A Study of perception and attitudes Towards TESCO Own Brands in Ireland

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Abstract

In many countries, the growth of private label brands (PLBs) also known as store brands is negatively affecting manufacturer brands’ shares, though PLBs have yet to take hold in other markets. Nowadays’ businesses are more complicated than they were 20 years ago, many competitors have been added up to the party and they are all seeking to produce an impact which lead them to become more and more competitive against each other, in fact, in many businesses product quality and customer satisfaction have become extremely important for organizations in order to be more attractive to their audiences, to grow, and therefore to succeed. Due to all that mentioned before this study seeks to evaluate or examine attitudes and perceptions towards private labels specifically TESCO own private label. The results using primary and secondary methods research demonstrate that these attitudes are driven by differences in psychographics and store image. Attitude toward national brands is characterised by positive store image, smart shopper self-perception, need for affiliation, and money attitude regarding power-prestige and anxiety. Private label attitude is characterised by more positive store image, and money attitude regarding retention and distrust.

To collect all the data required 120 questionnaires were handled personally by the researcher to TESCO store Rathmines Dublin 6; only 104 were answered properly and those were the ones used to the investigation itself determining the size of the sample. The analysis of the data gathered was made using Microsoft Excel 2011. The results show that generally speaking a high percentage of the customer surveyed that day would definitely use and recommend TESCO brands which means they are satisfied with the range of products offered by them. The findings also show that most of them do not consider TESCO private label as a low-quality brand and some of the aspects that may influence them to buy those.

Keywords Private label attitude, Consumer behaviour, Smart shopper self-perception, Motivational needs, TESCO own brands, consumers perceptions.
1. Introduction

This chapter seeks to provide an overview of the dissertation itself. It contains the research background of the study and also includes the academic justification with a brief description of Consumer behaviour and store brands and the explanation of why it worth researching this topic, a personal justification which highlight why it is interesting for the researcher and finally the scope and limitations of the topic proposed.

1.1 Research Background and its academic Justification

Nowadays new strategies and tendencies have been incorporated to obtain better results in business; marketplace has become more competitive than it was in the past which has forced companies to create new marketing approaches to be able to compete and go deeper to position themselves in customers’ minds and get an increment in the terms of the amount of clients.

A variety of factors in the last three decades have influenced approaches that giant retailers chains have taken to remain competitive and increase the volume of sales which is basically the main purpose of every business. The financial crisis that has affected the entire world in the last 8 years is one of those factors, another important factor is the purchase decision, considering that a high percentage of the purchase decision is made in the place itself, where customers analyse aspects that will determine what are they buying, how many can they buy? And whether the product have the quality they are looking for or not?; this is why firms have developed different plans in order to take advantage of those points mentioned before based in consumer behaviour and all the things related to this specific topic that is extremely influent when it comes to purchase decision.

Brands are everywhere and there is no doubt that they are one of the most important intangibles actives of any firm. The creation and management of high quality brands is a priority for any company all over the world (Keller, 2001). In the 70s manufacturers and distributors started to developed and commercialize store brands that were normally by that time perceived as a generic low quality product that did not have an specific name and which main purpose was to copy name brands. Since then store brands have evolved, improving its
quality and obtaining a good reputation amongst consumers. According to PLMA (Private Label Manufacturers Association) a report from 2012 revealed that store brands have a 40% of the market in countries like Switzerland, Portugal and United Kingdom.

There are many studies, researches and articles that have previously deepen in this field related to store brands and how they have been perceived throughout the decades for customers and the techniques used for distributors to persuade them to buy those goods. The Private Label Manufacturers Association (2007) Web site states that “retailers use store brands to increase business as well as to win the loyalty of their customers.” Vakariya and Chopde (2011) researched on private label and national brands for the apparel segment and found out that store brands provide value for money to the customers and higher margin to the retailers. On the other hand, there is evidence that consumers may not differentiate between different retailers’ private label; that is, private label users may be loyal to PL products in general, not to the PL of a particular retailer (Richardson 1997).

In the last decade the concern about store brands and how are they perceived has increased hugely; Martos-Partal and Gónzalez-Benito (2009), who were members of the Management and Business Economics Department of Salamanca University, Spain, published in their investigation “What does Store Brand Buyers Search? Characterization of Store Brand Buyers by Benefits Sought in Shopping” the theoretical approach and characterization of the store brand buyers, paying special attention to motivations and benefits sought in shopping. Similarly there have been researchers who have written about on this subject as is the case of Bhatt and Bhatt (2014), in their paper “Private Label Perceptions and its Impact on Store Loyalty: An Empirical Study” where they researched about the factors moderating the perceptions of customers towards private labels and an attempt to explore their impact on store loyalty. Ailawadi and Keller (2004) said that, this new context in increasing sales and a better acceptance for the store brands is consequence of brand strategy designed by distributors.

1.2 Store Brand or Private Label Industry and Justification for the Research

A very common definition used for Store brands is that they belong to the distributor which can only be sold in its branches (Kumar and Steenkamp, 2007). Store brands are known in different ways such as own brands, private labels and store brands. For customers, private
labels can offer lower prices as well as quality levels that are often not far below those of national brands (Consumer Reports 2009; Pauwels and Srinivasan 2004).

The (PLMA, 2014) Private Label Manufacturer Association has stated that store brands are all merchandise sold under a retailer’s brand. That brand can be the retailer’s own name or a name created exclusively by that retailer. In some cases, a retailer may belong to a wholesale group that owns the brands that are available only for the members of the group.

This sector has clearly identified customer needs and they have produced a generic brand with different levels; TESCO is a great example of it, they have TESCO Everyday value which targets a specific audience and then they also offer TESCO Finest which is a more elaborated product with a better quality in all senses. It worth to mention that the economic crisis and recession in Ireland and Europe have been favourable to store brands. Consumers are more receptive to store brands in difficult times which give distributors a great opportunity to go deeper in customers’ minds.

There was a time when people thought store brands were targeting lower social classes where the purchasing power was not enough, but the truth is, it was not like that. Even when those social classes with a low purchasing power buy store brands for necessity, the mid class and high class have been also penetrated for store brands according to (PLMA, 2006).

This interest for the store brands by classes with a high purchasing power is a consumer behaviour variation normally called “smart purchase” where people with higher incomes feel satisfied buying goods for less, which make them feel smarter by knowing how to appreciate quality in the different products offered even when there is no advertising ads or campaigns at all.

In many cases as it was mentioned before store brands have different consumer’s profiles; thus, they must get to know the most prone customers for each category to be able to compete efficiently in each one of them with their own products. These products fill the shelves right next to their brand name counter parts tempting every customer that walk by. They come in all different types and styles but they almost all have one thing in common, low prices. Every consumer has seen these goods in the market place but what do they think of them? Why do
they perceive them that way? Do they see them as cheap low quality goods or a great deal? Why would they pay more for a name brand good?

In a scenario where store brands are causing a huge impact in the marketplace, an appropriate comprehension of the customer behaviour and the purchase process seems to be fundamental because once you understand the consumer you can increase the level of satisfaction of them and hence the positioning of the distributor will become stronger than it was before.

Consumer behaviour has its roots in marketing; it is considered a business approach that appeared in 1950s through different ideas used towards business; back then marketers realized that they will sell more goods if they produced all those goods they had determined in advanced people prefer to buy, instead of trying to convey messages to persuade customers to purchase something already produced by the company. Companies figured out that it was a lot easier to sell products that research would have informed as wanted by customers, this rang an alarm in firms attention and they concentrated a part of their resources in this aspect.

In Ireland exist several distributors that have their own store brands, some of those are supermarkets, some others just convenience stores but they all produce a range of products of their own that vary according to the size of the company its extensions amongst others factors.

The main purpose of this dissertation is to evaluate the perception and attitudes customers have about TESCO own brands; due to the great competition that has emerged in the last years in the private label sector where different firms have increased their standards and quality levels in order to compete fiercely with others and increase their profits by introducing more and better products to the market. It has been noticed that they are likely to provide similar products to their consumers which emphasizes the fact that customers are loyal to store brand but not to a store brand in specific.

This project analyses how a retailer Chain named “TESCO” in Dublin, Ireland uses consumer behaviour, attitudes and perceptions theories to apply those to their own private labels to get to comprehend in a better way the perception from customers’ point of view towards their store brand in terms of quality, imagery and price in relation with name brands.
It will also help the distributors and retailer stores with private labels to make meaningful conclusions on the basis of observations made in the study and at the same time will inform people about all the considerations made to enhanced the imagery of a brand in this case “TESCO BRANDS” in terms of quality, value, variety and price.

This study of perception and attitudes towards store brands “TESCO” seeks to discern how this range of products is being and have been perceived for customers and their response to them. These lines, “Tesco Everyday Value and Tesco Finest” have been re-launched recently with the purpose of capturing consumers’ attention and persuading them even more to try them and make comparisons using the factors involved in relation with name brands.

The necessity of utilise the proper approach when it comes to store brands is linked with purchase decision and consequently with consumer behaviour. Decades ago store brands were trying to venture in the marketplace whereas nowadays they are fiercely competing with name brands which have led them to acquire a good marketplace percentage of sales globally speaking.

From the above exposed in relation to the store brands and consumer behaviour and the importance these brands are gaining in the marketplace because of the tactics utilised to convey messages to attract customers, some questions arise:

- What are the strategies used by TESCO to place their products in customers’ mind?
- How can they identify customers’ needs and consumer behavior?
- What are the factors involved in the acceptance of store brands?
- Have TESCO store brands created brand value for its own products?

These dissertation seeks to answer the questions mentioned before and analyzed the information obtained deeply to evaluate the levels of involvements, perception an attitudes towards the TESCO own brand products.
1.3 Personal Justification

Throughout the MBA taken the researcher’s interest was captured by the way consumers are driven to think the way firms want them to think or analyze things, more specifically marketing was a subject which involved plenty different aspects where consumer perceptions, persuasion, and attitudes are been highlighted continuously. Consumer behavior is the topic or subject which rules all those mentioned before; everything involving consumers is related with consumer behavior. It worth mention that researcher background is not linked at all with this subject but however, it was considered as an interesting area, because the Engineering sector which is the environment where the researcher was working before this also includes consumer behavior but slightly different. Nowadays and more than ever consumers’ perceptions and attitudes towards any service or products are extremely involved with price, quality and quantities.

This project will help the researcher and the company to have a better understanding about the way their products are being perceived and the attitudes towards them. This it is one more of the many contributions the company already must have in order to keep improving their products and own brands by giving them the chance to clearly identify the attitudes and perception produced by TESCO own brands in customers. On the other hand, it will also give the chance to the researcher use all the knowledge acquired throughout the master degree program coursed.
2. Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In order to enhanced the comprehension in the way that customers perceive store brands and their attitudes towards them as well as all the processes involved with those mentioned before, some specific definitions and concepts will take place in this chapter.

The arrival of PLB also known as store brands and their accelerated growth has been subject of an uncountable studies and literature. In this chapter definitions and concepts such as: Consumer attitudes and behaviour in terms of perceptions, motivations toward private label Opposite to national brands but also their benefits in terms of attributes; retailer positioning and market factors that allows the success of this kind of goods but also the different strategic response of national brands to cope with this growth.

The purpose of this chapter is to identify literature gaps by reviewing and evaluating previous relevant academic literature and additional sources that will allow people to have better criteria when it comes to store brands, attitudes and consumer behaviour. The topics covered in this chapter include Store brands, Consumer behaviour concept, customer value and a brief introduction about “TESCO STORES” which will be the organization studied.

2.2 Attitudes

Attitudes have been a subject of different studies and researches throughout the years and they have not coincided in one unique and universal definition for it. “Attitudes are usually represented as being positive or negative, favourable or unfavourable towards an object, idea, or other entity” (Foxall, R et al 1998; Ali Bassam Mahmoud, 2013 pp. 36-43) This concept of attitude shows that someone’s attitude towards an object to might vary or change from positive to negative, but agrees that an individual may also be conflicted towards an object meaning that they might at different occasions express positive and negative attitude toward the same thing. This led to the theory of whether individual can hold several or multiple attitudes toward the same object. (Ali Bassam Mahmoud, 2013)
Kotler (2009) said that attitude “economizes on energy and thought” they cannot easily be changed and generally lead an individual to behave in a consistent way towards anything in life. Moreover, attitude puts people in a position where their mind seeks to like and dislike things. Taking this in consideration industries often try to fit their products within the existing attitude rather than trying to change them (Kotler, 2009, pp. 249).

According to (Perloff, 2003, pp.139) who defines attitudes as “attitudes are learned, enduring, global and typically emotional and are strongly linked with behaviour.” An individual acts or thinks according to the situation in which is involved and in correspondence to the knowledge and habits that he or she has obtained throughout their different education stages and childhood. Certainly, it is difficult to change the thoughts acquired.

It can be appreciated in the definition above that there is not a universal definition when it comes to attitudes, even when some authors think that this is a phenomenon that must be studied deeply to determine or gain a more accurate approach to what really attitude or attitudes are.

2.3 Consumers

Consumers are individuals or groups who purchase any product or service to satisfy their personal consumption needs (Kotler and Armstrong 2000, pp.229). It is essential that marketer practitioners and researchers get to understand the customers and develop designs and strategies that will make it possible for the marketing professionals not only to please consumers but equally consumers’ assistance. Prior to this, there are certain questions the marketers use to predicate their strategic actions:

Who buys?
How do they buy?
When do they buy?
Why do they buy?
How do they evaluate the goods service once they have been purchased? Organization that manage to understands how consumers will respond to the different marketing mix has a great advantage over its competitors (Kotler and Armstrong 2000, pp.209)
2.3.1 Consumer Behaviour

Mowin, (1995) said “consumer behaviour is defined as the study of the buying units and the exchange processes involved in acquiring, consuming, and disposing of goods, services, experiences and ideas”. According to Schiffman, Lazar and Hansen (2012, p. 2) consumer behaviour is defined as “the behaviour that consumers in searching for, purchasing using, evaluating and disposing of products and services that they expect will satisfy their needs”. Linehan (2008, p.2) said that consumer behaviour might be explained as “the study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires”. Consumer behaviour has been also defined as “The study of the processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires.” (Solomon, et al, 2010, pp.6). Another of the many definitions we can find about consumer behaviour is “The dynamic interaction of affect and cognition, behaviour, and environmental events by which human beings conduct the exchange aspects of their lives” (Bennett, 1989). Study of consumer behaviour has shifted from why people purchase to consumption behaviour (Blythe, 2012). One of the important aspects of consumer behaviour is market segmentation, because consumers within the segment are more or less similar in terms of products needs and desire.

Certainly, when observing the people’s consumer behavior, it can be seen how they react towards the private label, how long it takes to decide which one to pick? Whereas others have trends to decide because they are open to try new products from different brands, others prefer to go with the conventional name brands. There are a variety of factors influencing the perception of a brand by consumers such as price, packaging, quality amongst others and within the store brands there are categories; some are more expensive than others, it might be because it has been made with better ingredients, or just because of the packaging. All those aspects, creates hypothesis in customer’s minds, where they analyze products and goods making use of the tools available for them; even watching around them and seen that other people is buying them may cause an impact in their purchase decision that will make them decide towards the private label. The availability of products in the shelves or placing their own brand just beside the name brand may cause that consumers evaluate things before choosing one or another.
2.3.2 Customer Value

According to Schiffman, Lazar and Hansen (2012, pp. 7) customer value can be defined as “the ratio between the customers’ perceived benefits such as economic, functional and psychological and the resources: monetary, time, effort and psychological use to obtain those benefits”. During the last decade, the digital revolution allowed marketers to offer more goods and services and distribute them widely to get a more precisely market. Linehan (2008, p.15) has explained that many companies has grown steadily over the last years by consistently providing total value to their consumers.

In every buying decision a consumer takes, it is involved the same question: is what I am going to receive worth what I have to give up in order to get it? The gain the consumer receives for the benefit is weighed against the cost the consumer must pay to acquire the benefit. The value the individual consumer places on a product or service becomes the customer value for that offering. Considering the fact that every customer has different perceptions about what value may be, a proper message must be conveyed in order to attract consumers to make them analyse the situation and persuade them to obtain the goods a company sells by convincing them of getting the best benefit for the price they have paid.

2.3.3 Consumer Perception

There is one subject where almost all researches agree on and it is that consumers have different perceptions of name brands and private label brands. A 2001 study entitled “Consumer Perceptions of National, Private, and Generic Brands,” by Bellizzi, Krueckeberg, Hamilton, and Martin, explored consumer perceptions through interview surveys. This study found that the most of people surveyed rated name brands higher in almost every category including but not limited to reliability, quality, texture, purity, desirability, freshness, satisfaction, aroma, and taste. Although the name brands received the highest ratings in most categories, store brands are considered as the best value. This study shows that there are perceptions by most consumers that name brands are superior to others but it fails to show which products consumers would purchase. Retailers seek consumers to perceive their private label products as comparable to name brands. The research fails when it comes to let us know what customers would pick when purchasing, the best value deal or the best quality product.
2.4 Purchase attitudes

Burton et al. (1998) defined private brand attitude as “a predisposition to respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner due to product evaluation, purchase evaluations, and/or self-evaluations associated with private label grocery products”. This study adopts this definition and focuses on private label products, which are sold in TESCO stores specifically, rather than the labels sold in the same chain of stores categories. With reference to the definition of private brand attitude, attitudes towards promoted brands can be defined as a predisposition to respond in a favourable or unfavourable manner due to product evaluation, purchase evaluations, and/or self-evaluations associated with promoted brand products.

2.4.1 Purchase attitudes and their antecedents

Attitudes toward money are a complex multidimensional concept and they elicit both positive (e.g., love) and negative (e.g. distrust) feelings from people (Medina, Saegert and Gresham 1996). Previous studies show that money has numerous dimensions along which people might differ. The most common scale used by numerous researchers is the Money attitudes Scale (high internal reliability, few items, and a stable factor structure) of Yamauchi and Templer (1982) (Robert and Jones 2001). Consequently, the scale and concepts are adopted here.

2.4.2 Power-prestige Factor

Yamauchi and Templer (1982) use power-prestige to mean that when people score highly on this dimension, they visualize money as a tool to influence and impress others and a symbol of success. Consumers who wish to pursue prestige and image are eager to seek status through consumption, and thus favour national brand products in the act.

Thaler (1985) established that there were two types of utility associated with consumer purchases. The first type is related to acquisition utility, which represents the economic gain or loss from a purchase transaction done. Acquisition utility equals the utility derived from the purchased good minus the price paid for that good. The second type found is transaction utility, which represents the pleasure or displeasure associated with the financial terms of the deal per se and equals the internal reference price minus the purchase price. Zeithaml and
Graham (1983) indicated that most of the research made about the topic is based on the assumption that internal reference prices are derived from (1) experience with the product or (2) readily accessible information from the environment. With the purchase price held constant, if the internal reference price is largely derived from experience with the product, acquisition utility exerts the greatest influence on total utility. Consumers with strong power-prestige regarding money derive higher acquisition utility from national brands, rather than lower prestige brands (e.g., private label (Richardson et al. 1996a)), because buying and using national brands can signal their comparative degree of social power-prestige. They purchase promoted brands to enhance their self-perception of being smart, for example, reaffirming personal values, increasing shopper prestige, and enhancing social status (Chandon et al. 2000).

2.4.3 Distrust Factor

Distrust is related with the confidence shown in the purchase act and the ability people have to make efficient purchase decisions. Yamauchi and Templer (1982) describe people who score highly on distrust as hesitant, suspicious, and doubtful regarding situations involving money. Roberts and Jones (2001) indicate that a better label for distrust factor may be price sensitivity since the questionnaire items relating to this factor focus on consumer sensitivity to price. Price-conscious consumers are sensitive to price difference between private labels products and brand products and are concerned with obtaining low prices for products (Lichtenstein, Bloch and Black 1988). Hence, they have favourable attitudes toward private label brands. According to the conclusions of Thaler (1985) and Zeithaml and Graham (1983), purchasing private labels enables consumers with strong distrust regarding money to obtain transaction utility, since they can make efficient purchasing decisions, do not complain for the amount of money they are spending, and derive pleasure or satisfaction from it. However, since consumer promotions have been classified based on whether the promotions obtains favourable numbers in terms of lower purchase price (e.g. sales, coupons) versus those that offer no direct price incentive (e.g. free gift, buy-1-get-1-free) (Blattberg and Neslin 1990), consumers with money attitudes regarding distrust don’t necessarily favour promoted brands.
2.4.4 Anxiety Factor

Yamauchi and Templer (1982) defined consumers scoring high on anxiety as those who see money as a source of anxiety and a source of protection from anxiety. Such people show nervousness when they do not have enough money to cover their needs and become worried when it comes to money. However, they also favour compulsive buying (Roberts and Jones 2001). This attitude tell us that anxious consumers would rather buy promoted brands instead of private labels, because purchasing promoted brands can help them satisfy their contradictory needs.

2.4.5 Smart shopper self-perception

Smart shopper self-perception has several ego-related benefits, including a sense of accomplishment, a boost in self-esteem, and pride in shopping savoir faire (Schindler 1988). Smart shoppers perceive a purchase from three separate points of view or dimensions, the value of the goods themselves; the cost relative to the quality the products possess; and the benefits and services offered and provided by the store to augment the product (Wortzel 1987), implying they purchase for utilitarian and hedonic benefits (Holbrook 1994). Big national brand products are rarely offered at low price, which means that those require a considerable effort on the consumer’s part to find a deal (Garretson et al. 2002), creating a sense of accomplishment and pride in shopping savoir faire. Sales promotions therefore can enhance smart shopper self-perceptions (Chandon et al. 2000). On the other hand, retailers typically market store brands as a lower price option. Consistently low price means that less effort is required for locating these brands, and thus causes less smart shopper self-perception (Garretson et al. 2002).

2.5 What is a Brand

According to the Business Dictionary (2015) a brand is a design, word, symbol or the combination of both of these, used to create imagery which normally identifies a product and differentiates it from its competitors; this image has been associated with a variety of factors responsible for generating credibility, satisfaction and making products beings perceived with certain level of quality which positions brands in consumers’ minds either positively or
negatively. Successful brands are those which are focus on coherent mix of marketing resources and consider the brand and asset.

Branding has been used to generate certain perceptions in consumers’ minds. According to Dick et al (1997) consumers’ judge brands considering factors such as quality which is linked ingredients at the same time, taste, and texture but they frequently judge them using indirect factors like price and brand name. Branding helps to create clarity in minds by communicating the source of the offering (Aaker, 1991; 1996), showing the quality of the product, and reducing costs and risks (Davis, 2000; Janiszewski & van Osselaer, 2000; Keller, 1998).

2.5.1 Consumers’ low Involvement with Brands

There are different levels of involvement for almost every product which are differently exhibited by customers. Unfortunately consumers show low levels of attention as well as low interest and limited retention of the brands. Decisions are generally affected by information stored in our memory, rather than by undertaking detailed search activities to get information about those. Heath (2001) suggests that consumers are now expecting well-known brands to be similar, so this way they do not regard brand learning as important aspect. Thus, when it comes to brands those decision will be made intuitively instead of rationally. Low involvement processing is utilised which requires less working memory which means that information can be stored as plain and simple associations with the brand.

2.5.2 Brand Added-Value

Stobart (1994) suggests that a brand gives consumers with the reassurance of quality and consistency. A good brand is easy to remember and it might often have a different price generally higher over its competitors, and at the same time may have high and more significant and reliable volumes. Brand owners can use their brand’s reputation to add value to their goods, products and services increasing their profits. The stronger the ownership the more certain those profits will be. A brand can have a price premium if and when consumers are able to perceive relevant added values. Highlighted

Palmeira and Tomas (2011) highlighted that, in customer’s mind if there are two different brands from the same Company in the same category there must be at least a slight difference
between them. The results of their work show that the quality expectations for premium brands are more elevated when the distributor also trades a cheaper Brand in this case. Earlier studies for name brands tan for private labels revealed that quality perception is higher (Bellizi et al. 1981; Cunningham, Hardy and Imperia, 1982).

2.5.3 Brand Loyalty

This has been defined as “a deeply held commitment to re-buy or re-patronize a preferred product/service consistently in the future, thereby causing repetitive same-brand or same brand set purchasing, despite situational influences and marketing efforts having the potential to cause switching behaviour.” (Oliver 1999, p.34). According to Oliver (1997) there are three key phases in attitudinal loyalty: cognitive, affective, and conative. The first loyalty phase is cognitive, which entails the presence of explicit knowledge about a good/brand. Affective loyalty is the second loyalty phase. This level of loyalty involves consumers’ feelings, moods, and emotional responses towards a product/brand (Oliver 1997). Furthermore, satisfaction has also been a concept which was noted as an essential part of the affective loyalty stage, as pleasurable responses to a good/brand are akin to satisfaction. The last and third phase of loyalty, conative loyalty, includes behavioural intention, and is defined as “an intention or commitment to behave toward a goal in a particular manner” (Oliver 1997, 393). In other words, this stage requires a commitment to a product/brand that leads a consumer to repurchase (Oliver 1997).

2.6 Store brands

The store brands are the only ones where the distributors have exclusive responsibility, from its research and development process, storage, sales, promotions and commercialization. Hence, the success or failure of store brands depends exclusively from distributors. This does not happen with name brands because the responsibility of those goods lies with manufacturers (Dhar and Hoch, 1997). The (PLMA, 2014) Private Label Manufacturer Association has stated that store brands are all merchandise sold under a retailer’s brand. That brand can be the retailer’s own name or a name created exclusively by that retailer. In some cases, a retailer may belong to a wholesale group that owns the brands that are available only for the members of the group.
Store Brands may also be defined as the brands belonging to the distributor which can only be sold in its branches (Kumar and Steenkamp, 2007). Store brands are known in different ways such as own brands, private labels and store brands. For customers, private labels can offer lower prices as well as quality levels that are often not far below those of national brands (Consumer Reports 2009; Pauwels and Srinivasan 2004).

The advantage of choosing store brands over the name ones is based on the fact that they can buy quality food and some other goods or products saving money in comparison with the name brands existing; this purchase can be done without waiting for any promotion. Private labels goods are made with the same or sometimes even better ingredients than the manufacturer brands.

Store brands or Private Label items are produced for different manufacturers; Large and huge manufacturers who elaborate two types their own brands and the store brand products whereas Small and medium size manufacturers that are specialized in a specific category of products, these normally concentrate its efforts in producing Store brands; and Wholesalers, Supermarkets chain and major retailers that have their own plants and can manage to produce its own brand to their own stores.

**2.6.1 Store brand Status and Tendency**

Store brands also known as distributor brands have been a growing force in the retail world in the last 3 decades, offering a wide variety of products in different categories that goes from tooth paste to toilet tissues. The majority of big supermarkets and discount stores have their own store brands and they are usually offered for 20 to 35 percent less than brand names. Because there are no marketing costs and lower supply costs for store brands, they can be sold at lower prices than name brands (Baltas, 1997).

Own Brands have reached more than half of all goods sold in Switzerland (53%) and Spain (51%). Those two countries showed market share gains in volume and value. In other countries United Kingdom (45%), Portugal (45%), Germany (44%), Belgium (41%) and Austria (40%) private label now accounts for at least four of every ten products sold. Market share for retailer brands also posted gains in Denmark, Norway, Hungary, Turkey and Italy (Private Label Manufacturer Association, 2014).
The study shows that store label plays a key role in the lives of customers across Europe. Forty-six percent (46%) purchase those products very often. According to some studies conducted, one in four believe that they will buy a larger amount of own brands than currently. Even when the economy gets better, consumers say that they will stick with private label: eight in ten said that after the economy improves they would not stop purchasing own brands (Private Label Manufacturer Association, 2014).

In 2010 store brand overall sales were around $100 billion. Store brands have become a large part of retail and many studies have been conducted on the subject. These studies have focused on many different aspects of store brands from the consumer, retailer and distributors points of view.
2.6.2 Legal Aspects of Brand Imitations

The Legal Information Institute defines a trademark as any word, name, symbol, design, or combination thereof used in commerce to identify and distinguish the goods of one manufacturer or seller from those of another and to indicate the source of the goods. The term “trade dress” refers to characteristics of the visual features of a product or its packaging (e.g., color, graphic design, texture, shape) that signify the source of products to consumers (Merges, Menell, and Lemley 2007, pp. 29). Unlike a trademark, trade dress does not require formal registration and is protected by law if it can be shown that it is distinct and recognizable.

An important aspect in brand imitation cases is initial interest confusion. In contrast to brand confusion, which refers to incorrect attributions about the association of the imitating brand, initial interest confusion implies that brand similarity may lead buyers to consider brands that they may not have otherwise considered because similarity may cause potential buyers to be attracted, distracted, interested, or diverted. Remember this section should be peppered with literature researchers (Anocha, Neeraj, Ty and Kim, 2014, p.660).
2.6.3 What Kind of People Buy Store Brands

Many years ago when store brands also known as private labels (PL) appeared in the scene and begun to become popular and being recognized amongst name brands, a lot of research and studies started to be oriented in all the aspects involved in this by then phenomenon; plenty of those studies were focused in profiling the type of people who bought these goods. These studies explained the demographics and the behavioural characteristics of the consumers that are buying store brands and generic products. Demographics are considered to be nowadays essential pieces of information when marketing a product. Knowing who is buying what is of a great importance for manufacturers and retailers so they can make their products more attractive and appealing for customers; both sides find store brands studies useful when it comes to private labels and brand names.

Initial researches of store brands and generics goods centre attention on demographics. Many of those studies found distinctive patterns that store brand consumers were more likely to have than non-store brand purchasers. Granzin (1981) said that Foregoing research usually agreed that private label buyers tend to be married, shopping for a big household, normally well and higher educated, and assuming a higher grocery bill; the research differed on aspects like age and income. Granzin (1981) also mentioned that the savings of acquiring store brands would definitely appeal more to lower income and younger consumers who have the necessity to stay within their budgets.

Further studies focused on the behavioral characteristics of store brand consumers. Those researches aimed to detail why private label and generic goods buyers behave the way they do. Within the findings made, it was highlighted that PL result to be more attractive to consumers who are open to new products and those who are willing to take the chance by buying store brands to obtain savings maintaining in many of the cases quality and taste. The hypothesis that changing for a store brand product carries the risk of being unsatisfied which lead some consumers to keep buying brand names to avoid this. Corstjen and Lal (2000) highlighted that when people get satisfied with any good bought before their willingness to switch to a new finds no purpose for it. As a consequence of this consumers build a loyalty link with certain products and brands which means they are going to be buying those frequently; it is in this scenario where private labels fights their battle against brands names. Martos-Partal and Gonzalez-Benito (2011) found in their study an interesting aspect
that has come up which is that consumers are more prone to purchases store brands during economic downs but even when everything has gone back to normality they keep acquiring those; this means the phenomenon mentioned above where customers when finding satisfaction in a products stay with those applies for both, PL and Brand names. There are some specifics characteristics in consumer behavior that make people more prone to buy store brands without putting aside the factor that may them feel unsatisfied when doing so. These factors have not passed unobserved for researchers, manufacturers and retailers who have gone deeper by researching and studying more about those.

It was revealed in others researches related to this topic that quality-price trade off plays a huge role in consumers behavior. This key factor it has been considered amongst the expert of this area and all the studies in this field as a ratio. It has been stated that if the product possesses a favorable price-to-quality ratio it then will be perceived as a bargain by consumers which make them more likely to buy it. Consumers are always looking forward to obtain the best quality-price value. When it comes to private labels (PL), price and quality have been one of the major concerns for obvious reasons. This definitely is a factor determining the acquisition of the generic goods by consumers because people in general pretend to obtain the best quality for the money they have to pay.

2.6.4 Increasing Store Brand Quality

In recent years, store brands quality has been a major concern for retailers and manufacturers who have climbed levels in order to offer better products. The necessity of increasing the value of the private label is higher every day. This explains the accelerated growth experienced by store brands in the last years. In today’s world, store brands are equal and sometimes even better than brand name goods when it comes to quality and taste. This was not the case a decade ago. In 1981, Granzin presented in his research how generic and own brands, were more often than not poor quality goods. Retailers have stepped up their game to offer better quality store brand goods and in turn better value to their customers which is something they definitely they appreciate.
2.6.5 Store Brand Price Perception

People’s intention gets strongly influenced by costs (Grunert, K.G., Bredahl, L. and Brunso, K. 2004). There is also a significant connection between price and consumers’ purpose towards private label product purchase (Munusamy, J. and Wong, C.H. 2008). Hence, most of consumers will decide by choosing low price product (Boutsouki, C., Zotos, Y. and Masouti, Z. 2008). Price sensitiveness for some customers is decisive as mentioned before; there are occasions almost exclusively in paying lower prices than in the quality itself (Martínez and Montaner, 2008). Price it is a key differentiator factor between name Brand and private labels in customer’s minds (Nanycz-Thiel y Romaniuk, 2009) and it result as a consequence to be a determinant aspect when choosing this brands (Store Brands). On the other hand, products categories with more affordable prices are the ones who reached deeply the population (Batra y Sinha, 2000; Hoch, 1996).

Monroe in 1973 researched reference pricing. This may be used as a reference point when evaluating brand quality if other information is not around or when consumer considers that there might be differences in quality between different brands (Monroe, 1976). Normally the price means quality. Research made on consumer products with high purchase frequency, have shown that the price is almost a quality indicator sometimes more than the brand (Rao et Manroe, 1989). Laaksonen (1994) stated that prices become less important in the when it comes to private labels products. Store brands have been used as an alternative to acquire good quality products but at lower prices than manufacturers’ brands (Veloutsou, Gioulistanis and Moutinho, 2004). Some others studies have also shown that consumers do not buy private labels just because they are cheaper; the price is what it matter the most for a retailer. If the difference in the prices between store brands and name brands is too small people normally decide to buy name brands. Winer, R. S., 1986, said once lower prices as a strategy may generate confusion in consumers’ mind and have a negative effect on brand image. Despite all this aspects price awareness and consciousness is something that never leaves customers’ mind.

2.6.6 Store Brand Packaging

Packaging is definitely an important factor considered by customers which influences consumers purchase intention. Consumers often judge products by looking its appearance but they also take into account the information provided on the packaging. Packaging conveys
product’s imagery and its positioning and in some cases company’s image. Product packaging is an important asset to attract consumers attention is a wild range of competitive products (Underwood et Al. 2001). Ampuero and villa, 2006, agreed with this, in seeing that packaging is what first attract consumer but that also pretends to inform about the quality and benefits the goods. It has also been suggested that packaging remains in customers’ mind and that becomes an asset for private labels as well just like it happens with name brands. Meyer and Gertsman in 2005 sympathize with this fact and mention that store brands are continuously improving their packaging as an action to reduce the difference between them and manufacturer brands. The following authors have determined that packaging is a source of differentiation for brands. Dick et al. in 1995 stated that store brands may offer lower prices because they invest lower amount of money manufacturing them which includes using cheaper packaging whereas Halstead and Ward, 1995, mentioned in their study that packaging strategy is a key aspect to be able to compete properly with name brands.

2.6.7 Shelf Space Allocation

Shelf space it is something that definitely an influence and help product to be sold, goods displaying it is one of the most important resources in retail environment. Retailers will not only see their profit increase but also decrease their costs by properly using the space available which supposes a better management of shelf space allocation and products displa; special offers and half price strategies may are normally use to achieve those goals.
It is assumed that the level of shelf on which the product is displayed has a significant effect on sales. Amrouche and Zaccour (2006) described shelf space as “one of the retailer’s most important assets”. This is a key resource which is limited; thus allocations may have a key strategic role. Allocations to store brands have been known to be as sizable as twice that apportioned to manufacturer brands (Nogales and Gomez, 2005). Suarez (2005) also noted that retailers intentionally allocate their own brands to a more advantageous position on the shelves; this strategy seeks to place their store brands to the right of the manufacturer brands they are competing against. This has its explanation in the fact that almost a 90% of the population are right handed and are thus theoretically speaking they will be more likely to reach for the private label alternatives. According to Hwang et al. (2004) the level on which the product is displayed might have a strong and significant effect when it comes to sales. For instance, a product which is purposely located at eye-level will go within the average consumer’s line of vision, ringing their attention, and hence increasing the probabilities of the product being picked up.
Tesco was founded in 1919 by Jack Cohen from a market stall in London’s East End. Over the years our business has grown and we now operate in 12 countries around the world, employ over 530,000 people and serve tens of millions of customers every week. We have always been committed to providing the best shopping experience. Today we continue to focus on doing the right thing for our customers, colleagues and the communities we serve (Tesco PLC, 2014). http://www.tescopl.com/index.asp?pageid=11

Tesco is a company that has ventured in different business categories such as Tesco Internet retailing, Tesco Bank, Tesco Mobile and Tesco Petrol Stations amongst many others sectors. They have also their own brands which offers quality products and goods to customers in an attempt to compete fiercely with name brands seeking to create awareness about their brand an enhancing the perception customers already have in relation to the brand.

2.7 TESCO (multinational grocery and general merchandise retailer)

TESCO and its own brand goods is the company chosen to study the consumer behaviour and the perception towards their products.

Figure 4 TESCO own brand Products
Tesco entered Ireland in 1997 with the acquisition of Associated British Foods’ Irish retail operations, also known as the Quinnsworth and Crazy Prices retail chains. Their business has grown and they have become the leading grocery retailer with 146 stores across the country. Tesco Ireland is committed to buying local and supporting Irish suppliers. Over 11,000 Irish farm families have become in supplier of their products for Tesco, and every single drop of their fresh, non-organic milk comes from Irish farms; also 100 % of their fresh beef, lamb and pork come from Irish farmers.

2.7.1 Tesco Brands

Tesco possess a variety of brands which offer better deals for consumer in almost all the categories. They have understood the importance of offering a quality product to their customers to a lower price; therefore, they have come up with eight different brands within the Tesco brand itself. They compete fiercely with their brands against the name brands. According to Tesco PLC (2015) 2The Tesco Brand is the heart of our range. It offers an amazing choice at great Tesco Prices, with the seal of Tesco quality you know you can trust for you and your family. Our own brand products range from beans to bread, milk to eggs and ready meals to cereal, providing all you need and more across the store.” Here are the own brands Tesco possess in their different categories and sectors:

- Tesco Everyday Value,
- Tesco Finest,
- Tesco Healthy Living,
- Tesco Light Choices,
- Tesco Free From,
- Tesco Organics,
- Tesco Wholefoods and Kids.
Figure 5 TESCO own Range Brands
3. Methodology

3.1 Methodology Introduction

Marczyk (2005) defined research as a process carried out to answer and acquire knowledge about a topic. According to Collins and Hussey (2003), any research has to be organized thoroughly to be conducted in an efficient manner. Saunders et al. (2007) consider the formulation and clarification of the research topic area the starting point of the project; before defining research questions and objectives.

The aim of this thesis is to analyse and investigate how brands are actually perceived by private label and manufacturer brands buyers and what influence their purchase behaviour to face to a large choice of products. This will help to identify new strategies for the grocery market actors.

In this chapter it will be given a detailed explanation of the research philosophy that is going to be used to conduct this investigation. So far there have been described and analyzed the actual situation of the store brands globally speaking and we have also defined briefly some other topics linked with this research such as consumer behavior, customer value, Tesco as a brand and its variety of own brands which offers a range of products for different audiences.

In this project will be discussed the approach taken in order to answer the research questions. According to Saunders et al (2012) methodology is a review that provides amalgamation of existing knowledge on the research questions based on assessments of all relevant data that can be found. But Paivi and Anne, (2008) stated that research question represents breakdown of problems in the research to achieve an end result.

The methodology looks at the various methods adopted to complete the dissertation. The research philosophy used for the study is positivism. Deductive method of research approach is utilized which justifies the use of quantitative mono method. Questionnaires have been circulated following the survey method. Therefore, each layer of the research onion framework is explained throughout this chapter, followed by considerations about the research sample, limitations, ethics and personal biases, discussing the paradigm and approach chosen in each case.
This research aims to explore attitudes towards store brands focused to TESCO STORES among customers and for this purpose the following research questions were considered necessary.

3.1.2 Research question

Kerlinger and Lee (2000) expressed that a statement of problem is merely important for any investigation, because without it, it is very hard for the researcher to go further and hence, a successful work may not be completed. For this thesis the definition on the problem states as follows.

“How perceptions determine attitudes towards store brands, specifically TESCO own brands?”

3.1.3 Sub-questions

- Are TESCO own brands considered a replacement for name brands?
- Has the cost and the quality of Private Label over normal brands caused more people to buy Store Brands?
- Are people buying those goods because of the added value or just because they are cheaper?

3.1.4 Objectives

In order to answer the research questions effectively it is critical to define the research Objective. (Saunders et al, 2009).

3.1.4.1 Main objective
- To explore the attitudes towards Tesco Own Brands among customers.

3.1.4.2 Sub-objectives
- To identify attitudes and behavior and the connection between these two variables.
To analyze consumer attitudes towards store brands as a possible substitute for name brands.

To evaluate if the economic crisis lead customers to buy store brands.

To evaluate if Tesco brands are perceived as lower quality products.

In the first section of this chapter, which is the research design, it will be determined, a general plan for this research and the way it will go when answering the research questions. Hence, it will be discussed and explained how the data collection process will take place and why these methods chosen will be used as a research strategy to collect primary data. Moreover, the data analysis procedures are shown and the usage of proper approaches, instruments and elements required for conducting this kind of study are listed below. Finally limitations of this research will be examined.

To sum up, methodology is defined by Saunders et al, (2009) as the way the knowledge is gained, how theories come up and are generated and tested, as well as the relationship between theoretical perspectives and research problem. It refers to framework which is going to be followed within the research conducted. There are many manners by which the researcher can carry out their research. In terms of reliability of the study, validity and credibility, the research must use the Research Onion framework by (Saunders et al, 2012, pp.128) which will help us along the methodology to define the area of the research method.
3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Research Philosophy

It is essential to get a better understanding about the perceptions and assumptions researchers may have regarding to the chosen investigation topic as well as the research methodology, because those mentioned before may influence the way in which the research is going to be undertaken (Flowers, 2009). This topic was also defined as “Research philosophy is an overarching term relating to the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge” (Saunders et al, 2009). According to Saunders et al (2009), the research philosophy you adopt contains important assumptions about the way in which you view the world. There are 10 different philosophies to choose from (Saunders et al, 2009): positivism, realism, interpretivism, objectivism, subjectivism, pragmatism, functionalist, interpretive, radical humanist, and radical structuralism.

The method used for this study is going to be the objectivism approach to social science where positivism is going be an important concept to be applied; this theory is characterized by believing in independent causes that lead to observable effects and hypotheses that are
tested based on the observed effects (Holden and Lynch, 2004). According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009), there are ten different philosophies that can be adopted by researchers, and for this actual research and its conduction, the positivism approach will be the one adopted by the researcher for being the most suitable and this is because the only way to produce and collect a reliable data is through the fact of observing; therefore, and according to Bryman and Bell (2011) human behavior plays as a significant key within this approach and this is due to the possibilities of gather information that in some cases does not necessarily coincide with the pre-existing principles or even theories. Positivism as a philosophy adheres to the view that only “factual” knowledge gained through observation, including measurement, is trustworthy. In positivism researcher’s role is limited to data collection, comprehension and interpretation through an objective approach where research findings are normally observable and quantifiable. Realism is also a different approach that fits within this investigation and besides it complements itself with the positivism philosophy. Philosophic realism in general is defined by Saunders et al., 2012, “Realism is a branch of epistemology which is similar to positivism in that it assumes scientific approach to the development of the project”.

The principle of positivism says that it depends on quantifiable observations that lead themselves to statistical analysis. It has been noted that “as a philosophy, positivism is in accordance with the empiricist view that knowledge stems from human experience. It has an atomistic, ontological view of the world as comprising discrete, observable elements and events that interact in an observable, determined and regular manner” (Collins, 2011).

### 3.2.2 Research Approach

There are two types of approaches such as deductive and inductive; deductive reasoning, or deduction, starts out with a general statement, or hypothesis, and examines the possibilities to reach a specific, logical conclusion. The scientific method uses deduction to test hypotheses and theories. In deductive reasoning, if something is true of a class of things in general; it is also true for all members of that class. The deductive approach allows the researcher to establish a hypothesis by using theory (Saunders et al., 2009) whereas inductive research involves condensing the data by applying categories and themes based on inference and interpretation (Zhang and Wildemuth, 2009).
The research approach that it will be applied to carry out this study is going to be deductive as it is intended to draw conclusions from observations after an in-depth and from observed attitudes from consumers towards Tesco own brands. As mentioned before the chosen approach is the most suitable because it provides a better way to approach the research objectives of this investigation, and therefore an answer for the investigation’s research question. The following quote mentions “As such, it is the dominant research approach in the natural sciences, where laws present the basis explanation, allow the anticipation of phenomena, predict their occurrence and therefore permit them to be controlled” (Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill, 2009, p. 124). The first step to be taken will be to start with the observation and measure of learned behaviors and personality factors like needs, interests, knowledge, experiences, expectations, and motivations of Tesco’s customers, beginning by intending to detect patterns and attitudes that will lead the way to be able to formulate some tentative hypotheses to explore deeply consumer’s perception, and finally ends up developing general conclusions.

### 3.2.3 Research Strategy

“A research strategy may be thought of as providing the overall direction of the research including the process by which the research is conducted.”

Remenyi, et al. (2005; p. 44). According to Remenyi et al, (2005,), at a strategy level, the research process is defined in broad terms that may take into account the general philosophical approach adopted by the researcher. Once a strategy has been decided, some considerations can be given to the specific research methods or tactics that will be employed.

Furthermore, the research strategy is determined by four key issues: research question, cost or budget available for the research, the time available for the research and the skills of the researcher. Remenyi et al, (2005). Additionally it is also highlighted that the research question is the main element of the research; it directs the type of strategy required for the research and do not leave much room for flexibility.

Different research strategies have also been suggested by Saunders, et al (2009):

- Action research: brings together theory and practice in the pursuit of finding Solutions by allowing the research to work along with participants
Archival research: extracts evidence from original archival records
Case study: examines cases for in-depth descriptive analysis
Ethnology: explores cultural phenomena
Experimental research: helps establish the existence of a cause-effect relationship
Grounded theory: generates theory through the analysis of data
Survey: collects quantitative information

The research strategy that best suits this investigation is survey; the conclusion will be based on quantitative data obtained from the questionnaires designed and qualitative data collected from the interviews, supported by secondary data acquired from the literature review. “A research technique in which information is gathered from a sample of people by use of a questionnaire or interview; a method of data collection based on communication with a representative sample of individuals. Surveys provide an efficient, and inexpensive and accurate means of assessing information about the population” (Zikmund, 2003, p. 175).

Furthermore, Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2008) also stated that surveys are normally a powerful tool if the researcher is attempting to collect primary data and due to this there are a huge variety of information that the researcher can gather by the simple fact of questioning others. Due to all those aspects mentioned before, the surveys that were used for this investigation were printed questionnaires provided personally to TESCO customers in Rathmines, Dublin 6, Dublin, Ireland, on Friday 6th of March of this current year. The main purpose of this was to obtain valuable information about some certain aspects involving attitudes towards store brands in general and TESCO own brands to help us evaluate the attitudes and perceptions people might have regarding this phenomenon which is taking a considerable percentage of the market globally speaking.

Questionnaires are a very useful tool which is mainly used to collect data by asking people how they feel regarding a specific topic; when it comes to investigation purposes questionnaires are well known for allowing researchers to gather valuable information from big groups of people at a very low cost (Cameron and Price, 2009).

3.2.4 Research Choice

The main research options where the study can choose from are: qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative research relies mainly on statistical relationships whilst the qualitative research
gives the opportunity to identify patterns, features and themes within a small group; reason why it has been determined that qualitative research is more suitable for this study as this research type makes it possible to get very specific, detailed, and valuable information. According to Yin (2003), carrying out qualitative research is a good way to obtain a deep understanding of the research problem.

Depending on the research choice, there are three main research methods (Creswell and Plano Clark, 2007): mono-method, multi methods, and mixed methods; mono-method is based on either one qualitative or quantitative research; multi methods are planted on multiple but separate qualitative or quantitative researches whilst mixed methods allow the integration of qualitative and quantitative research.

The present investigation will employ and apply both, qualitative and quantitative which is going to complement each other helping the researcher to answer properly the research questions.

3.2.5 Time Horizon

According to Saunders et al. (2009), there are two types of horizons: longitudinal and cross-sectional. Kimberly (1980) compares cross-sectional research to still photography and longitudinal research to motion picture photography. Like motion picture photography, longitudinal research presents a “dynamic view of the interrelationships among the components. By watching a motion picture, one can tell how relationships have changed over time and perhaps be in a better position to predict how they will change in the future (Kimberly, 1980). Cross-sectional research on the other hand, is just like a still photography “enables one to describe and perhaps measure the relationships among the components of the setting at that point in time” (Kimberly, 1980).

As the main primary purpose of this dissertation is to obtain the MBA degree which has a time limit already established, the time horizon to be used has to be cross-sectional because is the only choice that suits the parameter that has been set in advanced in terms of time.
3.2.6 Research Ethics

According to Blumberg, Cooper and Schindler (2008) ethical issues are involved in every single type of investigation and all parties taking part in this process should be able to have an ethical behaviour as it is shown in any other aspect related to the business field. Ethics are a very important aspect when it comes to investigations and research. There are several reasons why it is important to adhere to ethical norms whilst a study is being carried out. First, norms promote the aims of research, such as knowledge, truth, and avoidance of error and second, since research often involves a great deal of cooperation and coordination among many different people in different disciplines and institutions, ethical standards promote the values that are essential to collaborative work, such as trust, accountability, mutual respect, and fairness.

In the research that is taking place for this dissertation project, there have been found some ethical issues that must be considered whilst doing it, some of them are:

- Plagiarism
- Fabrication and falsification
- Faulty data-gathering procedures
- Poor data storage and retention

All of them are very important, but Plagiarism is the most checked it out when any investigation or study is being judged or correct it.

Some of the tips and considerations that might be taken to avoid those above and handle correctly the use or non-use of information and techniques are listed below:

- Thoroughly referencing other’s people work.
- Protecting the confidential communications with the team that is being studied.
- Explaining correctly the subjects under study and being thorough with procedures to avoid errors.
- Making public the data collected for verification purpose.
- Honestly report data, results, methods and procedures, and publication status.
The researcher will use sampling as the process where the researcher randomly selects elements within the population that later on will lead to draw conclusion about the research question. Sampling techniques are relevant in the research work where it is not possible to survey the entire population due to time constraints or limited resources (Bryman and Bell, 2007, p.182). Sampling is the selection of a relatively small number of individuals from whom the research obtains data in order to be able to generalise about a large group. (Gray, et al, 2007). The most important question in relation to population sampling is ‘what size of sample does the researcher need?’ The answer is influenced by various factors (Saunders et al. 2009, 212).

- Budget Constraints.
- Impractical to survey entire population.
- Resource Constraints.
- Time Constraints.

The present dissertation project will use a specific population that correspond to consumers of Tesco Stores Supermarkets in Dublin, Ireland; initially it has been considered to take 104 random people who buys in Tesco Stores. Those people do not have to be regular customers, they just need to participate actively in the purchase decision when it comes to make comparisons and decide between brands.

Data collection is an important part of the research and it can be classified into two types, namely primary data and secondary data. (Saunders et al., 2009). The dissertation has used both methods primary and secondary data collection to obtain the data that will be used to develop this research.

3.3.1 Secondary Data

According to Cooper and Schindler, (2008), secondary data sources are interpretations of primary data. Encyclopaedias, textbooks, handbooks, magazines and newspaper articles, and most newscasts are considered secondary information sources. Annual reports, sales analysis summaries of organisations are some other sources of secondary data. (Cooper and Schindler,
Saunders 2012 also stated that secondary data information already exists in the form of publications, books and electronic media. The secondary data collected was reviewed, critically analysed and presented in chapter 3. This type of information helps the researcher to improve and enhance the ideas and at the same time refine them. Moreover, the theories and arguments were consistent with the purpose of the study we have carried out, giving the chance to acquire a critical analysis of the literature which seeks to answer the research questions.

However, limitations are also associated with secondary data, e.g. the researcher may find it difficult to use the secondary data directly in his research, because it may be out-of-date or may have been taken for some other purposes. (Zikmund, 2003, pp. 63).

![Figure 7 Data Collection (Saunders et al, 2012)]

### 3.3.2 Primary Data

According to Zikmund (2003), primary data refers to those data that are gathered and assembled specifically for the research project at hand. (Zikmund, 2003, pp. 740). Several methods can be used for collection of primary data. It can be done either through questionnaires, observation, conducting interviews, or through memos and letters. A survey is defined as a method of gathering primary data based on communication with a representative sample of individuals. (Zikmund, 2003, pp. 742).
The primary data collection method used for this dissertation study will be exploratory. Observation and questionnaires (surveys) will be used to gather the information required in order to give answer to the question proposed and the objectives that were explained early in the chapter. The survey will be applied randomly to customers who visit “Tesco Stores” in Rathmines Dublin6, Dublin, Ireland which was the store chosen to conduct the study.

3.3.3 Data Analysis Procedures

The analysis of the data collected will contemplate by definitions; synthesis, analysis and processing, mathematically, statistics or logic.

According to this, the requirements of analysis and synthesis correspond to (Chourio, 1987):

- Separate the basics aspects and to subject reflection.
- Summarize the basic information in charts, graphs or data relationships.
- Merge the results obtained to others knowledge of the problem posed in the theoretical and conceptual framework.
- Submit a reflection on already structured information and make a sketch general of conclusions reached.
- Clarify to what extent the hypotheses or expected results of a design can be considered confirmed or disapproved.
- Adjust the model or design, fix it or replace it.
- Exhibit favourable aspects found through the process, and the difficulties encountered. Make suggestions about the work. Look for gaps or errors in the theory and / or empirical procedures, if the model or design has been disapproved. If it has been confirmed, a review of possible extensions and consequences in other areas.

The data analysis for this research will be made following the aspects listed below:

- Decision making regarding the analysis performed (statistical tests).
- Execution of statistical calculations.
- Obtaining the analysis
**Inferential statistics:** Intent to generalize the results obtained in a sample the entire universe. Inferential statistics inferred parameters (statistical universe) from statisticians (statistical results from the data of a sample). Inferential statistics can be used for two procedures: testing hypotheses and estimating parameters. And the validity of the tool used.

Once the data is being analysed it will proceed to interpret these results to obtain knowledge in base to these. The analysis and interpretation of the data obtained will be realized in function of achieving the objectives proposed in this dissertation project. This analysis will be based in the study in detail of trends, comparisons, discovering and identifying variables of importance for measurement of the consumer behaviour towards private labels in this specific case TESCO STORES.

Although initially has been said that both qualitative and quantitative approaches will be used to examine values, attitudes, perceptions and behaviour towards TESCO own brands, the main approach that will be using this dissertation project will be quantitative because it will collect and analyse numerical data provided by questionnaires that afterwards will be utilise to make a statistical analysis.

### 3.4 Limitations of Methodology

Despite the comprehensiveness of this survey and the use of a representative sample, there are some important limitations for the methodology that may impact or influence the application or interpretation of the results for this study. It can be said that the main limitation in this case that could arise through this research is the lack of honesty in the answers given by the people (TESCO’s customers) when it comes to respond the questionnaires, this would produce false results and the objective of the research would be lost. To try to avoid this scenario the questionnaire that will be employed must be brief, the question have to be easy to understand and most of them should be yes and no questions to make consumers feel comfortable and evade that wasting time feeling that a long questionnaire might cause on them. Also the consumers will be informed briefly before giving them the survey about the necessity of the reliability of the answers to be able to make a proper analysis of the results to achieve the objectives proposed for this investigation.
Another possible setback that may interfere to overcome the methodology choose for this research is the lack of statistical knowledge to carry out the analysis of the results, to avoid possible errors in the statistical calculation and graphics a thorough literature review will take place to succeed responding the research question.

4 Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter will be presented the results obtained from the questionnaire’s participants which was the tool used in order to get the data that will respond to the research problem. As a result of a survey applied to 103 people who were shopping at TESCO store in Rathmines, Dublin 6 the collected data, was consequently studied and analysed to determine if the objectives proposed at the beginning were answered; all these was made by following the methodology outlined in Chapter 3. The significance of the findings obtained will be discussed, within the context of the relevant literature and in relation to the research problem which mainly include the perception and attitudes of TESCO own brands.

A copy of questionnaire applied has been presented in the appendix.

4.2 Questionnaire of the Research

As explained previously in Chapter 3, the data collection was made applying a questionnaire which was composed by 15 questions that were stated with the intention to obtain the attitudes and perceptions customers in general have about TESCO own brands. Additionally, a demographic section had place with 4 questions: gender, age, occupation and Monthly income which helped us to identify the different participants in sections. All these elements provide the pertinent information on the investigation’s research questions with the purpose of describing people perceive and what are their attitudes towards TESCO own brands.

4.3 Demographic Segment

4.3.1 Gender

The results obtained from the survey applied regarding to the gender question are shown in the table 1 which is displayed below. This table shows that the majority of participants were females with (50.97%) whereas the male participating percentage was (49.03%). It worth mention that all the people who cooperated in this study were randomly chosen as was
explained before. It has to be mentioned that because of the software used in the table it appears 50% for each but as it was written before there is a minimal difference.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>49.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1 Gender**

**4.3.2 Age**

The results recovered from the survey concerning the age of the participants is shown in table 2 and it reflects that most of the respondents are within the group of 25-34 years of age, with 51 participants (49%), followed by the 18-24 and 35-44 groups of ages with 15 people (14%), respectively, then the group of 55-64 years with 8 people (8%), then the 45-54 group of age with 7 (7%) of individuals in this category, and lastly the 65+ and under 18 categories which held 4 people (4%) each one of them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>18-24</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>65+</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Under 18</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 2 Age**

**4.3.3 Occupation Segment**

In the occupation segment used in the survey the information retrieved is shown in the table 3. This table indicates that majority of the people who participated in the survey were employees with 55 (53%), followed by the student category which has 34 individuals a (33%) of sample used; then the unemployed division had 8 people which represents a (8%), the penultimate group was retired person with 6 participants (6%) and at last the executive category which had only 1 person which is (1%) of the sample.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Executive</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Employee</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Retired Person</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Student</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Unemployed</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3 Occupation

4.3.4 Monthly Average Income Segment

The monthly average income question placed in the survey sought to give numbers to the purchase power of the participants and at the same time see how their incomes were related to their answers when it comes to the perceptions they have about TESCO own brands. The figure 8 presents the category of 1000-2000 was the highest with 43 (41.35%) individuals, followed by the group of people with less than 1000 euro of income monthly which was 40 (38.46%), then the 2000-3000 section had 18 (17.31%) participants; the 3000-4000 group showed 2 people (1.92%), the next classification was 4000-5000 with only 1 person (1%) and lastly the more than 5000 euro division did not get any response. The table 4 presents the same results but in terms of the response count.
In this part, all the data gathered from the survey applied is analysed and explained thoroughly. This survey had been conducted to have a better understanding of consumer’s attitudes and perceptions of Own Brands, specifically TESCO own brands. This analysis will reveal how consumers choose their products and how they act according to the perception they have about the brand which is subject of this study.

### 4.4.1 How often do you to buy in TESCO STORES?

The figure 9 indicates that most of the people surveyed with a (38.46%) go to buy to shop in TESCO once a week, followed for a (36.54%) of the respondent who go to the store twice a week; then there is (12.50%) of the people that attends to the shop daily, next to last are people who buy monthly with (11.54%) and the last category is people who never go hopping which is (0.96%). It worth mention that Quelch and Harding, 1996 stated that own brands are a good method to attract clients to retailer stores by offering unique goods and products, Anselmsson and Johansson 2007 mentioned that the more own brand label clients acquire, the more loyal they become to the shop. The table 5 also presents the results in terms of count. So either way can be appreciated the tendency obtained with the use of the survey and the information acquired.
4.4.2 How many TESCO own brand products on average do you buy every time you go shopping?

In correspondence with the information collected there is an important amount of people who buys certain quantity of TESCO own products. The figure 10 exhibit the percentages of people on each one of the categories measured in the survey. The majority of that people (51.92%) buy more than 7 TESCO own brand products every time they go to shop, followed by the (24.04%) of the participants who have explained they buy between 3 to 5 TESCO private label when they go to the store; then the section of 5-7 TESCO own brand products
bought per purchase obtained (18.27%) and finally the division of 1-2 TESCO products collected (5.77%). Even though when the (51.92%) of the surveyed participants buy more than 7 TESCO own products during their shopping, at least more than half of them are not loyal to just this retailer. Customers do not perceive any difference between private label or store brands from different retailer (Richardson, 1997). For people this type of products are the same regardless the brand they carry, this is why retailers must offer name brands in order to satisfy the customer’s expectation and distinguish themselves amongst other retailers, job that TESCO has done very well. However, Own brands have come to stay and they have claimed their place in the shelves that can be appreciate for the quantity of people who buy them as a good substitute for name brands, that will be explored a bit further. As it has been noted above the table 6 also reveals those numbers shown in the figure and discussed in this section.

Figure 10 TESCO own brands bought when shopping
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1-2 products</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>3-5 products</td>
<td></td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>5-7 products</td>
<td></td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7+ products</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>104</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6 TESCO products bought on average when shopping

### 4.4.3 What is the first word that comes to your mind when talking about TESCO own brand products?

In this division is indicated what were the first word that came to mind to all the people surveyed. So, this way it can be measure the type of perception participants have towards TESCO own brand. As it can be appreciated in the table 7 there are a big variety of words used by the customers to define TESCO own brands. Many of the words the consumers came up with are similar amongst them reason the researcher will try to sum up the categories. The majority 26 people (27.04%) had different things to say about the TESCO own brands such as, Food, pizza, beers cheese, everyday value amongst others, followed by 21 people which represents (21.84%) who came up with words like: Availability, diversity, value, convenience and tidiness, then 15 (15.6%) of the participants thought TESCO products are cheap whilst 12 others (12.48%) when asked for the first word to come to mind they mentioned prices, followed by 20 people divided in 10 in each category for individuals who came up with variety (10.4%) and Promotions or special offers (10.4%), next to last 9 people surveyed (9.36%) talked about quality; amazingly only one person 1 (1.04%) said that his/her perception was that those brands are low quality.
What is the first word that comes to mind when talking about TESCO / own brands?

| variety, | variety, | CHEAP, | variety, | great products, |
| food, | fruits, | reduced, | convenience, | good stuff, |
| Cheap, | convenience, | promotions, | quality, | tidy, |
| Pizza, | variety, | competitiveness, | ice cream, | diversity, |
| cheap stuff, | Price, | Cheap, | affordable, | value, |
| Cheap, | Blue, | variety, | cheap, | special offers, |
| Quality and price, | food, | value, | low prices, | availability, |
| Okay, | everyday value, | deals, | great offers, | cheap, |
| rice, | Low price, | promotions, | special offers, | convenience, |
| Food, | cheap, | availability, | beers, | special offers, |
| deals, | Cheap, | food, | every little helps, | food, |
| quality, | less price, | convenience, | salad, | convenience, |
| cheap, | accessible, | price, | variety, | cheap, |
| hummus, | Quality, | cheap, | special offers, | cheap, |
| Cheap, | Quality, | value, | variety, | price, |
| cheese, | Every little helps, | own brands, | food, | good values, |
| price, | Quality, | accessible, | variety, | cheap, |
| tostitos, | shops, | variety, | quality, | variety |
| Own brands, | Food, | value, | great value, | quality |
| Plastic, | price, | food, | Low quality, | quality |
| price, | Low prices, | price, | promotions, |

Table 7 First word thought about TESCO products

4.4.4 Do you perceive TESCO own brands as low quality products?

According to the data gathered and analysed there is a general good perception of the TESCO private brands. It worth mention that even when Store brands evolve in terms of imagery, packaging and quality, consumers will prefer to perceive them only as an opportunity to take advantage and get a good value for money (Laaksonen and Reynolds, 2002). The figure 11 shows that 48 of the respondents (46.15%) answered that TESCO own brands are sometimes perceived as low quality products in their different segments whereas 46 participants (44.23%) considered TESCO own brands are definitely not seen as low quality products which is an important amount of the sample used, almost half of it; lastly 10 individuals (9.62%) said that TESCO’s private label are definitely low quality products in all their wide range of goods in comparison with name brands. To sum up almost half of the people surveyed see those products as goods with added-value in terms of price, but even when the retailers make an effort to improve their quality their perception might not evolve. Table 8 indicates the same numbers explained before.
4.4.5 When you buy TESCO own brands is because... (Multiple answer possible)?

There are certainly a diversity of factors and aspects each consumer consider every time they go shopping and decide to acquire any of the TESCO wide range own brand products. People evidently possess their own criteria when it comes to judging their perceptions towards private labels; this question was set with multiple answers eligible. Choices were voted as followed. The choice that says that TESCO brand possesses a good value for the money was chosen for 82 people (78.85%) of the surveyed respondents, followed by promotions which according to people is the second reason which influence them to go and buy TESCO own products, this option got 55 (52.88%); then TESCO own brands and its quality obtained a number of 32 individuals which represents (30.77%) and lastly the innovation of shown by TESCO products as an option which makes people buy them obtained 6 people (5.77%).
Table 9 Reasons why people buy TESCO brands

4.4.6 Does price affect your decision making when buying TESCO own brands?

According to the findings shown in figure 13 and table 10, detailed people’s agreement or disagreement in different levels whether TESCO own products prices affect or influence them when buying those items it was found that most of the people who participated in the survey applied 65 respondents (63.11%) agreed with the idea that price is absolutely linked to decision making when buying TESCO own brand products. Then, 16 individuals (15.53%) strongly agreed this. A (13.59%) 14 participants said they neither agree nor disagree with this idea. Followed by 7 (6.80%) who disagreed, and said that price does not have anything to do with their decision making when choosing and buying TESCO private labels, it worth mention that in this case even when this does not appear in the survey as a question many people commented that when they buy those products is because they like them or they
consider those as good as the others. Finally only 1 person who represents a (0.97%) strongly disagreed with this question where was asked if price had something to do with their choice.

![Figure 13 Price affecting decision making](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Strongly Disagree</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Disagree</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Neither Agree nor Disagree</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Agree</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strongly Agree</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 10 Price affecting decision making**

### 4.4.7 Does economic crisis influence people to buy store brands in general?

This question was asked to identify whether respondents thought economic crisis influence them or not to buy store brands in general which are sometimes considerably cheaper than National brands. Figure 14 indicates that 72 (69.23%) of the sample surveyed which is a big number admitted that this is unmistakably one of the main reason if not the first reason impulse people to try this generic brands and after that it also depends on the quality shown
by these products and the perception experienced by the client. Then, next to last 28 people (26.92%) said that economic crisis may encourage and influence people to buy store brands. The last group of people 4 (3.85%) think economic crisis has nothing to do with people buying store brands; they believe people just buy those because they are being largely promoted availability issues or just because they feel attracted by them. Table 11 also shows the same number in order to support the chart explanation.

![Figure 14 Economic crisis influencing people to buy private labels](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>69%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27%</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 11 Economic crisis influencing people to buy private labels**

4.4.8 Do you consider TESCO own brands as a substitute for national brands?

There are different perceptions and thoughts for this question; even when some authors like (Laaksonen & Reynolds, 2002 and De Wulf et al, 2005) explained that consumer become aware that quality Store brands increases, the perception they have towards them does not change, because for them generally speaking price is the most important perk. Our findings show in figure 15 which is supported at the same time by table 12 that most of people 64 (61.54%) used to conduct this research considered that sometimes some products in different
circumstances might be substitutes for national brand products. Then, 23 respondents (22.12%) think that TESCO brands are definitely a substitute for all the other products they are competing against whereas the rest of the sample 17 (16.35%) have given their opinion which is that they cannot be considered as substitutes.

![Figure 15 TESCO brands as a substitute for national brands](image)

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>Definitely yes</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Definitely not</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 12 TESCO brands as a substitute for national brands**

**4.4.9 Does packaging and quantity in TESCO own brands persuade you to buy them?**

The findings obtained in this section were much divided; people have different perceptions about what packaging and quality can persuade them to do. Laaksonen & Reynolds (2002), stated that even when private labels make an effort to improve their imagery and packaging as well as many other aspects in order to compete more fiercely with national brands, the positioning strategy made by national brands leaves them in a privileged place in comparison to store brands. Most of the sample 39 (37.86%) think those attributes can surely persuade people or themselves to pick out TESCO own brands instead of a national brand product, followed by 29 participants (28.16%) who said that packaging and quantity do not have power enough to persuade them to buy this kind of products. A (25.24%) 26 people surveyed are more open to this and they said that very often they have been persuaded by those
attributes whilst the rest of them 9 (8.74%) stated that they would never be persuaded for such aspects. Table 13 and figure 16 reflect the numbers discussed above.

![Figure 16 Packaging and quantity persuasion](image)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 13 Packaging and quantity persuasion**

### 4.4.10 how satisfied are you with TESCO own brand products?

The information gathered through the survey conducted to the sample used for this research demonstrated that 52 respondents (50%) half of the sample group selected said they were satisfied with TESCO own brands products in general, followed by 19 (18.27%) who mentioned being somewhat satisfied; then 17 individuals (16.35%) voted for a high level of satisfaction with the brand which is subject of study. There were 11 people (10.58%) who did not consider having or feeling any type of satisfaction or dissatisfaction; thus they voted neutral. The amount of people who was very dissatisfied was 3 (2.88%); subsequently, the dissatisfied and somewhat dissatisfied option only got 1 person each representing (0.96%) of the sample.
4.11 Would you recommend TESCO own brand products?

The last question of this survey had the intention to check if consumers would be willing to recommend TESCO own brands to others (friends, family etc.) based in their own experiences with the brand. Throughout the analysis it has been carried out with the information gathered for this study, it has been said that customers generally speaking even when they perceived changes and improvements in the store brands they just see them as a good value for money deals which can vary of course depending of the person who was asked. Almost half of the sample chosen 46 (44.23%) as it can be seen in figure 18 and table 14 agreed with recommending TESCO products to others whereas 36 people (36.62%) said they will recommend only some of those products which have been previously used by them, followed by 20 respondents (19.23%) who categorically said they will definitely recommend
this private brand to others and finally just 2 participants representing a (2%) explained they will never recommend TESCO own brand products.

**Figure 18 how many people would recommend TESCO own brands**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Definitely yes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Definitely not</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Some of them</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 15 how many people would recommend TESCO brands**
5. Conclusion and Recommendation

5.1 Introduction

This chapter seeks to show the findings obtained for the investigation conducted, by summarizing all the results presented in the chapter above, with the intention to provide a better understanding of those and a proper conclusion for study carried out. Recommendation for further research will be given at the end of the chapter.

5.2 Conclusions

The aim of this dissertation was to explore and evaluate the attitudes and perceptions of consumers towards TESCO own brands. In order to carry out this investigation a main objective which also had sub-objectives were established, all the theoretical information which supports all the subjects treated throughout the research are in the literature review which was thoroughly developed; in this section topics such as the relation between attitudes and behaviour as well as consumer behaviour which is the subject that practically rules the investigation along with consumer perceptions and purchase attitudes.

The first sub-objective was satisfied by the combination of secondary and primary research in chapter 2 and in the findings chapter. The number of respondent who demonstrated to have a good perception towards TESCO own brands generally speaking was very high despite they used different adjectives to describe it, 103 people came up with good things about the TESCO private label.

The acceptance of the products and their effectiveness when it comes to be considered as a possible replacement for national brands varied in different ways, but most of them 64 participants, think the private label is sometimes a substitute for the other products that are promoted by a diversity of campaigns which is the aspect that differentiates them and creates the positioning in customer’s mind. However, even when the quality perception of the TESCO products was certainly divide with the majority of people 48 saying that sometimes the products are perceived as low quality. On the other hand, 46 people said categorically they do not perceive the brand as a low quality one.
Economic crisis and prices are subjects which are extremely linked; the cost of the products is something that undoubtedly has opened the market and has generated positive responses from customers; 80 percent of the sample surveyed agreed with this statement and explained even when the survey was composed by a simple answer format that with the actual economic crisis that is ruling the world and the elevated cost of life this brands that some of they knew exist from a long time ago have been increasing their participation and gaining more and more fans and people who choose them instead of the national brands to save some money that can be used for something else. Some of them have claimed to perceived more participation from privates label in general since the economic crisis step in a few years ago. Furthermore there was a mixed perception towards the attitudes shown when it comes to packaging and quantities and the possibility that those mentioned before may have an influence when the time to choose products comes; the majority of the people involved in this research 38% stated they get persuaded by quantities and packaging from TESCO own brand products, the rest of the sample with numbers very similar to the one shown above disagreed and some said those perks do not have anything to do with their choosing and some other thought that very often those make them think twice and finally convince them to pick the private label one.

Finally, people have definitely spoken about the levels of satisfaction they have got in terms of the TESCO private label; A very high number of the respondents 84% expressed their satisfaction in different levels (Satisfied 50%, somewhat satisfied 18% and satisfied 16%) in relation to the TESCO own brand products. This unmistakably reflects positive attitudes and perceptions towards this private label, which according to the information gathered is very acceptable, and also demonstrates that due to the high level of approval which is highly related to the perception of the products and the brand itself which are being subject of study, represent a very well earned positioning in customers mind in terms of quality and price.

To sum up, this investigation presents different aspects related to TESCO own brand products and all the topics involved in it. All the data gathered was collected from 104 participants whom according to their own experiences had the chance to evaluate their own attitudes and perceptions towards the brand an at the same time help the researcher to complete his dissertation which sought to estimate the acceptance of the TESCO own brand goods by assessing their attitudes and perception of the brand.
Ultimately, it was found that there is a mixed of attitudes and perceptions towards TESCO own brands in terms of price, quality, generic brand as a substitute of the national brand and levels of satisfaction. Positive attitudes prevail among the 104 people who took part on this investigation. However, among occasional consumers there were uncertainties shown in some aspects as some others expressed their dissatisfaction with the products because some factor such as, quality levels, price and preference for national brands regardless their prices.

5.3 Recommendations

When it comes to recommendations it worth mention that time played an important role for this investigation. The use of the questionnaires was consulted with the TESCO STORE manager who took a bit of time to decide whether to allow the researcher to apply it within the facilities or outside just right where the main entrance is. This certainly caused some time constraints which at the same time affected some other aspects like sample size. Hence, it is recommended for further research to arrange all those details with the people or organizations involved in the investigation to avoid setbacks that might be affecting the time of completion.

- Larger studies can be carried out with bigger sample groups which will allow to have better a more precise idea of what is being studied.
- Further research of TESCO private labels or even competitors will definitely show a more exact inform in terms of acceptance, perceptions and attitudes.
- Exploring attitudes and perceptions of consumers towards TESCO own brands or private label in general in other countries will help to validate the findings obtained in this investigation by making proper comparison with information gathered about the same topic in a different place with different culture, conditions and laws.
- Evaluate the perception of the brand in different places across Ireland in different areas where social classes might be higher or lower to see if they perceive it in the same way.

6. Reflection on Learning and Skill Development

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will outline the approach obtained or used to learning process developed during the MBA program that was undertaken by the researcher, especially in the thesis stage. The first section will explore the reflections on learning of the researcher using academic
literature theories. According to Burns and Sinfield (2010) learning is a social, interactive and constructionist process, and the only way of achieving it is by engaging with both people and knowledge in a very dynamic and interactive way. Likewise, it will be explained how the acquired knowledge from the MBA course can be applied for future and further research.

6.2 Self-Perception

The MBA programme undertook was an unlimited source of learning in multiple business areas such as project management, finance, international management, business strategy, personal and professional development and marketing; the last one was one of the most attractive lectures thought throughout the course which served as an inspiration to develop this study in an area closely linked to it. Personal development was a very important lecture which thought different aspects that sometimes can be put aside but actually are essential part in the fast moving world we are at in these days; own skills, weaknesses, strengths and self-confidence are some of the aspects mentioned in this lecture; the last one is a very crucial factor that affects plenty people but particularly foreigners who decides to venture in other countries for different purposes like is this case Ireland and must learn a different language and manage all the obstacles this involves. However, according to the researcher’s experience being a foreign student who have coursed programmes in different countries and continents, it worth mention that the only assignment policy which rules almost all the lectures and the amount of words required for each of them push people to focus only on those aspects, putting aside the real importance of the courses; Exams should be used more often. Nevertheless, the structured used gave the tools and techniques needed to complete the MBA programme properly by enhancing research skills which will be valuable assets in the near future.

6.3 MBA’s Importance, Dissertation and Skills Acquired

6.3.1 MBA’s Importance

Undertaking a MBA programme for the researcher was an objective set just after he got graduated from his first degree, coming from a Spanish speaking country firstly needed to learn the English language and subsequently undertake the MBA course; these two challenges represented a huge effort which was made at the same time that he was working to
support himself economically speaking. The difficulty and complexity of the MBA was understood since the beginning.

The telecommunication Engineering degree obtained was a bit different in comparison with this MBA because of the nature of the programmes. The MBA is and was based in deep investigation from different sources whereas the Engineering one was merely based on exams showing a lack of investigation and hence the developing of the research skills. The variety of backgrounds in the course allowed the researcher to have a more broader way to analyse and comprehend things to have better perspectives and perceptions towards numerous aspects related to any topic. Finally, this whole groups of experiences including the MBA of course has led the researcher to look for new horizons and new opportunities that may come up to venture in different fields that might not be linked with the engineering sector but instead more oriented towards business.

6.3.2 Dissertation

This dissertation has been done with a lot of effort from the researcher. In the beginning, he was not very clear about the topic to be chosen, but after a few weeks and after having several marketing classes there was a subject that rang his attention which was of a personal interest. Consumer behaviour, quality, purchase attitudes and perceptions were gaining and gaining more point throughout the classes. The feedback obtained for the proposal made the researcher keep going in the same field of interest and develop a study that with the help of the supervisor David Hurley and the guidance of the research methods 2 with lecturer Pj Paul. Once the researcher received the approval notice of the entire module courses, he and his supervisor set meetings every two weeks in order to fulfil all the requirements asked and complete all the work needed on time. The supervisor provided invaluable methods and suggestions that definitely made things a little bit easier. It has to be mentioned that this dissertation required special attention to the language (English) and grammar used which is the second language of the researcher and the one that intended to convey all the information gathered and the findings retrieved
6.3.3 Problem Solving Skills

This study was done on consumer behaviour, purchase attitudes and perceptions where a lot of research has been published. The main issue was to access the participants (sample) who were the ones who responded the questionnaires given. Due to the study was done at the beginning of the year which is not a busy season, but the authorities of the store were not very keen to help the research to apply the questionnaire to consumers. This of course delayed the process of data collection; this and some other issues related to researcher’s job and duties cause a lot of constraints that needed to be compensated with extra working hours and additional effort to stay within planned time. The experience lived with the assignments in the programme made researcher understand even better the importance of having a balance literature. Being open minded and using sources that work with and against your way of thinking helped out to develop a better investigation.

6.3.4 Time Management Skills

Throughout the whole MBA programme time was factor which determined the way it was developed and the success obtained; as mentioned before the researcher struggled with a full-time job all along the course whilst the course was taken which by the way was also full-time. Time management became a must to be able to fulfil these; this is why it can be said that this was a skill that was notoriously improved and without it researcher would not have been able to complete the thesis successfully.

6.3.5 Team Work Skills

During the entire MBA programme in all the modules coursed a lot of group assignment took place, which gave the researcher the opportunity to meet people from different parts of the world, different cultures and perspectives when it comes to assignments and many other things. Working in groups like those enhanced the team work skills due to the diversity of approaches every one of them could provide from their own different points of view. The ability to negotiate, solve conflicts in the groups is an experience that will help me in the near future when the time to work in an international environment comes.
6.3.6 Verbal and Written Communication Skills

Verbal and written communications were significantly improved throughout the MBA programme. When you realized the researcher’s native tongue is not English and even though he managed to get this far in a MBA course which was lectured in English speaks for itself. New and better possibilities are now open for the researcher who not only has completed the MBA course but he now can say that he speaks, read, and write two languages.
References


Monitoring the Greek Experience”. Journal of Retail & Distribution Management 36(2) pp 158-175.


Appendices

This survey is conducted as part of a research paper on the perception and attitudes of consumers toward TESCO own brands. Your answers will be used to measure the position and the attractiveness of the TESCO brands when it comes to the act of purchase. It only takes a few minutes.

1) Gender

Male
Female

2) Age

Under 18
18-24
25-34
35-44
45-54
55-64
65+

3) Occupation

Student
Employee
Retired Person
Executive / Senior Executive
Unemployed
4) Monthly average Income (EURO)

- Less than 1000
- Between 1000 and 2000
- Between 2000 and 3000
- Between 3000 and 4000
- Between 4000 and 5000
- More than 5000

5) How often do you go shopping?

- Never
- Once a week
- Twice a week
- Monthly
- Daily

6) How many own brand products on average do you buy every time you go shopping?

- 1-2 products
- 3-5 products
- 5-7 products
- More than 7 products

7) What is the first word that comes to mind when talking about TESCO own brands?

8) Do you perceive TESCO own brands as low quality products?

- Definitely yes
- Definitely not
- Sometimes
9) When you buy TESCO own brands is because.. (Multiple answer possible)

- Product Quality
- Promotions
- Innovative Products
- Good value for money

10) Does price affect your decision making when buying TESCO own brands?

- Strongly Disagree
- Disagree
- Neither Agree nor Disagree
- Agree
- Strongly Agree

11) Does economic crisis influence people to buy store brands in general?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

12) Do you consider TESCO own brands as a substitute for name brands?

- Definitely yes
- Definitely not
- Sometimes

13) Does packaging and quantity in TESCO own brands persuade you to buy them?

- Yes
- No
- Very often
- Never
14) How satisfied are you with TESCO own brand products?

- Very Dissatisfied
- Dissatisfied
- Somewhat Dissatisfied
- Neutral
- Somewhat Satisfied
- Satisfied
- Very Satisfied

15) Would you recommend TESCO own brand products?

- Yes
- No
- Definitely yes
- Definitely not
- Some of them