Entrepreneurial marketing as sustainable competitive advantage for SME's: An exploratory study within the Irish Flower Industry

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Business Administration (General) at Dublin Business School

Supervisor: Ray Whelan

May 2019
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Declaration

‘I, Athoibi Sagolsem, declare that this dissertation that I have submitted to Dublin Business School for the award of Master of Business- General is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated, where it is clearly acknowledged by references. Furthermore, this work has not been submitted for any other degree.’

Signed: Athoibi Sagolsem

Student Number: 10393978 Date: 20.05.2019
Acknowledgement

The completion of this research could not have been possible without the help and guidance of numerous people around me. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my dissertation supervisor Mr. Ray Whelan for his continuous support, patience, motivation, guidance, and input throughout this process. His timely feedback and encouragement have helped me successfully carried out this research work.

I would like to acknowledge and thank Joan Clovin for her valuable support and help during my dissertation. I would like to thank the librarians of Dublin Business school for helping me throughout my dissertation.

I would like to thank all my interviewee from Costello Flowers, Maura's Cottage Flowers, Kildare flowers, Tina's Floral Arts, Austen Flowers, The Green Room, Daisy Bowl Florists, New Life Florist, for their cooperation, time and for sharing their valuable information and contributing to this research.

Lastly, I would like to thank my family and friends for their support on every stage of my dissertation.
Abstract

Entrepreneurial marketing is a combination of entrepreneurial skill and marketing skill, when applied, it brings out the best possible outcome from the non-conventional way. The core measuring dimensions - proactiveness, opportunity focus, risk taking, innovativeness, customer intensity, resource leverage and value creation decides effectiveness of an enterprise with the restricted of resources. Entrepreneurial marketing was developed for SMEs; however, it can add sustainable competitive advantage to any size of enterprise. The objective of this research is to find out the practicality of entrepreneurial dimension on Irish flower business which are, mainly SMEs and to explore the advantages of using entrepreneurial dimension n by different situation to achieve competitive advantage. Qualitative method of was adopted for the research method by conducting semi-structured interview to 8 florists from various counties of Ireland. The findings from the research was analyzed using thematic analysis process and by using NVivo 12 pro software. The finding reveals that the entrepreneurial marketing dimension are practice within the Irish Flower SMEs and there is a number of advantages for implementing these dimensions. These dimensions have an impact on sustainable competitive advantage however it depends on the implementation process. Further study with larger sample is suggested for the researches.
Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1. Introduction

In the business world entrepreneurship and marketing are two mostly discussed disciplines. Even though they are both two broad disciplines in its own way, there are many overlapping areas that interest researcher and business gurus, hoping to learn new aspects of business ways and develop knowledge that will improve the ongoing need of market shifts. With the increase of small and medium enterprises (SMEs) influence in economic, there is a need for further development of the performance of this enterprise. As marketing plays a significant role in business, it is undeniable to say that small and medium enterprises struggle most with marketing ability with limited resources when compared to well established large business. With the advancement of technology competition in the market is no longer between the same level organization. Even a newly established firm can compete with a giant organization neck to neck. Entrepreneurship skills explore the unconventional way to achieve the best outcome by breaking the traditional norms of doing business. By applying these skill SMEs have justified its importance in the market distinctly, however, the marketing area of SMEs is not same as in big firms and it is an area of its own. With many constraints comes with SMEs, entrepreneurial marketing is coined as best for SMEs by many researchers which will be discussed in the later part of the study. With Entrepreneurial marketing measured by its core dimensions (proactiveness, opportunity focus, risk-taking, innovativeness, customer intensity, resource leverage, and value creation), entrepreneurs can achieve the greater opportunity of competitive advantage. With this theory, the research is focused on Irish Flower business which
is very niche and hardly explored. Before further discussion, it is vital to understand the SMEs and the flower industry of Ireland which is discussed below.

1.2. Small and Medium Enterprises in Ireland

According to the European Commission (2003), an enterprise with less than 10 people and whose annual turnover not more than 2 million euro are categories as micro SMEs while above 10 but less than 50 people and with annual turnover not more than 10 euro million are categories as a small enterprise. As published by the European Commission in 2006, 99% of all the enterprise in Europe is represented by 23 million SMEs providing 75 million jobs to 25 countries of Europe (European Commission, 2006, p.5). Alone in Ireland, among the total enterprise in the country, SMEs accounted for 99.8% (Central Statistics office, 2016) generating 47.8% of the total business economy turnover of the country (The Irish Times, 2017).

Further Microenterprise accounts for 91.8% of the total SMEs engaging around 27% of the working population (Central Statistics office, 2016). Though SMEs contributes entrepreneurial skills and innovation and employment, most of the time they are restricted to access new technology due to the lack of capital and resources. On which entrepreneurial skill provide vitality to the business lifecycle.

Considering the fact that almost half of the economy is generated by the SMEs it is vital to know the areas where these SMEs can improve. Irish SMEs especially micro SMEs have shown the highest share value of 61% among the EU-28 member states in non-financial business in a report (European Union, 2018, p.17).
1.3. Irish Flower Business

Ireland has a rich Horticulture sector with a farmgate of 433 Euro million within which flower industry can be is sub-categories under Amenity Horticulture (non-food) the sector which covers nursery stocks bedding plants, bulbs, cut flower/foliage and turf grass, Christmas tree, Protected Flowers/Ornamentals having a total value of 63 euro million.

Flower the market is a growing business estimated to sustain 400 jobs by 2020 in 2012 by industry experts. With the rising demand for Irish cut foliage, development in this sector has been gathered pace (Irish Examiner, 2012). Ireland has host World Flower Show in 2014 which gave a boost to the floristry inspiring many people to venture in this sector as a business career (Independent, 2014). From the busy streets of the city till the rural areas one can find a flower shop across Ireland, as with the influence of the culture flower business plays an important role in Irish society. Ranging from flower bouquet for every kind of occasion to potted plants for garden business blooms rapidly every year reaching to 795 euro million in 2018 (BordBia, 2018, p.21).

Domestic the market being the focused retail market for the growers however export of amenity valued 17.9 million euro in 2017 as per a record by Bord Bia (Bord Bia, 2017). Apart from home production, many products are imported and the retail market for these products are serviced by supermarkets, Garden centers, DIY shops, Lifestyle centers. Around Ireland, most of these centers are SMEs run by well-trained florist or event organizers like wedding organizers. The worker raging from 1 to 10 at the maximum these SMEs are almost all belongs to micro category. These florist/ owners are entrepreneurs who are managing all aspect of the
business operation all by themselves, unlike any other firms that have separate departments for each operation. Besides the limitation of both resources and capital, they lack marketing skills as well as knowledge of business options however to survive in the market these entrepreneurs find its own way to keep going on. Also, there are very few academic researches done on the flower business of Ireland, the research area is new. This let us to our research question.

1.3. Research Question

How does Entrepreneurial Marketing dimensions contribute to the development of sustainable competitive advantage in SMEs?

The research question is to provide a better understanding of utilizing entrepreneurial marketing dimension on business which is already under constraints. It also accounts for the development of competitive advantage to stay ahead of competitors and providing a longer-term continuity in the business.
1.4. Research Objectives

The research aims to find out the theories provided by other research on entrepreneurial marketing dimension of SMEs is accountable for Irish SMEs in flower. The research also aims to find out the advantages a business can gain by practicing the dimension. Lastly, the research aims to explore the advantages of the outcome in bringing new opportunities and growth and competitive advantage.

1. To investigate whether SMEs of Ireland practice entrepreneurial marketing dimension in their business.
2. To investigate the advantages outcome from the use of entrepreneurial marketing dimension.
3. To explore the contribution of entrepreneurial marketing dimensions in creating a sustainable competitive advantage.

1.7. Justification

Growth in business is essential however to grow knowledge of every possible option where growth can be brought is required. SMEs are playing a significant role in this new economic era. Every form of business which comes under SMEs is mostly owned by entrepreneurs who have a different skill set. With limited resource and capital, they had to restrict their business from accessing advance technology which then again forced them to utilize their entrepreneurial skills to survive in the market.

SMEs with flower, business is mainly owned by the florist who lacks business and marketing skills. Clearly, the lack of financial knowledge, technology, time, opportunity to keep update
when compared to larger firms’ growth is very minimal. Enhance the understanding of the phenomenon of EM within the context of Irish SMEs which are engaged with flower business. The study is an attempt to explore the impact of the implementation of the EM dimensions within Irish flower SMEs, and their role in the improvement of the organizational performance. This study offers new insight for Irish entrepreneurs, owners, and managers to develop their entrepreneurial behavior and to create a competitive advantage by addressing the dimensions that improve the performance of their organizations.

1.8. Scope and Limitation

The scope of this study is that it will identify the best factors of entrepreneurial marketing dimensions when implemented on an unexplored area of the market which is very niche and constraint by limited resources. It will bring out the market specific behavior and its impact on the competitive advantage.

The study will be able to guide marketer, entrepreneurs and future researcher about the market specification and entrepreneurial behavior on flower business. The findings from the research can identify the area where an organization can improve to achieve sustainable competitive advantage.

The study will also explore the marketing options which are right now in operation for this specific market. This data can help marketers to gain knowledge of similar types of SMEs.
As the research was conducted with a small sample frame and questions used during data collection is only to explore the objectives due to time limitation. Further, as marketing is very confidential and personal to the SMEs, data confidential related ethical issues have also been experienced during the study.

1.9. Dissertation Roadmap

Chapter 1: Introduction

This section details the background of the research area, research question, research objectives, related hypothesis, scope and limitation of the research to provide the reader with a basic idea of what is being research, where it is being researched and why it is being researched. The section also behaves like a map to the study and guides the reader to understand the scheme of the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This section contains the terms and the theories related to the research topic which has been critically review from the existing literature. This section will allow the reader to understand how the research theory was developed from the existing literature and similar researches. It will also allow an in-depth understanding of the research theme and the knowledge of the factors associating with Entrepreneurial marketing and its core 7 dimensions.
Chapter 3: Methods

This section contains information about how the research was designed and how it was implemented. Description of all the relevant utilities in the research is detailed with a suitable explanation of why a particular design was adopted. It also has information on how and where the primary data were collected. It also accounts for the sample and the ethical considerations taken during the research.

Chapter 4: Result

The chapter contains the finding obtained from the research. This section contains how the data were processed, identified and analyzes. It also has the information on how the software was used to organize the data in a systematic form for better understanding and interpretation. The reports exported the data interpretation is explained with the help of reports generated from the NVivo 12 pro.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter contains the interpretation of the findings of the research associated with research objectives and question. Relating to the research question this sector holds the elaborate data application of literature review to achieve the objective of the study.
Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendation

This is the final chapter that concludes the whole research and its finding and observation.

Further recommendation and research area are also discussed in this section.
Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1. Introduction

A literature review is a description of relevant literature related to a research field. It provides an overview of what has been said, prevailing theories and hypothesis, overall it provides background information of the research topic (Hart, 2018, p.25). The foundation of research is built by the literature review. Knowledge of the research area and the understanding of previous research provides insight for further research and development to the area (Saunders et. Al., 2016, p. 76). According to Biggam (2015, p. 119), a good literature review is characterized by the work done by other researchers relevant to the researcher’s objective, depth of critical evaluation, evidence of emerging issues and lastly the appropriate sources. From the guidance, the research area -Entrepreneurial Marketing dimensions and business strategy advantages are critically evaluated using the library resources. A literature review must be coherent, critical, contemporary and conclusive. There must be a logical flow progressively (Galvan, 2017, p. 29).

With the context from the research topic and the proposed hypothesis, an understanding of entrepreneurial marketing is required. With the knowledge, this could be utilized in terms of a business strategy building is further discussed.
2.2. Entrepreneurial Marketing

Kotler et al. (2016, p.4), defined marketing as fulfilling customer’s need with profit. Though financial success is essential for a business, it highly depends on marketing ability of the business. With the advancement of technology, competition in the business market have high threshold forcing business to create more value, more creative and more innovative. The four strategic context of marketing explained by Baines, Fill and Page (2011, p. ) that is knowing your competitors, market segmentation, external environment and resources plays the basic rules for the business however for small and micro enterprise where very few person or even only one person (single owner-manager) manages the business, it is very problematic getting all marketing function get done. When it comes to small and micro firms, marketing is one best tool to establish itself and to survive and grow (Bjerke and Hultman, 2004, p.13).

Growth is success however growth by doing the same is managerial growth and growing by doing something different from other is entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurial marketing describes the marketing activities with entrepreneurial mindset. Morris el at (2002, p.5) defined entrepreneurial marketing as “the proactive identification and exploitation of opportunities for acquiring and retaining profitable customers through innovative approaches to risk management, resources leveraging and value creation”. He further suggested that for SMEs constant attention to marketing is critical to success for newly launched or growing ventures yet marketing decisions also pose some of the greatest challenges to these ventures. Because SMEs face specific constraints, they are set apart from their larger business counterparts which
have more longevity. Entrepreneurial marketing offers the combination of marketing and entrepreneurial skills in business for which it is considered the optimal tools for SMEs.

### 2.2.1. Entrepreneurial orientation

Entrepreneurial orientation was first defined as “an entrepreneurial firm is one that engages in product-market innovation, under takes somewhat risky ventures, and is first to come up with ‘proactive’ innovations, beating competitors to the punch” by Miller in 1983 (Rezaei and Ortt, 2017, p.880). It has been recognized that entrepreneurship is important for business performance. The entrepreneurial act is central to the business enterprise. Researchers find that entrepreneurial culture encourages the flow of innovative ideas and facilitates the capacity of firms to innovate. Moreover, entrepreneurial culture also helps firms to create strategies that are suitable for business operations in difficult times (Bjerke and Hultman, 2004, p.69).

Entrepreneurial orientation is a construct that researchers frequently used to measure the level of firms’ entrepreneurship. The construct originates from strategic management literature that categorizes firms as either non-entrepreneurial or entrepreneurial firms. Prior studies find that EO is not only correlated to firms’ general business activities, but also to specific marketing activities. Researchers find that EO affects firms’ capacity to innovate, ability to create new product applications, marketing strategy making process, intention to enter new markets, and ability to cope with complex market environments (Majovski and Davitkovska, 2017, p. 45- 50).
2.2.2. Marketing orientation

Market orientation is defined as ‘responsive to market intelligence’ which is achieved by understanding the current and future requirements of customers and designing to meet the requirements. Market orientation focusses on customers, competitors, and resources. An understanding of customers to create more value, awareness of short- and long-term capabilities of competitors to stay ahead and utilisation of every possible resources available to its maximum potential in an integrated way to create value (Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 47). The assessing tool developed by Naver and Slater in 1990 to measure the threes focused market orientation is described in below tables.

Table 1 describes measuring parameters of customer orientation. It counts the understanding of customer need to identify the objective of the firm and link with the firm’s objective to comprehend the accessing of the customer satisfaction level. A regular check on the satisfaction level is required to build up a strong relationship and identify the group that is loyal and understand the specific segment of the group and monitor them.

Score scale is 80-100 high level of market orientation, whereas 60-80 moderate, 40-60 long way to go and 20 -40 mountain ahead.
Table: 1. To measure the Customer Orientation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information about customer needs and requirements is collected regularly</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our corporate objective and policies are aimed directly at creating satisfied customers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of customer satisfaction are regularly assessed and action taken</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We put major effort into building stronger relationship with key customer and customer group</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We recognise the existence of distinct group or segments in our markets with different needs and we adapt our offerings accordingly</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 50-51).
Table 2 describe the factors to measure the customer orientation under the marketing orientation. It will allow to understand the frequency of monitoring the competitors and the actions to deal with them and also the intensity to which the competitors are challenged.

Table 2: To measure the Competitor orientation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Information about competitor activities is collected regularly</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We conduct regular benchmarking against major competitor offerings</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is rapid response to major competitor offerings</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>We put major emphasis on differentiating ourselves from the competition on factors important to customers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 50-51).

Table 3 describe the internal resources orientation. The table includes the factors like intercommunication and information transfer to keep every one in the same page while dealing with
customers. Information sharing of customer requirements are considered. The rivalry between the co-workers are also taken into account as it could hinder the function of internal operation.

Table 3: To measure Inter-functional coordination (Resources)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Neither</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Information about customer is widely circulated and communicated throughout the organisation</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The different departments in the organisation works effectively together to serve customer needs</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tensions and rivalries between departments are not allowed to get in the way of serving customers effectively</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Our organisation is flexible to end opportunities to be sized effectively rather than hierarchically constrained</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Nwankwo and Gbadamosi, 2011, p. 50-51).
2.3. Entrepreneurial Dimension

Entrepreneurial marketing dimensions can be viewed as a combination of entrepreneurship and marketing that delivers solution to the new emerging perspective of marketing (Morris et al., 2002, p. 5). These dimensions are proactiveness, opportunity focus, calculated risk taking, innovativeness, customer intensity, resource leveraging, value creation, among which the first four (proactiveness, opportunity focus, calculated risk taking, innovativeness) is derived from entrepreneurial orientation and the fifth (resource leveraging) is derived from guerrilla marketing and the final two (customer intensity and value creation) is derived from marketing orientation.

2.3.1. Proactiveness:

Proactiveness is the marketing action of an organisation by challenging the situation to deal with competitors. Apart from the competitors the proactiveness accounts actions of the firm to handle an external environmental change or marketing trends. It also accounts the actions dealing with the suppliers during the business to create less dependency and reduce uncertainty and vulnerability. (Morris et al., 2002, p. 6).

Actions taken under proactiveness orientation is to reduce uncertainty on success rate. When the external factors are identified it is vital to beforehand take action to ensure the competition in the market and stay ahead of the competitors. Sometime launching a new product to gain
more attention of the customer is also counted as proactive action which then bring more opportunity and idea to the firm (Hozhabri, 2015).

### 2.3.2. Opportunity focus:

Opportunity recognition is very crucial in terms of business and is the fundamental of entrepreneurship. Entrepreneurs derive opportunity from market imperfection to deliver profit. This skill is only enhanced when engage with search and discovery actively. Environmental scanning activity and focus on external environment is critical according to the principal of entrepreneurial marketing (Morris et al., 2002, p. 6). In a dynamic market opportunity are created by aligning the development, communication and derivative preposition of value and market (Whalen and Akaka, 2016)

Business performance highly depends on the opportunity resulting from the market activities. Market sensitivity, depth knowledge of the field are the factors for identifying the best opportunity of an enterprise.

### 2.3.3. Calculated risk taking

Risk taking venture can be observe in terms of resource allocation decision making product/service choice and market choice by an organisation. “Entrepreneurial marketing defines an explicit role for marketing in managing the forms risk profile” (Morris et al., 2002, p. 7).
To stay open to risk taking nature can bring new opportunity to the business and new knowledge. Not every business is subject to risk taking step (Becherer et al., 2008). Some business may take it to feel more in superior position from its competitors. However, risk taking calculation can only be achieved when a firm has deep understanding of the market and information also the possible outcome from the step that could either end with a positive or negative impact.

2.3.4. Innovativeness

Innovation-focused marketing actions allow the firm to concentrate on new ideas that lead to new markets, products, or processes. The degree to which a successful organization emphasizes innovation in its market actions can range from the highly innovative new market creator to the incremental market builder. The market creator must break with past solutions to offer the customer a radically different value. The incremental innovator builds on existing customer relations and market knowledge. SMEs may choose to focus on innovative means of marketing since the firm may not have the resources to break with industry standards. (Morris et al., 2002, p. 8).
2.3.5. Customer intensity

Wide scientific attention has identified that successful companies emphasize on customer intensity. Enterprises have to be aware about their image since it influences on the customer’s perception of the company. The dimension of customer intensity can be viewed as a central driving force of marketing, which drives companies to create, build and sustain customer relationship. (Morris et al., 2002, p. 7)

Customer orientation emphasizes and guarantees customer equity, strong relationship between enterprises and customers, and an emotional dimension, to the firm’s marketing efforts. EM consolidates the need for creative approaches to customer procurement and loyalty (Becherer et al., 2012). EM focuses on innovative approaches either to create new relationships or using existing relationships to create new markets. The relationship between company and customers is dyadic, where the company identifies with the customers at the fundamental level, and identification of customers with the company (Becherer et al., 2012).

2.3.6. Resource leveraging

Resource leveraging can be defined as “doing more with less” meaning to maximum utilization of available resources to maximise profit, utilizing those recourses that other are unable to utilize, to utilize other’s resources for own benefit, combining two resources to get higher value and lastly to use one resource to get another (Morris et al., 2002, p. 7). Furthermore, they discussed that marketers must possess the required insight, experience, and skill to recognize an underutilized resource, and to get the optimal use of the available resources.
2.3.7. Value creation

Value creation is the basic objective of any business in new market. Previously marketing objective were to draw profit however with the shift in the market the objective is not only the profit but also a focused-on relationship (Morris et al., 2002, p. 8).

Value creation is the most important dimension of EM, Morris et al. (2002) argued that marketers must use a combination of resources to provide more value to the customers, in addition, marketers must figure untapped sources of customers value.

2.4. Sustainability Competitive Advantage

Competitive advantage allows a firm to excel its competitor on the basis of market performance among the same industry. It is a condition that makes the firm superior in term of product/service for the customer’s choice. ‘Sustainable competitive advantage is the result of implementing value creation strategies that are not periodically incorporated by competitor and other business cannot duplicate the benefits of the method used’ (Makmur et al., 2017, p.573).

Two measuring dimensions of Competitive advantage are cost advantage and differentiation advantage.
2.4.1. Cost Advantage

Cost advantage refers to the advantage of a firm to be able to lower the price of product/service reasonably without effecting the firms profit. This action is attained by improving business operations efficiently (Makmur et al., 2017, p.573).

2.4.2. Differentiation Advantage

Differentiation advantage refers to the uniqueness of the firm or irreplaceable by other firms. It typically refers to the better delivery benefit of a firm. Innovation is the key to achieve differentiation (Makmur et al., 2017, p.573).

2.5. Research on Entrepreneurial Marketing

For many years research on entrepreneurial marketing has been an ongoing topic both in academic as well as practical areas. In a study by Kucketz and Prochotta (2018) of 225 experiences entrepreneurship research it was found that entrepreneurial process is broadly researched and experiment as choice of research design (Appendix 1).

An exploratory study of entrepreneurial marketing in SMEs by Franco et al. (2014) as a case study of two firms indicated that there is an influence of the entrepreneurial marketing and the entrepreneur/founder of the firm in the marketing decision and the growth and sustainability of the business when the firms decided not to follow the traditional marketing norms due to
the limitation of resources particularly finance and the human resources. A similar study by Bechere et al. (2008) on 74 respondents let to the conclusion that the entrepreneurs exhibit differently when the entrepreneurial dimensions are used for business ventures.

Another study on entrepreneurial marketing on various SMEs by Nouri et al. (2015), Jones and Rowley (2011) and Rashad (2018) led to the conclusion the entrepreneurial marketing in considered the best practice for small and medium business and there is a positive impact of these dimension on the performance of the SMEs.

From the above-mentioned researches, the first two objective of this study that is

1. To investigate whether SMEs of Ireland practice entrepreneurial marketing dimension in their business.
2. To investigate the advantages outcome from the use of entrepreneurial marketing dimension.

were derived to answer the question does the SMEs in Ireland specific to flower business exhibit entrepreneurial marketing in their business? If so, how it benefits the business and what are the advantages of using in Irish market.

Bavarsad et al. (2015) could not confirmed the entrepreneurial marketing on sustainable competitive advantage by using Day and Wensley measuring dimension (innovation in product, process, organizational systems, management capabilities and marketing capabilities.) from their study on 179 respondents of gold, diamond and precious metals industry due to the lack of innovativeness factor from the finding. As innovativeness is one of the main core dimensions
of entrepreneurial marketing. However, it was confirmed that there is a positive impact on entrepreneurial marketing dimensions on competitive advantage.

Makmur et al. (2018), however, were able to produce the positive impact of entrepreneurial marketing on sustainable competitive advantage without using Day and Wesley measuring dimensions in their study on small culinary souvenir industry in Indonesia. From the above two research, there was a gap of knowledge that is the practice of entrepreneurial marketing depends on market type for it has to impact as a sustainable competitive advantage. To understand more, the research question was raised to answer the gap of knowledge. However, there is little literature available on the Irish flower business and entrepreneurial marketing for Irish market. The third objective of this research was drawn.

To explore the contribution of entrepreneurial marketing dimensions in creating a sustainable competitive advantage.

As there is little fact known about the research area, an exploratory design was adopted.

2.5. Conclusion

From the literature review, it could be concluded that though there are abundant literature available on entrepreneurial marketing theme, there is a lack of literature on application of entrepreneurial marketing on Irish market. The above literature provides only the detailed knowledge of the entrepreneurial marking and its dimensions in general and its behavior in other form of different market. Also, there is lack of literature on Irish flower business as it a growing sector. With the little knowledge of entrepreneurial marketing basic in hand and little
knowledge on Irish SMEs and Flower business, the research is carried out to explore every possible theory that is found during the research.

The knowledge entrepreneurial marketing and its dimension will a boundary to limit the scope of the study. As the nature of the study is exploratory there is not limitation, however a direction will be set. The variable competitive advantage is to bring out the actual use of the and in dept understanding of the concept applied. Here under the literature review competitive is not explore in detail as the main focus s on the entrepreneurial marketing dimension and its behavior to bring out the best outcome in unconditional environment. Entrepreneurs are well known of their skill to bring out best when everyone else is not able to, here the concept of entrepreneurial dimension will fill the gap of knowledge.

With the marketing orientation factors as a base and the entrepreneurial orientation as the instrument the study is mainly focused on the positive impacts of the marketing functions to bring new venture as well as stronger relation between the business and the customer.
Chapter 3 : Methodology

3.1. Introduction

Research methodology is the systematic way of analyzing a theoretical principle or method or both in a field or research area. It comprises the research design of how the research will be conducted and how the finding is analyzed. Following the Research onion by Sauder et al. (2016, p.124) research method comprise of six stages that includes philosophies, approaches to theory development, methodological choices, strategies, time zone and technique and procedures. Detailed discussion on each stage adopted for this research is mentioned below.

3.2. Participants

Population is the total set of people from whom information is needed. Sample is the term to denote a smaller group of people that are under observation, in short, a subset of population. Sample enable researcher to draw conclusion from the sample about the population (Domegan and Fleming, 2007, p. 374). Sampling is the process of selecting appropriate target population in order to avoid unmanageable data and wastage of time on unnecessary data collection. Use of sampling for research increases the accuracy of the information (Saunders et al. 2017, p. 274-275).
3.2.1. Sampling Details

For this study non probability purposive sampling was adopted to conduct the sampling process as it allows the researcher to apply her judgement on deciding the sample that fits right for the research (Saunders et al., 2015, p.301). Based on the theory from literature review that the entrepreneurs are the decision makers sample decided consist of owner-florist, manager-florist, florist-owner-teacher.

As per Sauder el al. (2016, p. 297) the suitable size of non-probability sample for semi-structured/ in-depth interview is between 5- 25. By keeping this as a standard the research size for this study is taken as 8.

3.2.2. Sampling Procedure

As there is no specific record of registered enterprise dealing with flower business on hand, a random selection of 2 florist shop from each 25 counties of Ireland. From the Bord Bia publication it was known that the flower retail services are available through Garden Centers, DIY shops, Lifestyle centers and supermarkets. With an understanding from previous research that the entrepreneurs exhibit differently while implementing the entrepreneurial marketing dimensions, it was assuming that the private flower studio/shops who is own by florist, an expert in the flower can provide valuable information and their struggles in the business. The selection was made through google search, Facebook and Instagram page.

On the initial stage an invitation to participate in the research were send out through Dublin Business School official email to all the 50 listed shops (Appendix 2).
Out of which only 6 responded to the email. Out of the 6 responses only one showed willingness to participate. On second stage a reminder email was send out on which only one responded with positive. With the time constraint researcher contact the remaining respondents via phone and total of 6 respondents were willing to participate. Therefore, a total 8 respondent were available for the interview.

3.3. Design

Research design comprise a plan flow that determine how the research question will be answered. There are three research design - Qualitative, Quantitative and Mixed design (Saunders et al., 2015, p.163).

By Creswell and Creswell (2018):

Quantitative Design: This design uses numeric data (mainly associated with questionnaires) to produce a data about attributes of people or organizations or other things.

Qualitative Design: This design is uses non numeric data (words, image, video- associated with interviews) to study behavior, opinion, motivation themes.

Mixed Method Design: This design uses both quantitative and qualitative either in a specific sequence or concurrent manner. Base on the choice and the requirement of a study, researcher can decide the best choice of using the pattern.

This research adopted qualitative research design. As there is little access to the literature about Iris SME flower business market, author intend to explore the Irish flower business
environment. Assuming that a deep detail is required before drawing a theory, qualitative approach is likely the best option.

This research follows the Research Onion structure, base on which the design comprises philosophy, approaches, strategies n procedures.

### 3.3.1. Philosophy

Research philosophy refers to the evaluation of beliefs and assumption for developing a knowledge (Saunders et al., 2016, p.124). Out of the 3-assumption ontological, epistemology and axiological and the 5 types of philosophy Positivism, Critical realms, Interpretivism, Postmodernism and pragmatism by Saunders et al. (2015), the research philosophy - assumption adopted is interpretivism- epistemology as this philosophy emphasis on creating meanings from physical phenomenon. Th purpose of this philosophy adoption is on the basis that the author is trying to create new and in-depth understanding of utilisation of entrepreneurial marketing dimension in Irish SME flower market by interpreting the social information of experience in business florist. Furthermore, the author aims to analyse their individual circumstance which could be a factor to their decision making.

Interpretivism focus on complexity, richness, multiple interpretation and meaning making which is explicitly subjective (Saunders et al., 2016, p.141).

Epistemology assumption allows to focus on knowledge and how to communicate knowledge to other and a greater choice of method (Saunders et al., 2016, p.127).
This assumption is perfectly applicable to the fact that the individual knowledge of every entrepreneur is different and to utilise their knowledge for this research.

### 3.3.2. Approach

Three research approaches are suggested by Sauders et al. (2015) - deduction, induction and abduction.

Deduction logic is to deduct a conclusion out of true property, while induction logic refers to the generation of untested conclusion from a known property and abduction logic is to generate conclusion from a known property.

In context of this research Inductive approach is adopted as entrepreneurial marketing dimension property are known however the behaviour of these dimension are not known with respect to the Irish market and the research is to induce a conclusion of its behaviour base on the qualitative data. Also, the sample size is 8 which is relatively low small with regards to the number of Irish florists in the country.

### 3.3.3. Strategy

The design of this study is exploratory and it is chosen to suit the nature of the study as there is lack of knowledge of the applying area. Considering the exploratory nature of the research design will allow freedom to the author to gain insights as the study progress. The exploratory study is used when a theory is unclear and to understand the issue, an in-dept interview of the
concerning person could help to bring out more facts to understand. The advantage of using exploratory design is the flexibility and adaptability to change. (Sauders et al., 2015, p. 175.)

Due to the limited time-frame of 12 weeks the interview is designed to explore the surface of the problem area. An in-depth study would need larger sample frame and open interview system that will explore every detail of participants response. The problem arises when there is very less willing percipient available for a study if the design is well structured and planned. Flexibility in both the side is required.

### 3.3.4. Limitation

The research limitation is points out the assumption and small detail ignored during the research work. The first limitation is the restricted accessibility of the literature/ background of Irish market to the researcher. Time limitation inhibit the deep search of Irish market information to the research however BordBia, the Irish food Board and the National Botanical garden have been a very helpful in this research. The lack of proper background information on Irish market could be a factor to the proper designing of the research.

Second limitation is the sampling. The sample size is 8 which is very small in compare to the population engaging in flower industry. Therefore, the data collected from chosen sample might have different to some section of the population as demographically market is dynamic. Even though the 8 respondent belongs to different countries of Ireland.
Third limitation is the respondents. When approach for participating into a research people feel insecure. And also due to the time commitment, most of the population rejects the invitation. Also, people when approached through email they are reluctant to reject the request fearing it as a spam or virus. Therefore, the preferred type of respondent might be left out among the non-willing to participate population.

Fourth limitation is truthfulness of the data. Some respondent feels insecure about their data being public and as marketing data are very sensitive for their firm. It is uncertain that the data collected were 100% true.

3.5. Material and Apparatus

The research study adopts qualitative design that is carried out using semi structured interviews. This section includes detail explanation of the interview questions.

3.5.1. Material

For this research a semi-structured interview was conducted. The questions were developed on the basis of the seven core dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing that is proactive, opportunity focus, innovative, risk-taking, customer intensity, resource leverage and value creation. The questions (attached at Appendix 3) were designed by using key words like ‘explain’, ‘how’, ‘describe’, so that the interviewee describe the theme in their own individual way with details relating to the theme and their experience.
Before going to the interview question some variable are collected in order to categories the participation and their expertise in the business.

Variable:

**Employees:** This variable allows to determine the size of the SME and their human resources.

**Established year:** This variable allows to determine the stability of the business in the market.

**County:** This variable allows to determine the demographic of the participants.

**Role:** This variable allows to determine the decision-making power.

**Experience:** This variable allows to determine the expertise of the participant on the field.

With the above variable the author is able to judge that the respondent can provide data related to the study.

The first question is to understand the marketing activities of the firm. Activeness in marketing activity is important for a firm to indicate that the have a knowledge of the market they are competing with.

"**Can you briefly explain what are the marketing activities of your business?**"

It allows to categories the participant on the basis of the activeness and the variety of the marketing option adopted
Theme 1: Proactiveness Oriented

Proactiveness in a business is indicated by the actions performed to counterpart the competitors challenge and active participation on the market trend change. The sample question enables the participant to describe their actions and their perception of market trend and competitors.

“Please explain how your firm handles with competitors and external environmental factor changes like market trend change.”

From the individual data question are further steered toward the differentiation to relate with the advantages gain from performing the actions.

Theme 2: Opportunity Oriented

Opportunity brings new business and allow the business to grow. Entrepreneurs have the quality of identifying ever single opportunity and turn into a business. The sample question first extracts the actions of the firm to seek opportunity.

“How much fervent your business is towards new opportunity?”

From the individual data question are further steered toward the importance of opportunity seeking advantages for the firm.
Theme 3: Calculated Risk-Taking

The sample question intends to investigate the perception of risk-taking in the business.

“What is your firms’ attitude towards the risk-taking project?”

From the individual data question are further steered toward the importance of risk-taking advantages for the firm.

Theme 4: Innovativeness

Entrepreneurs are represented by innovativeness for their performance. The sample questions explore the depth of innovativeness of the firm.

“How often your firm invests in R&D to ensure innovativeness and stay creative with the service/product? Can you mention any product/service?”

From the individual data, question is further steered toward the importance of opportunity advantages of being innovative.
Theme 5: Customer Intensity

“How your firm measure customer satisfaction level and How important is it for your firm?”

From the individual data question are further steered toward the importance of customer value to the firm.

Theme 6: Resource Leveraging

Maximum utilization of resources allows the small firm to manage its operation smoother. The sample question investigates the areas where resource leveraging is done within the firm.

“Please describe how efficiently your firm uses resources?”

From the individual data, question is further steered toward the importance of resource management from every aspect of the business.
Theme 7: Value Creation

Value creation is base of every business. Action performing to provide better value for the amount the customer spends. The sample question tends to investigate the individual opinion on value creation.

“How would you differentiate your firm from any other flower shop in terms of value creation?”

From the individual data, question is further steered toward the of differentiation cost efficiency of the firm by value creation.

3.5.2. Apparatus

The research follows qualitative design which is carried out by performing semi structured interview. The apparatus used to record the interview is mobile phone. And for transcribing the interview laptop was used and a desktop software to dictate the interview.

3.6. Procedure

The primary data collection is through semi structured interview. The participants are from different counties of Ireland (Dublin, Galway, Wicklow, Monaghan, Kerry and Kildare). Out of the 8 interviews conducted to collect the primary data, 7 of the interviews were taken through telephonic conversation by getting an appointment beforehand.
The respondents were informed what the study was about and for what purpose it was during the appointment seeking telephonic conversation. Most of the respondent were willing to take part by telephonic conversation. They informed their busy schedule for not being able to provide proper interview time and place. Information form (attached at Appendix 4), consent form (attached at Appendix 5) and the interview question were sent to the respondent earlier when the respondent agree to participate in the research.

One interview was taken face-to-face. The interview took place at Costello Flowers, Dun Laoghaire, Dublin on 11 April 2019 at 05:30 pm. The interviewer printed the consent form and the information form with the interview question and were presented to the interviewee before the interview start. Once again, the purpose of the study was described and the interview was conducted. After the interview, the interviewee was asked to sign the Consent form by describing the use of personal data in the study and the public publication.

The interview duration differs as per the responses of the participants; however, all the interview did not exceed 30 minutes as committed in the form.

3.7. Ethics

In a research ethics in every step is crucial as there is sensitivity of personal identity. Among the many ethical issue, data protection is the most important and most easily targeted. The data collected from the participant are valuable and also very sensitive. Utilization of any personal as well as research data is unethical without the consent of the data provider.
One major ethical issue with interview is participants regret after answering the question and would like to withdraw. For this kind of issue before the interview start an instruction is kept in handy so as they can withdraw any point of time.

Another issue which can be mentioned is even after sample question were send out before arranging an interview, the interviewee sometime might face understand the exact interpretation. Communication gap could lead to unwanted situation. It is foremost important duty of the researcher to communicate properly and clearly before any arrangement are made.

The safeguard of the primary data from the interview is solemnly me by the researcher. Researcher have understood and secure the primary data as per the data protection rule by Data Protection Commissioner, Ireland. The interview question has restricted and design to use minimum data possible of persona identity.

Upon the completing of research the data will be destroyed, however at any point of the time if the participant wishes to withdraw then the data will be destroyed.

3.8. Data analytics

This research has done data analysis of primary data by using Thematic analysis as it is the foundation of qualitative data analysis. Braun and Clarke (2006) defined Thematic Analysis as” the method for identifying, analysing, reporting patterns with data”. Thematic analysis allows a systematic analysis with a flexibility to access the qualitative data. It also provides a logical way of accessing the data with proper ordering.
As Thematic analysis is not bound by any philosophy it provides the researcher the freedom of utilising the primary data to support the findings. The nature of the data collected is descriptive. Once the data is transcribed the coding of nodes is performed. The nodes were based on the variables (Employees, Established, County, Role, Experience) and the theme (Proactiveness, Opportunity, innovativeness, risk-taking, customer satisfaction, resource leveraging and value creation.) described above.

3.9. Conclusion

The above section presents the methodology and the analysis method of the research. Separate justification was providing for each type of selected or adopted method. With the detail explanation of the choice of the methodology and the objective from the literature review the chapter highlights plan and the model going to be used for answering the research question.
4.1. Introduction

The primary data were recorded as audio which is then transcribed as text document using a dictation desktop software. As the research is going to use Thematic Analysis for evaluating the primary data there is a need of systemic organization of the data.

The data are analyses by using NVivo12 pro provided by Dublin Business School for analysis of qualitative data. After the software were installed the transcribed file are imported to the software.

Braun and Clarke (2006, p.87) suggest six phase guides to perform Thematic analysis. This phase includes become familiar with the data, generating initial codes, search for themes, review themes define themes and finally to producing the report.

Base on the research study the themes are well known. The entrepreneurial marketing dimensions are the theme on which the data are to be put together. As author went through each transcribe data relating to every theme are encountered and noted.

As the sample question were simple and well organized to denote the specific theme, the nodes created are similar to the theme, however the specification of competitive data that indicated the competitive advantage are slightly different. therefore, the data belonging to the advantage are created separately and with a prefix '_advantage'.

Verified nodes are created and data are inserted from each respondent transcribe. As per the 7-core dimension of entrepreneurial marketing the themes are created and related nodes are
organizing to form a meaningful group of data (Braun and Clarke, 2006, p.89). Fig. shows the headachy of the node under the theme.

**Research Objective 1: To investigate whether SMEs of Ireland practice entrepreneurial marketing dimension in their business.**

From the findings entrepreneurial marketing dimensions are implemented by the SMEs, however not all dimensions are implemented as they are not applicable to some. As the objective is to find out the applicability the observations are discussed below:

### 4.2. Theme 1: Proactiveness:

Proactiveness is the action and measured taken to handle the market trend change and dealing with the competitors. The two factors of proactiveness – market trend knowledge and competitors handling capacity are very varied among the respondents. It was found that most among the 8 respondents, 4 doesn’t really care about competitor but do have a clear idea where’s the have doesn’t have any idea or anything to do with the competitors.

**Node 1: Competitors:**

R3: “so my competitors are quite far from me so I kind of work with them”.

R6: “My idea about competitors is, I do not pay much attention to my competitors”.

R7: “Just go with the flow”.

R8: “I do not really care about them. Like you can waste your life worrying about like what other people do and what they do not do and everything”.

Node 2: Market Trend

R3: “If there is something new on the market that I like I am interested in I would probably get it them and with my customers discusses like I tell them about it look the product I got”.

R4: “Well trends change and usually the people who sells the flowers to me they usually organized things to show you what is going to change and a lot of it does come from Holland.”

R5: “Most of work is out through word of mouth. So, if I do a good job then people reach out somebody else and let will let me know if want me to do something for them like wedding you know.”

R6: “I have couple of mentors with whom I chat occasionally. I find that even though there is a trend of my type of flowers now I would not worry about the going out of fashion because I have a particular sector segment of the market that will always be there. Some type of the customer like persona. I would say 85 to 95% chance. People in nurturing job, they live in the real world and they do not want perfection. They do not want uniformity.”

R7: “Just go with the flow.”

R8: “I keep an eye obviously on certain things but the reality is that you established your niche like I know what I am doing that thing”.

Observation: Competition among the flower SME are very low or either not considered as competitors among them as majority of the respondents have not mentioned or nor considered an important factor for business.
The competition effects on the business is low to non. The market trends are followed by most of the respondent except for respondent 4 whose product are controlled by the whole sell delivery-Holland.

Figure 1 indicates the sum activeness of the theme proactiveness shown by the 8 responses base on their various activity. Respondent 6 showed the highest with more than 10% with activities.

**Fig:1: Proactive node percentile.**
All the SMEs do follow market trend however the competition among the Flower SME are quite low. In some cases, the SMEs even work together to cover up the delivery area when one shop is not able to do. The reason of this is rule by demographic. All the SMEs have shown some sign of following market trend except for respondent 4 whose products and variation is all controlled by Holland deliveries.

4.3. Theme 2: Opportunity Focus

Opportunity focus is determined by the marketing activity of the firm through which new business are gained. Apart from the specific marketing activities, the firm have provided data that are related to opportunity searching actions taken on occasionally. The node considered are the marketing actives and also separate seeking channels. Assuming through the marketing action firm get opportunity.

Node 1: Marketing:

R1: “well I use face book and Instagram and website very basic last November. local advertising and Facebook, internet local advertising”.

R3: “Instagram and Facebook. Advertising at Local paper, local school, and sort of gifts to the local schools, and for event and things like that.”

R4: “word of mouth at this stage. a charity event, I always give them spot prize. And I do google ads.”

R5: “Instagram, Facebook, networking business networking”.
R6: “moment I depend on word of mouth and social media mainly. Instagram is really important. bridal magazines specific to the area. And also, local newspapers and magazines.”

R7: “Social Media”.

R8: “social media, editorials like magazines. word of mouth that is the best marketing.”

**Node 2: Opportunity:**

R1: “word of mouth, Facebook, Instagram, different events, local schools.”

R2: “work just comes in.”

R3: “I suppose through marketing, by getting to know to the local clubs, by getting to know to restaurant. Hotels, introducing myself. “

R4: “Mainly through google that is internet. I get business in over the internet or people will called me from Australia, or America, Canada or where ever they are. So, I get a bit of business that way. And England and UK as well”.

R5: “I suppose just showing the people you work. I find Instagram very useful. I put my works picture on social media. I hardly use my website to show my work.”

R6: “Social media and half of my wedding business last year were from recommendation.”

R7: “Just go with the flow. social media”.

R8: “because we have been here for a while people seek us, I do not how maybe they look up on my website or my Instagram.”
**Observation:** All the respondent has one or many marketing activities. Other than the marketing except for the respondent 2 and 7, the firm seeks opportunity for the business. Social media is one big factor playing in terms of marketing. All the respondent show focus on opportunity however the intensity of their activeness is different. Respondent 3 and 6 have explored more options like magazines, local schools’ events.

Figure 2 shows respond 6 have shown the most opportunity focused behavior with the highest percentile nearly of 13.7%. this behavior is recorded as the respondent have invested her business with most of the marketing channels. Apart from the marketing activities respondent 6 has her others activities not related directly to the opportunity, however leading to get new opportunity through them.
Social media, google ads, newspaper, magazine, website and word of mouth are the marketing channels through which new opportunity for the business are brought by the firms. It can also be mentioned that some of the owner are very active towards the opportunity seeking whereas respondent 2 and 7 just go with the flow. Engaging with marketing activities have enable to the exposure of market opportunity and also with an action on particular occasion leads to opportunity. Opportunity focus is advantages to the business.
4.4. Theme 3: Customer Intensity

“Customer satisfaction is very important for this business and also to me” – Respondent 6.

Flower business is customer driven business. Customer satisfaction is essential and is marked by feedback, revisit to the same shop, recommendation through word of mouth.

**Node 1: Customer Satisfaction:**

**R1:** “they are happy and bubbly. If the feel back they come in here and they pass on their friends to come in here and they do not know what they are looking for sometimes. I do not really...”

**R2:** “they come back to me. But I do 100% rating.”

**R3:** “They come back. I do not have that many google reviews but I do get Facebook reviews and lots of comments of positiveness, nice bright cards and lovely message to say thank you. It is an interesting industry in which people especially Irish people do not usually complain.”

**R4:** “Because mainly I have lots of customers and I know what they like and a good florist had to remember what they like. And everybody is different and all like something different.”

**R5:** “Well from the feedback it is good to know that I am doing good and you are in right direction. I use to put up those feedback on Instagram and place like happy customer and people know that you are getting feedback. That people are happy with me. In that way a positive image is created among new people who does not know me.”
R6: “My customer service is very important to me. I take a lot of time with my customers. I meet my customer twice for wedding, one initially and one near the wedding”.

R7: “The did come back. And yes, the brides use to get back with feedbacks.”

R8: “and I do get lovely massages, cards, email thanking for the designs from there I know they are happy.”

Fig.3: Customer Intensity node percentile.
Observation: From figure 3 respondent 1 exhibit the highest with more than 4%. Apart from the feedback the respondent 1 have her way to attract customer through her displays and interacting with the customers let her know their feedbacks.

4.5. Theme 4: Risk-taking

Risk-taking is bold action, to come out of comfort zone, and adopt new idea or bring out new.

Node 1: Risk taking

R1: Not really risk-taking projects in florist business now. It is not stock market.
R2: “not really.”
R3: “I do not know. I do not have many.”
R4: “Not really. It is same thing over and over again.
R5: “. I use to go to hotels when they are having wedding and take a table for 300 euro or more. That has never got me anything. I was there in those business meeting for three years and they cost a lot of money like 3800 euro a year. And I never get a return from those what I wanted. “
R6: “I have to be very happy with my own gut feeling about this project. I would turn down if it doesn’t fit my own beliefs in past.”
R7: “Not really. We do only generally stuffs.”
R8: “Yes, I am not afraid to take risky projects.”
Fig.4: Risk taking node percentile

Observation: Most of the respondent are not willing to take risk, one dose feel risk. Except for the respondent 8 who is not afraid to risk taking project, coming out of comfort zone, trying out new stuffs from old, creating while working, she had shown the strongest evident on risk taking factor. Because of this behavior she is quite establish and have quite a business. Here a relation between the dimension can be drawn using her case. Respondent is willing to take risk and try out new ideas which lead her to keep on market trend and also with the risk-taking venture she has innovation that again makes her different and unique among any other that satisfy customer and get new opportunity.
4.6. Theme 5: Resource Leveraging

Resource leveraging is utilizing available resource and possible resource to get benefit. Respondents hardly have any helping hand it is either themselves or their partners.

Node 1: Resource

R1: “I have not really got the dram effect of it in the business so until I get that I do not have any delivery drive or anything stuffs like that.”

R2: “I do myself but I do get help from family.”

R3: “It isn’t’ enough.”

R4: “For this small business the resources I am having is enough and I am of certain age. Total 4 members working with me among which 2 are part time.”

R5: “I do it alone. I am very good in preparing. I love working at night time. As well as the day too. I won say it is very stressful but it is time consuming.”

R6: “With 7 children I never had time. I do not have much external help but I do have certain amount of help from family.”

R7: “Just two of is just perfect.”

R8: “Mostly it is event work so I do everything myself like the design and all. But there are 6 people who help me so there are 7 of us all together.”
Observation: From figure 5 respondent showed highest percentile of more than 3%. Here the node 2 (number of resources is omitted) as the number doesn’t play any role while analyzing through NVivo.

Apart from the human resource leverage respondent one has utilized her other resources very efficiently. Here resource leveraging increases her advance towards saving increases. As from her case hiring untrained helper for her work to pay or spent lesser and save more. Utilization of shop scarps for other purposes too add value in saving.
4.7. Theme 6: Value Creation

Node 1: Value creation

R1: “So, investing you time with customer does pays off well.”

R2: “Not really. I do just what I do.”

R3: “So, I am an expert in this field. I interact with my client and help them out with everything they want when they come in whether it is for a product or a service.”

R4: “and I know what they like and a good florist had to remember what they like. And everybody is different and all like something different.”

R5: “So, well that is fine but I would put in a flower and a plant as well in the basket. So, I put up an orchid, with which looks very natural. The guy put up the picture on Instagram and it looks great.”

R6: “I use to meet twice at least or sometimes more. Occasionally I do not when the live abroad.”

R8: “At the end, yah I am here to help them it is their event.”

Observation: Value creation is the creating and delivering value to the customer for that amount they spend on it. As customer satisfaction is very important for this business, all the respondent have shown their approaches to create value by interacting, helping out with product selection, innovating to the stuffs they are not very much aware of. From figure 6 respondent 6 has provided her list of action that helps in creating value for her customer. A relation to the customer satisfaction and value creation.
Figure 6: Value creation node percentile
4.8. Theme 7: Innovation

Innovation is new idea, new product, something different (Bavarsad, 2015).

Node 1: R&D

R1:  “I did a couple of courses in London.”
R2:  “yeah, a little bit.”
R3:  “wise I am constantly looking for new ideas and I would use Facebook, Instagram and internet after that.”
R4:  “I never do R&D”
R5:  “Yeah, I do follow a lot of florist in other countries. I follow American florist.”
R6:  “I grow my own flowers.”
R8:  “I keep an eye an on not only flower industry to fashion industry also. The fashion show, the new trend in clothing as well even the fabric stuffs like that. I like textures.”

Node 2: Innovative:

R2:  “yeah, a little bit.”
R3:  “I do very crock gifts wears and promote as much as Irish local craft I can and I also have awards and a very experience”
R5:  “ So, I follow the trends and new in the markets. That’s why I do well. I have different ideas to do things. So, people like my stuffs. “
R6:  “I have a lot of new ideas and I challenge myself and learn to do something different, It is very personal when I do arrange any flower for my customer so it is very individual.”
R8:  “So, I kind of keep an eye. Every day is learning. Every day is new.”
Observation: Innovation is achieved when spend quality time on R&Ds. The two nodes are link through the theme. Some respondent invests on R&D for innovation and some for business opportunity. Fig 7. However, both led to innovativeness as there is knowledge and exposure to information. Respondent 5 follow many other florists from different countries which let her get ideas that culturally different which is an advantage for developing new ideas.
All the themes discussed above and their node are summarized in the figure 8 below as a hierarchical structure.

The variable theme does not have a significant on the other main theme data. It was collected for judgmental purpose only. Resource node under resource leveraging and the customer satisfaction advantage under customer intensity theme are omitted; it does not have significant in the discussion.

![Hierarchy of Nodes](image)

**Fig:8: Heiarchy of Nodes**
The variables are the modifiers for the study, which are keep under one theme, however the finding of the primary data is not affected by the presence of variable theme.

A cluster figure 4.9 show the relationship among the themes. This relation is built from the word similarity and word frequently used among the node value. The data provided by the interviewee are in mixed form indicating many at a single time. So similar data were pit together. Another factor that counts is the judgment of the author during the analysis. As the data were all subjective English word that could be taken and understood in many forms. Subjective data are subjected to perception and the understanding of the reader.

The relation among the dimensions from the figure can be establish for a firm as below:

- Value _Creation --> Customer_Focus → Proactiveness_Orientation -->
- Innovativeness_Orientation → Calculating_Risk → Oportunity_Orientation
→ Resource_leveraging.
Starting from value creation, Customer satisfaction is very essential for flower business. The objectives of these firms are customer driven. To get customer satisfaction automatically these firm create value in the form of intellectual service, products or behavioral gesture. Once a customer satisfaction establishes, through word of mouth on which the firm has no control over, the firm is exposed to more market and builds up the base of an old customer. Exposer to market means exposure to competitors and market trends which then bring back information. As the firm establishes it then again target for more customer, which could be possible by utilizing the old customer base. However, there is a need to know the competition and the market trend to keep retain the old customers and to keep up with the new customer. To form the base firmly, innovation is need. Information from the market trend is the base for R&D. After a good amount of investment in R&D, the new idea of develops that leads to take up projects. As this project new a firm need to understand the risk and calculate the possible outcome and willingness to invest and take up the projects. At the same time resource leveraging and opportunity, orientation provides support to the firm.
4.3. Conclusion

The primary data transcribes is analyzed by creating nodes and theme base on the entrepreneurial marketing dimensions. The transcribed data were imported to NVivo 12 pro and processed running queries. Three type of queries were run to analyses the 7 themes separately, chart query, hierarchy query and cluster query. Chart query for each separate node to compare the data among the participants.

**Validity:** Validity is the process of validating by comparing the processed data and the raw data. (Sauders, 2015, p.204). The data interpreted from the chart that contains the comparison of 8 participants were compared. The highest percentile scoring participant’s data was again compared with transcription. A slight difference was observed for few participants as the during node creation possible word were categories without thorough check on the meaning.

Also, the percentile was created by more than one node simply by comparing the validation was difficult in the beginning stage. However, the with practice the data were validate with each word and the nodes.

**Reliability:** Reliability refers to the replication of the data to the previous research. The previous research taken in to consideration was by Makmur et al. (2018) and Bavarsad et al. (2015). Both the research was conducted through quantitative while this study adopts qualitative method. When the finding s were compared there is a slight difference between the parameters. This difference is due to the nature of applied filed where out of seven core dimensions are not necessarily applicable.
Chapter 5: Discussion

Research Objective2: To investigate the advantages outcome from the use of entrepreneurial marketing dimension.

The seven-core dimension are intertwined with each other. The Practicing of one-dimension lead to achieve another dimension. As we have already analyzed the observations from the findings the advantages of practicing entrepreneurial marketing in terms of Irish flower SMEs be view as follows:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Advantage</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pro-activeness:</td>
<td>One step ahead of competitors, Market trend knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity focus:</td>
<td>Expansion of business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Customer intensity:</td>
<td>Customer satisfaction, Customer value creation, new customer attraction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation:</td>
<td>Creativity, customer attraction.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Differentiation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk-taking:</td>
<td>Differentiation, innovation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Resource leveraging</td>
<td>Cost efficiency,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Value creation</td>
<td>Customer satisfaction, new opportunity.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Objective 3: To explore the contribution of entrepreneurial marketing dimensions in creating a sustainable competitive advantage

Pro-activeness on Competitive Advantage

Among the two-drive force of proactiveness it is clear that all the respondents invest more on market trend to keep up, with the trend and it has become a significant source of new ideas. Even if they have not considered competitions among themselves the factor have hardly put any impact on their business. The negligence of the competitions factor also does not impact the opportunity seeking, instead, investing their time on market trend have provided a source of new idea and information of fashion and trend. Therefore, the proactiveness is half achieved and does have shown impact on competitive advantage as it provide differentiation to each individual entrepreneur. This study contradicts the study by Makmur et al. (2018) as competition is not an influence factor with regards to the Flower SME of Ireland.

Opportunity Focus on Competitive Advantage

Florist entrepreneurs have shown from their answers that they are opportunity oriented and focuses on getting new opportunity for the business. It might be significant to mention that though not all the respondents have shown similar behavior, the respondent who are very focus on the opportunity have gain higher and are able to achieve more value in the business.
Also, it is very clear that respondent who have invested every possible option on marketing have more business and more exposure to the market. Focusing on new opportunity thus make a difference. The factor thus shows that impact on competitive advantage through opportunity focus.

**Customer Intensity on Competitive Advantage**

The understanding of customer need, behavior, entertaining the customers by interacting with them, investing time on customer relationship these are some of the main feature shown by the respondents. Customer satisfaction level are measured by the feedbacks from social media google, card massage and the most important feature of utilizing the customer feedback to get more recognition by posting them on social media or in another words, utilizing customer feedback to get more opportunity was shown by one of the respondents.

**Risk-taking on Competitive Advantage**

Risk taking is one of the entrepreneurial features that is vastly highlighted. However, a large amount of variation has observed from the study. Majority of the respondent do not consider the flower business have risk taking at all however few respondents have shown bold action on their product choice by adding on to wild flower selection and because of that the respondent have a unique style that makes her different from any other florist.
On another case one respondent have shown keen interest on challenging herself with unusual pattern of product. It is difficult to generalized the observation however the study has proved specimen hat risk taking does have impact on competitive advantage.

**Resource Leveraging on Competitive Advantage**

The respondents are utilizing their resources at the maximum potential as there is lack of finance to put more resource in the business. The respondents have provided with ample example of utilizing free hand for their business which dose indicate the impact on competitive advantage.

**Value Creation on Competitive Advantage**

For the business-like flower, customer satisfaction is very significant. As one of the respondents have highlighted that“ Irish customer doesn’t complain at all” there is always an effort from the owner to please their customer. Most of the time the customer doesn’t’ t have any idea of what they want, when they approach, florist tend to provide the maximum help in deciding what to purchase. In this way florist interact with their customer and help them with every single detail they could to establish a relation and creating a value in the process. Thus, value creation has impact on competitive advantage.
Innovation on Competitive Advantage

Innovation is the highlighted feature of an entrepreneur. There is a mix response from the participants. People engaging with their own creation like respondent 8 and 6 are very much into R&D and always keep on with their uniqueness by investing on maximum potential of creativity, whereas other florist who concentrate on scaling up of their business invest a medium amount of effort. There is also a group who doesn’t not invest in innovativeness as they deal with already made products.

Thus, investing on Innovativeness by performing research and development have impact on competitive advantage.
Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendation

6.1. Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to explore the impact of entrepreneurial marketing dimension implementation, its advantage of implementation and contribution on sustainable competitive advantage in Irish SMEs flower market and observe its behavior in the related business. The result shows that all the dimensions of entrepreneurial marketing are being implemented however its implementation differs with the implementing decision maker and it is not necessarily implemented as a set of rules. Variation in the implementation shows different results.

The dimensions are linked to one another. Implementation of one dimension can result in achieving another. Like proactiveness and opportunity focus is hard to separate. Also, customer intensity and value creation. When a firm invest on customer intensity value creation is automatically achieved. By implementing the dimension one firm can achieve many advantages. The advantages achieve from the implementation is more like a complete set of business development rules. If applied properly there is sure benefit however if neglected growth is slow. The impact of its implementation, direct or indirect depending upon the implementation process and utilization pattern.

The last objective of the study was to find out how the dimensions contribute to the sustainable competitive advantage. From the above findings and discussions, it is clear that that every
single dimension contributes on its different way. Competitive advantage in this study is
measured in two-dimension differentiation and cost efficiency. It was proved that
proactiveness, innovativeness, opportunity focus, risk taking, customer intensity and value
creation contributes differentiation while resource leveraging contributes cost efficiency.

6.2. Recommendation

There is lack of information and training among the flower SME of Ireland, which limits the
exploitation of technology and marketing possible option. It is highly recommended to the
small and micro business to explore and invest more on market and technology, which will be
an added value to the business.

The study was done with minimum sampling frame, though it covers most of the demography,
hence the generalization of the result to the larger population may not be applicable. Also, the
study was done with one form of data collection so the result may vary with done with mix
method. Initial plan for this study was by utilizing mix method design, however due to the time
constrain and lack of participants it was limited to one type of data collection.

Focus research on similar field to understand the complexity of entrepreneurial dimension
behavior is recommended. To achieve a deep understanding on how to improve the
performance of a firm by utilizing entrepreneurial dimension is recommended. Also, the study
is meant to provide an insight to the marketer and entrepreneurs on the behavioral of
entrepreneurial marketing dimension with respect to Irish market. Similar research on different
area with larger sample is highly recommended.
References


Appendices

Appendix 1: Entrepreneurial Marketing Survey

Most promising topical areas in entrepreneurship research

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<td>Entrepreneurship / Innovation Interface</td>
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<td>Entrepreneurial Opportunities</td>
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<td>Corporate Entrepreneurship</td>
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<td>International Entrepreneurship</td>
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<td>Geography of Entrepreneurship</td>
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<td>Entrepreneurship Education</td>
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<td>Family Firms</td>
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</table>

Source: University of Hohenheim, Entrepreneurship Research Group
Based on recommendations from 226 experienced entrepreneurship researchers

Source: Kuckertz and Prochotta(2018, p.)
Appendix 2: Interview Invitation Form

Dear [Recipient],

I am writing this email to invite you for a research interview (face to face or telephone) on Entrepreneurial marketing dimensions as a part of my Master's dissertation. The interview will take a maximum of 30 minutes. As a renowned [field] of Ireland, I believe your knowledge is highly significant for this study. I have attached the interview questions and information about the study and the interview details with this email. Please let me know when can I call you in case you are willing to participate.

If you have any Queries or require any further information, please do not hesitate to contact me at the following number 0809875550 or email me at 309359791@dbu.ie/achal.sagolzem@gmail.com.

Your contribution in this study is highly appreciated. Thank you in advance.

Yours Sincerely,

Akhil Sagolzem

Student ID: 30935979

Dublin Business School
Appendix 3: Sample Interview Question

Interview Guide

<table>
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<th>Name:</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Role:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Established year:</td>
<td>Experience:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County:</td>
<td>Interview Date:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Can you briefly explain what are the marketing activities of your business?
- Please explain how your firm handles with competitors and external environmental factor change like market trend change.
- How much fervent your business is towards new opportunity?
- What is your firms’ attitude towards the risk-taking project?
- How often your firm invests in R&D to ensure innovativeness and stay creative with the service/product? Can you mention any product/service?
- How your firm measure customer satisfaction level and How important is it for your firm?
- Please describe how efficiently your firm uses resources?
- How would you differentiate your firm from any other flower shop in terms of value creation?
Appendix 4: Information form

Information Form and Consent Sheet

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

PROJECT TITLE: Entrepreneurial marketing as sustainable competitive advantage for SME's: An exploratory study within the Irish Flower Industry

My name is Athoibi Sagolsem (10393978) and I am a Mater’s student in the MBA General at Dublin Business School. I am working on the research project under the supervision of Mr. Ray Whelan.

You are being asked to take part in a research study on Entrepreneurial marketing practice by the small and medium enterprises of Irish flower market. The research aims to explore the marketing practice and the positive impacts of entrepreneurial dimensions on creating a sustainable competitive advantage for micro and small enterprises across Irish floral industry.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN

In this study, you will be asked to participate in one to one interview as a part of qualitative research. With your consent, interviews will be audio-recorded. Once the recording has been transcribed, the audio-recording will be destroyed.

TIME COMMITMENT
The study typically takes 30 minutes maximum that will take place in a mutually convenient safe location. The information recorded will be held until the research is completed and published.

**PARTICIPANTS’ RIGHTS**

You may decide to stop being a part of the research study at any time without explanation required from you. You have the right to ask that any data you have supplied to that point be withdrawn / destroyed. You have the right to omit or refuse to answer or respond to any question that is asked of you. You have the right to have your questions about the procedures answered (unless answering these questions would interfere with the study’s outcome. A full de-briefing will be given after the study). If you have any questions as a result of reading this information sheet, you should ask the researcher before the study begins.

**CONFIDENTIALITY/ANONYMITY**

The data I collect does not contain any personal information about you except for your profession as required for the credibility of the data. I intend to use the data collected for the academic research. The data will be used while analysing the purpose of the study and during presenting the thesis.
FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

I or / and Mr. Ray Whelan will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time.

You may contact my supervisor at ray.whelan@dbs.ie or contact DBS at (01)4177500.
Appendix 5: Consent Form

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

PROJECT TITLE: Entrepreneurial marketing as sustainable competitive advantage for SME’s:
An exploratory study within the Irish Flower Industry

PROJECT SUMMARY:
The research aims to explore the Irish flower industry specially the small and medium enterprises to find out the entrepreneurial marketing practice by measuring its seven core dimensions (proactiveness, opportunity-focus, risk-taking, innovativeness, customer intensity, value creation, resource leveraging). The small and medium enterprises mainly with limited resource highly depends on the creativeness and innovation for its stand within the market. Entrepreneurial Marketing describes various ways to employ for small and medium enterprises. The study aims to discover the actual advantages an enterprise could gain from practicing the marketing process.

By signing below, you are agreeing that: (1) you have read and understood the Participant Information Sheet, (2) questions about your participation in this study have been answered satisfactorily, (3) you are aware of the potential risks (if any), and (4) you are taking part in this research study voluntarily (without coercion).

Participant’s signature
ATHOIIBI SAGOLEM

Student Name (Printed)

ANN JOYCE
Participant’s Name (Printed)

Student Name signature

Date
11th April 2019

Dublin Business School

2019
Appendix 6: Dissertation Meeting 1

Dissertation Meeting/Progress Monitoring Report

Name of Student: Athoibi Sagolsem  
Student No.: 10393978

Name of Supervisor: Ray Whelan  
Meeting No.: 1

Date of Meeting: 04/03/19  
Location of Meeting: Castle House

Review/Comment on Progress Made (since last meeting):

Topics/Issues discussed/addressed at meeting: Action Agreed/Progress expected before next meeting:

- Question to broad
- A lot to be done in the time available

Overall Summary/Conclusion of Meeting:

This first meeting gave to the student opportunity to better explain to the supervisor the dissertation theme, the overall methodology, the objectives and the research question.

This meeting was also important to review the introduction chapter, to reflect about the planning and dissertation process and to set achievable goals, that must be completed until the next meeting.
The list below can be used as a template.

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<tr>
<th>Activities</th>
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<td>Evidence of critical analysis commensurate with Level 9 <em>(qualitative or quantitative or both)</em></td>
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<td>Evidence of project &amp; time management</td>
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Date of next meeting: 04/03/19

Signed (supervisor):

Signed (student):
Appendix 7: Dissertation Meeting 2

Dissertation Meeting/Progress Monitoring Report

Name of Student: Athoibi Sagolsem    Student No.: 10393978
Name of Supervisor: Ray Whelan      Meeting No.: 2
Date of Meeting: 15/03/19    Location of Meeting: Castle House

Review/Comment on Progress Made (since last meeting):

First meeting

Topics/Issues discussed/addressed at meeting: Action Agreed/Progress expected before next meeting:

- Question to broad
- Needs to redefine the question

Overall Summary/Conclusion of Meeting:

Making progress
Interim Meetings

These are essentially concerned with monitoring progress and the manifestation tick list below can be used as a template.

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Date of next meeting: 15/03/19

Signed (supervisor):

Signed (student):
Appendix 8: Dissertation Meeting 3

Dissertation Meeting/Progress Monitoring Report

Name of Student: Athoibi Sagolsem   Student No.: 10393978
Name of Supervisor: Ray Whelan   Meeting No.: 3
Date of Meeting: 26/04/19   Location of Meeting: Castle House

Review/Comment on Progress Made (since last meeting):

All of the recommendations ongoing

Topics/Issues discussed/addressed at meeting: Action Agreed/Progress expected before next meeting:

Making steady progress

Overall Summary/Conclusion of Meeting:

Steady progress
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Date of next meeting: 26/04/19

Signed (supervisor): [Signature]

Signed (student): [Signature]
Appendix 9: Dissertation Meeting 4

Dissertation Meeting/Progress Monitoring Report

Name of Student: Athoibi Sagolsem      Student No.: 10393978
Name of Supervisor: Ray Whelan          Meeting No.: 4
Date of Meeting: 6/12/2018              Location of Meeting: Castle House

Review/Comment on Progress Made (since last meeting):

Very good progress

Topics/Issues discussed/addressed at meeting: Action Agreed/Progress expected before next meeting:

- Making progress

Overall Summary/Conclusion of Meeting:

Very good progress
These are essentially concerned with monitoring progress and the manifestation tick list below can be used as a template.

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Date of next meeting: 12/04/19

Signed (supervisor):

Signed (student): __________________________
Appendix 10: Dissertation Meeting 5

Dissertation Meeting/Progress Monitoring Report

Name of Student: Athoibi Sagolsem       Student No.: 10393978
Name of Supervisor: Ray Whelan          Meeting No.: 5
Date of Meeting: 26/04/19                Location of Meeting: Castle House

Review/Comment on Progress Made (since last meeting):

All of the recommendations completed

Topics/Issues discussed/addressed at meeting: Action Agreed/Progress expected before next meeting:

Making excellent progress

Overall Summary/Conclusion of Meeting:

Excellent progress
Interim Meetings

These are essentially concerned with monitoring progress and the manifestation tick list below can be used as a template.

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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of a comprehensive review of literature</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of planning the Dissertation process logically</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of a robust methodology</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of critical analysis commensurate with Level 9 <em>(qualitative or quantitative or both)</em></td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of conceptualisation commensurate with Level 9, linking review of literature to methodology and also to findings from analysis.</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of synthesizing, literature review, methodology and findings from analysis and developing conclusions and/or recommendations from this process</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of good communication</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence of project &amp; time management</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Date of next meeting: ________________________________

Signed (supervisor): ________________________________

Signed (student): ________________________________