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Research Topic

To Investigate Consumer Brand Loyalty in the Irish
Clothing Industry (Case Study - Zara)

Dissertation submitted in part fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
“Masters of Science in Management Practice”

At Dublin Business School

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Clothing Industry (Case Study - Zara)

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Abstract

Purpose – The ever changing market dynamics, customer preferences & choices, never ending advertisements, constant new updates, hourly discounts, lucky draws, loyalty programs, who dressed best, best sellers, out of stock , restocked , last few hours and the list goes on. The apparel market will not exist without the use of these words. It's fascinating to see how a brand that used to sell only in your locality today is a Global brand and its keeps growing. However, it has its own set of problems. Branded products are often considered to be trustworthy. Brand loyalty promotes branded products that in addition generate revenue for a company and add value to the brand. However, brands are often are subject to change.

Design/Methodology/ Approach – A survey was conducted to collect information on various factors that contribute to brand loyalty from the consumers . To evaluate the role of leadership in brand loyalty and brand management, interviews were conducted of the store managers from Zara.

Findings – Most of the participants who took part in the interview were female consumers. The findings reflected various factors involved in brand loyalty and the role of leadership.

Research Limitations/implications – Due to the less amount of time, this research is only based on the data collected in Dublin, Ireland. The findings and implications are subject to change if the location is changed or the same research is carried out at a different time.

Originality/Value – This research discussed the role of leadership in brand management in Dublin, Ireland.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Brands primarily connect an organization and its consumer. Often a brand stands as a symbol for vision, mission, quality and success of an organization (Kotler, 2012). Brands are often given human traits and persona to influence consumers (Kim and Kramer, 2015). Moreover, Loyalty to a particular brand is a very complex and hybrid concept which encompasses behavior and attitude of consumers to the clothing brands and the relation of the clothing brand loyalty with desire to be loyal to the brand (Kalauz, Ević and Tratnik, 2011). “According to the statistics provided on statista.com with regards to the size of the apparel industry globally, European Union stands out to be the highest, followed by the US (Statista, 2013). Oliver (1999) conducted a research to determine the relationship between consumer brand loyalty and satisfaction. The author stated that loyal consumers are definitely satisfied, However satisfaction does not necessarily make all the consumers loyal (Oliver, 1999). Research shows that organizations to struggle to achieve satisfaction, as loyalty cannot be considered to be a logical goal, because of the type of product or consumers lack of interest (Oliver, 1999). Brands are often recognized by the image and personality that is generates in the minds of its consumers using various mediums such as advertisements and other strategies used by the organizations (Solomon et. al, 2010; Ahmad and Thyagaraj, 2014; Mathews., 2015). Moreover, there are various alternatives available for a consumer to choose from, and a consumer makes his / her choice considering various criteria of sensations, such as appearance, taste, texture, or smell (Soloman et. al, 2010). However, there are many other factors in which a market is divided such as, demographics, age, gender, and geography. In addition, it is believed that the key to determine success of a brand by generating a long term relationship between the brand and its consumers (Solomon et. al, 2010). While ensuring the benefits of the consumer and enhancing consumer satisfaction, organisations should attempt to converge the consumers’ needs and desires. Thus, it is understood that branding, creating value for a brand and making it sustainable in such a competitive market is the need of any retail industry today. Among the entire clothing industry in Europe, ZARA is the largest selling clothing brand (Roper

and Kwan, 2014). The **brand loyalty** has been identified as a key subject for the contribution in ZARA's consistent success. This research proposal is done to examine the role and importance of **brand loyalty** in building value to a brand. This study is conducted by taking the top clothing retailer ZARA as a case study. Also this research proposal includes the relevance for the research and the relevant bodies of theory relating to the research subject then the research question is generated and the research methods, design are explained. Finally, considering the research limitations the dissertation is summarized and concluded.

1.1 Background of the Company

Zara is considered to be the world's second biggest clothing retailer of Inditex, the parent company is the worlds' largest clothing retailer (Interbrand.com, 2015). In 2013, Zara was named as one of the top 50 most sustainable brands around the world by Interbrand (Intel.com, 2013). Zara opened in Dublin, Ireland on 2003 on Henry Street after revamping the oldest irish clothing store called the "Roches store" (The Irish Times, 2003). Zara is considered to be a leading brand in the rapidly changing fashion industry due to its well - organised store network management (Loeb, 2015; Caro, 2011). Inditex maintains competitive advantage in fast fashion apparel and footwear. Moreover, Zara displays a high level of network growth because of its strong vertically aligned supply chain. Zara implements a fast fashion business model that ensures that its store have a fresh stock every two weeks that is, Zara guarantees a fresh stock for its consumers after every fortnight (Industria _de_Diseo).

1.2 Relevance for research

Brand plays a central role in fashion industry. According to Kotler, "a brand is defined as a name, symbol, logo, design or image, or any combination of these, which is designed to identify the product or service." (Kotler, 2009). Today's organizations' use branding as a strategic tool to create awareness in the market and craves from acceptance. However, brands are always evolving, they are not static. (Joseph Arthur Rooney, 1995). Hence, we need to understand consumers' needs and wants, need to have strong leadership and brand strategies which can adapt to the surrounding competitive

environment which can help to build effective and efficient brand. (Joseph Arthur Rooney, 1995). According to the research conducted for this topic, many articles were found, however, none of the articles directly reflected Ireland or Zara, the brand that has been taken up for the research.

1.3 Research Question

From the above study it is understood that the brand loyalty is an important and an evolving topic in the field of marketing and understanding the key factors that influence the brand loyalty like, brand strategies, leadership associated with brand management and consumer perception and involvement in build the brand can lead to improvement in business growth for Zara, Dublin, Ireland. Specifically, the following research question and objectives will be examined in the research. Formulating, specific research question is very important “no research questions or poorly formulated research question will lead to poor research” (Bryman A & Bell E., 2007: 83) also the authors went on saying that if the research question were not specific, the research would be unfocused, though the research design is well structured. (Bryman A & Bell E., 2007) So the research question, aim, objectives and hypotheses are specifically formulated to do the research effectively.

- **How “ZARA” the clothing brand attracts the customers and makes them loyal to the brand in Ireland?**

1.4 Research Aim

The main aim of this research is to critically investigate the various factors involved in developing brand loyalty and leadership involved in managing it as a key business growth in the clothing industry at Dublin, Ireland by taking the top clothing brand “ZARA” as a case study.

1.5 Research Objectives

1. To understand the theory and academic concept of Brand Management.
2. To analyse ZARA's Marketing Strategy and the value to maintain the Brand Image.
3. To understand customer's perception towards ZARA as clothing brand.
4. To analyse the role of Leadership in Brand Management in clothing industry at Ireland.
5. To understand the theory and academic concepts of leadership skills in the organizations.

1.6 Research Hypothesis

Hypothesis is defined as "a preposition made as a basis for reasoning, without the assumption of its truth" (Lee and Lings, 2008). The authors further clarify that a preposition is a statement that answers the research question by predicting a relationship between two or more variables (Lee and Lings, 2008).

Considering the above research question, aim and objectives of the research, the researcher has determined the following hypotheses for this research:

Brand strategies play a very crucial role when it comes to brand management and brand loyalty. Brand strategies are always subject to change as the competitive environment in the market space is ever changing (Strebinger, 2014). The below hypothesis is formed to evaluate what is the impact of brand strategies on the consumer brand loyalty.

Hypothesis 1:

Ho = Brand strategies used by Zara has a positive effect on the customer's Brand Loyalty.

Ha= Brand strategies used by Zara has no effect on the customer's Brand Loyalty.

Consumers' perception and brand image take time to develop (Rindell and Iglesias, 2014). Perception depends on age group and gender as well (Violet Lazarevic, 2012; Maja Stracenski Kalauz, Tihomir Vranesevic, and Miroslav Tratnik, n.d.). The below

hypothesis is formed to evaluate the effects of Consumers' perception over the brand image.

Hypothesis 2:

Ho= Consumer's perception about Zara as a Brand has effects on its Brand Image.

Ha= Consumer's perception about Zara as a Brand has no effect on its Brand Image.

The below hypothesis is formed to evaluate the effects of companies attributes make consumers loyal to the brand.

Hypothesis 3:

Ho= Companies attributes like pricing and product offerings make consumers brand loyal.

Ha= Companies attributes like pricing and product offerings does not make consumers brand loyal.

The below hypothesis is formed to evaluate the role of leadership (i.e., the store managers) and its contribution towards consumer brand loyalty.

Hypothesis 4:

Ho = Store managers' leadership skills enhances store and brand loyalty of consumers.

Ha= Store managers' leadership skills does not enhance store and brand loyalty of consumers.

1.7 Structure of Dissertation

This research study is divided into seven chapters. Each chapter and a description of the contents in each of the chapter is given below:

Chapter 1 – Introduction

In this chapter, the background of the brand loyalty and its importance in

Brand management is explained. This chapter also focuses on the research question, aim, objectives and hypotheses of the research. The research approach, limitations and contributions will be explained in great detail within this chapter.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

This chapter is divided into five sections, at first, literature based on brand loyalty, brand pyramid model and consumer perception is critically analysed. Second, the brand strategies and their importance in creating and sustaining brand. Third, brand image will be discussed to understand the role of brand image in the success of a brand. The fourth section will discuss and critically analyze the relationship between the brand and its consumers. The fifth section will discuss the importance of leadership in brand management. Analysing and understand, all the above section to carry out this research study effectively.

Chapter 3 – Research Methodology and Methods

This chapter will be underpinning the various research methodologies and methods that considered before conducting this research study effectively. This chapter will also justify the methodology and the methods chosen to carry out this research.

Chapter 4 – Data Analysis and Findings

This chapter will layout the research findings and critically analyse the information results obtained after collection of the primary data, collected using a survey questionnaire and in-depth interview of the store managers of Zara.

Chapter 5 – Discussion

This chapter will analyse the finding and results obtained in the previous chapter with regards to the chapter 2, and provide answer to the research question and the objectives of the study.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter will summarize and highlight all the important points that the research analyzed and specific recommendations will be provided to Zara based on the discussion in the previous chapter. The potential for future research in the subject will also be identified and will be explained.

Chapter 7 – Self – Reflection

This chapter will explain the overall experience of the researcher during the Masters programme and how it has increased in the knowledge of the research in the field of interest. This chapter will also critically analyse and highlight skill that were carried out by the researcher during the process of dissertation.

1.8 Contributions

This research study will viably add to the understanding of Brand Management with regards to Irish Clothing Industry in India. Moreover, this study will particularly help any organization in clothing industry to understand the needs of the consumer and trends in the market. In addition, this study will likewise add to the subject Branding and Brand Management particularly, the significance of brand loyalty and leadership involved in branding. This research study will successfully add to the researchers' learning and help the researcher to accomplish the above laid down objectives.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Literature Review is an integral part of any academic research. Literature Review is defined as “The selection of available documents (both published and unpublished) on the topic, which contain information, ideas, data and evidence written from a particular standpoint to fulfil certain aims or express certain views on the nature of the topic and how it is to be investigated, and the effective evaluation of these documents in relation to the research being proposed.” (Hart, 2000)

According to Power and Hauge, *“Branding has become so intertwined with consumption that today’s consumers have often deeply personal relationships to brands and brand histories. Branding is an attempt to strategically “personify” products and to encapsulate a balance between different economic values: quality, utility, symbolic, and cultural worth”* (Power and Hauge, 2008). According to Gambetti, Graffigna and Biraghi, Consumer-Brand Engagement described as *“... a dynamic and process-based concept, evolving in intensity on the basis of the brand capability of increasingly intercepting consumers' desires and expectations using all possible physical and virtual touch points between brand and consumers. Consumer Brand Engagement appears as a overarching marketing concept, encapsulating different consumer decision-making dimensions, from brand preference to brand purchase”* (Gambetti, Graffigna and Biraghi, 2012). Furthermore, Franzak, Makarem and Jae explain about the role of consumer emotions in consumer brand engagement, which encourages brand loyalty by emotional arousal (Franzak, Makarem and Jae, 2014).

In the McKinsey Insight report, they have found that companies that use word-of-mouth as a medium of advertisement and emphasize on in-store execution are more likely to be on the consumer’s short list for initial consideration are likely to capture the loyalty of a consumer in emerging markets (Atsmon, Kuentz and Seong, 2012).

Brand Pyramid Model (BPM) is a model which determines the journey of a consumer from brand awareness to brand loyalty. This model consists of five stages: 1. Presence, 2. Relevance, 3. Performance, 4. Advantage and 5. Bonding. This model aims at building loyalty to a brand, product or organization. This model will be explained further in detail.

Self Determination Theory (SDT) helps us to understand the relationship that the individuals have towards their brand communities (O’Donnell and Brown, 2012). This theory also, determines how the individual consumers participate in building and

developing a brand and its value. The impact of social influences, social comparisons and self-determination over brand loyalty too is discussed in this theory.

While explaining the importance of Brand, Hart and Murphy (1998) stated that *"If a brand is a good one then consumers will purchase it and it becomes a valuable asset"*. Hence, brands may prevail until they continue to serve the need of the consumer (Hart and Murphy, 1998).

2.1 Literature Introduction

The above short literature review on branding and brand loyalty draws the importance of brand management for an organization. To understand and have an effective contribution to the knowledge about the brand management, the further study is done and it is divided into different themes. At first, specifically focused literature review on the importance of brand loyalty, in which the existing study and the impact of brand loyalty in success of a brand is addressed critically by underpinning the Brand Pyramid Model concept. The second literature theme is focused on the consumer perception towards a brand is discussed critically. In third literature theme, developing of leadership skills with creating and building a brand, in which the importance of leadership involved in managing a brand, is addressed critically. Finally, the literature themes are summarized and concluded.

2.2 Brand Loyalty

According to Jing Theng So, Andrew Grant, Parsons Sheau-Fen Yap, there is a significant impact of corporate branding, emotional attachment and brand loyalty in luxury fashion market. Furthermore, they also examined six corporate branding dimensions, corporate association, functional benefits and symbol benefits were found to have a significant impact on emotional attachment which has a significant impact on brand loyalty. (Jing Theng So *et. al.*, 2013). In another study related to brand loyalty, the authors state the effects of self-congruity like, brand personality congruity, brand's user imagery congruity and brand's usage imagery congruity and consumers attitude towards the brand plays an importance role. They also associate brand personality with human characteristics like, sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication and

ruggedness. (Fang Liu Jianyao Li Dick Mizerski Huangting Soh, 2012) Tho D. Nguyen, Nigel J. Barrett, and Kenneth E. Miller found that the key determinants of brand loyalty are considered to be perceived quality, brand awareness and advertising attitudes. They also established a positive relationship between perceived quality and brand awareness and between brand awareness and advertising attitude (Tho D. Nguyen Nigel J. Barrett Kenneth E. Miller, 2011). Philippe Aurier Gilles Séré de Lanauze, agrees with this, and adds further that the consumers' attitude towards the brand as an important factor related to the trust and commitment towards the brand Philippe Aurier Gilles Séré de Lanauze, 2012). Keaveney (2011) argues that the notion of brand loyal consumers is not completely true. His research states that some consumers can never be loyal to the brand and hence, such consumers should be predisposed as disloyal consumers. Keaveney divides the consumers into two broad categories as; a) Highly emotional, trusting and loyal and b) less emotional, trusting and loyal (Keaveney, 2011). On similar lines, Precourt (2009) discusses about lack of brand loyalty during the period of recession or tough economic times. His research shows that brand loyalty has seen significant drop during tough economic times even when the consumers' awareness and trust in the brand is high (Precourt, 2009). Sharp and Newstead (2010) argue that the most loyal customer may not be the best customer. To shed more light on their claim, the authors classified the consumers as: a) Heavy category buyers – they buy a lot of products, of different brands and b) Light category buyers – they often purchase less branded products, as they do very less purchasing. The authors state that the heavy category buyers are the most potential brand loyal customers, also for the competitors. In addition, they also mentioned that light category buyers may lack awareness of the brand and result in less purchase of products of the brand. Moreover, to overcome these challenges that restrict the brand growth, need to be tackled with a strong strategic and / or by engaging consumers in enhancing the brand by spreading awareness of the brand through various loyalty programmes and discounted offerings to the organisations' most loyal consumers (Sharp and Newstead, 2010). Taylor and Hunter (2014), explain the concept of brand loyalty based on the customer relationship management model. Furthermore, the model the authors considered is based on various factors such as consumer satisfaction, attitude, trust and value. According to

Diaz, the marketing executive of Zara, “We are fashion business – not clothing. Our customers buy our products because they like it – not because they are Zara.” (Miguel Diaz cited in Ferdows, Lewis, and Machuca, 2003).

Choong Lyong Ha (2011) states that brand loyalty is considered to be a behavioral aspect and it is not easy to gain brand loyalty, measuring and predicting brand loyalty (Choong Lyong Ha, 1998; S. Allen Broyles *et. al.*, 2011). For further detailing in brand creation and building, Brand Pyramid Model is explained below:

2.2.1 Brand Pyramid Model

According to MindTools.com (2015), Brand Pyramid Model has five key stages, as follows:

a. Presence –

In this stage, consumers are made aware of the brand; they might have also tried the product, however, they may not have an emotional attachment towards it.

b. Relevance –

In this stage, the consumer starts to establish his needs and wants to the brand. The consumer, also, begins to compare the cost of the product to the value and benefits of the purchasing the brand.

c. Performance –

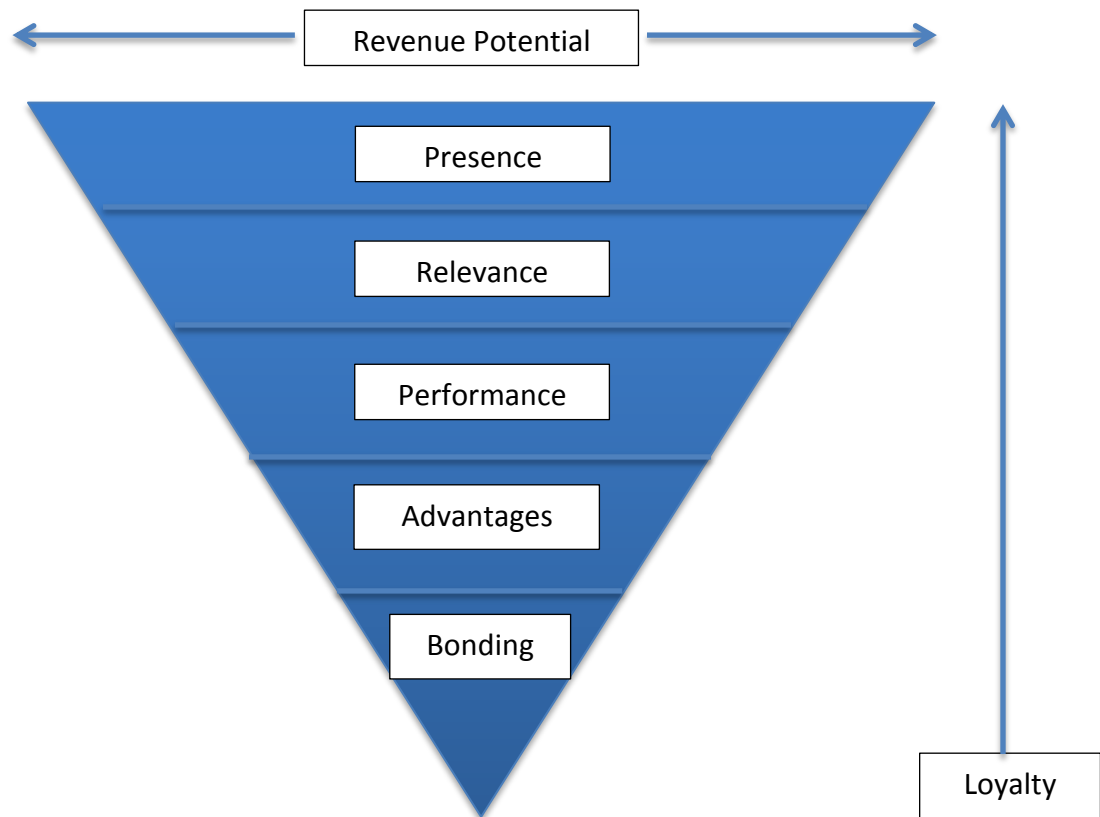
In this stage, the consumer begins to compare the brand with other substitute brands available in the market. The consumer associates the brand with a specific identity.

d. Advantages –

In this stage, the consumer determines the advantages of associated with a particular brand and shows emotional attachment towards it.

e. Bonding –

In this stage, consumer establishes a strong bond with the brand, as they are happy with the brand, shows stronger emotional attachments, and is likely to promote the brand verbally to their peers, family, friends, etc.



(Source: Brand Pyramid Model, MindTools.com, 2015)

Research has shown that it is quite difficult to measure loyalty as on regular bases it is considered to be a one-dimensional phenomenon as it is seen with respect to consumer behavior analysis (El-Manstrly and Harrison, 2013). They, further, consider and put to test the multi-dimensional approach suggested by Oliver to measure loyalty. Matthews, Son and Watchravesringkan (2014) carried out a research to study the antecedents of brand loyalty based Oliver's cognitive, affective, and conative theory of consumer brand loyalty. The authors considered various aspects of brand loyalty such as brand equity and satisfaction. Furthermore, they also took in consideration the brand equity factors

such as, brand awareness, brand image, brand perceived quality, brand emotional value, and brand satisfaction (Matthews, Son, and Watchravesringkan, 2014). Their research showed that brand does create an emotional attachment with its consumer and that organisations need to focus on brand value to enhance brand satisfaction. However, their research lacks variety of respondents in their selected population (Matthews, Son, and Watchravesringkan, 2014). A study was conducted to understand the determinants of brand loyalty (Rathod and Bhatt, 2014). The authors in this study relate product differentiation and unique shopping experience as the key determinants of brand loyalty. In addition, the research conducted by the authors mentions the growing competition and rise in private brand labels, which are create by cost leadership, strong supply chain management system and brand loyalty (Rathod and Bhatt, 2015). Choi and Ahluwalia (2013) agree and moreover, their study examines the determinants of brand switching. According to the authors , the brand commitment is based on promotional discounted offerings, loyalty programmes, end of the season sales and by encouraging mutual benefits between the consumer and the manufacturer (Choi and Ahluwalia, 2013). The authors also mention competitors induced inference which can cause negative publicity of the brand and consumer may decide to change the brand preference (Choi and Ahluwal, 2013).

2.3 Factors that influence Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is measured by various factors, some of the major factors are identified and mentioned below:

2.3.1 Consumer Perception

Perception can be defined as ‘the process by which consumers select, organize, and interpret information (via. our sensory receptors such as, ears, eyes, mouth, fingers) to form a meaningful picture of the world’ (Kotler, Armstrong, Wong and Saunders, 2008; Solomon *et. al*, 2010). Hence, perception is one of the aspects of consumer behavior (Solomon *et. al*, 2010).

Traditionally, understanding of consumer behavior is considered very important by evaluating the various actions of a consumer. The authors states that these actions can help to determine the loyalty of the consumer (Rosenbaum-Elliot, Percy and Pervan, 2007). In addition, the authors mention these actions into various stages as follows: The movement of buyer, obtaining information and comparing the offerings with respect to the competitors offerings, making up a decision and acting upon it (Rosenbaum-Elliot, Percy and Pervan, 2007 : 5). According to Karen Miller, consumer's perception towards a brand can make them loyal to a particular brand or service in fast fashion and replicas. The author also mentions hedonic consumers, who by luxurious fast fashion clothing for sheer pleasure of owning them (Karen Miller, 2013). Moreover, according to the author, there are many more types of consumer behaviors and to add on to this study a comparison of fast fashion and slow fashion consumers have also been conducted. Furthermore, the author also states that consumers expectation, consumers decision process (CDP) in both pre and post purchase stages and consumer satisfaction also play an important role to build in perception about a particular brand or service (Maegan Zarley Watson Ruoh-Nan Yan, 2013). In today's market, a brand must focus on all age groups, especially the generation Y consumers (Jessica Hill Hyun-Hwa Lee , 2015; Violet Lazarevic, 2012). The author argues failing to create a relationship between their brand and the generation Y can be hazardous for the brand(s) as Generation Y is not considered to be so much brand loyal (Violet Lazarevic, 2012; Maja Stracenski Kalauz, Tihomir Vranesevic, and Miroslav Tratnik, n.d.). Kansara (2014) criticized this saying that today young consumer understand that they are going to cherish all the benefits of the branded product as it is a trusted product. The authors research and findings determined various factors like design, trust, social influence and uniqueness of a brand as the key drivers of consumer brand loyalty of a young consumer (Kansara, 2014). Brand community is defined as "specialized, non-geographically bound community, based on a structured set of social relations among admirers of the brand." (Albert M. Muniz, Jr. and Thomas C. O'Guinn, 2001). Won-Moo Hur Kwang-Ho Ahn Minsung Kim believe that trust and brand commitment of brand communities has a strong impact on brand loyalty (Won-Moo Hur Kwang-Ho Ahn

Minsung Kim, 2011). O'Donnell and Brown (2012) argued that to sustain in today's market, it is necessary for the brand to connect with its consumers. Social media also helps to create brand awareness, association and loyalty, and enhance the brand image too especially in the case of young consumers. As many young consumers recognize a brand and also the competitors of the brand through social media (Jumiati Sasmita Norazah Mohd Suki, 2015). The research conducted by the authors shows that promotional activities also has an effect on brand loyalty. (H.-Y. Tsao, P.-C. Lin, L. Pitt and C. Campbell, 2009). Many academic researchers and practitioners focus on the concept of brand engagement which can be stated as *"the strength of the bond connecting brand with the self"* (Park cited by Beck and Dagogo-Jack, 2014). The authors stated that brand performance of a product or a service increases when the organisation focuses on brand attachment with its consumers with the help of brand performance indicators such as word-of-mouth and purchase intentions. Furthermore, they claim that consumers self-esteem and relationship with the brand grows, simultaneously with the brand (Beck and Dagogo-Jack, 2014). Rice (2014) claims that consumers have changed over time and consumers to day are much smarter and marketing strategies have no effect on such consumers. Simonson and Rosen state that consumers have not changed, they are still the same and neither they are immune to the marketing strategies, the consumers decision making process is changing due to the easy available information online, such as, critics about a brand or a product from various reviews (Simonson and Rosen cited in Rice, 2014). Segal *et. al.* agreed and highlighted that companies need to concentrate on their online presence and reviews of the customers as well because nowadays, reviews about a brand or a product on these online platforms may have a positive or a negative impact on the consumer (Segal, Goldstein, Goldman and Rahaf cited in Rice, 2014). Research related to the case study on the Zara brand shows that consumers like to purchase garments at Zara stores because they can always find new and exclusive merchandise, with limited number of merchandise per designs available in the store (Ferdows, Lewis, and Machuca, 2003).

2.3.2 Brand Strategy

“Brands are going to be any company’s future and Brands will play a center role in company’s orientation.” (Urde, 1994). Strategies play a crucial role in achieving the goals of an organisation (Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy and Pervan, 2007). Brand strategies often also known as Brand architecture or Brand structure has a significant impact on the various factors of brand management (Strebinger, 2014). With the growing number of audience, it will be of utmost importance to understand new ways of applying brands to new cultures. (Tiltman 2014 cited Murphy). Furthermore, the author states that today’s consumers are more aware of their brands and understand the values associated with it (Tiltman, 2014). Research shows that many academic theorist provide with many ideal brand strategies, however, not all brand strategies stand true in the real world outside when put to test (Strebinger, 2014). Furthermore, the author’s research findings reveals that brand strategies cannot remain stagnant, they need to be changed looking at the market and the various other drivers of brand strategies (Strebinger. 2014). Nowadays, consumer demands are ever changing, hence, understanding those demands and encouraging innovation in brands is considered to be a new brand strategy to influence consumers decisions (Kapferer, 2014). Ritch and Schroder (2012) claimed that consumer purchase brands based on price when there is a lack of sustainability in the product of their choice. Abrudan (2015) that branding strategies are mostly based on the trends in the market. Samuelsen and Olsen (2012) argue that having brand strategy alternatives does not just influence consumers decisions; it brings about a change in their attitude and also helps in the growth of the brand. Brand Strategies can be further classified into two main categories; a) Symbolic Brands – which has High consumer involvement with emotional/cognition perception, b) Functional Brands – which has low consumer involvement with emotional/cognition perception (Rosenbaum-Elliott, Percy and Pervan, 2007 : 176). For any brand to sustain in a market, it is very important to show that it is different and better than its competitors (Aaker, 2012). Moreover, Aaker (2012) suggested that this differentiation can be achieved in two ways;

- a) Branding by preference – This aims towards generating preference among the choices considered by customers.

b) Branding by relevance – This aims towards developing innovative brand offerings, making competitors' products irrelevant to the consumers.

According to Haigh (2009), recession period provides a good platform for attracting consumers towards the brands. During the period of recession, not only the demand and price go down of well-established branded products, however, consumer's preferences is also subject to change and makes it more favorable to a brand to come out with innovative offerings. Moreover, it also suggests a change in brands' existing strategies to reach its consumer base. The author calls it the "*Demand Drivers*" which are further classified as: functional, emotional and conduct. (Haigh, 2009). In case of Zara, research shows that the merchandise available in Zara stores is considered to be unique, holding a very few number of merchandise per design – putting the entire collection available in the store on display (Ferdows, Lewis, and Machuca, 2003, Caro, 2011; Worstall, 2015). In addition, Zara's strategies includes the introduction of new designs at regular intervals, its rapid production capabilities and lead time in production allows Zara to analyse and predict future market trends (Caro, 2011; Worstall, 2015; Laurent, 2003). Moreover, Zara has a strict about the due dates to place the order, as they tend to avoid the perils of oversupply as most of the stock of Zara remains in the store for less than a fortnight (Ferdows, Lewis, and Machuca, 2003; Caro, 2011; Doonar, 2004).

2.3.3 Brand Image

Porter and Claycomb (1997) state that well-recognised brand is an asset for the organisation that possesses it. The authors claim that the impression of a brand depends on the stores choice decisions and buyers behavior. They, also, claim that the brand image has a direct impact of store image (Porter and Claycomb, 1997). Martenson (2007) agrees, and adds that it is not just brand image and store image that are related, loyalty to the brand also has an impact because of brand and store image. The authors' research states that brand image leads to customer satisfaction, which leads to loyalty in the brand (Martenson, 2007). Brand Personality Congruity is a phenomenon where the customer relates his/her own personality with the brand personality (Jlanyad and Li Dick, 2012). The authors, also, state the attitude and loyalty

for a brand are important factors that predict the behavior of a consumer of the brand (Jianyad and Li Dick, 2007). According to Koubaa (2008), country of origin is one of the factors that influences brand image and loyalty. “the power of brand lies in the minds of consumer and customers” (Koubaa cited Keller, 2008). Rindell and Iglesias (2014) conducted a research based on understanding the composition of Brand Image. The research conducted and the findings clearly state that time and context are the core components of brand image. In addition, the authors, also, mentioned that it takes time for a consumer to form an image of a product or service and these may also provide with opportunities to connect with consumers (Rindell and Iglesias, 2014). In case of Zara, “Zara” has an brand image of a cost leader in the market with a compromise in quality of the merchandise (Caro, 2011).

2.3.4 Supply Chain

In retail industry, supply chain is considered to be key factor which ensures success for any company. A strongly designed and functional supply chain guarantees that the company is set to encounter and overcome the issues faced by the business (Fritzen, Losdat and Sanger, 2014). In addition, the authors state that a strong supply chain helps companies to create and develop a strategic vision for the company ensuring that it can produce innovative in less time to manage critical and complex issues with a solution (Fritzen, Losdat and Sanger, 2014). In case of Zara, the supply chain is highly centralized and vertically aligned which is run by the Inditex headquarters from La Coruna, Spain (Berfield and Baigorri, 2013; Caro, 2011). In addition, manufacturing less products of a kind and keeping the inventory levels low, has proved beneficial for Zara, as consumers keep on visiting the store to check out on the collection, as a product available on display today may not be available tomorrow due to the less number of products and frequent change of the store collection (Pearson, n.d.). To maintain the quick supply chain, Zara usually recruits fresh designers and manufacturers merchandise near the headquarters in Spain (Pearson, n.d.; Caro, 2011). In addition, Stewart (2004) mentioned that “Zara manages its supply chain not to minimize costs, but to maximize revenue”.

2.4 Relationship between Brand and its Consumers

According to King and Newman (2015) state that *“Brands create value in two ways, when they increase the sales volume when consumers choose to buy the well – known brand over a lesser known brand or an unknown brand generic product offering similar features”*. Azoury and Salloum (2013) conducted a study to understand the relationship between consumers perceived value, brand trust, affect and loyalty. The authors mainly focused on finding out the relationship between brand value from the consumers perceptive and brand loyalty using brand trust and affect as a tool to establish this relationship. Research shows that understanding relationship between a brand and its consumers are the key indicators of successful brand management and marketing operations to generate awareness and create presence of the brand (Kunkel, Hill and Funk, 2013). In addition, the authors emphasize on brand architecture and consumer behavior studies to determine the relationships between brands and its consumers. Though studies produced quite positive results, the gap identified was the lack of understanding of the other factors that could determine relationships between brand and its consumers (Kunkel, Hill and Funk, 2013). Research on Zara brand reveals that design and creation depends comprehensively on re-utilizing (duplicating) designs samples which is inspired from various source such as, magazines, catwalks and latest fashion trends and at an affordable price than that a competitor can offer (Caro, 2011). Many researchers and practitioners across the globe believe that consumers often give brands characteristics just as any other human may have (Levy as cited in Maxian, Bradley and Toulouse, 2013). Brand Love is a well known term which draws an emotional connection between the brand and its consumers. The authors also determined that most active consumers in the entire population are considered to be college students and the emotional connection between the brand and majority of its consumer base starts to develop in university campuses. In addition, research does not mention the other factors leading to establish a strong bond between the consumer and the brand (Maxian, Bradley and Toulouse, 2013; Castano and Perez, 2014). According to Sreejesh (2015), the relationship between the brand and its consumers is more like a relationship between the self and the country of origin. The author determines the relationship between strong and positive attitudes of consumers towards their brands is

purely cognitive in form (Sreejesh, 2015). In addition, brand loyalty of a consumer is based on commitment and trust (Sreejesh, 2015). Moreover, a consumer once committed to a brand is likely to remain loyal to the brand to maintain its relationship with the brand. Strong sense of commitment due to the attachment with the brand, the consumers tend to promote their brands through positive word of mouth or by criticising the alternatives available in the market (Sreejesh, 2015).

2.5 Importance of Leadership in Brand Management

“Strong brands must have clear guiding principles, values, behaviour and culture, which they consistently maintain.” (Haigh, 2009). The leadership plays a very important role, specifically for the managers in any organisation. Northouse (2010) defines leadership as *“... a process whereby an individual influences a group of individuals to achieve a common goal.”* A Leader can be defined *“... a person, the one who influences others and gets the work done.”* (Mullins L.J., 2010: 373). Leadership plays a very crucial role in brand management. Brand Managers or Brand Leaders are responsible to have a strategic vision for the brand. The role of leadership in an organisation can be transformational in re-orientating an organisation around a new brand identity. (Graham Hankinson, 2012). Creative Leadership is needed to resolve and manage day-to-day consumer problems (Roberts, 2015). According an article on McKinsey Insights, *“marketers today face huge pressure to produce growth in an era of fragmenting customer needs. Understandably, they often react by expanding rather than pruning their brand offerings”* (McKinsey.com, 2015b). According to Bruce Springsteen, *“Sustaining an audience is hard, as it demand consistency of thought, of purpose and of action over a long period of time”* (McKinsey.com, 2015c cited Bruce Springsteen). Furthermore, the article suggests that consistency is exceptionally powerful when it comes to influencing consumer choice and getting it right requires inputs from the top management (McKinsey.com, 2015c). The researchers at McKinsey have identified three key consistencies, as follows:

- a. Consumer-journey Consistency –

Here, an organisation strives to provide its customers with a top-notch service with higher level of transparencies ensuring smoother interaction. Research shows that very few companies are able to deliver this consistency.

b. Emotional Consistency –

Here, an organisation reflects on the positive consumer experiences which drives consumer satisfaction and loyalty.

c. Communication Consistency –

Here, an organisation is expected to deliver products or services to the consumers as committed.

According to a case study on Zara, huge emphasis is given on training of the sales staff and they also encourage internal promotions (Ferdows, Lewis, and Machuca, 2003). In addition, the authors also mention that the store managers are completely responsible for profit and loss of the assigned store. The store managers interact with consumers on regular basis to constantly listen to their suggestions, criticism and opinions. Furthermore, these suggestions, criticisms and opinions are forward to the designers working for Zara to understand the consumers' needs and wants (Caro, 2011; Worstall, 2015). The critical performance metrics for the store managers can be determined by how effectively they can predict the sales while placing the order for the merchandise and increase in sales (Ferdows, Lewis, and Machuca, 2003; Caro, 2011). Reflecting upon the above literature, the role of leadership in managing a brand can be pointed out to be the most challenging one.

2.6 Literature Conclusion

This literature review about the subject brand loyalty has effectively contributed to the knowledge. Also, there is not much literature related to the role of leadership in brand management. By critically reviewing the existing literatures, academic concepts and theories related to brand management and brand loyalty has enhanced the

understanding for doing this research and also this literature review will be help in collecting the primary data effectively.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology and Methods

This chapter will provide details on methods and steps followed to collect the data required for the primary research. This chapter will explain in detail about the research design used to successfully carry out this research. The research design is divided into different sections as: research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, Sampling Respondents (selection of the target population, sample size and procedure used to collect the primary data), data collection methods and procedures and data analysis techniques. Finally, this chapter will discuss on reliability and validity of the standards of the research. Due to the lack of access with Zara staff, researcher will examine the key factors that encourage brand loyalty among consumers determined by various factors, such as age, gender, preference from a consumer's perspective in general.

3.1 Methodology Introduction

The aim of this research is to analyze the branding and brand loyalty involved in developing a brand and managing it as a key business growth in the clothing industry at Dublin, Ireland by taking the top clothing brand "ZARA" as a case study. The research will examine what are the brand strategies used by Zara to market their products, will focus on consumers perception of the brand (i.e., Zara) in Ireland and key factors that will help Zara to grow as a brand from the consumers perspective. Hence to carry out this research effectively, the research onion is underpinned and followed. The research philosophy is explained first and then research approach, strategy, sampling respondents, research ethics, data collection instruments, data analysis procedures and finally the limitations of methodology. Under each heading, the reason and advantages involved in selecting the particular method for doing this research is clearly explained.

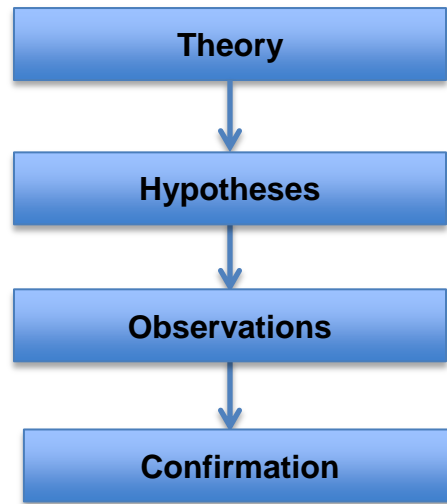
3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Research Philosophy

The research onion indicates research philosophy as a first step and also understanding of research philosophy is very important. *“The research philosophy you adopt can be thought of as your assumptions about the way in which you view world”* (Saunders M., 2012: 128) There are many research philosophy, **Ontology** and **Epistemology** these both *“highlights important differences which will influence the research process”* (Saunders M., 2012: 128) The philosophy adopted to this research will be **Interpretivism** which emphasis *“conducting research among people rather than other objects such as truck and computers.”* (Saunders M., 2012: 137) This research focuses on human beings; it analyzed the branding strategies used at Zara, Dublin, Ireland to retain and enhance brand loyalty among its Irish consumers. The research attempted to test ‘how the brand strategies used in Zara will enhance the brand loyalty leading to business growth in Ireland. Interpretivism philosophy the *“researcher has to adopt an empathetic issue”* (Saunders M., 2012: 137) the researcher has to enter the *“social world of the research subjects and understand their world from their point of view.”* (Saunders M., 2012: 137). Also it is said that the Interpretivism *“highly appropriate in the case of business and management research specifically in the field of human resource management.”* (Saunders M., 2012; Crewell, 2007). The main reason for choosing this Interpretivism philosophy is because it is suitable and appropriate for this research.

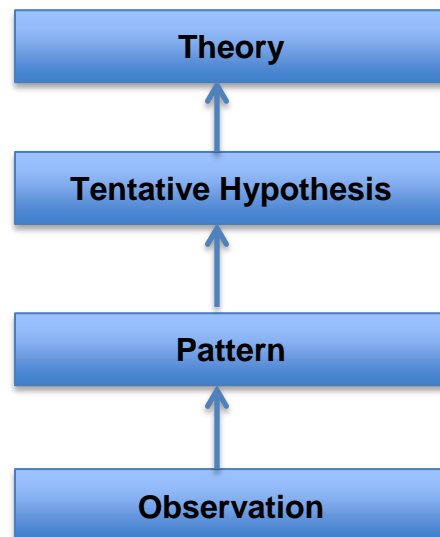
3.2.2 Research Approach

The research approach is the next layer in the research onion, as it is structured there are two types of research approach which is inductive and deductive. The **deductive** approach is chosen for this research, the deductive approach in another “simple term it is called as ‘top down’ approach, starts with theory and the narrow that down into more specific hypotheses, then the observations are collected to test the hypotheses, finally the theory is confirmed or denied (Saunders M *et al.*, 2012: 144 & 145, M.K Trochim W., 2006).



(Adapted from M.K Trochim W., 2006, 'Social Research Methods,' 'Research Methods Knowledge Base,' 'Deduction and Induction,' online.)

The **Inductive** approach is reverse of deductive approach in simple term it is called as 'bottom up' approach. *"It starts by collecting data to explore a phenomenon, then the theory is generated or build"* (Saunders M *et al.*, 2012: 145)



(Adapted from M.K Trochim W., 2006, 'Social Research Methods,' 'Research Methods Knowledge Base,' 'Deduction and Induction,' online.)

This research is of deductive research, because at first, the theories and academic literatures in the subject area brand management and brand loyalty are reviewed, and the theories and academic literatures are put to test by interviewing the store managers of Zara and Irish consumers in Dublin, Ireland. Also it is said that, the deductive approach is *“the most typical for master dissertations”* (DBS Moodle, ‘Research Methods 2’, ‘Research Philosophies and Approaches’, Slide 12, 2015).

3.2.3 Research Strategy

“In general terms, a strategy is a plan of action to achieve a goal.” (Saunders M et al., 2012: 173) By choosing an appropriate research strategy helps the researcher to answer the research question, and also the choice of right research strategy has made the researcher to *“achieve a reasonable level of coherence throughout the research design, which enables to answer particular research question and meet the research objectives.”* (Saunders M et al., 2012: 173). While doing a marketing research, there are two ways to obtain the data from individuals; a) By asking them and b) By observing them. A survey methodically gathers information from the respondents by communicating with them (Domegan and Fleming, 2007). According to Domegan and Fleming (2007), *“Survey research is considered to be a systematic collection of data from a sample of respondents, usually involving the measurement of a large number of variables such as: depth and extent of knowledge, attitudes, interests and opinions, behavioral factors and classification variables, demographic and socio-economic variables”*. Moreover, **Survey** strategy is chosen for this research and deductive approach is chosen for this research, the author says that *“survey strategy is usually associated with a deductive research approach and it is a common strategy in business and management research.”* (Saunders M et al., 2012: 176). The survey strategy has more advantage in comparison with other strategies; the survey strategy *“gives researcher more control over the research process.”* (Saunders M et al., 2012: 178) The data can be collected by interview also, because the survey strategy is *“most frequently associated with organization and method research and interviews”* (Saunders M et al.,

2012: 178). For this research, a survey questionnaire was sent out to participants through email and by posting on Facebook.

3.2.4 Sampling Respondents

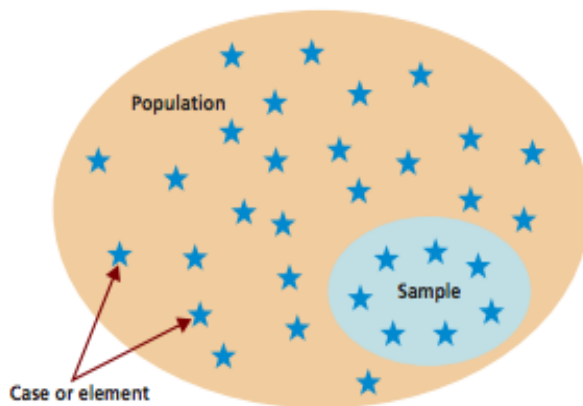


Figure 7.1 Population, sample and individual cases

(Adapted from Mark Saunders *et al.*, 2012: 259, 'Research Methods for Business Students', 6th edition, Pearson Education Limited, England, Snap shot from e-book via Moodle, accessed on 18th December 2014)

'By selecting the right sample, the data can be collected effectively. *"For all research questions where it would be impracticable to collect data from the entire population."* (Saunders M *et al.*, 2012: 260). There are two sampling techniques *"probability and non-probability"* (Saunders M *et al.*, 2012: 260). When the target population is known, then the probability sampling is suitable for the research, whereas, when the researchers is *"not certain that the participants are truly representative of the population"* then the non-probability is suitable for the research." (DBS Moodle, 'Research Methods 2, Sampling Selecting Respondents, Slide 8, 2014) In this research the right and exact respondents for Zara are known so the **probability sampling** was suitable for this research. However, while studying the consumer of the Zara brand, **convenience / availability non-probability sampling** was used. Convenience sampling is used widely, however, it is prone to bias and influences that are beyond the researchers control. However, it is convenient to obtain data using this sampling method

(Saunders M et al., 2012: 290). Therefore, the researcher will be aware in checking the right sample before collecting the data. So, probability sampling and non-probability combined together was considered to be an appropriate and suitable way for this research and also *“the probability sampling is associated most commonly with research survey strategy.”* (Saunders M et al., 2012: 262)

3.2.5 Research Ethics

The ethics is an important element and it should be taken into consideration for completing the research successfully. *“Ethics are critical aspects for the success of any research project.”* (Saunders M et al., 2012: 208). This research involves human participation, *“business and management research involves human participants. Ethical concerns are greatest where research involves human participants.”* (Saunders M et al., 2012: 208)

Traditional type access

In this research, the store managers and consumers of Zara, Dublin, Ireland were approached, so the human participation is involved in this research. At first in gaining access the **traditional type**, was followed by a face-to-face interaction for the store managers and the survey for consumers, the researcher will clearly explained about benefit of this research to all the respondents of Zara, Dublin, Ireland. While collecting from the store managers, the researcher had organized the interview and use business professional language and norms were followed. During the time of getting access it is said, *“Researcher’s should not attempt to apply any pressure on intended participants to grant success.”* (Saunders M et al., 237) The researcher has not personally give n any pressure on the participant to participate in the interview. Once the store managers of Zara, Dublin, Ireland agree participant in the interview then the official **consent form** will be signed by both parties, the researcher and participants.

Ethical issues during data collection

The data will be collected by face-to face interview, so the researcher will be professional and use only business English language to communicate with all

respondents. *“In face-face interviews the researcher should avoid over questioning and pressing the participant for a response.”* (Saunders M et al., 2012: 242) and also it said that if the researcher puts pressure on the participant *“it will lead to stressful situation for participant.”* (Saunders M et al., 2012: 242, cited the work of Sakaran & Bougie, 2009) The researcher will interview the general managers only on their convenient time and also the researcher will complete the interview discussion within a given time (Saunders M et al., 2012: 242, cited the work of Sakaran & Bougie, 2009). All these ethics will be considered by the researcher to do the research effectively and complete on time

3.2.6 Reliability and Validity

Reliability can be defined as “a synonym for consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents” (Cohan et. al, 2000; Riley et. al., 2000). This research was collectively based on consumer perception and leadership skill which may change as per location and time. Hence, this research cannot be generalized. Validity can be determined in many ways; construct, descriptive, but the two overall types validity are internal and external (Ghauri, 2005; Riley et. al, 2000). The research has attempted to maintain the internal and external validity of the data by establishing measures of successfulness of the data collected from the participants and the store-managers.

3.2.7 Time Horizon

This research is cross-sectional studies because from the authors it is understood that, “cross-sectional studies refers to short-term research and also it is associated with survey strategy” (Saunders M et al., 2012: 190).

3.2.8 Limitations of Methodology

Since this is a short term research, it focuses on only on company in order to complete the research effectively. This research involves collecting data from the store managers and consumers from Zara, Dublin, Ireland.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis and Findings

According to Creswell *“Data Analysis in qualitative research consists of preparing and organizing the data (i.e., text data as in transcripts, or image data as in photographs) for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing the codes, and finally reporting the data in figures, tables, or a discussion.”* (Creswell, 2013). Hart (2000) gives an even simpler definition to analysis phase, he defines it as systematically breaking down of information and relating them to each other after an exploration of the information. The questionnaires was checked and implied after collections which were send out to the participants through email and posted on Facebook. The suitable technique was applied to test and interpret the result of data analysis. The data was gathered for this researcher in two and half weeks’ time starting from 24th July, 2015 to 05th August, 2014. Student participant who are currently studying in Dublin Business School and Trinity College also participated in the survey. Also, the questionnaire was provided to people visiting the Zara Store on Henry Street and South King Street. Obtaining participants from all the different age groups, genders, professions and locations provided a good mixture for the quality of the research. This mixture of different categories of variables can help the researcher to analyse the information about broad understanding of people about internet banking and its service dimensions. This research further focuses on what are the various factors that influence a consumer’s buying decisions looking at the different aspects of brand management.

The face to face interviews were taken in the mid of August, 2015. Total four store managers and managers working at Zara stores over different locations were requested to participate for the in-depth interviews by the researcher, however, only two store managers took part in the interview process as other two expected participants were requested for the interviews yet could not participate due to personal and work reasons.

The number of four participants was adjudged enough for interviews through the advice from supervisor and also suited best according to the survey too. It includes only female

as the Zara stores visited by the researcher had only female store managers. One of the participants who were participated in the in-depth interview, the store manager is professional, in her early thirties, working for Zara for around one and a half year and with four years of retail industry experience. On the other hand, the manager interviewed by the researcher, in her mid-twenties, has working for Zara for the past 10 months and has worked on various levels from starting as a sales assistant to being a manager in the store and her overall experience in the retail industry has been 3 years excluding the 10 months at Zara. Being on different roles in the store this provided with a good mixture for quality research. This mixture can help the researcher to collect the information about broad understanding of leadership and its role in managing a brand at various dimensions.

One of the interviews was conducted in a café where it had a quite environment and prior permission was taken from the manager. And one of the interviews was conducted in participant`s apartment due to personal reasons. The participants were contacted through telephone or face to face request was made to arrange appointment to choose day, time, place and availability for interviews. The refreshments were provided to the participants to gain the confidence for their answers in the interview process. The average time of the interviews was calculated around 10 minutes per interview. The time was varied for each interview as every participant took their time to give the answers based on their knowledge and experience about branding and brand management.

At the beginning of each interview, interviewees were informed about the purpose of the study and were ensured by the researcher for their privacy about the information given by them. They were made aware of the fact that the interviews are going to be getting recorded, if they are okay with the audio. They were told by the researcher that they are free to go if they want to leave the interview at any stage for any reason.

The combination of judgemental and convenience sampling was very useful for the researcher to choose the appropriate members who have good knowledge about the research topic and their availability and willingness to participate in in-depth interviews.

4.1. Processing the data

Every interview was conducted in professional English language only. Various quotations and terminologies were used by the interviewee and the interviewer which were later interpreted by the researcher as it can possibly challenge the validity of the research. Hence, the process of interpreting the information from the interview was carried out keeping in the mind the research questions, aim, objectives and hypotheses that were put forward to carry out this research efficiently and effectively. The information collected in the questionnaire was focussed only on the people living in Dublin, Ireland.

4.2. Transcribing the data

The researcher has transcribed all the interviews in a simple, effective and academic way. The data was collected by semi-structured interview questions which was designed and based on the literature. The research has recorded all the information collected from the interviewees in the form of an electronic copy, as the interviewees did not give consent to record the interview using an audio player. During the complete interview process, the interviewer and interviewees used on professional English to communicate, so that the questions and responses are recorded in a very professional manner. Each response expressed and talked by interviewees during the interview was translated by the interviewer as the examination technique develops the truth of creating the pictures of it (Ryen, 2002). Oral communication plays a very important role in an interview as it is not just information that is passed, it additionally passes on emotions and/or expressions that maybe subject to bias with regards to the questions asked to the interviewee. According to Kvale and Brinkmann (2009), occasionally interpreting the oral communication may lead to biases, yet it holds importance in the research process.

4.3. Analysis of Questionnaire (Quantitative Research)

To complete the requirement for the research, quantitative research was conducted in the form of questionnaire with the help of Google Forms as Google forms were more used and was easier to create this form. Out of all the questionnaires sent out and collected over different locations the total number of responses received back are 109. The questionnaire collected outside the Zara store on South Kings Street and Henry Street where collected using an iPad containing the form, where participants were shown the information sheet and requested to fill in the questionnaire. Almost fifty - two (52) questionnaires were collected from different age groups of Dublin Business School, Trinity College Dublin and outside the store. Thirty - five (35) questionnaires were posted online through Facebook. Twenty – two (22) questionnaires were responded through the link send by email and posted online. Overall 109 questionnaires were collected fully completed.

The researcher have used questionnaire survey to investigate consumer brand loyalty considering various dimensions of brand management on different age group and different types of occupations participants held and different background which can be seen as important variables.

Survey Questionnaire was mainly focused on participants with the age of 18-40, however, less than 18 years of age options was also included by the researcher to avoid the bias factor.

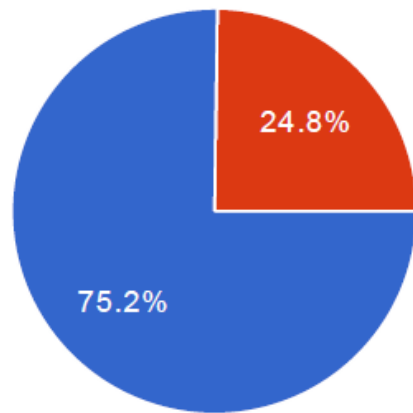
Out of total 109 participants, 53 participants were male which is counted as 48.6 per cent of entire population and rest of 56 participants were females which is counted as 51.4 percent of total population in the survey. 44 participants (40.4 percent) are include in the age group between 18-29 which is highest age category in the survey took part in the survey while participants age category between 30-39 are slightly lower than former category which is weighted at 32 in numbers (29.4 percent). Furthermore, 19 participants that fall in the age group under 18 (17.4 percent) and 14 participants (12.8 percent) that fall under 40+ age group.

To analyse the last two questions we will use the method known as **Net Promoter Score** or **NPS** which first came to existence in 2003. NPS helps an organization to differentiate their market space between three categories of consumers, as follows: (1) Promoters – who will promote the brand, (2) Passives - do like the product but may or

may not promote the brand, can easily switch to a competitor and (3) Detractors – will never be brand loyal as they are the unhappy consumers who may portray negative image of the brand (Grisaffe, 2007). Almost all the respondents taking part in this survey were highly educated and from different professional backgrounds. Many of the undergraduate students also took part in the survey.

The pictograms below help to better understand the findings:

- **Do you shop according to the price tag?**

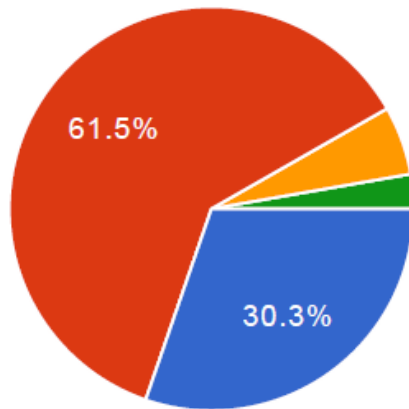


Yes	82	75.2%
No	27	24.8%

All Answered

As indicated in the above pie chart, 109 participants filled the survey. Out of 109 contributors, 82 of them responded with 'Yes' which is weighted as 75.2 percent of entire population of the survey. 24.8 percent of the participants responded with 'No'. The purpose to ask to question was to evaluate whether consumers make purchasing decisions based on price. According to above chart, impressive measurement is that two third part of the entire population make their purchasing decisions based on price of the product of a particular brand. Consumers prefer to purchase branded products based on their price budgets and not only based on quality and popularity of the brand.

- **How much do you spend on clothing per month?**



10€ - 50€	33	30.3%
50€ - 100€	67	61.5%
100€ - 150€	6	5.5%
Other	3	2.8%

All Answered

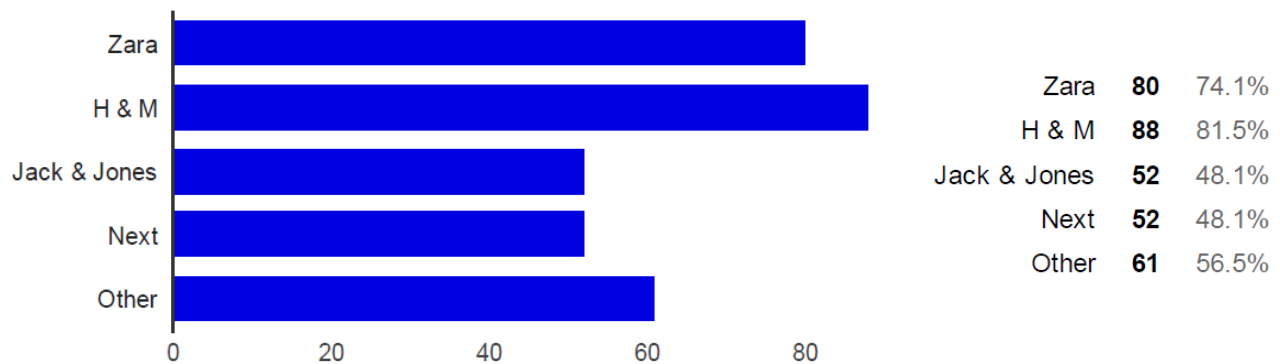
The diagram shows the amount spent by people on clothing per month. The main reason to form this question was to figure out an average bracket of amount which the people prefer to spend in a month over clothing. Out of 109 participants, three fall in the 'Other' category as they do not actually spend monthly on clothing, however, they do spend on clothing over a period of few months. Most of the participants are under the second or average amount bracket spend per month category of 50 to 100 Euros per month which is 61.5 per cent of entire population. 30.3 per cent people spend around 10 to 50 Euros per month while 5.5 per cent people in the survey which is counted as 6 spend around 100 to 150 Euros per month over clothing. The above results indicate that maximum population spends an average amount on clothing regardless of their employment status. As shown in the chart, the demographic variable of expenditure over clothing does not depend on the status of employment. Whereas, it is also not clear from the research that about the purchasing behaviour though, it provides an average amount that majority would prefer to spend over branded products.

- **Which is the brand that comes to your mind when you think of shopping for clothes?**

The main purpose of this question was to find out the brand preference of the participants. From the entire population, 20 (18.3 percent) of contributors first choice when purchase branded clothing is "Zara", followed by the Primark brand known as "Penneys" in Ireland with 12 contributors, 11 (10.1 percent) and 10 (9.2 percent) contributors first preference is Forever 21 and H & M respectively. Rest of the

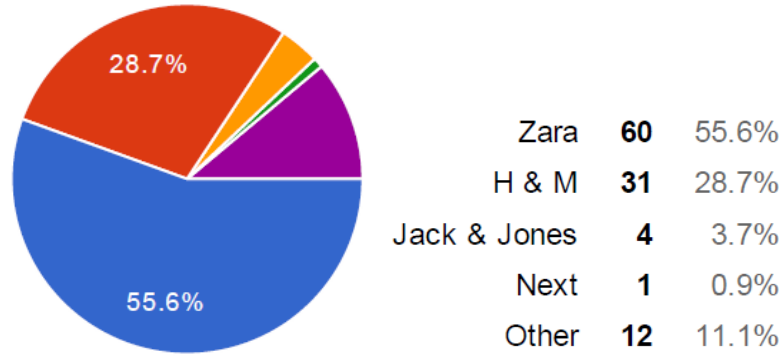
contributors that are in smaller numbers preference is other brands (Debenhams, Urban Outfitters, Pull & Bear, Topman, D & G, Versace, Armani Abercrombie & Fitch, GAP, Adidas, Tommy Hilfiger, River Island, etc.). It is indicative from the figures that Zara is the most preferred brand for majority of the consumers. The frequency people who prefer shop at the store of a particular brand determine the awareness of the brand in Dublin, Ireland.

- **Which other brands do you consider for clothes shopping?**



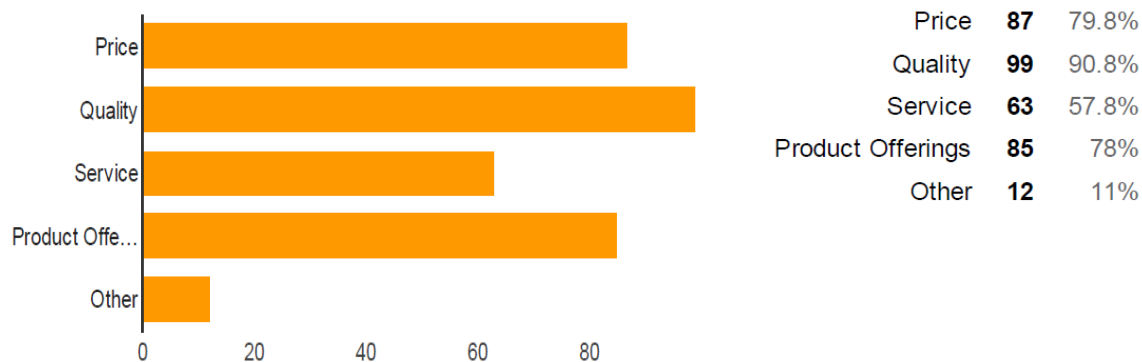
The purpose to ask the above question was to access which are the other alternative brands that the consumers usually prefer. The bar chart clearly represents that H & M and Zara are more popular choice of majority of population that participated in the survey at 81.5 percent and 80 percent respectively followed by Jack & Jones and Next at 48.1 per cent the brief idea what alternatives majority of consumers consider after their preferred choice. In the above bar chart, majority of consumers selected H & M as the second preference of the consumers followed by Zara. Jack & Jones and Next have received an equal preference from the consumers at a third level and other brands considered by the consumers are (Debenhams, Urban Outfitters, Pull & Bear, Topman, D & G, Versace, Armani Abercrombie & Fitch, GAP, Adidas, Tommy Hilfiger, River Island, etc.).

- **According to you, which is the leading clothing brand in Dublin, Ireland?**



The sole purpose of asking this question was to determine the awareness of the selected population. From the above pie chart is clear that most of the sample population considers “Zara” to be the market leader with 55.6 percent (60 participants) followed by H & M at 28.7 percent (31 participants). Both Jack & Jones and Next are considered to be leading by 3.7 percent and 0.9 percent of the entire population. The other brands such as, Debenhams, Forever 21, JD, TK max, etc.

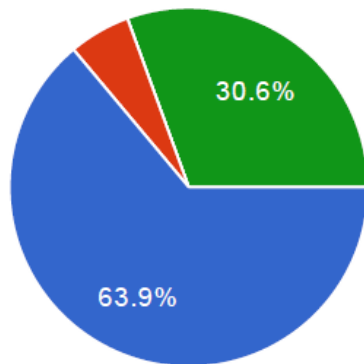
- **What are the factors led you to believe that the above selected brand is leading?**



The main purpose to ask this question was to understand what are the metrics or the factors in which the consumer believes the brand of their choice to be leading in the market. The above bar chart shows that the basic metric is quality of the merchandise that the consumers are purchasing which amounts to 90.8 percent (99 participants).

Quality is closely followed by Price and product offerings with 79.8 percent (87 participants) and 78 percent (85 participants) respectively. The fourth metric considered by the consumers is service with 57.8 percent (63 participants). Lastly, there are various other factors which constitute to be considered a brand to be leading, such as, new arrivals, clearance sales that amounts to 11 percent (12 participants). From the above description, the researcher can infer that quality of the merchandise, price and product offerings are considered as the factors that make a brand leading from the consumers point of view.

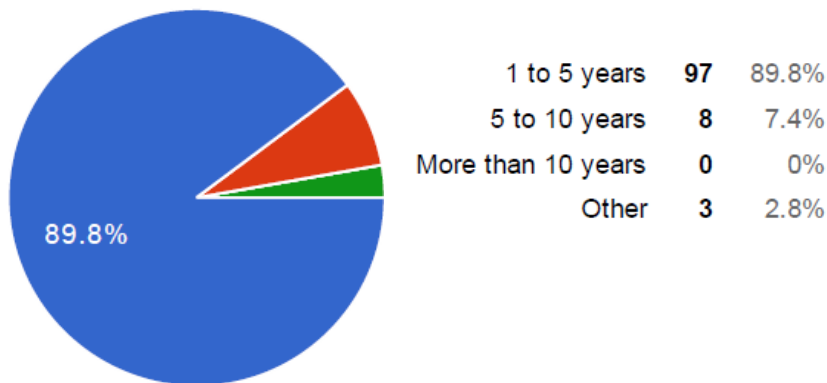
- **How many times do you shop from Zara?**



Once in a month	69	63.9%
Twice in a month	6	5.6%
Thrice in a month	0	0%
Other	33	30.6%

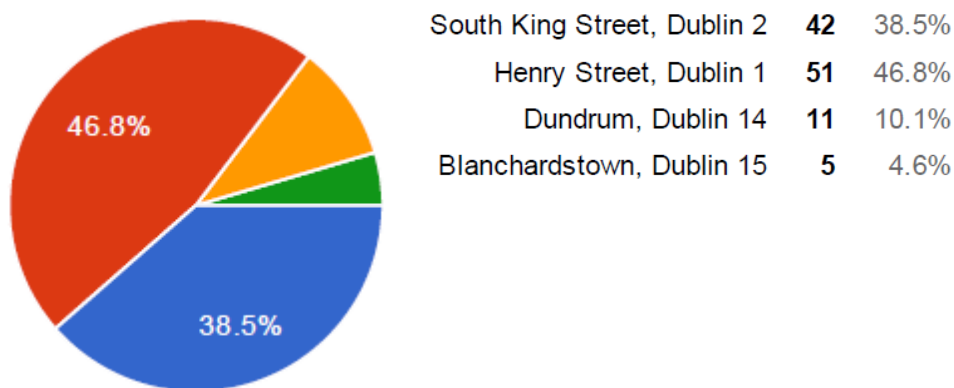
This question was asked to analyse the frequency of purchasing of the consumers over a particular time period keeping the question very much objective to the brand that is been considered as case study for this research. The above pie chart shows that out of the 109 participants who took part in the survey, most of the participants, that is, 63.9 percent (69 participant) are purchasing from “Zara”, at least, once in a month, followed by 5.6 percent of the total population purchasing twice in a month. This indicates a repeat purchase from the same consumer each month, indicating a brand loyalty loosely. On the other hand, 30.6 percent of the total population gave a mixed response on the frequency of their purchase are distribute over time like once in three-four-five months. Two of the responses were discarded as they have never purchased from Zara, Dublin, Ireland.

- **How long have been shopping from Zara?**



The purpose of asking this question was to understand the time period since the consumer is aware of the brand and has been loyal to it. From the above pie chart, it is clear that majority of the participants which amounts to 89.8 percent (97 participants) have been purchasing from Zara from the range of 1 to 5 years. On the other hand, only 7.4 percent of the entire population that participated in the survey have been purchasing from Zara for the past 5 to 10 years. In addition, only 2.8 percent of the population of the whole population has either being purchasing for the less than a year or has never made a purchase from Zara in Dublin, Ireland.

- **Select the location of the store where you made your latest purchase**

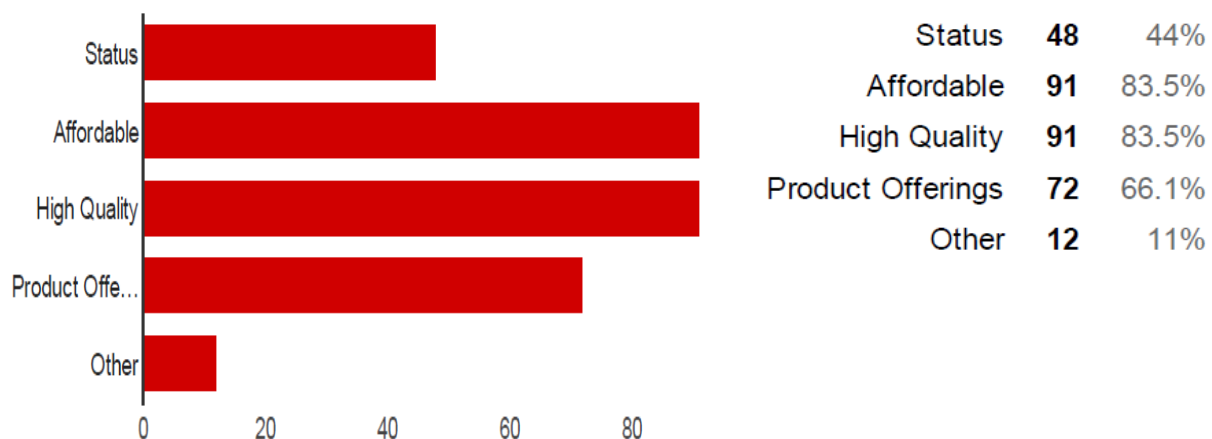


The main purpose to ask this question was to know the location that has had maximum purchases of the consumers. The above pie chart shows that out of the 109 participants who took part in the survey, 46.8 percent (51 participants) made their latest purchase from Zara Store at Henry Street followed by the South King Street store where 38.5 percent (42 participants) of the total population made their latest purchase. On the other hand, the store locations in Dundrum and Blachardstown have had 10.1 percent (11 participants) and 4.6 percent (5 participants) respectively. The researcher can infer that Henry street is the branch that can.

- **Do you shop at Zara only for important occasions/events? If “Yes, then please mention some of the occasions.**

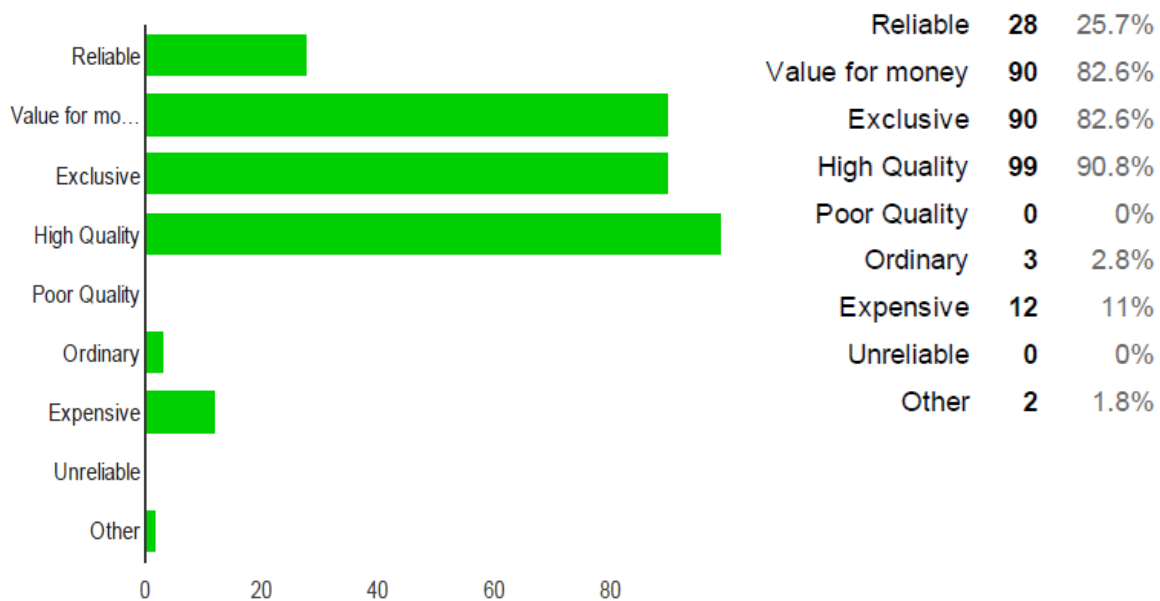
The purpose to ask this question was to understand “if important occasions / events” is what drives the consumers to purchase from Zara. The majority of consumers who took part in the survey which amounts to 50.45 percent (55 participants) confirmed that they do not purchase from Zara only on special occasions. This helps to understand Zara is preferred by its consumers for its everyday use, resulting into more repeat purchases. The rest of the populations claimed that they do purchase from Zara only for important occasions or events which amounted to as follows: (1) Party (22.93 percent), (2) Work (10.09 percent), (3) Outdoor (12.84 percent) (4) Graduation (0.09 percent), (5) Sales (0.08 percent), (6) Weddings (0.07 percent), (7) New arrivals (0.02 percent); and (8) others which constitutes to 0.06 percent. The research infers

- **What makes you buy from Zara?**



In the survey done by the researcher, the above question was asked to understand what makes the consumers to purchase from Zara. From the above bar chart it is clear that High Quality and Affordability that amount to 83.5 percent (91 participants) each, followed by product offerings amounting as 66.1 percent (72 participants). This helps to know how Zara has kept its offerings stable over the years giving the same amount of importance to its Product Quality and customer care.

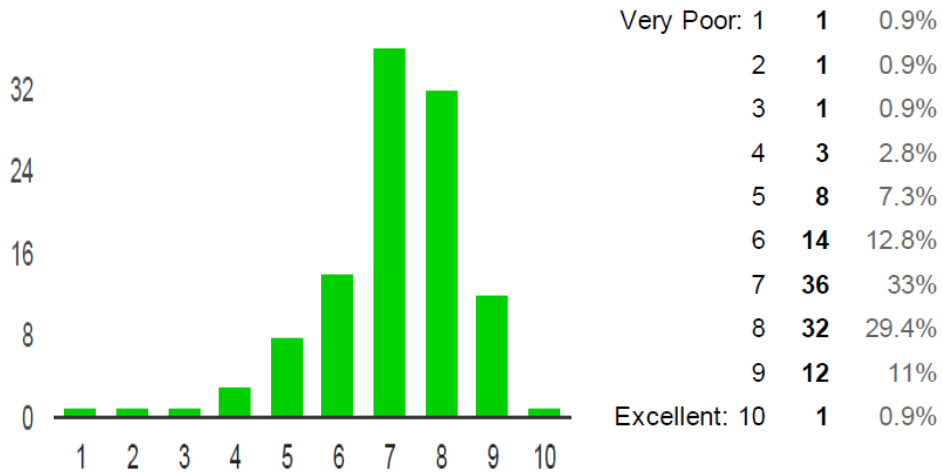
- **What are the three words that best describe Zara Products in the Irish Clothing Industry?**



The main purpose to ask this question is to evaluate what the words that best described Zara products. The above bar chart clearly shows that out of 109 participants majority of the participants described Zara products to be of High Quality (90.8 percent), Value for money (82.6 percent) and Exclusive (82.6 percent). Zara provides it customers with the

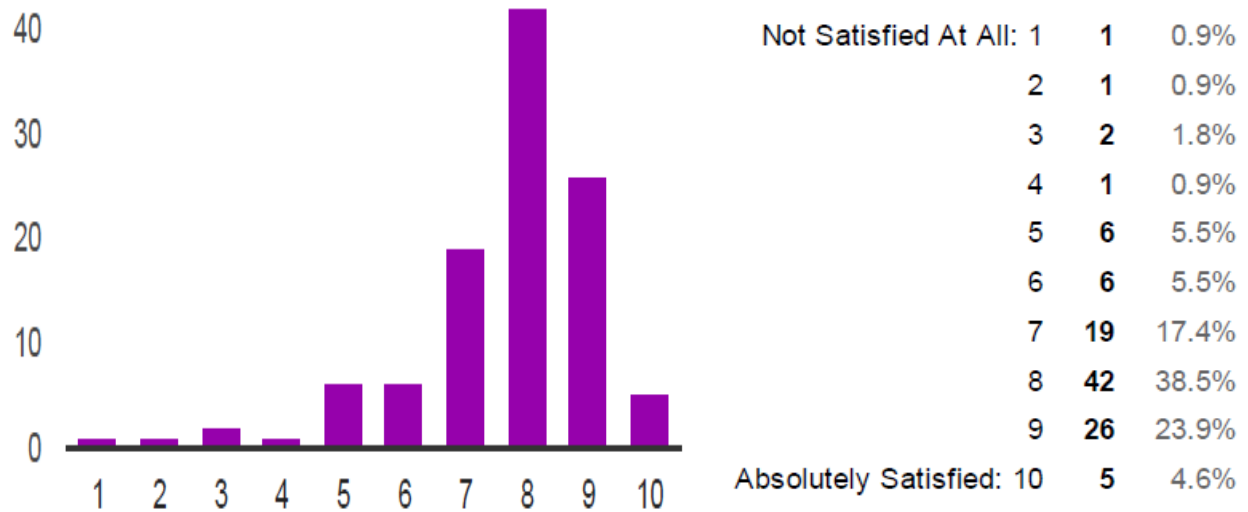
best quality clothes at an affordable rate whose designs are influenced from the runways, giving them a sense of pride in owning Zara

- **How would you rate Zara’s “After Sales” services?**



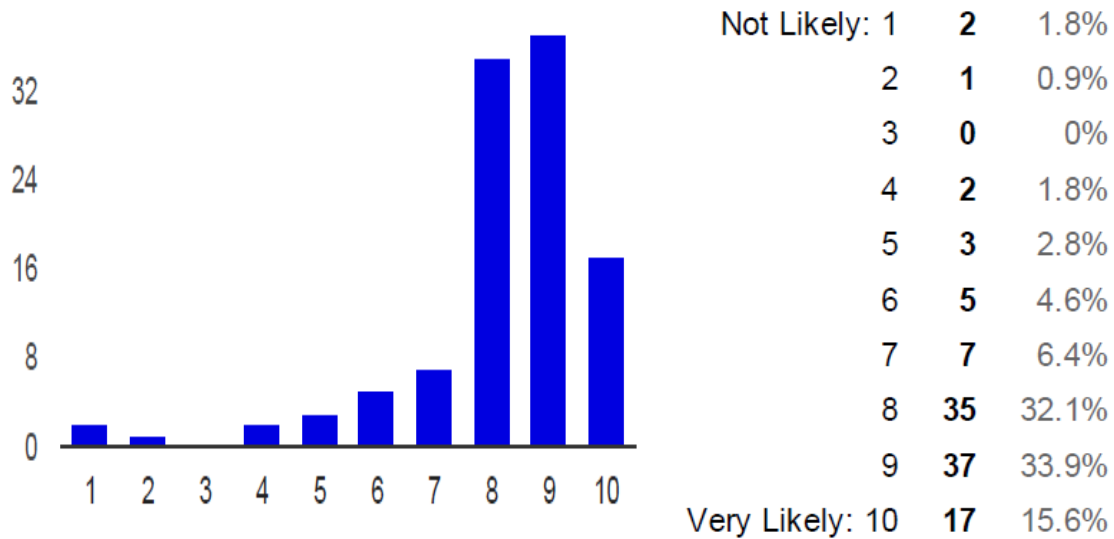
The purpose of asking this question was to evaluate if the consumers are satisfied with the after sales services of Zara. The above bar chart shows that the consumers are averagely satisfied with the after sales services of Zara. Majority of the participants, that is, 33 percent are somewhat satisfied with the after sales services. Only one out of the 109 participants has given an excellent score to these services. Zara may need to work on improving its after sales services to boost more sales

- **Overall, how much satisfied are you with Zara?**



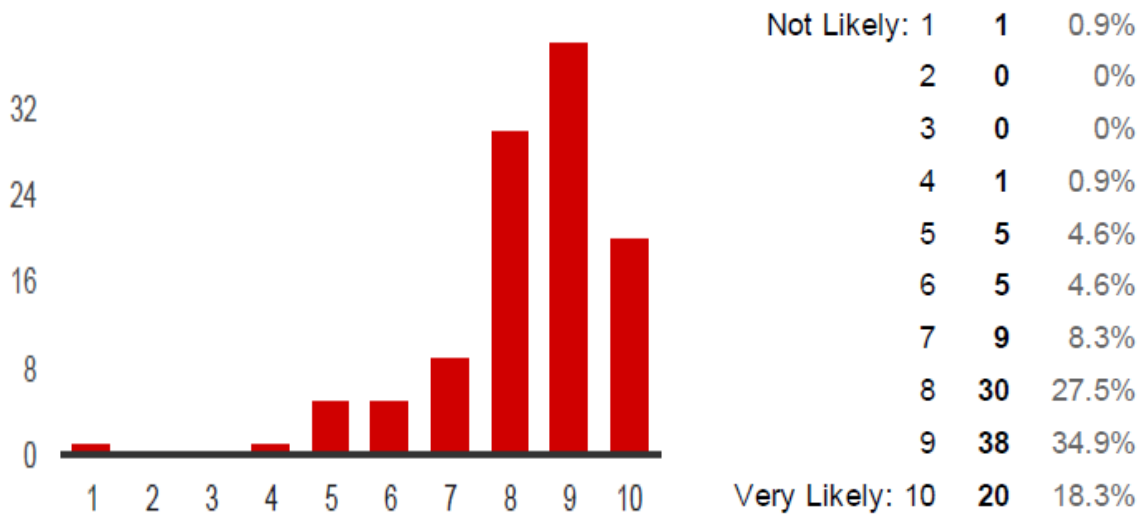
The aim of the researcher to the formation of this question was to investigate the satisfaction level of the consumers. The above bar chart shows that the consumers are out of the 109 participants, 84.4 percent of consumers are highly satisfied with the Zara products. 11 percent of the participants are moderately satisfied and 4.5 percent of the participants are not satisfied with the products. This shows that Zara has excellent score based on consumer satisfaction, however, may need to understand the reason on dissatisfaction as well.

- **How likely are you to continue purchase/shop at Zara?**



The main important finding from this question was response over the repurchase of products from the Zara store. Considering the received score with respect to the Net Promoter Score (NPS), out of the 109 participants, 89 participants are likely to continue purchasing at Zara Stores. This repurchasing behaviour gradually may lead to brand loyalty as well.

- **How likely are you to recommend Zara to a friend/family/colleague?**



The main important finding from this question was response over the consumers likelihood of promoting the brand to friends or family or colleagues. Based on the understanding of Net Promoter Score (NPS), out of the 109 participants, 80.7 percent (88 participants) are likely to recommend the brand to their near and dear ones.

4.4. Analysis of In-Depth Interviews (Qualitative Research)

The interview conducted with Store manager has been analysed here. The interview is further broken down to three main themes that were identified and the information is distributed between these themes and then critically analysed.

Interview with the Store Manager and the manager of Zara (Female Participant)

Theme 1 – Importance of Leadership in relation to branding

During the interview, it was found that, the interviewees has working with Zara as a store manager for the past 1.6 years and has 6 years of experience in the non-grocery retail industry. This question was asked to determine the depth of knowledge and expertise in the retail industry. It can be clearly evaluated from the interviewee response that she has immense know - how of the industry and the way it works. When asked about the importance of leadership in branding, the interviewee responded with her experience that "... brand leaders need to be exceptional managers with a distinct set of talents, in order to fulfil customers' and investors' expectations." Furthermore, the interviewee mentions the key to a brands success is clear and defined strategies, alignment of the staff with the consumers' and investors' expectation, and continuous measurement of progress to ensure that the set goals are achieved. When asked about "Creative Leadership", the interviewee responded that "Creative Leadership does not solely from intellect, innovation and creativity", the interviewee believes that considering consumer needs and wants in necessary. (See appendix B)

Theme 2 – Factors that influence Brand loyalty

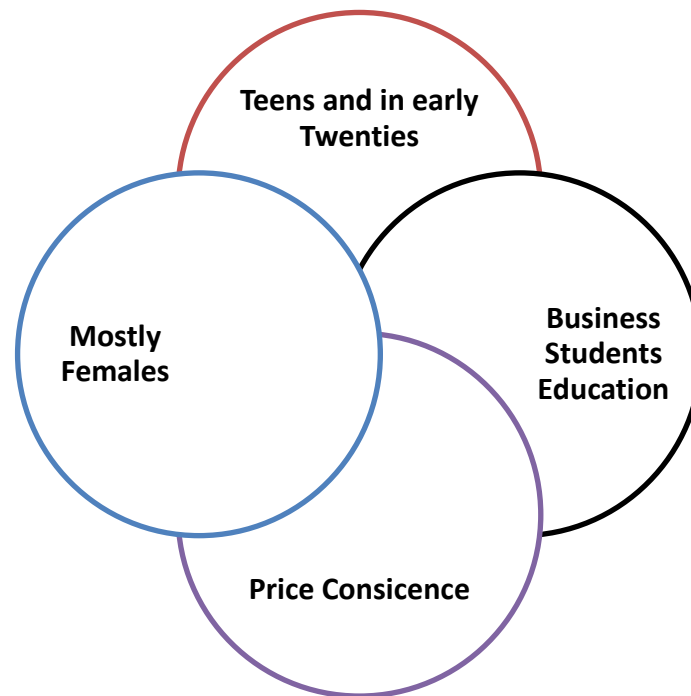
On mention of the consumer base and been asked about enhancing consumers base easier than retaining the old ones, the interviewee disagreed and responded that it is not about the not about enhancing the consumer base it is about various other factors related to consumers as well that need to be taken care while discussing retention of consumers. The interviewee explained about the consumer to be as "... single, most important part of the puzzle.", while discussing the role of consumer in enhancement of brand loyalty. She also mentioned that consumers' needs and wants and feedback is often considered while bringing in new products in the store. To understand the consumers' desires, it is necessary to interact with them from time to time. The interviewee mentions it to be one of the key metrics to measure their performance. The interviewer also mentions about loyalty programs and discounted offerings and understand their role in brand loyalty on which the interviewee expressed that brand loyalty is a two way exchange, which strengthens the bonds between the brand and the consumer associated with the brand. (See Appendix B)

Theme 3 – Brand Loyalty

The interviewer asked the interviewee about the brand loyalty in recession period on which the interviewee responded by saying it completely depends on the market that is focussed on. The interviewee positively mentioned that keeping consideration the competitive environment not all consumers will be loyal to the brand. When asked to mention the factors that induce brand loyalty among the Zara consumers', the interviewee point out that the perceived quality of the products and brand value and image can be considered as the major contributors to brand loyalty.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Summarizing the finding from both the quantitative survey and qualitative semi-structure interviews of the store manager as follows:



Nature of responses:

The responses collected show the following characteristics:

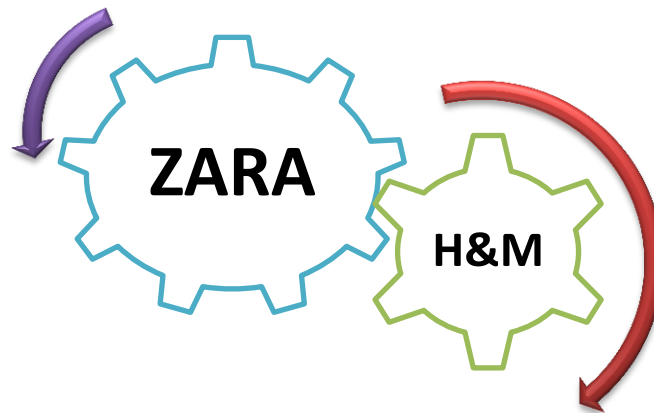
- a. The Age group in which the responses fall are from 18-29 years old which accounts for 37% and 30-39years old account for 31%. This helps the researcher to understand that the population is divided into teens, early twenties and late thirties. This age net is the highest contributor in terms of sales
- b. The survey was mostly answered by Females. From this the research can infer that the female consumers were more active in shopping thus being more interested in answering the survey. It also raises the possibility that the female consumers are more inclined towards trying new trends and fashion.

- c. Around 82% accounted for being price conscience while shopping. They would end up buying something only when it fits their budget. This point stands directly related to the above Gender based question. It is a general assumption that women are always price conscience when shopping, spending their money accordingly.

- d. The majority of the responses who answered this were Students accounting to 13.8%, followed by Personnel working in Education Sector which is 12.8% and lastly personnel from Financial Sector accounting to 11.9%. Students being in the forefront who answered this justifies their need for better clothes according to changing fashion. They tend to be the Risk Takers when it comes to trying something new. Many a times they are who set a New Trend around.

The survey also helped list the two most popular brands in Dublin, with Zara getting 55.5% vote and H&M getting 28.7% votes.

This points the fact that Zara has been using its Brand Strategies in the right direction. Their Product offerings, Price and Quality seemed to be just the right fit for the consumer's need. This in turn makes them enjoy a healthy market share and popularity among its teen, early and late twenties customer.



Furthermore, the hypothesis are been discussed and tested in comparison to finding in the previous chapter.

The First Hypothesis is stated below:

Hypothesis 1:

Ho = Brand strategies used by Zara has a positive effect on the customer's Brand Loyalty.

Ha= Brand strategies used by Zara has no effect on the customer's Brand Loyalty.

According to the Caro (2011), the points that differentiate Zara from other is its '**Smart Supply Chain**'. The elements that help it being powerful then others are:

1. Recurrent Shipments across all its Stores
2. Its In-house IT team
3. Personal Feedback on product performances
4. Reverse Manufacturing

When the researcher analysed the primary data, received following were the findings, which are pointed out here from the previous chapter.



Brand Strategy –

Zara's Brand Strategy is directly related to the Supply Chain mentioned in Literature review. The statistical data helps me to prove this:

1. The attribute **Quality** accounted for 90.8 percent, which helps to know that though a company may spend a lot of money on advertising , it all comes down to a point that whether the products that are being offered meet the consumers demands and expectation.
2. The attribute **Price and Product offerings** accounted for 82.6 percent.

From this the researcher can infer that Zara's efforts in making its **Smart Supply Chain** as a **Brand Strategy** is successful. The consumers voted Zara the best because of the same attributes.

According to an Article in Literature Review it is seen that most of the consumers opt for a Brand that offers them Comfort the first. Zara includes this in their **Product Quality**

and **Offerings**. Furthermore, Zara is having the best designs off the runway in the shortest transit time in their stores. Coupled this with Price, '**Zara**' enjoys a healthy market place. According to Philippe Aurier Gilles Séré de Lanauze as mentioned in the Literature Review points out that consumer's attitude towards the brand plays a major role in creating a brand image in customers mind. It's this attitude that later on helps them being the brand advocate, making the brand more popular through word of mouth publicity. Companies often use visual advertisements to get their brands registered in consumer's mind, which later on helps them in the purchasing. Over the years this attitude is passed down to their immediate family too and thus creating a new set of loyal customers for the company. Thus, the Null hypothesis (Ho= Brand strategies used by Zara has a positive effect on the customer's Brand Loyalty) is **True**

The second hypothesis is stated below:

Hypothesis 2:

Ho= Consumer's perception about Zara as a Brand has effects on its Brand Image.

Ha= Consumer's perception about Zara as a Brand has no effect on its Brand Image.

The researcher has found that what truly makes a Brand is the consumer's perception about the brand, quality of its products and services. It can either make or break a brand. Over the years consumer's perception makes the Brand Image. The primary data helped to pinpoint the consumer's perception which makes the Brand Image for Zara.



Brand Image:

The above points are that make Zara as a strong Brand hereby making its Brand Image stronger. The statistical data helps to prove it:

1. Zara's **After Sales Service** got 33% votes on the newton scale, which helps to understand that Zara puts in efforts to make sure that its consumers are well served. They have a policy of either they can try clothes at the store or they can go home and try it. They can return the clothes in-case of misfit or damaged. This makes Zara a likeable brand
2. When asked about whether they would recommend Zara to their Friends and Family, around 38.5% said they would. Word of Mouth is the most influential advertising technique that all the brands strive for. These people thus become advocates for the brand
3. Around 33.9% were likely to **purchase again** from Zara. Repeat Sales helps the companies to know to predict Customer to Sales Ratio using the no. of repeat purchases from a particular customer using the CRM software. Because of its in-house Information Technology (IT) systems (as mentioned above) Zara is able to track and predict the sales for its next season. Hereby reducing the dead stock

4. Zara got 38.5% votes when asked whether they were satisfied with the overall brand. These numbers help the researcher to infer that Zara has been putting in a lot of efforts on all its steps which leads to a sale. Just by providing the customers with good products at better prices don't help it achieve a market share. It's the overall efforts that are put together matters

Thus the null hypothesis (Ho= Consumer's perception about Zara as a Brand has effects on its Brand Image) is **True**

The third hypothesis is stated below:

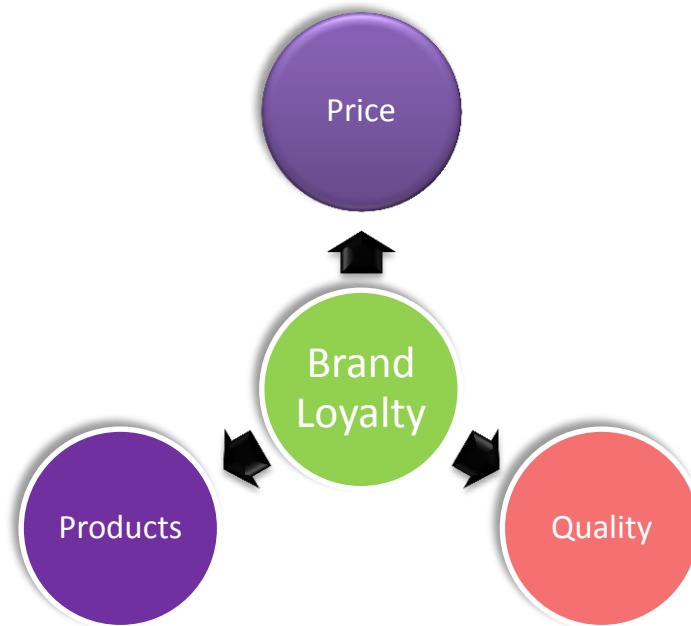
Hypothesis 3:

Ho= Companies attributes like pricing and product offerings make consumers brand loyal.

Ha= Companies attributes like pricing and product offerings does not make consumers brand loyal.

Zara is known for its **Affordability however without any Quality Sacrifice**. Zara's Smart Supply Chain as mentioned in the Literature review helps it to achieve its USP. Zara thrives on its rapid sales because it's successful in creating the mind-set among its consumers that products which are available today in stores may not be there tomorrow. Zara achieves this because it can replenish new products at a faster rate as compared to its competitors.

This same as being found in the primary data research



As seen in the summary Zara is voted as the top brand in Dublin (according to the 109 respondents I surveyed) when asked why they bought from Zara they said:

1. The attributes **Affordability and Quality** of the products accounted for 83.5% , which states that Zara provides high quality products at such prices that everyone can buy it, making it popular among the age group 18-29years old.
2. The second attribute that attracts customers is because of its Product offerings. According to an Article in Literature Review customers are more inclined towards brand that offers them Comfort with Stylish looks, and Zara seems to top this thanks to its Flexible Supply Chain. Flexible Supply Chain helps to cater to a larger set of customers without having any stoppage in their production. The supply chain also helps in recurrent shipments giving a tough edge to its competitors

Also according to Tho D. Nguyen, Nigel J. Barrett, and Kenneth E. Miller as mentioned in Literature Review, they emphasized that one the key determinants to brand loyalty was **Quality** . They have further gone to state that there is even a positive relationship between Quality and brand awareness. Brand awareness helps the brand to build to

carter to a large set of population thereby increasing their loyalty. The same fact has been found in the research too. Quality is one the key point for the respondents for being brand loyal to Zara inspite of tough competition and the general inflations which goes on. Thus the null hypothesis (Ho= Companies attributes like pricing and product offerings make consumers brand loyal) is **True**.

The third hypothesis is stated below:

Hypothesis 4:

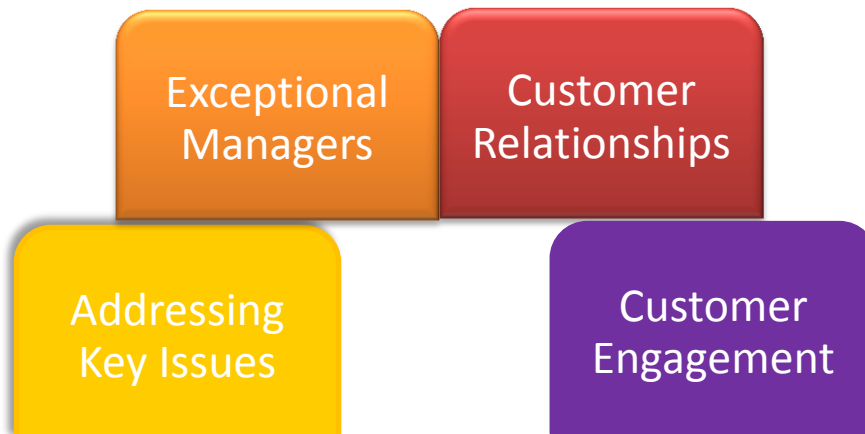
Ho = Store managers' leadership skills enhances store and brand loyalty of consumers.

Ha= Store managers' leadership skills does not enhance store and brand loyalty of consumers.

“We are fashion business – not clothing. Our customers buy our products because they like it – not because they are Zara.” – By Marketing Executive, Zara

The executive here is trying to point out to the fact that consumers buy clothes from Zara because of its high Quality and Affordability and not because it belongs to the brand Zara. This a strong point to consider when we talk about Brand Loyalty. The company earns it because of its products and no other incentive can really make a consumer brand loyal. However, according to Keaveney (2011) there is no such thing as Brand Loyalty for consumers will always find something else to buy from. He states that such customers should be termed as 'Disloyal'. However, the first hand research below do show some results which helps to know customers do remain loyal It is often said “Leadership can either make or break a Brand”, and it stands true to Zara too. Just like the above quote by Zara it helps us to know that they are proud of their products and flaunt the immense customer popularity they get from their customers.

The interview with the store managers helped the researcher to understand the importance of leadership in brand management.



Role of Leadership in Brand Management –

The managers helped the researcher in finding three crucial points which according to them helped Zara beat its competitors. These points helped Zara in distinguishing itself from others competitors. The managers were of the opinion:

1. Zara is able to enjoy a healthy market share because of its **Exceptional Managers** at store. They make it a point to see that the feedback that they get from customers do reach the company on time. Also as per an article in the Literature Review it is seen that Zara holds up its 60% of production, and processes it only after receiving the feedback. This helps them in reducing their Dead Stock and faster production of the popular trends
2. The second most important factor that helps Zara enjoy a better market position is because of its ability to resolve the **Key issues** faced by its customers at the earliest. It sees to it that issues are solved being innovative and creative so that same issues don't arise again in future.
3. The only answer Zara gave me when I asked what attracts customers to them was their **Long-term relationships strengthen over time**. Zara uses a lot of Loyalty programs to reward their loyal customers, and taking special care of them

by being closely in contact with them. Sending them curated offer details and so on

4. When asked about how important **Customer Engagement** is to them, they simply said it's a **key metrics our performance is measured on**. Zara measures its performance at end of the day by calculating how many customers they were able to include in their process of providing better products to them. The reason Zara always have the best collection in their stores in because of their customer engagement, which gives them a close clue of what is trending

Thus, the Null hypothesis (Ho = Store managers' leadership skills enhances store and brand loyalty of consumers) stands **True**.

Chapter 6: Conclusion and Recommendation

As the researcher has studied and researched this project from more than 60 days, the researcher would like to conclude research by putting forward the insights of all the learnings that the researcher has come across so far. Brand is often considered as a vision of one person; however, it requires effort and loyalty of many to make it successful. Throughout my study on discovering what clicks, what makes consumers buy, why they remain loyal to a particular brand I found out it's because of a dozen different things. Like the attributes that work for Zara are: Product Offerings, Quality and Price. However, Zara has a secret weapon which I think is their Strategy but they don't really point it out. It's their Supply Chain. Though many scholars have written about it but it's still not in the company's strategies list. Zara's Flexible Supply Chain helps them to meet the ever changing demands of its customers. It also helps them to have the best design clothes in their stores straight off Runway at a lightning speed. But though Zara has gone all Technology driven but it has kept its traditions alive still. It still makes it's a point that the customers feedback reaches the company before the new batches of clothes are produced again. From the overall research, the researcher can conclude that a Brand is a mix of many factors that keeps it alive, and can survive only when it keeps evolving without losing its core values

Now for the recommendations the researcher would like to highlight a few points based on the above research. Zara as a Brand has grown too big too soon, and like all other big companies Zara has some drawbacks as well. Dublin as a City is mostly inspired from the nearby bigger cities like London for its Fashion Culture. According to Euromonitors' research, Dublin has a lot of bohemian vibe which literally means flaunting one's own style. Zara can cash on this point and have the popular fashion blogger's on board to design a new set of clothes which are primarily influenced from Dublin culture. Zara can also concentrate on serving the higher incomes groups in Dublin by creating a niche line of clothing for them. In simpler words the company can try creating specialised clothing products. This can be achieved with the help of its Flexible Supply Chain. Also, throughout research, the researcher noticed a few things

that makes Zara so successful also contributes it to its weaker points. For instance, Zara is known for its recurrent designs in the store every two weeks, though this gives its customers to have a larger choice each time they visit, it also puts in a lot of additional cost for Zara. The amount of money it spends on Research and Development is way too high. For this they may hire Designers and Fashion Bloggers who could help them with the research and over the time Zara may have reduced its significant cost. Moreover, Zara should pay attention to is its Logistics. It's of the key reason for the fast growth of Zara. But with the company expanding globally, that is, entering different locations simultaneously it may end up losing its smaller markets which gives them a good amount of business. This will also result in decreased sales if those customers turn away to its competitor. It should always be ready with multiple back up plans.

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Appendices

Appendix A:

Chapter 7: Self - Reflection

7.0 Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher would share his reflections throughout the course of Master of Science in Management Practice and particularly about the dissertation process. To begin with, the learning styles learnt and implemented by me will be explained; in addition, the challenges encountered during the research process will be mentioned. This chapter will also, focus on the skills and knowledge acquired during the course of Masters of Science in Management Practice and will mention my future action plans based on my experience during the research process. The action plan is developed and organized as per my learnings and experience during the dissertation process.

7.1 Learning Styles

The Kolb's learning cycle is a closed loop which consist of four categories of learning styles (1) Experience (performing the task); (2) Observation and reflections (watching over and thinking through the experience); (3) Development of ideas (come up with new ideas to resolve a situation encountered in the process of implementing and learning from it); (4) Testing ideas in practice (implement the skills acquired through the whole learning process and understand what works best for you (Southampton Solent University, n.d.). An individual may fall into any of these categories and move or evolve into the next category at any point of time (Southampton Solent University, n.d.). During my course, I had come across Management Simulation and Personal and Professional Development as one of my modules, in which I took the Honey and Mumford's test, and discovered that I fall under the "Observation and reflections" category or "Watching and

thinking” learning style. Furthermore, I had an opportunity to investigate and explore all the learning styles in the module Management Simulation and Personal and Professional Development module. My current learning style has proved to be beneficial for research and information gathering during the dissertation. The other learning styles also, proved of great assistance during the research process. The learning styles also proved to be a great help for me to understand all the modules taught to me throughout my Masters of Science in Management Practice course. For my dissertation, the learning styles helped me to grasp and understand various concept, theories and articles related to the past and the current research on the topic; and understand the current business scenario in my subject of my interest.

7.2 Self-Appraisal

This Masters programme developed by Dublin Business School has over exceeded my expectations. The teaching practices here are more practical and up to the industry standards. Also, the databases the library provides and the support by the librarian in researching for information through various library classes has proved to be of immense help to get over with every course module. These research skills are thoroughly implemented throughout the research process. I was capable to get done with this research successfully because of the guidance of my supervisor Mr. Enda Kilgallen. His guidance, timely advices, motivation and expertise in the research area has helped me immensely to finish this dissertation successfully. The encouragement and motivation that he provided me helped to go through the various stages of the dissertation process. Most of our communication was through email, but he made sure that my doubts were resolved. My overall experience with the course and every module of it has been very satisfying and I am sure that in near future it will definitely benefit me in my professional career.

7.3 Problem Solving

I faced two major problems during my research process, the first one was, I was ill during my data collection process with pushed my whole schedule ahead, as I was not even able to leave my bed. And the second one was to get a permission to schedule an

interview with the store managers of Zara. Even after a number of requests, I was denied for getting an interview from the store managers at Zara. I had to informally request the store managers and explained them, my research topic and its importance after which they gave me an interview but refused to sign any consent form as it is against their company policy.

7.4 Summary of Added Value

This Masters course has helped me to gain as well as enhanced some of the key skills that will help in in my future career prospects such as Leadership skills, communications skills, people skills (approaching them and asking them questions to gain more information), information gathering and last but not the least, research and analytical skills.

7.4.1 Leadership Skills

During this Masters of Science in Management Practice course, I experienced an immense change in my leadership skills. The changes that I experience came gradually, through my experience in writing group assignments and presentations, where many times I took the lead and distributed the work equally among the group members and collaborated, the individual piece of work into one in the end. The score achieved in those assignments and presentations; and the comments from the lecturers proved to be a great motivator to keep on enhancing the acquired skill.

7.4.2 Interviewing Skills

For my research, I had to interview the consumers as well as the store managers. I had to develop my interviewing skills as I would be facing the highly professional store managers. Keeping in consideration the interviewees' experience, I had to prepare myself to ask right questions in a professional manner. Also, this prior preparations in forming the questions for the interview made me more clear about the information related to my research topic.

7.4.3 Research and Analytical Skills

Most of my assignments were based on relevant and current business scenarios , which provided me with an opportunity to enhance and sharpen my research and analytical skills. During the dissertation, I have demonstrated implementation of these skills successfully throughout the document.

7.5 Action Plans

There are two major skills accomplished by me throughout the dissertation process that I would like to enhance and sharpen gradually in my professional as well as personal life. These skills are “Leadership Skill” and “Research and Analytical skills”. I have planned to enhance these skills by always keeping myself updated with research and on-going progress in the subject of my interest by reading various professional journals and conferences like, “Ted Talks”; and building a professional network on LinkedIn.

Appendix B: Interview Transcripts

Interview 1 –

Interviewer – Krunal Gujarathi (Student)

Interviewee – Store Manager, Zara (Female)

Interview Location – In a café, Date – 16-08-2015

Interviewer – How long have you been working for Zara?

Store Manager – 1.6 years

Interviewer – How many years of experience do you have in fashion retail industry?

Store Manager – 6 years

Interviewer – Could you please tell me the importance of leadership involved in building a brand?

Store Manager – When building a brand, the leaders must be exceptional managers, with a distinct set of talents, in order to fulfil customers' and investors' expectations. I personally believe in 3 main principles:

- a. setting clear strategies and grooming talent well;
- b. align internal people development and programs with the company's strategies and investors' expectations;
- c. measure progress and analyse performance, based on the set targets within the strategy;

Without the above prerequisites, there's no such thing as leadership or building a brand.

A product's brand connects a company's output and reputation with customers' needs and investors' hopes. A leadership brand, by extension, is based on marketplace expectations for the behaviour of a company's representatives.

Interviewer – In the most recent article, it was put forward that “Creative Leadership is necessary to solve day-to-day consumer problems”. What are your views on this?

Store Manager – That strongly depends on how much customer feedback is taken into solving the alleged consumer problems. Being creative and innovative is crucial, however, if the creative solutions do not address key issues highlighted by the consumer, then it's pointless. Creative Leadership does not come solely from intellect, innovation and creativity, but also from the ability to give consumers not only what they ask for, but also what they need.

Interviewer – Many marketing theorists and practitioners believe that, it is easy to increase consumer base than to retain the existing ones. How would you comment on that?

Store Manager – I disagree. Why? To start off with, the above belief would indicate that a company is not even looking at/trying to retain consumers. Besides, how do you define your consumer base? What elements contribute to it? The marketing theorists need to consider these factors in to account as well.

Interviewer – Could you please tell me, the importance of consumers' engagement in a brands' success?

Store Manager – A consumer is the single, most important piece of the puzzle. After all, the consumer is the person that uses the product on a daily basis and if you're not engaging with your consumer base and taking their feedback on board, why are you in business?

Interviewer – How often do you interact with your consumers? Do they give you any reviews or suggestions?

Store Manager – Every single day, numerous times per day. Absolutely, it's one of the key metrics our performance is measured on.

Interviewer – According to you, what is the thing about Zara that attracts its consumers more?

Store Manager – A consumer is the single, most important piece of the puzzle. After all, the consumer is the person that uses the product on a daily basis and if you're not engaging with your consumer base and taking their feedback on board, why are you in business?

Interviewer – Do you believe that loyalty programmes or discounted offerings help to enhance brand loyalty?

Store Manager – Absolutely. Long-term relationships strengthen over time, only if there are mutually-assured benefits.

Interviewer – Many existing literature on Brand Loyalty suggests that during the period of recession, consumers tend to be less brand loyal even when the trust and believe in the brand. What would comment on this?

Store Manager – Really depends on the product and market, as well as customer base. And I think it's fair enough for the shift to happen. For eg. May be out of 10 loyal customers of us 6 may shift but the other 4 will always return to us.

Interviewer – What are the key factors on which loyalty of consumer depends? Is it brand image, brand strategy, supply chain, quality of the merchandise, price and/or perception?

Store Manager – According to me, Percieved product quality, perceived product value, brand image and customer relationships are the most important factors that loyalty of a consumer would stand on.

Interview 2 –

Interviewer – Krunal Gujarathi

Interviewee – Manager, Zara, Dublin, Ireland (Female)

Interview Location – Interviewee’s apartment

Interviewer – How long have you been working for Zara?

Manager – 10 months

Interviewer – How many years of experience do you have in fashion retail industry?

Manager – 3 years

Interviewer – Could you please tell me the importance of leadership involved in building a brand?

Manager – Leadership can either make the brand or break it. Employees look up to the person who is leading them. It’s very common to see the qualities of a leader being passed on to its subordinates. Like if the leader is lazy in his work and tends to postpone it always, his subordinates will also look to avoid it always.

Interviewer – In the most recent article, it was put forward that “Creative Leadership is necessary to solve day-to-day consumer problems”. What are your views on this?

Manager – Yes indeed it is. It helps to solve the problems that the customers may face. It helps us to be a step ahead

Interviewer – Many marketing theorists and practitioners believe that, it is easy to increase consumer base than to retain the existing ones. How would you comment on that?

Manager – I disagree with that. Because most of the customers we get is our repeat customers and the news ones which come they are mostly referrals. They come because their friends and family advocated about us.

Interviewer – Could you please tell me, the importance of consumers' engagement in a brands' success?

Manager – Consumer Engagement helps us to know the gaps where we may lie and what else should we offer that we are missing out. They help us to know the missing ingredients in our offerings.

Interviewer – How often do you interact with your consumers? Do they give you any reviews or suggestions?

Manager – I always make it a point to talk with the customers while they are at the payment counters or just randomly in the store. Yes many a times the enthusiast ones do give us.

Interviewer – According to you, what is the thing about Zara that attracts its consumers more?

Manager – I think it's our product offerings along with the price that fits their pocket which attracts them the most.

Interviewer – Do you believe that loyalty programmes or discounted offerings help to enhance brand loyalty?

Manager – Loyalty programs does help in knowing the customers which stick with the brand no matter what. It also acts as a reward points to our loyal customers

Interviewer – Many existing literature on Brand Loyalty suggests that during the period of recession, consumers tend to be less brand loyal even when the trust and believe in the brand. What would comment on this?

Manager – I think it's fair enough for the shift to happen. But the ones which want to Zara alone will always return to us.

Interviewer – What are the key factors on which loyalty of consumer depends? Is it brand image, brand strategy, supply chain, quality of the merchandise, price and/or perception?

Manager – I think the loyalty happens over a period of time, but it continues only when we offer the same or better quality always.

Appendix C: Security Clearance



Krunal Gujarathi <gujarathi.krunal@gmail.com>

zara feedback for thesis

Krunal Gujarathi <gujarathi.krunal@gmail.com>
To: Enda Kilgallen <enda.kilgallen@dbs.ie>

Thu, Aug 13, 2015 at 8:53 AM

Dear Enda,

Yesterday, I again spoke with the Zara HR department, which denied to provide me with an official consent to carry out the interview. Also, I spoke with one of the managers in a Zara store explaining her about my research and importance of it, on which she agreed to participate in the interview but will not sign any consent form as it is against the company's policy.

I wanted to know if it is okay to collect the data without the consent form. I would also like to request you for an extension of one week carry out the interview and finish my dissertation successfully. I have successfully received the response from the respondents and now I am working on the analysis part of it.

Kindly provide me your advice.

Thank you.

Regards,

Krunal Gujarathi

Appendix D: Information to Participants

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

PROJECT TITLE

To Investigate Consumer Brand Loyalty in Irish Clothing Industry (Case Study - Zara)

You are being asked to take part in a research study on “Consumer Brand Loyalty”. The aim of this research is to determine and critically analyse the key factors that contribute in developing and managing a sustainable brand. I am Krunal Gujarathi, a Masters’ student at Dublin Business School and Mr. Enda Kilgallen is my supervisor for this research study. This topic is approved by Research Ethics Committee.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN

In this study, you will be asked to questions related to leadership, consumer engagement in brand success and brand loyalty. The questions will help to determine the key factor involved in a brand’s success.

TIME COMMITMENT

The study typically takes 10 – 15 mins.

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 the information you share with me which will be available on academic resources like, presentation at conferences, publication. I assure you that none of your personal information will be shared without your prior permission.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

I or / and Mr. Enda Kilgallen will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time. You may contact my supervisor at enda.kilgallen@dbs.ie and DBS phone (01) 4177500.

INFORMATION SHEET FOR PARTICIPANTS

PROJECT TITLE

To Investigate Consumer Brand Loyalty in Irish Clothing Industry (Case Study - Zara)

You are being asked to take part in a research study on “Consumer Brand Loyalty”. The aim of this research is to determine and critically analyse the key factors that contribute in developing and managing a sustainable brand. I am Krunal Gujarathi, a Masters’ student at Dublin Business School and Mr. Enda Kilgallen is my supervisor for this research study. This topic is approved by Research Ethics Committee.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN

In this study, you will be asked to questions related to leadership, consumer engagement in brand success and brand loyalty. The questions will help to determine the key factor involved in a brand’s success.

TIME COMMITMENT

The study typically takes 2 - 3 mins.

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... [describe as appropriate. Describe your intentions regarding use of the data, for use in your dissertation and e.g., presentation at

conferences, publication, etc. In doing so, make clear the extent to which individual participants will or will not be identifiable, as appropriate]

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION

I or / and Mr. Enda Kilgallen will be glad to answer your questions about this study at any time. You may contact my supervisor at enda.kilgallen@dbs.ie and DBS phone (01) 4177500.