the four respondents are college students, representing a specific strata of the population, and therefore price’s influence on consumption should be confirmed or disconfirmed with a broader set of respondents in future research. A recommendation for the future would be to study influencers on alcohol consumption habits of alcohol drinkers at various stages of life.
The work could go a number of directions from here. The literature is lacking information as to what influences young American drinkers to consume alcohol. This research touched upon the subject briefly and is successful in adding insight to the literature, however there is room for further research and confirmation in this area. There is also room for further research in terms of the self-concept theory and the alcohol industry in that the subject was only briefly touched upon, due to the fact that it was not determined to be a main objective for this study. Future researchers could make further discoveries in the area as well as providing further confirmation of the findings of this research.

4.4 Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to provide insight into perceptions of the Guinness brand as determined by young American drinkers. The introduction and justification of study area of this research made it clear to readers that the academic and marketing world is in dire need of this research, which was further discussed in chapter two, the critical review of the literature. The literature recognizes a widespread belief that brand perceptions strongly influence buying behavior (Romaniuk and Sharp, 2002, p. 218) and studying brand perceptions allows marketers to understand how their brand fits with market preferences (Franzen and Moriarty, 2009, p. 147). The third chapter of this work justified the chosen methodology for the research. A thematic analysis and grounded theory tools were used to develop the in-depth case study on the alcohol industry, conducted in the form of four interviews. Potential biases and ethical concerns also were considered and alleviated to the best of the researcher’s abilities. The discussion of findings, chapter four, presents insight into the Guinness brand and alcohol marketing to the readers. The research questions: “How do young American drinkers perceive the Guinness brand?”, “How do young American drinkers perceive their favorite brand(s) of alcohol?”, “How does Guinness’ heritage drive
perceptions of the brand?,” and “How does Guinness’ Irish origin drive perceptions of the brand?” were answered.

Guinness’ extensive history and Irish origin were found to positively enhance perceptions of Guinness, and alcohol and Irish brands in general. Simm’s and Trott’s models, presented in their 2006 study on the Mini brand, were adapted to best represent the Guinness brand perceptions. Recommendations for the future, determined by both the respondents and the researcher, were also highlighted in the fourth chapter.
Chapter 5. Self Reflection on Own Learning and Performance

Chapter five seeks to provide recipients of this research with a reflective piece. The chapter begins with a reflection on the researcher’s dissertation process. The researcher then reflects on the sources used throughout the dissertation, followed by a reflection on the formulation of the research. Lastly, the researcher reflects on her learning and skill development, where a personal SWOT analysis is presented.
5.1 Reflection on the Dissertation Process

Selecting a research topic was an overwhelming but rewarding task. My personal interest in international marketing, stemming from past travels and a former internship in international marketing, led to my initial interest in the chosen topic. While reviewing the literature, I recognized the importance of understanding brand perceptions in developing future marketing activities. Guinness’ position in the American marketplace was thought-provoking because it is one of the oldest and most prominent brands in the world, and I recognized an overwhelming prominence in the Irish market and seemingly under-the-radar performance in America, especially with newly-legal drinkers, an area I also recognized to be significant during an initial literature search.

At first I was overwhelmed with the task of choosing a research topic. However, by conducting initial research rather than making a rash decision based purely on interest, I was able to develop a topic that I found both interesting and necessary. I learned about myself that I often make impulse decisions, an occasionally destructive habit, and would benefit from thoroughly investigating before making decisions. Had I not thoroughly reviewed the literature prior to formulating my topic, I could have missed critical components of brand perceptions. In review of the literature, country of origin and heritage effects on brand perceptions were stumbled upon by chance and recognized to be of utmost importance. In reflecting on the dissertation process, I realize that if I had more time and writing space, I would have searched for and considered further “shapers” of brand perceptions. However, the interviews conducted revealed that country of origin and heritage are of great influence over perceptions the targeted demographic holds of international alcohol brands and the Guinness brand in particular.

I improved my research, interpersonal and communication skills throughout the dissertation process. Prior to the dissertation stage of the MBA, I was overwhelmed at the
thought of using online journal articles, a concept previously foreign to me. I decided to ask the librarians for further assistance in searching for sources, which proved valuable. Using online journals provided by DBS’ EbscoHost search engine, the literature reviewed was abundant. Changing search terms became necessary a number of times, and using broad terms proved to be helpful. Textbooks, both in the form of e-books provided by dawsonera.com and in the traditional form, proved to be very beneficial in developing the methodology section of this work. The literature search tools proved ideal for this research. Asking for help and communicating my needs with the librarians positively enhanced my project.

The dissertation was crafted in stages and in a very organized manner, which made me realize the advantages of my organization skills. I found it easiest and most effective to organize my literature sources by use of an Excel spreadsheet, which was envied during the proposal stage by my classmates. This is an area that I was able to further improve, which will remain very useful in my future career.

The dissertation process has been a rewarding experience. From selecting and developing a topic to collecting secondary and primary data, and in finally turning data into critical insights for brand managers across a number of categories, the dissertation process has taught me a number of things about myself, my work habits, and areas that are both well-developed and in need of improvement.
5.2 Reflection on Sources

Selecting sources for the research was an interesting procedure. There were many aspects of the search that surprised me and if I were to do the project again I would have gone about reviewing the literature in a profoundly different way during the initial stages of the project.

At the beginning of the dissertation stage I now realize that I was searching the literature in too narrow of a manner, which led to a great deal of frustration. I focused mainly on textbooks on international marketing and branding from the DBS library, and then by searching “brand perceptions” and “Guinness” on Ebsco Host, accessed through the DBS library page, and for e-books on dawsonera.com and general information on google.com. Much of the literature written on brand perceptions did not use exact terms (i.e. brand perceptions), and therefore finding them required searches for similar terms such as “brand images”, “consumer behavior patterns towards international brands,” among others.

Also, surprisingly, literature on Guinness was not evident in academic-type sources such as textbooks and journal articles, but instead was most prominent in newspapers, online, and in print. I assumed that since the brand’s marketing was so notable it would be evident in marketing-focused literature. However, after a great deal of unsuccessful searching, I finally came across sources that, in the form of newspaper and online articles, re-affirmed the importance of the study by the chosen demographic.

After the initial search, and when my research skills improved, the literature re-affirmed the importance of the topic and helped shape the research questions. A more varied approach allowed me to find sources, especially in journals, that focused heavily on country of origin and heritage effects on brand perceptions, which I now realize was a valid concern to me and was not in my initial thoughts on the topic and was instead stumbled upon.
I was also surprised how many sources on brand perceptions proved to be irrelevant information for this particular study. Much of the literature was heavily focused on a specific brand or product category and therefore did not provide valuable insights for other studies. I became aware of this flaw and therefore tried to relate this study to be as valid as possible for brand managers in a number of categories.

Throughout the dissertation process I learned a great deal about researching and developed skills that will make me a better researcher in the future. I also learned that going outside of the marketing discipline and into psychology-focused literature was rewarding, which goes against my initial thoughts. The study of brand perceptions falls into a consumer behavior study that also occurs by psychologists that are interested in marketing. I believe that searching outside of business and marketing journals helped shape my study in a positive way.

My initial assumptions about the literature were inaccurate but once my research skills further developed I was surprised at the abundance of literature that was available on my specific topic. I was wary about articles, specifically about Guinness, that were not of an academic nature and after a great deal of consideration I decided it would be best to not use the information in the dissertation as its validity was questionable. I believe that the sources I did choose, in the form of electronic journal articles, books, e-books, textbooks, news articles, and information published by Guinness, gave this research a well-rounded critical literature review and methodology section.

5.3 Reflection on Dissertation Formulation

Simms and Trott’s 2006 in-depth case study on perceptions of the Mini brand provided me with a great amount of support in formulating this dissertation. I was able to adapt the models presented by Simms and Trott to best fit the alcohol industry, and Guinness brand in particular. The literature on country of origin and heritage branding also proved
supportive in formulating the dissertation. I decided to heavily focus on heritage and country of origin as it was proven a main determinant of positive brand perceptions for Guinness and other alcohol brands.

I was surprised as to how much price was found to influence alcohol brand perceptions determined by young American drinkers. In fact, the importance of price remained a key theme throughout the interview process. I was also surprised that all of those interviewed mentioned the product’s taste as the reason they do or do not choose to consume Guinness. I expected the brand’s image to overrule taste in some ways. I also expected Guinness’ Irish origin and robust heritage to influence perceptions of the brand, but I was surprised as to the extent this remained true.

My findings were new and fresh in that they brought about much confirmation of current literature along with new insight into brand perceptions. The outcomes of this study differed from my expectations in that product-related attributes of Guinness prove both beneficial and harmful to the brand’s image, but Guinness’ symbolic appeal only enhances the brand’s image. I did not expect all four respondents to only mention positive symbolic attributes of the Guinness brand.

Reflecting on the dissertation process, I now realize that I did a good job devising the dissertation. My findings were fresh and new and were successful in both confirming and disconfirming previous literature and adding new insight on brand perceptions to the literature. This dissertation will be constructive to recipients in developing future marketing activities.
5.4 Reflection on Learning and Skill Development

In 1992, Honey and Mumford developed the learning styles inventory, based upon Kolb’s learning cycle, which shows that people possess particular learning styles that influence their ability to learn (Beard and Wilson, 2006, p. 33). The four stages of learning, which is presented as Figure 17, represent the four types of people with preferences for each stage of the learning cycle (Beard and Wilson, 2006, p. 34). Beard and Wilson (2006, p. 33) mention the importance of recognizing that even though a person may begin anywhere in the cycle, the cycle must be completed in order for the learning process to be complete.

Figure 17: Honey and Mumford’s Learning Styles

The dissertation process has taught me a lot about my own learning style and research preferences. In reflecting on my learning style, I recognize that I identify most with the pragmatist style of learning (seen in Stage 4 on Figure 17). Pragmatists prefer to apply theories and techniques to investigate if they work (Beard and Wilson, 2006, p. 34). I preferred this method in choosing to further investigate the brand perception model introduced by Simms and Trott (2006). According to Illeris (2009, p. 76), a pragmatist is often criticized for a willingness to abandon moral standards to achieve results. I believe that I stuck to the ethical standards that I set for myself to the best of my ability.
My dissertation advisor, Joyce Byrne-Walsh, commented that I have worked independently throughout the dissertation process. Reflecting on Joyce’s comments, I recognize that I am both an independent researcher and prefer solitary learning. I believe that my communication skills were enhanced through the interview process, and my interpersonal skills were improved through interactions with Joyce. A personal SWOT analysis of my research skills, presented as Table 5, presents areas that I seek to exploit and build, while also recognizing areas that I need to improve on and avoid.

**Table 5: Personal SWOT Analysis of My Research Skills**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Written and verbal communication</td>
<td>➢ Numeracy skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Self-motivated</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Organization</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opportunities</th>
<th>Threats</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>➢ Leadership</td>
<td>➢ Procrastination</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Problem-solving skills</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>➢ Accountability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I was surprised that procrastination did not harm my research project. My time management skills improved throughout the MBA course and allowed me to be ahead of my expectations in completing the dissertation. I believe that I would benefit from further developing my problem-solving skills, which I recognize as an opportunity for the future. I tended to ask for advice from Joyce when I was unsure of something, and I believe that I would benefit from solving my own uncertainties rather than seeking assistance in my future career.

If I was to repeat the dissertation process, I would use the same spreadsheets for organization. However, I would spend less time searching for literature as I realize that I
wasted a good amount of time in my literature search. I believe that I improved my research skills throughout the process, which will be beneficial in any future research endeavors.

I believe that the dissertation process has taught me many things about myself and my research and learning tendencies. I have built a unique skillset and gained expertise in research and marketing alike. The dissertation process has made me a better candidate for my future job and scholarly endeavors.
Chapter 6. Appendices

6.1 Tables

Table 2: Time Allocation

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<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Finish</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collecting and reading secondary data</td>
<td>January 1, 2013</td>
<td>July 31, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating interview guide</td>
<td>June 1, 2013</td>
<td>June 30, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collecting primary data</td>
<td>July 1, 2013</td>
<td>July 30, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Writing first drafts</td>
<td>July 1, 2013</td>
<td>July 14, 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing primary data</td>
<td>July 1, 2013</td>
<td>July 21, 2013</td>
</tr>
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<td>Analyzing supervisor comments</td>
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</tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shipping</td>
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<td>August 16, 2013</td>
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Dissertation Completed: August 16th, 2013

Table 3: Research Costs

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<td>Lost Wages (5/20-8/16)</td>
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<td>Shipping</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interview Incentives</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation Reimbursements</td>
<td>$35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Cost of Research: **$7,170**

Table 4: Interview Guide

This interview seeks to provide insight into consumer perceptions of the Guinness brand. Your participation in this interview is optional, and you have volunteered to act as a respondent for this study. Audio recording will be used throughout your interview, and direct quotes from your interview will be subject to
publishing in print and online on an electronic database. Your name will not be published, though your age, residency, and gender will be mentioned. Questions you do not feel comfortable answering can be avoided upon request, and you may take a break from the interview at any time. Do you understand and agree with the above statements?

**Question 1a:** We will start off by discussing your alcohol consumption habits. How often do you consume alcohol?

**Question 1b:** Who or what influences your decision to drink? (probe: friends? price?)

**Question 1c:** When choosing to drink outside of your home (at a bar, club, or restaurant) what do you typically consume? (probe: beer, wine, or liquor + brand) Why?

**Question 1d:** Do you also typically choose to drink ______ when you drink at home? Why? (if different than outside the home)

**Question 1e:** What about ______ appeals most to you? (probe: taste, price, reputation?)

**Question 2a:** The self-concept theory states that people purchase brands because of the way they define, maintain, and enhance their self-images (such as personality, appearance, and characteristics). Do you choose a brand based on how you think others will perceive you?

**Question 2b:** In what categories, if any, do you believe this theory to be true? (clothing, music, cosmetics, etc.)

**Question 2c:** Does the image you have of an alcohol brand affect your purchasing decision?

**Question 2d:** Do you believe that other drinkers choose a brand of alcohol based on how others will perceive them?

**Question 3:** So onto Guinness. How would you describe Guinness to a person unaware of the brand?

**Question 4a:** How often do you drink Guinness?

**Question 4b:** Why do/don’t you choose the drink?

**Question 4c:** What about the Guinness brand is most appealing to you?

**Question 4d:** What about the Guinness brand is most unappealing to you?

**Question 5:** What famous public figures, past or present, do you believe are or were most likely to consume Guinness? Why?

**Question 6a:** What 5 things (products, people, places, etc.) do you associate the Guinness brand with?

**Question 6b:** What 5 things do you associate with your favorite alcohol brand?

**Question 7a:** Can you recall any past Guinness advertisements?

**Question 7b:** If so, who do you think they were aimed at?

**Question 7c:** What was most memorable about the advertisement?

**Question 8a:** Do you have a favorite alcohol advertisement?

**Question 8b:** What about the advertisement was most appealing to you?

**Question 9:** Please complete the following sentences:
Question 9a: Typical Guinness drinkers are (mention age, gender, personality, etc.)
Question 9b: The taste of Guinness is ________________.
Question 9c: If the Guinness brand was a person, he or she would be ____________.
Question 9d: I choose an alcohol brand based on its ________________.
Question 9e: My favorite alcohol tastes ________________.
Question 9f: Guinness is perceived as ________________.
Question 9g: My favorite alcohol brand is perceived as ________________.

Question 10a: Are you aware how old the Guinness brand is?
Question 10b: Guinness is one of the oldest brands in the world at 254 years old. Is the brand’s history appealing or unappealing to you?
Question 10c: Does an alcohol brand’s age/history influence your decision to consume that drink?
Question 10d: Do you feel that way about all brands with rich history?
Question 10e: In 2009, the Guinness brand began celebrating its history publicly with birthday-type celebrations. Have you ever participated in an event celebrating a brand’s “birthday?”
Question 10f: Would you be interested in participating in this type of event?

Question 11: Do you think the next generation of drinkers will prefer new over old brands of alcohol?
Question 12: Do you believe that Guinness should focus on or downplay its age in future marketing activities?
Question 13: Do you prefer domestic or imported brands? Why?
Question 14: Do you think that the next generation (recently legal) of drinkers will prefer American or global brands of alcohol?

Question 15a: Are you aware of what country the Guinness brand originates from?
Question 15b: Does Guinness’ Irish-origin affect your decision to consume the drink?
Question 15c: At what point in time did you learn of Guinness’ Irish origin? (time compared to when you first learned of the brand)

Question 16: What stereotypes of Ireland do you hold?
Question 17: Do you believe that Guinness should focus on or downplay its Irish origin in future marketing activities?

Question 18: Do you have any advice for the Guinness marketing department in attracting the next generation of drinkers to the brand?

Question 19: What changes to Guinness would you make if in charge of the product?

Review of respondent’s answers.
Question 20: Is there anything else that you want to add? 😊
6.2 Bibliography


