Irish Food Brands:
A Shopper Perception Study towards Loyalty

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ABSTRACT

In view of the positive development of the Irish brand's reputation in the food industry, the purpose of this research is to investigate the loyalty potentiality for Irish food brands in Dublin. The study initially explores the loyalty potentiality in the food industry and go further by examining the spheres of country of origin, quality, health, taste and price in connection with the Irish food brands.

In order to realise that investigation, a questionnaire was administered to collect data in Dublin of 103 food shoppers between June and July of 2016. It was discovered that 1 in 6 respondents is loyal to food brands, and that 1 in 4 consumers is predisposed to consider purchasing Irish food brands. However, these findings rely entirely on the consumer's perception and the spheres studied. Nonetheless, the authentic findings elicited from the shopper's perspective can assist Irish food companies on better allocating their resources to create better value.

Additionally, no prior research has measured the loyalty degree of shoppers for Irish food brands. In that quest, based on previous research, the conceptualisation of a construct to measure the loyalty potentiality of the food industry was realised, which can adaptively probe any market.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the Irish food industry has increasingly attracted attention. Opposing the gloomy trend that has negatively impacted on most Irish industries due to the preceding global recession, the industry has exhibited an enduring growing status (DAFM, 2015, p. 21). In addition, the net selling value of food products has represented the largest share contrasting to all products manufactured and sold by Irish based companies, of which in 2014 was of 19.3% or €19.8 billion (CSO, 2015a).

Furthermore, the Irish brand reputation as a food producer is regarded as strong integrity, safe, sustainable and high quality, being consumed in at least 175 countries around the world (DAFM, 2011, p. 15; DAFM, 2015, p. 1, 58).

As a result, the Irish food brand is evidently becoming more salient. Accordingly, shoppers might use country of origin as a quality indicator of a food product in the occasion where they cannot evaluate its intrinsic characteristics prior to the purchase (Kalicharan, 2014; Torres and Gutiérrez, 2007; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999).

Conversely, when a product is formerly experienced, intrinsic qualities are the most accurate indicators of a brand quality (Olson and Jacoby, 1972). Specifically to food, taste is often the chief attribute criterion used into a decision making process (Brunsø, Fjord and Grunert, 2002; Luomala et al., 2015). Another intrinsic quality highly regarded for food products is health, although its effects, as well as its declared nutrition information, are not easily realised by the consumer (Grunert, 2005).

Nonetheless, price is a strong extrinsic attribute to be regarded in the equation. Accounted for the monetary value that the shopper is paying for a combination of qualities to receive, price should represent all the product's value, leading the consumer to strongly consider it in order to either appraise his or her sacrifice, or to infer superiority when no other quality cues are available (Ahtola, 1984; Brunsø, Fjord and Grunert, 2002; Makasi and Govender, 2014; Zeithaml, 1988). In fact, price, health and taste are the primary considerations for consumers in Ireland when shopping food products (Lavelle, Carroll and Fahy, 2012; Walton et al., 2011).

Even so, differentiation is only established when all the value added to a product is perceived by the buyer, creating or strengthening the brand relationship with the customer, which may lead to loyalty, and hence, to higher profits. The loyalty importance was evidenced by

Reichheld, Markey and Hopton (2000), who have studied a broad range of industries, concluding that a +5% change in customer retention results into profit increases of 25 to 100%.

Nevertheless, differentiating a food brand among the competition to evoke repeat patronage in any form is a tough task, predominantly to companies that manufacture fast-moving consumer goods (FMCG) such as food products (Oliver, 1999; Uncles, Dowling and Hammond, 2003). Still, loyalty can exist in that sector (Leahy, 2008; Olsen, 2002).

1.1. Problem Statement

Knowledge about the consumer is vital to any company, mostly on account of the endless routes a company can take as an attempt to pleasure its customers. Although specificities of a niche should be scrutinised in order to close existing gaps, establishing a global perspective of potential scenarios is essential so that strategic prioritisations might be more easily conceived, consequently, resources would not be unnecessarily consumed, being employed in better value creation to the clientele.

As a result, comprehensive evaluations should be constantly monitored, as well as contrasted to different angles, hence, a continuous research effort should be devoted. Accordingly, this paper studies the consumer perception regarding the Irish food brand quality, comprising the consideration of the country of origin of a food product, as well as three inherent prominent characteristics when choosing a food brand, which are taste, health and price.

Notwithstanding, the study is led by the loyalty perspective in the city of Dublin, and, since no previous research has measured the loyalty degree of shoppers for Irish food brands, the following research question was formulated:

- What is the loyalty potentiality for Irish food brands in Dublin?

By responding that question, a new perspective will be provided to Irish food companies take into account when appraising their efforts to establish a superior relationship with the consumer in Dublin. Nevertheless, six research objectives has been established in order to guide that investigation, which are next presented.

1.2. Objectives

1. Investigate how loyal the shopper in Dublin is towards food brands.

The investigation starts by appraising the loyalty level of shoppers in Dublin towards food brands, thus, indicating the loyalty potentiality for food brands of any country of origin, yielding an overarching panorama to be primary considered by an Irish food brand.

2. Assess the consideration level of shoppers in Dublin regarding the country of origin of food brands.

Sequentially, the country of origin consideration for food brands will be assessed.

3. Assess the likeability of Irish food brands.

The result of considering Irish food brands is originated from the establishment of their differentiation into consumers' minds, therefore, the overall quality of Irish food brands will be evaluated.

4. Appraise the consideration of eaters in Dublin concerning health for Irish food brands.

Nevertheless, one of the primary components considered when purchasing food products is health, therefore, its correlation to Irish food brands will be appraised in order to support the overall quality.

5. Appraise the consideration of eaters in Dublin concerning taste for Irish food brands.

Consequently, taste will also be taken into consideration.

6. Evaluate the shopper attitude in Dublin towards the price of Irish food brands.

Finally, evaluating the price attitude of shoppers for Irish food brands would solidify the previous appraisements, inasmuch as it represents all the quality value of an Irish food brand, as further discussed in the literature.

1.3. Structure of Research Paper

This study starts by reviewing the literature in the chapter 2, starting by discussing prior research of Irish food shoppers as an initial foundation that assisted on defining the scope of this study in the form of the research objectives. Consequently, the subsequent variables involved in the study are meticulously explored and discussed.

The methodology utilised to carry out the primary research is appraised in chapter 3. Sequentially, chapter 4 analyses and presents the findings extracted from the primary data collected. As a result, perspectives' contrasts and discussions between findings and literature are developed in chapter 5. Lastly, chapter 6 concludes by summarising the study and devising recommendations based on the primary and secondary research.

2. Literature Review

This chapter opens by contrasting attitude and behaviour of Irish food shoppers. Next, the components of loyalty are discussed, exploring its utilisation in the market, where different approaches are presented in order to indentify and measure the loyalty of a consumer. Sequentially, country of origin is introduced in the form of a brand, consecutively elaborating on the preference for home brands.

Afterwards, key quality elements involved in the consumer's appraisals are examined, where the two most important qualities revealed, health and taste, are accordingly investigated. Subsequently, the price sphere is scrutinised.

2.1. Irish Food Shoppers

Introducing a broad consumer's perspective for a food product appraisement, large discrepancies are found in previous researches carried out in the Republic of Ireland concerning the importance of food attributes such as taste, health and price. In a first study conducted between 2008 and 2010, the "National Adult Nutrition Survey" revealed that the factors considered most important to Irish people when selecting food were: taste, represented by 41% of the participants, health, with a share of 36%, and price, holding 9% of importance (Walton et al., 2011).

In another survey realised in the same country, conducted between 2010 and 2011, respondents reported virtually equally that price and health are the most important attributes when shopping food, each of the attributes representing 25% of importance, followed by taste (16%), food production origin (15%), and brand (11%) (Lavelle, Carroll and Fahy, 2012).

Firstly, it could be argued that the discrepancy was accounted due to the methodologies employed. It was indicated that the former survey utilised only the first ranked option and the latter used the top three factors equally weighted, therefore, these different methodologies would almost certainly lead to divergent results. A complementary possibility for the disparate results (however less likely) is that the population's attitude towards food consumption has substantially changed between the time periods. Nevertheless, obviously other factors could also be unfavourably intervening in the results' reliability and validity. Nonetheless, a considerable discrepancy of information is observed, notably, the first and third attributes have switched positions, where taste factor had the greatest variation of 25 percent points between the studies.

Additionally, Love Irish Food (2015) commissioned and published the findings of a recent study, exhibiting that the motivators for buying a food product are: trust in the brand, country of origin and local provenience, representing 35% of motivators; product quality accounting for 25%; and price for 23%. However, no more details on these results are revealed to better compare with the results before discussed, not to mention the methodology utilised to achieve them. Although, price can be compared, which is in consonance with the second study, differentiating in only 2 percent points.

Nevertheless, it is perceived that health, taste and price are the most important considerations when purchasing a food product In Ireland.

Complementary, according to a research realised by Bord Bía (2013), 75% of consumers would be encouraged to buy Irish food products if the product's package states the food's Irish provenance. In addition, 43% of Irish food shoppers reported in 2015 to "only buy well known brands", representing one of the behavioural characteristics of loyalty, as explored in the next section (Love Irish Food, 2015).

2.2. Loyalty

Before discussing different conceptualisations of "loyalty", it is necessary to note that this term is usually accompanied by other names to address specific perspectives, such as "customer loyalty", "consumer loyalty" and "brand loyalty" (e.g.: Keller, 2013; Kotler and Keller, 2016).

Customer loyalty and brand loyalty are two chief nomenclatures widely employed in the academic literature and in the market, where customer loyalty frequently highlights the nature of loyalty, explaining the processes and components involved in the customers' mind towards a brand, while the brand loyalty commonly emphasises the view of the brand management in order to enhance consumers' attitudes for a brand (Uncles, Dowling and Hammond, 2003).

However, all perspectives are concerned with the loyalty of a shopper towards a brand, which is the omnibus perspective of this study. Yet, a broad comprehensive perspective of "loyalty" is defined by Reichheld (2003) as the "the willingness of someone — a customer, an employee, a friend — to make an investment or personal sacrifice in order to strengthen a relationship".

Uncles, Dowling and Hammond (2003) characterise loyalty by segmenting it as into three categories: monogamy, polygamy and promiscuity. Loyalty as **monogamy** refers to total devotion to only one brand, thus, promoting it, whereas **polygamy** denotes the sympathy sharing among a handful of brands, leading to no brand commitment and the **promiscuity** classification is ascribed to consumers who are variety seeking oriented.

Nonetheless, in order to explain the reasons that underlie the customer behaviour, researchers have developed theoretical concepts (e.g.: Day, 1969; Dick and Basu, 1994; Gentry and Brown, 1980; Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978; Lutz and Winn, 1974; Oliver, 1999). Oliver (1999) for instance, used factors previously introduced by Jacoby and Chestnut (1978), depicting the consumer processes for loyalty in four consecutive stages, as following described:

1. **Cognition**: stage of assimilation and associations of brand's information.

2. **Affection**: infusion of satisfying factors from brand's usage occasions.

3. **Conative**: commitment establishment, i.e., behavioural intention due to salient motivations.

4. **Action**: behavioural realisation, or readiness to act towards the brand.

Dick and Basu (1994) have firstly proposed these stages, although, in a different disposition. In addition, their model is comprised of more elements and details. As a consequence, its elaboration is subsequently given more attention.

A Framework for Customer Loyalty

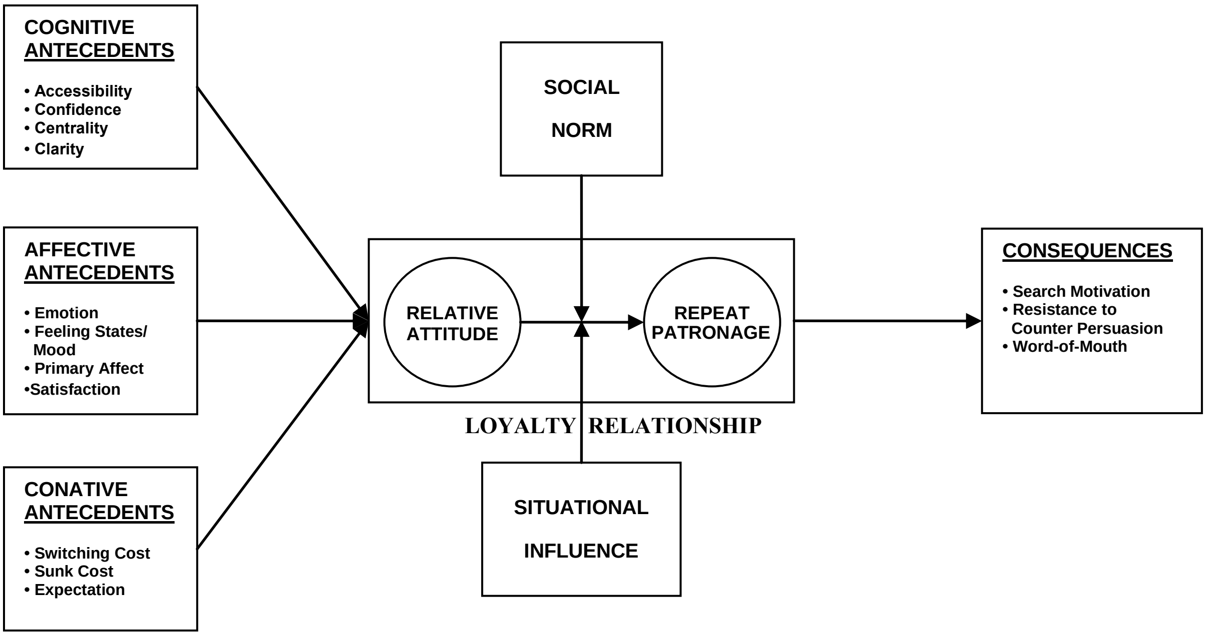

Figure 2.1: A Framework for Customer Loyalty

[Source: Dick and Basu, 1994]

Dick and Basu (1994) constructed two main components into the loyalty relationship: **relative attitude**, i.e., the consumer's favourability level towards one entity brand among other available brands in the market under different consumption occasions, and which encompasses the first three phases of Oliver (1999), however, operating simultaneously; and the **repeat patronage**, which corresponds to the Oliver's (1999) action stage. In addition, **social norms** and **situational factors** are presented in the framework in order to mediate the connection between relative attitude and repeat patronage.

Dick and Basu (1994) depict the composition of relative attitude in two components: **attitude strength** (or "attitudinal extremity") and **attitudinal differentiation** (or customer's perception of uniqueness within the brand relationship). Notwithstanding, the authors indicate that relative attitude predominantly correspond to attitudinal differentiation, inasmuch attitude strength is described as inconclusive, that is, in the face of alternative brands, a brand evaluated as a strong attitude strength, but presenting a weak attitudinal differentiation, could lead to either spurious or no loyalty.

Nevertheless, the researchers developed four loyalty categories whilst relating the two pivotal components primarily introduced, i.e., relative attitude and repeat patronage (also illustrated in "Appendix 2 - Models of Dick and Basu"):

1. **No loyalty**: for low relative attitude and low repeat patronage.

2. **Spurious loyalty**: for low relative attitude and high repeat patronage.

3. **Latent loyalty**: for high relative attitude and low repeat patronage.

4. **Loyalty**: for high relative attitude and high repeat patronage.

Whereas no loyalty, spurious loyalty and loyalty might easily be associated respectively with promiscuity, polygamy and monogamy, as described by Uncles, Dowling and Hammond (2003), latent loyalty is less evident to be identified in the market, since it occurs when norms and/or situational effects are operating equally or stronger than repeat patronage (Dick and Basu, 1994).

Nonetheless, the importance of loyalty is largely operationalised in the marketplace by measuring customers' repeat patronages in the form of purchases (Jeffery, 2010, pp. 93-95; Reichheld, Markey and Hopton, 2000; Reichheld, 2003). Measuring either customer retention or defection based on the number of purchases in a timeframe might be used for different measures, for instance, a relevant related measure used in the market is the "Customer Lifetime Value", which estimates the present value of the future cash flows that a customer will bring in to the company (Farris et al., 2010, p. 153, 155, 167; Jeffery, 2010, p. 63).

However, loyalty could also be measured by surveying the clientele. An eminent example is the use of the "net promoter score", established by Reichheld (2003), which substitutes many customer's satisfaction questions (argued as misleading by the author) for only one enquiry: "How likely is it that you would recommend [brand] to a friend or colleague?" (Reichheld, 2003; Satmetrix Systems, 2016).

In the domains of measuring satisfaction to signal loyalty, criticisms and admonition are made by researchers (e.g.: Reichheld, Markey and Hopton, 2000; Stewart, 1997). As just mentioned for instance, Reichheld (2003) refers to satisfaction questions as misleading loyalty indicators. Oliver (1999) also realises the drawback of that relationship, however, noting that for some firms is the only measure feasible to be utilised, underlining the importance of its study.

Notwithstanding, Olsen (2002), while investigating loyalty with regard to "repurchase", proposes a model where satisfaction is the mediator between quality and repeat purchase. Accordingly, the author has conceptualised that the customers' decision-making process recognises qualities of a product and elevates these characteristics upon a satisfaction evaluation by which will determine the potential customer's predisposition to purchase the brand, compare with competitors, as well as to become loyal to it.

The Olsen's (2002) results were favourable, where the study is specific to seafood products. Nonetheless, there is evidence suggesting that consumers are not essentially loyal to food and household products (Oliver, 1999). Consequently, Oliver (1999) claims that items treated as commodity are not appropriate for loyalty programmes, however, the same researcher acknowledges exceptions, aligning his stance with evidences of newer peer reviewed studies, even though not numerous (e.g.: Leahy, 2008; Olsen, 2002).

2.3. Country of Origin

Researches as cited in Torres and Gutiérrez (2007) have considered country of origin as "country of manufacture", "country of assembly" and "country of design". However, the perception of country of origin, according to Kotler and Keller (2016, p. 260), constitutes "the mental associations and beliefs triggered by a country".

Furthermore, a country is considered a brand itself, hence marketed accordingly by its government and/or its constituents (Kotler and Keller, 2016, p. 260). Correspondingly, the country brand image can directly influence the consumer quality perception, attitude and behaviour toward a product, and therefore influence on its purchasing (Kalicharan, 2014; Torres and Gutiérrez, 2007; Verlegh and Steenkamp, 1999).

The country or origin represents extrinsic quality cue(s) (i.e., quality signal(s) that are not part of the product's nature, also elaborated in "2.4.1. Total Food Quality Model"), therefore, it assists on deciding among alternative brands. For example, France suggests positive extrinsic quality cues for products such as wine, perfumes and fashion, thus, suggesting the consumer to expect corresponding intrinsic quality cues as tasty, pleasant scent and stylish (Adina, Gabriela and Roxana-Denisa, 2015; Pecotich and Ward, 2010).

In parallel, country of origin concepts might vary in abstraction, i.e., be applied to other geographic areas (Keller, 2013, p. 267). For instance, the influence of extrinsic cues was studied in wines labelled as a new product from California and North Dakota, in which wines described as from California had higher positive results for the reason that California is acknowledged for its wines while North Dakota is not (Wansink, Payne and North, 2007).

Inferably, any sphere of a country (such as cultural, historical, linguistic, economical, technological and political) might generate (positive or negative) quality cues that native or foreign consumers might perceive and thus use for evaluating a product or a brand.

Nevertheless, the higher the consumer's knowledge level of a product, the less likely (s)he will be biased on appraising it (Bian and Moutinho, 2011). Consonantly, country of origin impacts more significantly on products that the consumer is not familiarised or less involved (Josiassen, Lukas and Whitwell, 2008). In any case, attention should be devoted to country of origin by a firm's perspective, inasmuch that is an extension of its brand, consequently affecting its imagery (Keller, 2013, pp. 107-116).

2.3.1. Home Country Brand Preference

Consumers are commonly prone to value their home brands more than foreign brands (Bilkey and Nes, 1982). Complementary, consumers tend to higher appreciate the brands that were made in more developed countries, even when they are patriotic (Bilkey and Nes, 1982; Zolfagharian and Sun, 2010). Several studies (as cited in Bilkey and Nes, 1982) indicate that foreign products are largely evaluated according to their national economic development degree and national reputation of their respective sectors.

Nevertheless, there are occasions where undervaluation or even aversion to foreign products take place due to disagreement(s) towards a nation, which could be based on culture, history, politics, military and economy (Bilkey and Nes, 1982; Cui, Fitzgerald and Donovan, 2014). These are rooted in two distinct principles, animosity and ethnocentrism. Animosity is caused by the remnants of antipathy for a nation, while ethnocentrism is on account of self-overprotection or fear of losing control of the own interests (Cui, Fitzgerald and Donovan, 2014).

Additionally, it is important to observe that ethnocentrism differs from patriotism in the way that the latter generates love and devotion to a nation, thus, it does not signify overprotection (Puncheva-Michelotti and Michelotti, 2014).

As an example of animosity, a study conducted in 1965 demonstrated that students from Guatemala lowly evaluated products made in El Salvador and Costa Rica in consequence of the negative feelings toward the people of these countries (Schooler, 1965).

In the ethnocentrism sphere, Zolfagharian, Saldivar and Sun (2014) studied immigrants of first-generation in United States, revealing that these immigrants favour products of the more developed country only when the degree difference of economic development between home and host countries is high.

Nevertheless, understandings of country of origin effects could be abstracted from a cultural perspective. For example, cultural bias was apparent when investigating the country of origin effects involving products and people native of United States and Japan, concluding that in Japan the effects of valuing (regardless of superiority) their home products higher than the foreign ones were pervasive possibly due to its collective culture. In United States, perhaps for its individualistic society, country of origin did not affect the evaluations (Gürhan-Canli and Maheswaran, 2000).

2.4. Consumer Quality Perception

Quality elements are commonly comprised of search, experience and credence characteristics (Brunsø, Fjord and Grunert, 2002; Darby and Karni, 1973, cited in Grunert, 2005), where:

- **Search characteristics:** are the desirable product attributes sought before a purchase.
- **Experience characteristics:** are the impressions acquired during and after consuming the product.
- **Credence characteristics:** are the beliefs, whether existent, conceived at any moment.

Lutz (1986, as cited in Zeithaml, 1988) proposed two forms of qualities, "cognitive quality" and "affective quality", relating the former as a search mechanism and the latter as the experience impressions. Sequentially, Lutz advocated that an affective judgement are more likely to take effect on services and nondurable goods, since the experience characteristics predominate at these circumstances. On the other hand, he suggested that cognitive judgement might prevail for durable goods due to the prioritisation of product's characteristics searched.

Nonetheless and fundamentally, other researchers (e.g.: Myers and Shocker, 1981; Young and Feigen, 1975) have postulated the human mind abstracts and prioritise qualities by clusters, which end up being prioritised into the individual's emotional realms.

2.4.1. Total Food Quality Model

Product qualities are generally segmented into objective and subjective attributes. Objective attributes refer to the actual food qualities that are manipulated by food engineers, while the subjective are the qualities perceived by the consumer. (Grunert, 2005)

Grunert et al. (1996, p. 81) introduced the Total Food Quality Model (TFQM) in order to analyse the consumer's quality perception and consumer's decision-making on food products as an attempt to integrate different approaches, such as mean-end chain, expectancy value, satisfaction/dissatisfaction and economics of information (Grunert, 2005; Grunert, Bredahl and Brunsø, 2004).

The TFQM emphasises four predominant dimensions extracted from empirical food research: taste, health, convenience and production process (Brunsø, Fjord and Grunert, 2002). Nevertheless, note in the "Figure 2.2" that it does not neglect price, just the opposite, "cost cues" as sacrifice are separated from the "extrinsic quality cues", demonstrating the distinctiveness of "give" and "get" components of a food purchasing, whereas its use as quality indicator is implicit in "extrinsic quality cues" (Ahtola, 1984; Brunsø, Fjord and Grunert, 2002; Grunert et al., 1996, p. 81).

The Total Food Quality Model

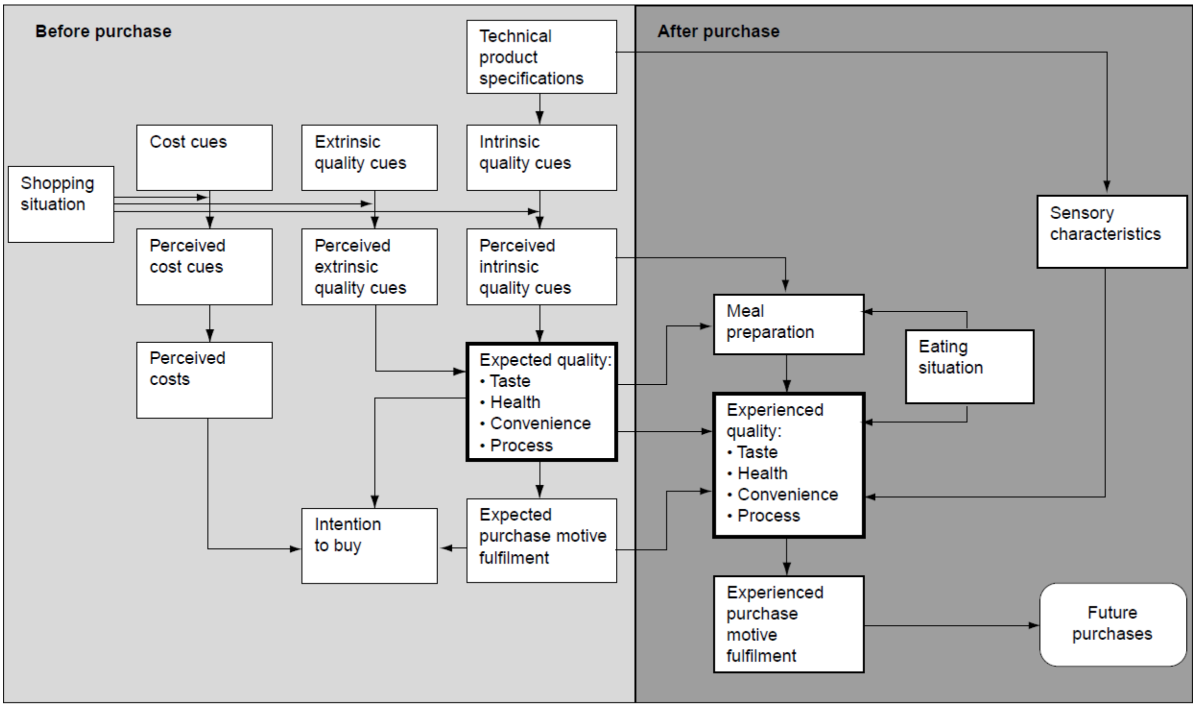

Figure 2.2: The Total Food Quality Model

[Source: Brunsø, Fjord and Grunert, 2002]

The extrinsic quality cues exhibited in the model refer to the information pieces of product-related attributes received from external sources of the product, e.g., country of origin, brand and price (Olson and Jacoby, 1972; Steenkamp, 1990). Conversely, intrinsic quality cues are received from the physical components that constitutes the product, for example, a food's taste and its colour (Olson and Jacoby, 1972; Steenkamp, 1990). Not surprisingly, studies analysed by Olson and Jacoby (1972) indicated that the intrinsic cues are predominantly perceived as the most accurate indicators of brand quality.

Notwithstanding, a few quality cues are sometimes difficult to be classified as either extrinsic or intrinsic, remarkably, those related to product packages, since peculiarities of a package may be part of a product's consumption ritual (Zeithaml, 1988).

Moving onto the framework's core, the expected and experienced quality compounds include four components. The first two components, taste and health, are given special attention in the subsequent sections, although, taste intends to represent the most salient hedonic aspect of the consumer's sensory perception, while health is mainly related to the functional sphere of a food (Grunert, 2005).

Convenience quality is described as the tendency of reducing efforts and time in all the food management, such as searching, choosing, buying, storing, preparing, consuming and wasting the food's refuses (Brunsø, Fjord and Grunert, 2002).

Finally, process quality concerns to the degree of the food's substances manipulation and external agents involved. It chiefly refers to organic food, genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and animal welfare. Therefore, the food process quality is almost entirely perceived as credence characteristics, once consumers will not usually be able to certify the food provenance. (Brunsø, Fjord and Grunert, 2002)

2.4.2. Health

The term health might include an extensive gamut of significations from different standpoints, e.g.: physiological, psychological and social. Nonetheless, the emphasis of this study is on health from the consumers' perspective toward food products.

Brunsø, Fjord and Grunert (2002) propose to look through two customers' lenses while considering to buy healthy food, the predominant view is related to ingesting functional food, as containing nutrients, less fat, sugar, salt and so on, and the second stands for an aversion to potential detrimental food in regards to food safety concerns, i.e., when they are for example associated with salmonella, pesticide residues or even genetic modification.

In addition, "functional food" should be defined, since it has varied across countries and cultures, and has been redefined over the last three decades (Martirosyan and Singh, 2015). Possibly the most accepted definition (which was revised in 2014 at the 17th international conference of the Functional Food Center in United States) is as follows:

> Natural or processed foods that contains known or unknown biologically-active compounds; which, in defined, effective non-toxic amounts, provide a clinically proven and documented health benefit for the prevention, management, or treatment of chronic disease (Martirosyan and Singh, 2015).

Nevertheless, on a food company's path of elaborating and promoting enriched products, consideration regarding consumer perception and behaviour towards the food products should be taken, prevalently related to communication effects.

For example, a conjoint study carried out in three countries demonstrated that an enriched food product was perceived healthier in the cases of informed that it produces well being and prevents some disease, compared to a third scenario where it was only stating the enrichment information (Bech-Larsen, Grunert and Poulsen, 2001, cited in Brunsø, Fjord and Grunert, 2002). In addition, the fact that "health" is connected to "credence" should protrude the communication relevance on transmitting health quality cues to consumers (Grunert, 2005).

Therefore, for communication effectiveness of a food product message, in supplement to the importance of its source credibility (imparted by extrinsic quality cues), it is evident that the informational content which it carries would be more acceptable when easier understandable, that is, addressing directly the consumer's point of concern, so that even the shopper unfamiliar with nutritional meanings can assimilate the corresponding beneficial outcomes, as just demonstrated.

A second aspect to be taken into consideration is that consumers perceive more health quality when the enrichment is an extension of the product nature. For example, the acceptance of bread enriched with fibres is higher than enriched with calcium. Accordantly, milk enriched with calcium is more favoured when compared with enriched with fibres. (Poulsen, 1999)

Possibly that perspective should originate from the reason that the more natural (or, the lower degree of processing) a food is perceived, the healthier it is judged (Grunert, Bredahl and Brunsø, 2004).

In regards to the correlation of health and taste, it diverges among the consumers' perceptions, varying between high and low abstractions among the diverse food types, where some eaters favourably associate healthy and tasty food, i.e., tasty implying healthy food, while others demonstrate the opposite relationship, that is, healthy food associated to untasty (Luomala et al., 2015; Werle, Trendel and Ardito, 2013).

Accordingly, light food for some consumers is associated with health, but for others is related with superficiality and/or undernourishment (Luomala et al., 2015). However, low fat content is nearly an universal positive health cue (Ellen and Bone, 2008). In addition, the divergence of consumers' perceptions are lessened for organic foods, inasmuch they are generally perceived as more natural, thus healthier (as just discussed), and in specific circumstances also as tastier (Brunsø, Fjord and Grunert, 2002; Grunert, Bredahl and Brunsø, 2004).

The effective impact on human wellness due to the compositions of organic and conventional food was subject of debate during a long time among academics, which, nevertheless, apparently did not impacted on the consumers' perception or preference for more natural food, as aforementioned. Nonetheless, the consumer's sentiment on that topic is currently stronger aligned with the academics' findings. Contradicting previous research that found no significant difference between organic and non-organic food, it was revealed in a recent large study through a meta-analysis based on 343 peer-reviewed publications that organic crops and crop-based foods, in reality, contained generous favourable healthy differences than conventional crops in all the following regards: several antioxidants; some compounds, such as minerals and vitamins; levels of the toxic heavy metal; and evidently, pesticide residues. (Baranski et al., 2014)

2.4.3. Taste

Human taste buds perceive five qualities, sweet, umami, salty, sour and bitter, whereas sweet, umami and salty tend to be appreciated (as sugars, amino acids and, sodium chloride or other salts), and, sour and bitter tend to be repudiated (as acids and alkaloids) (Birch, 1999; Frank and Hettinger, 2005; Sijtsema et al., 2012).

The signals received by taste buds, chiefly on the tongue (however, also in the back of the mouth and even in the intestine), activate certain neurons (in primary taste cortex) which decode the mix of tastes perceived and culminate in a brain region (called orbitofrontal cortex) to be processed with olfactory signals (Araujo et al., 2003; Krishna, 2013, p. 108, 112; Rolls, 2005).

In fact, smell is a predominant sense for the ability to taste, caused by the food odours that reach the olfactory mucosa (Krishna, 2013, p. 111; Spence, 2015). Consequently, taste misjudgements are easily demonstrated when pinching a person's nose simultaneously to tasting a flavour. These misinterpretations are significant, for example, they might occur when comparing Coke and Sprite, or apple and grape juices. (Araujo et al., 2003; Krishna, 2013, pp. 110-111)

Complementary to the five essential taste qualities currently recognised, some examples of other elementary qualities that might influence the taste perception include metallic, fatty acid, alkaline and kokumi (Ikeda, 2002; Spence, 2015). In addition, oral tactile sensations such as astringency and temperature also impact on a flavour perception (Spence, 2015).

Further, the brain (or the orbitofrontal cortex) integrates all the senses together, as sounds, feelings and other cues assimilated, which result into a synergetic flavour response (Krishna, 2013, p. 112). Nevertheless, it is still not well defined in the literature how these elements within a flavour experience should be regarded, whether as modulatory or constitutive, which some of the cases will be next explored (Spence, 2015).

2.4.3.1. Taste Preference

Taste is often the main quality criterion considered when choosing food products (Brunsø, Fjord and Grunert, 2002; Luomala et al., 2015). However, as an experience quality, taste evaluation is realised during and after the food's consumption (Brunsø, Fjord and Grunert, 2002). As a consequence, when deciding for a food product, the choice of a shopper might be based on similar past experiences, price, package looks or even feelings produced by touching and smelling the product (Krishna, 2013, p. 107). Nevertheless, the ambience also plays its role on influencing the food product choice, as the store's cleanness, the surroundings' smell, lighting and so forth (Krishna, 2012).

These other cues might temporarily substitute the taste quality, shaping the consumer's expectation for a complete taste experience. On the other hand, in a restaurant for example, all the senses may operate simultaneously, where every detail such as the shape of a meat piece or the design of a soup spoon can influence the whole taste perception and food consumption experience. (Brunsø, Fjord and Grunert, 2002; Krishna, 2013, pp. 106-107)

As a substantial implication, whereby incorporating multiple sensory inputs and being susceptible to extrinsic cues, taste is accordingly suggestible and ambiguous (Elder and Krishna, 2009). As an example, an experiment where participants were biting potato chips and simultaneously using headphones to allow the modulation of crunching sounds, those whose the modulation was amplified rated the chips higher in crispness and freshness aspects (Zampini and Spence, 2004).

Furthermore, the involved psychologic aspects significantly influence taste perception (Krishna, 2013, p. 113). As a salient illustration, in a study investigating the effects of hard-to-open packages on taste, the chip potatoes in packages that were harder to open were considered tasting better (McDaniel and Baker, 1977).

Additionally, as it was illustrated in "2.4.2. Health", the manner of communicating a message might powerfully stand out to grab the consumer's attention. Communicating taste, however, will induce the hedonic perceptions of a consumer, as the new Californian wine illustrated in "2.3. Country of Origin". Nonetheless, an even more salient case was demonstrated where customers of a restaurant higher rated a food when under the name "Succulent Italian Seafood Filet" (Wansink, van Ittersum and Painter, 2005).

Another important consideration is that consumers compare their own values with the perceived brand's values, thus, when a congruence is found, they are induced to experience a better taste and aroma. Conversely, in the case of encountering an incongruence, a potential positive experience is neutralised. (Allen, Gupta and Monnier, 2008; Paasovaara et al., 2012)

A well-known example of value's alignment was exhibited by Coca-Cola when introducing the "New Coke" in 1985. Despite of the demonstration that the new formula was tastier than the original "Coke", customers overreacted because of their emotional bonds to the original Coke. As a consequence, the organisation reintroduced the original formula, occasion that the company attracted a great positive sum of direct attention from its customers, illustrating the power of traditional values established by a brand. (The Coca-Cola Company, 2012)

2.5. Price

In order to better describe the role of price, Zeithaml (1988) proposed a conceptual model that assists on clarifying the interconnections involving price, quality and value, as exhibited in "Figure 2.3".

A Means-End Model Relating Price, Quality, and Value

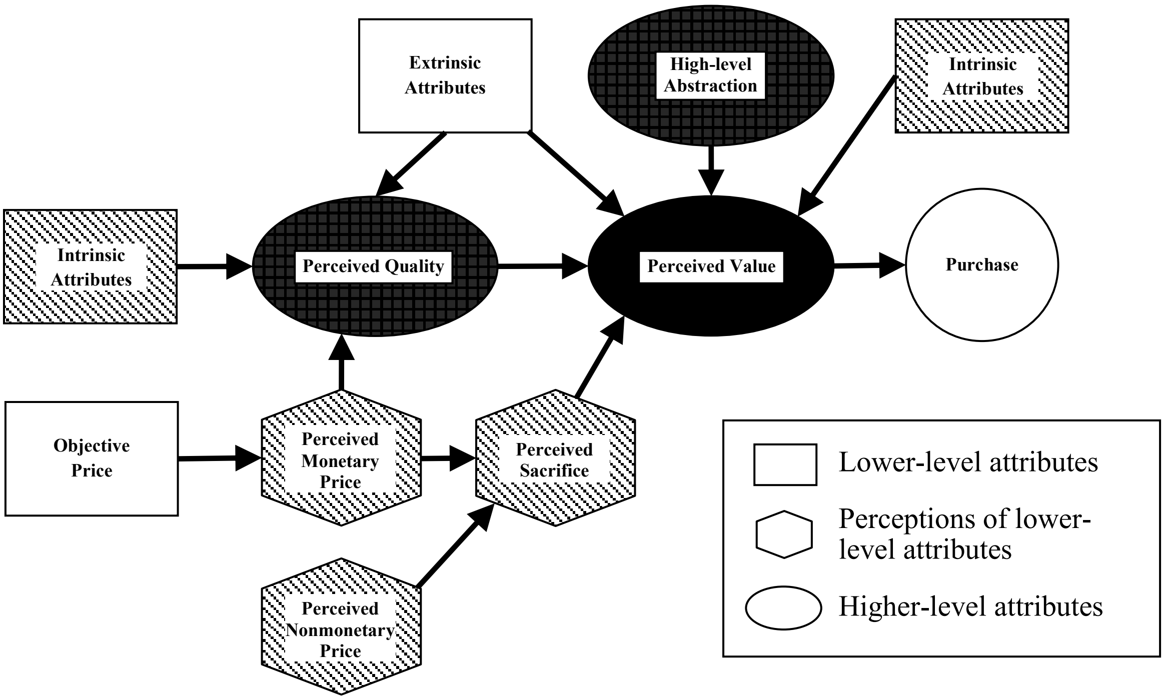

Figure 2.3: A Means-End Model Relating Price, Quality, and Value

[Source: Zeithaml, 1988]

In the model, "perceived quality" represents what the consumer will receive in a high abstracted evaluation, where quality is therefore regarded as superiority rather than attribute(s) (Zeithaml, 1988). Accordingly, the "intrinsic attributes" and "extrinsic attributes" are brought forward in the "perceived quality" ambit, along with the "perceived monetary price", that denotes the price used as a quality indicator.

The "objective price" is the amount of money set to acquire a product, nonetheless, "perceived sacrifice" concerns the consumer's perception of the total price, comprising: the "perceived monetary price", referring to how the consumer encodes the "objective price" in their minds, such as cheap or pricey; and the "perceived nonmonetary price", representing time and efforts, such as the search, psychic and others (Zeithaml, 1988).

"Perceived value" corresponds to the final perceptual computation and can be represented by the relation between "perceived quality" and "perceived sacrifice", i.e., between the "get" and "give" components (Ahtola, 1984; Zeithaml, 1988). Consonantly, in the case where the consumer appraises having paid more than received, it is observable a less favourable outcome. Conversely, a superior positive result is realised if (s)he estimates that the quality received outweighs the price disbursed. Still, a balanced perception may exist when the value perceived is the same for both components. (Zeithaml, 1988)

Saliently, perception of quality value varies significantly even for a particular product category due to the distinctiveness of each person (Zeithaml, 1988). Consequently, price might be an important indicator of quality. Accordingly, it is frequently claimed that the higher is a price, the higher is its influence on quality expectation (Grunert, 2005).

In fact, consumers recurrently use monetary value to infer quality value, predominantly when few quality cues are available (Ahtola, 1984; Brunsø, Fjord and Grunert, 2002; Makasi and Govender, 2014; Zeithaml, 1988). In consonance with that reasoning, when the perceived risk of making an unsatisfactory purchase increases, the willing for a higher priced product also increases in order to offset that fear (Zeithaml, 1988).

Conversely, research has been demonstrated that in presence of abundant intrinsic and extrinsic quality cues, the former predominate, which could be argued that is because intrinsic cues provide more evaluation utility (Szybillo and Jacoby, 1974). Nevertheless, price may also be regarded as the least relevant indicator associated with quality among other extrinsic cues (Grunert, 2005; Zeithaml, 1988).

Nonetheless, price perception associated with quality varies across product categories, for instance, low price for Japanese cars does not weaken the positive quality reputation built upon their cars. The dissociation also occurs in categories where price or quality variation is low, such as salt for example. (Zeithaml, 1988)

Miyazaki, Grewal and Goodstein (2005) studied the effects of extrinsic cues, pairing price with a second extrinsic quality cue — warranty, country of origin and brand — moderating scenarios with intrinsic cues. Firstly, as expected, the predominance of intrinsic quality cues over the extrinsic on determining quality was observed. On the other side, in the lack of usable intrinsic cues, they found that setting both the price and second extrinsic cue as positive, results into a stronger quality perception. Conversely, when offering one negative cue in the pair (being it the price or the second cue), the negative cue predominates, exhibiting similar effect level when both cues are negative.

However, elaborating a multidimensional quality criteria model for a product choice in order to predict the consumer behaviour into a realistic scenario should become far more complex, inasmuch as the consumer might use price initially to eliminate undesirable options and at further stages constantly readjust the price weight in potential decisions, according to his or her presently relative alternatives analysed (Park, Lessig and Merrill, 1982). Nevertheless, possibly the readjustment of prices are less often for fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs).

A quality versus price segmentation perspective for FMCGs is imparted from a study realised in Germany in 2001, where participants were classified into quality-seeking and price-sensitive groups, that is, the research demonstrated that for price-sensitive participants, product's utility decreases as price increases, whereas for quality-seeking respondents, it increases as price increases, therefore, revealing the use of higher prices as an indicator of better quality for the quality-seeking participants (Grunert et al., 2002, as cited in Brunsø, Fjord and Grunert, 2002).

A similar global perspective approach is observed in an investigation of preferences for hedonic and utilitarian food attributes, where the study demonstrated that for hedonic food products, consumers prioritised taste over price, whereas for utilitarian food products, price outweighed taste (Maehle et al., 2015).

2.6. Summary

The literature examined and outlined Irish shoppers' considerations concerning food products in general, and specifically for Irish food brands. Sequentially, loyalty conceptualisations and measures were discussed, emphasising the framework of Dick and Basu (1994), where loyalty classifications were suggested. In addition, the country of origin was presented as a brand, highlighting the proneness of natives to esteem their home brands.

Next, the consumer quality perception was introduced, followed by the examination of Total Food Quality Model (TFQM), subsequently addressing to the food dimensions of health and taste, where the former was associated with consuming functional food as well as with avoiding possible detrimental food, while taste was presented as (or influenced by) a composite of senses and aspects, where the case of coca-cola saliently illustrated the tradition value operating over taste sense itself.

Price and correlated elements from the consumer's perspective were afterwards illustrated by the Zeithaml's (1988) model, subsequently discussing different scenarios where price is utilised as a sacrifice and as a quality indicator.

3. METHODOLOGY

The research methodology is next presented, starting by the research design, transitioning to the data collection instrument, consecutively explaining the procedures used in the data analysis, sequentially commenting research ethics, and lastly, the limitations of the methodology are addressed.

3.1. Research Design

The following sections appraise the adoption of the positivism research philosophy, where a deductive approach is utilised, in which the survey strategy was chosen into a mono method quantitative study. Sequentially, it examines the target population and the choice for the use of a probability simple random sampling in order to conduct the data collection.

3.1.1. Research Philosophy

The present research objectively appraises the consumer perception concerning the Irish food brand and on food products, regarding loyalty, country of origin, overall quality, health, taste and price, in which the seek for causal relationships are primarily assisted by existing theory. Consequently, the **positivism** research philosophy is adopted, since it characterises a study based on the observation of social reality in order to produce unambiguous and accurate knowledge, seeking for causal relationships to ultimately elicit a pattern or generalisation (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, pp. 135-136).

3.1.2. Research Approach

Specifically, the study interrelates measures to define the shoppers' loyalty degree for food products, as well as it interrelates the esteem of country of origin, overall quality assessment, health valuation, taste appreciation and the consideration of price for Irish food brands. Accordingly, it uses causal relationships and the reductionism principle, aiming to produce generalisation. Inherently, the research is underpinned by a highly structured methodology in order to grant reliability. Consequently, a **deductive** approach is utilised. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, pp. 146-147)

3.1.3. Research Strategy

A **quantitative** study is conducted inasmuch as the examination of numerical relationships between variables is necessary for measuring the loyalty potentiality for Irish food brands (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, p. 166).

Additionally, the study investigates results of relationships rather than predicting them as in experiments, therefore, it utilises a **survey** strategy. Nevertheless, since it does not make use of any other data collection technique, it constitutes a **mono method quantitative** study. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, p. 181)

3.1.4. Sampling

The target population sample is comprised of 103 food shoppers who live or have lived in the Republic of Ireland, are familiarised with Irish food brands and have been in Dublin during the data collection, which occurred between June and July of 2016.

In order to generate statistical representativeness of the target population, the sampling technique used is the **probability sampling** (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, p. 182, 276). Particularly, **simple random sampling** was opted for its easy accessibility, whereas the researcher collected the data of 100 respondents at public places of Dublin City (in the postal districts of D1, D2 and D8) as well as of 3 online participants (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, pp. 286-287).

Additionally, demographic information was primarily included in order to verify whether the data were collected randomly, that is, representative of the target population (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, p. 288). Therefore, participants' gender, age and country of origin were included in the questionnaire, as presented in "4.1. Demographic Information".

3.2. Data Collection Instrument

The data collection technique or instrument employed for the survey strategy was a **questionnaire**, since its utilisation is appropriate for the necessity of collecting standardised consumer's data in order to describe phenomena and explain causal relationships (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, p. 439). The questionnaire was constructed using Google Forms in a way to properly fit both a computer and a mobile phone screen, as exhibited in "Appendix 3 - Survey Questionnaire".

3.2.1. Questionnaire Design

The questionnaire's design comprised iterative processes that involved discussions about the instrument's items among the researcher's closest people, including one expert, in which the questions have changed substantially until resulting in the final instrument, composed of 13 inquiries.

In order to produce a reliable and valid instrument, specificities for each question was aligned between researcher and each collaborative person. As an eventual result, each question went through the designing processes based on the data requirements, where each collaborative respondent assimilated the question as intended by the researcher, consequently answering it, while the researcher subsequently decoded the answer as indented by the respondent (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, p. 450).

The questions were ordered in a way to support the respondent's reasoning and simultaneously prevent potential biases (Bordens and Abbott, 2011, pp. 267-268; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, p. 466), even though involving complex considerations since some prioritisation particularities might naturally become conflicting among participants' perspectives, whereas a balanced range of criteria were used, established upon the prioritisation of more global, important and easy questions to be positioned at the beginning of the questionnaire.

As a consequence, it starts with four questions about food brands, the initial three concerning loyalty and the fourth addressing to country of origin. The subsequent five questions focus on the Irish food brand, which measure overall quality, health, taste and price.

The question number 10 is the hardest to be grasped due to its longest statement, however, it is a global question. However, its importance among the other questions is less evident, thus positioned after the 9 questions.

The last three questions are the participant's demographic information — gender, age and country of origin — which are factual data, the easiest statistics to be collected. However, they are specific and not directly linked to the study's major concerns, resulting in the lowest importance among the questions, thus, accordingly collected at the survey's end.

3.2.1.1. Scale Design

Agreement levels operates for the first nine questions using a 6-point Likert-type scale (composed of "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Slightly Agree", "Slightly Disagree", "Disagree" and "Strongly Disagree"), where the even-point scale consideration intends to force the respondents to decide either to agree or disagree instead of a neutral response, and the six points grant a higher sensitivity compared to the potential alternative four points (Clasen and Dormody, 1994; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, p. 457). However, Chang (1994) argues that increasing sensitivity reduces its reliability. Nevertheless, Cummins and Gullone (2000) indicate that it does not systematically diminish the scale reliability.

Nonetheless, the reason to force to either agree or disagree with an item's statement is to prevent that respondents could easily defect of appraising the overall picture using a neutral response. As a result, it alternatively directs them to abstractedly either slightly agree or slightly disagree, establishing an initial pattern or propensity.

Consonantly with Cummins and Gullone (2000) recommendation, a 10-point numeric rating scale is employed in the 10th enquiry in order to capture the respondents' considerations, starting from 1 (not important at all) to 10 (extremely important). Despite the fact that the extremities' importance is informed in the question's statement, their corresponding "self-anchoring rating scales" at the answer demonstrated to be improperly visible on the designated smartphone's display. Consequently, the researcher cleaned the "self-anchoring rating scales" to be tested in the pilot testing phase, so that only the question's statement instruction would indicate how to use the scale (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, p. 458). The results are further addressed in "3.2.2.1. Pilot Testing". Additionally, recommendations are made for future research intending to use the 10-point numeric rating scale system in "6.2.1. 10-Point Scale Recommendation".

Moving to the demographics, the gender inquiry is a category question that offers three options, "Male", "Female" and "Other", where "Other" option was established to corroborate randomness.

Sequentially, ranges of age is provided in a category question in order facilitate participants' age collection with only a touch on the screen, as well as in order to prevent uneasiness for those who do not want to reveal their precise age. Nevertheless, it is based on a research conducted by Bord Bía (2015, p. 122), yielding a base for comparison.

The last inquiry is the respondents' country of origin. Although it could also be a category question to choose between "Ireland" and "Other", an open question was chosen to verify the randomness of nationalities involved. Furthermore, the researcher could quickly input the information on behalf of the participant with no considerable disservice.

The next section describes the significance of each question of the questionnaire, with the exception of the demographic information, which was already depicted in this section and, as introduced in "3.1.4. Sampling", it primarily proposes to verify whether the data were randomly collected. Nevertheless, it could be noted that specific information, even less representative, could indicate especial directions for an Irish food brand, thus, these data are also considered in the data analysis.

3.2.1.2. Questionnaire's Items

Loyalty

The 1st question ("I always buy the same food brands if they are available") intends to provide a perspective of the consumer's behaviour of **repeat patronage**.

The 2nd question ("When I have to change my favourite food brand, I feel profoundly disappointed") is designated to verify the **attitude strength** concerning a food brand.

The 3rd question ("I love to try new food brands regularly") denotes a propensity to look for variety, or, inversely representing the **attitudinal differentiation** towards a brand.

The item 10.1 (Importance of brand loyalty when buying a food product) indicates the consumer's **consideration** of brand loyalty importance, thus, less emphatic than attitude strength, while the latter is less pronounced than attitudinal differentiation and whereas repeat patronage is the most prominent component of loyalty.

Accordingly, based on the work of Dick and Basu (1994), the question 2 is correlated with the question 3 in order to create **relative attitude**, and question 1 is correlated with the relative attitude in order to produce a final indicator, the **loyalty degree**. These two variables are developed in "3.3. Data Analysis Procedures".

Country of Origin

The 4th question ("I know the country of origin of branded food products I purchase") intends to portray the consumer **knowledge** about the country of origin of esteemed food products in order to indicate a precondition to consider using country of origin as an extrinsic quality cue.

The item 10.2 (Importance of country of origin when buying a food product) indicates the consumer's **consideration** on country of origin importance as a predisposition.

Overall Quality

The 5th question ("Irish food brands are the best") is the highest abstract component of the questionnaire and its primary purpose is to signal the overall **consideration** for the Irish brand in the food industry. However, it also serves as a **transition** question, connecting country of origin with the subsequent appraisals. Nevertheless, it may be argued to also serve as a **warm-up** question for the next inquiries in the way to possibly discharge some patriotic bias.

Health

The 6th question ("Irish food brands are healthier") refers to the **credence** appraisement of what the Irish food brands contain and how they are taken care before reaching the consumer in the way to produce wellness and/or avoid infirmity.

The item 10.3 (Importance of health when buying a food product) indicates the consumer's **consideration** on health.

Taste

The 7th question ("Irish food brands are tastier") expresses the consumer's **experience** esteem towards the taste of Irish food brands.

The item 10.4 (Importance of taste when buying a food product) indicates the consumer's **consideration** on taste importance as a hedonic stimulation.

Price

The 8th question ("Irish food brands tend to be more expensive") demonstrates the price **sensitivity perception** of consumers of Irish food brands.

The 9th question ("I choose Irish food brands even when slightly costlier") intends to measure the shopper's **support** or attitude for Irish food brands.

The item 10.5 (Importance of price when buying a food product) reveals the consumer's **consideration** on how much attention should be devoted to price (as a sacrifice and/or a quality indicator).

3.2.2. Data Collection

The data collection was essentially conducted at public places of Dublin by using the researcher's smartphone, representing 97% of the data sets, against 3% online respondents. Yet, in the following sections, the analysis of the pilot testing phase is disclosed and the data collection procedures are subsequently depicted.

3.2.2.1. Pilot Testing

The questionnaire was tested on a group of 13 respondents. The 6-point Likert-type scale employed in the first nine questions demonstrated a large disparity of responses, however, the small amount of data could not indicate either reliability or sensitivity.

As for the 10-point numeric rating scale, one participant confused the rating system explained in the 10th question's statement, inversely appraising its items, however, the researcher noticed and promptly corrected the respondent. Nevertheless, that occurrence is not related to the "self-anchoring rating scales", since the respondent was unable to read the smartphone's display, thus, the researcher had to read out the question so that he could answer it, as further detailed in "3.2.2.2. Data Collection Procedures".

Concerning the question's purposes, considerable amount of feedbacks were received from some of the respondents, corroborating the previous iterative instrument's construction processes, thus, no alterations were assessed required.

Accordingly, the researcher decided to keep the instrument as well as the procedures utilised in the pilot testing. Consonantly, the data collected in this phase were considered eligible to be included together the subsequent data collection to form the final sample.

3.2.2.2. Data Collection Procedures

Although the researcher used his smartphone to collect the major part of the data, the instrument presentation to respondents occurred in four different manners, where the researcher: (1) predominantly showed his device's display and guided the questions without reading them out, explaining to participants that his verbalisation could influence them; (2) either showed or not the device's display, guiding the survey by reading the items out loud since the first manner was judged inconvenient or impossible to apply, mostly for participants who were unable to read the screen, however, striving to keep a neutral voice tone in order to not bias the respondents, which would contaminate their responses and consequently reduce the data's reliability and validity (Bordens and Abbott, 2011, p. 277; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, p. 442); (3) handed his mobile device to participants so that they self-completed the questions; and (4) shared the instrument on the Internet, though it was filled by only 3% of the sample.

Additionally, when the questionnaire was presented in the first and third manners, the researcher showed an initial image contained in the questionnaire in order to frame the participant's mind, inquiring whether they recognise some of the Irish food brands in the illustration, further explaining the image's purpose, which specifically was evoking daily food shopping experiences, mainly with Irish food brands. However, for those who could not visualise the illustration, they were asked to picture in their mind the routine of choosing and purchasing food brands.

The researcher was continuously attentive to not influence respondents, hence, an impartial posture was strived, mostly in a few cases whereas participants demonstrated their concerns about questions, seeking for hints, making evident that the researcher's presence could influence responses. In fact, on these exceptionalities, by using different words they were readdressed to think about their considerations on their habitual food purchasing. As a consequence of these procedures, in which the instrument was randomly applied on 97% of the sample, the replicability of the study is granted.

3.3. Data Analysis Procedures

The data were analysed using the IBM SPSS Statistics and Microsoft Excel. An initial Excel spreadsheet was initially utilised to code the 6-point Likert-type scale employed in the first nine questions, where "1" represents "Strongly Disagree" and "6" stands for "Strongly Agree". In addition, Excel was also used to clean the data, make adjustments from notes that were taken in the data collection's eventualities, generate perspectives using filters and to produce charts and other spreadsheets that are included in this paper.

The SPSS Statistics tool was utilised to produce descriptive statistics, some of the charts incorporated in the work, as well as to analyse the correlation of the variables in search for new potential perspectives, such as the Spearman's correlation and Friedman's test.

Coefficient of variation

The coefficient of variation (CV) was used in order to measure dispersion of the answers' distribution, so that an unified perspective could permit comparison among all the questions, in view of the fact that the scale of question 10 differs from the first nine questions. The CV is represented by the next formula:

$$CV = \frac{\sigma}{\mu}$$

where,

σ represents the standard deviation of the responses of a question, and

μ represents the answers' mean of the corresponding question.

Conversion formulae

Nevertheless, when comparing proportions of questions' answers, the conversion was required since their codes starts from 1 and not 0. Additionally, there are cases that might be elucidative contrasting an item of the question 10 to one inquiry among the first nine, albeit their scale ranges are different. Thus, the following formula was utilised for conversions of the first nine questions' answers (C_{1-9}):

$$C_{1-9} = [100 \times (Q_{1-9} - 1)/5]\%$$

where Q_{1-9} represents the numerical code of the question's answer to be converted.

While for the items' conversions of question 10 ($C_{10.1-10.5}$), the corresponding conversion formula used was:

$$C_{10.1-10.5} = \left[100 \times \left(Q_{10.1-10.5} - 1\right)/9\right]\%$$

where $Q_{10.1\text{-}10.5}$ represents the numerical code of the item's answer to be converted.

Loyalty degree construct

In addition, based on the work of Dick and Basu (1994), the coefficients repeat patronage (RP) and relative attitude (RA) were developed and are expressed by the following formulae:

$$RP = \left(Q_1 - 1\right)/5$$

$$RA = \left(Q_2 - 1\right)/30.1 + \left(6 - Q_3\right)/6$$

where, Q_1, Q_2 and Q_3 represent respectively the numerical code of answers of the questions 1, 2 and 3.

It should be noted that reducing dimensions could be performed in different ways, and Dick and Basu (1994) do not specify exactly how to unite attitudinal differentiation ($-Q_3$) and attitude strength (Q_2) in order to form relative attitude (RA). Although, according to the description of their suggested models (as in "Appendix 2 - Models of Dick and Basu"), the RA's formula was deducted, that is, in the case of attitudinal differentiation of a respondent is less than 50% and attitude strength is at 100%, s(he) shall not be classified in the "spurious loyalty" or "loyalty" group.

In order to satisfy that condition, the weight of attitude strength should be less than 1/6, therefore, a value of approximately 0.166 was chosen to suit it. Consequently, attitudinal differentiation retains a weight of around 0.834 (i.e.: 1 - 0.166) in order to compose the coefficient RA.

Additionally, based on these weights, the loyalty degree (LD) coefficient was developed in order to numerically represent loyalty as an one-dimensional perspective. In this case, RP and RA should be weighted equally to represent the loyalty classification model of Dick and Basu (1994), consequently generating the following formula:

$$LD = \left(Q_1 - 1\right)/10 + \left(Q_2 - 1\right)/60.1 + \left(6 - Q_3\right)/12$$

where, Q_1, Q_2 and Q_3 represent respectively the numerical code of answers of the questions 1, 2 and 3.

Obviously, the one-dimensional formula cannot appropriately extract the loyalty classifications proposed by Dick and Basu (1994) due to the natural overlapping of the dimensionalities, since the latter is represented in two dimensions. Nonetheless, as a reference for the reader, considering that the classifications "no loyalty", "spurious loyalty" and "loyalty" are represented respectively by the intervals LD < 0.32, 0.32 <= LD <= 0.68 and LD > 0.68, the formula roughly yields 10% of misclassifications (or 10 of the 103 cases of this study).

3.4. Research Ethics

Ethical issues might be extensively discussed (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, pp. 239-242), however, a general established rule is to prevent any damage or embarrassment to the researched party (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2015, p. 201).

The researcher has not expected to come across any ethical issue when planning his actions in order to prevent any potential embarrassments. Further, probably the major drivers for the participants' willing to contribute with this research were due to the imperatively courteous approach strived in conjunction with the fact that this study does not include sensitive information of respondents.

3.5. Limitations of Methodology

A potential obstacle considered in the processes of planning the data collection was the non-commitment and/or urgency of participants. In order to overcome that difficulty, serene places were predominantly used and people apparently not averse to external stimulus were largely approached.

However, another potential limitation along with that is the concentration of people alike, consequently, the researcher complementary selected random places and people to collect the data.

4. DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The following results are based on the responses of 103 participants surveyed, structured by the components of the study, starting by presenting the results of loyalty, moving to country of origin, transitioning to the qualities of food brands, where the answers of overall quality, health, taste and price are analysed, and closing, two additional analyses are presented.

In order to better understand the findings, as previously mentioned in "3.2.1.1. Scale Design", the first nine questions uses a 6-point Likert-type scale, where "1" represents "Strongly Disagree" and "6" stands for "Strongly Agree". The 10th question's five items utilise a 10-point numeric rating, starting from 1 (not important at all) to 10 (extremely important). In addition, as a reference for the reader, the perspectives and information presented in the following subsections are in the majority extracted from "Appendix 4 - Mean Results Grouped by Demographic Variables", "Appendix 5 - Spearman's Rank Correlation Coefficients", "Appendix 6 - Descriptive Statistics" and "Appendix 7 - Frequency Tables".

4.1. Demographic Information

Among the 103 participants, 82 respondents or 79.6% are native of the Republic of Ireland, while 20.4% are originally from another country (Bangladesh, Brazil, Croatia, Germany, Hungary, Italy, Korea, Kuwait, Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russia, Sweden, Trinidad and United States). Additionally, 49.5% or 51 of the participants are reported as female, 48.5% or 50 as male, and 1.94% or 2 respondents as having another gender identity.

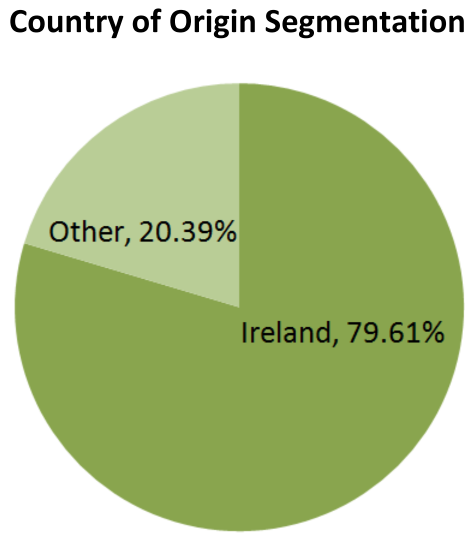

Figure 4.1: Country of Origin Segmentation

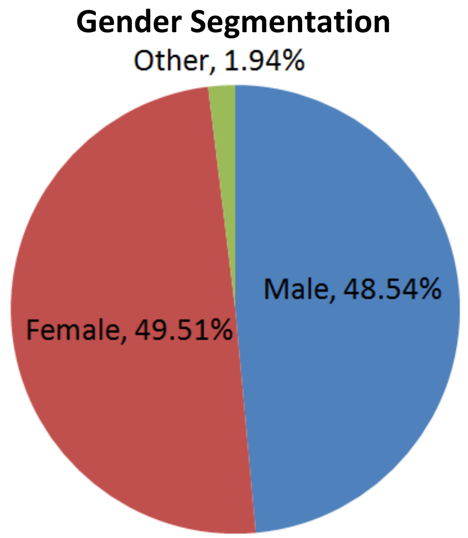

Figure 4.2: Gender Segmentation

The population's sample is primarily constituted of 34.0% or 35 people between the ages of 25 and 34 years, followed by 23.3% or 24 participants between the ages of 35 and 44, as well as by the same amount of participants in the age group of 55 years or older, while both the age groups of "18-24 years old" and "45-54 years old", comprise 9.7% or 10 respondents each.

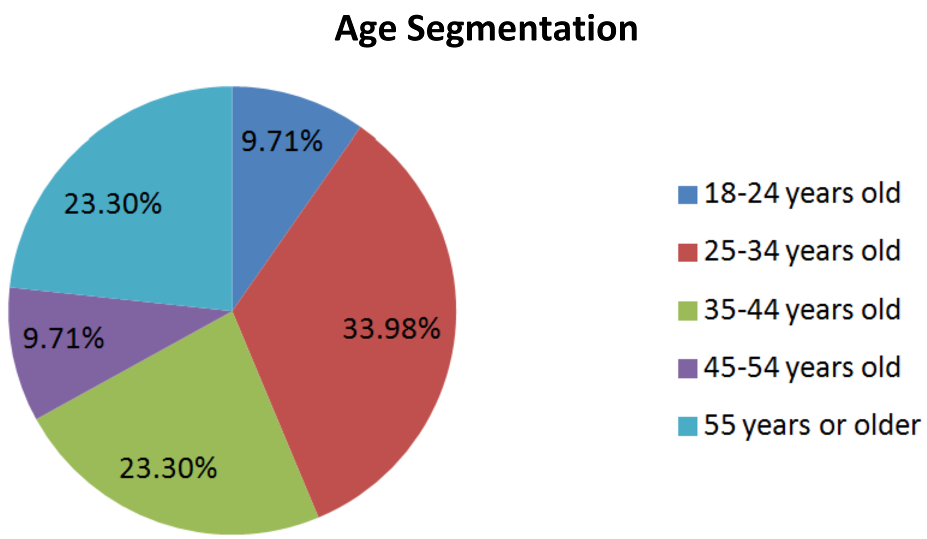

Figure 4.3: Age Segmentation

The interrelation of respondents' country of origin, gender and age, is exhibited in the "Figure 4.4" so that some specific views could be further developed while taking into consideration the small representativeness of these subgroups.

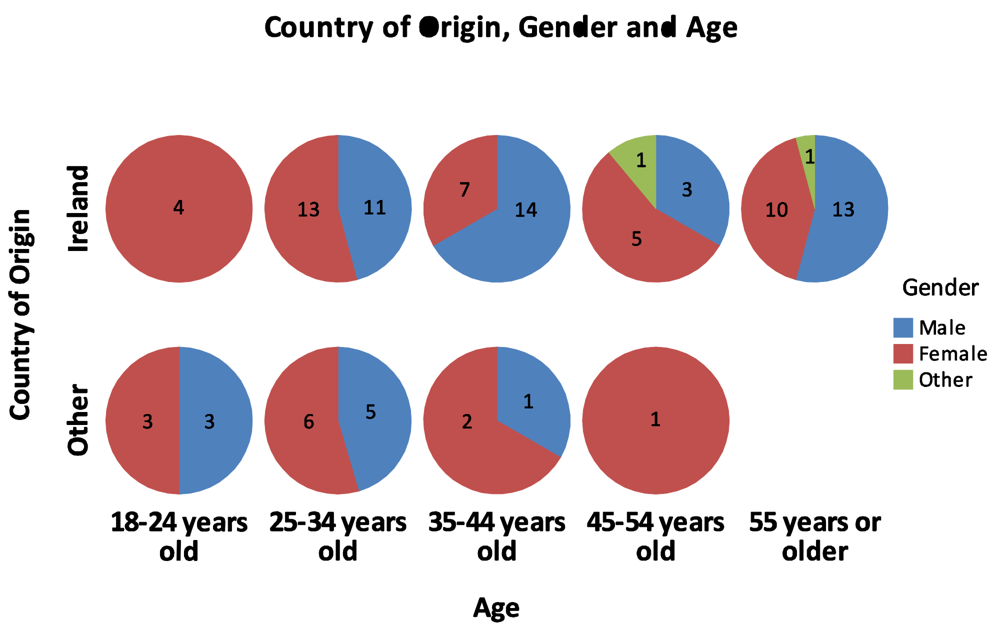

Figure 4.4: Country of Origin, Gender and Age

As observable, the most representative subgroups to be taken into account are from Ireland and at the age of "55 years or older", followed by the group of "25-34 year old" and "35-44 years old", however, the latter subgroup is substantially disproportional on the gender classification, constituted of two thirds of males.

Consequently, the subsequent findings presentation simultaneously takes the advantage of these classifications, however, it omits partial perspectives of these subgroups at large when they do not add significance. As an illustration, when exhibiting some pattern of natives of Ireland along their age and clustered by gender, no value would be added to include the age group of "18-24 years old", once it does not contain any male sample, thus, including only the females samples would yield an incomplete perspective even for a global perspective, in fact, possibly misleading the readings by framing a "partial comparison" which in reality is not a comparison at all. Additionally, the "Other" gender group could also be omitted in the illustration, once there are only two samples in different age groups, producing a margin of error extremely expanded.

Nevertheless, even though the age groups demonstrates proportionality discrepancies when compared with secondary data source (as referred in "3.2.1.1. Scale Design"), predominately on account of its inherent larger number of classifications, the main purpose of verifying the randomness of the data collection was achieved.

That is strongly corroborated when visualising the gender segmentation, since comparing them with the Irish Census of 2011 (of the entire country's population), a nearly equal split is visualised between males and females (CSO, 2012, p. 18, 15). In the case of participants' country of origin, Ireland's non-natives in this research contains 8.22 percent points more than in 2011 if compared with the entire country's population, denoting obviously an acceptable discrepancy for this study as well as an improbable indication of migration increase based on the Ireland's migration pattern (CSO, 2012, p. 33). Furthermore, this study's data were collected only in Dublin and the target population includes participants currently living in other countries (as described in "3.1.4. Sampling").

4.2. Loyalty

As mentioned in "3.2.1.2. Questionnaire's Items", loyalty is measured by four components, the first three questionnaire's items plus the first criterion of question 10.

		1. "I always buy the same food brands if they are available".	2. "When I have to change my favourite food brand, I feel profoundly disappointed".	3. "I love to try new food brands regularly".	10.1. Importance of brand loyalty when buying a food product.
N	Valid	103	103	103	101
	Missing	0	0	0	2
Mean		4.56	3.54	4.47	5.76
Median		5.00	4.00	5.00	6.00
Mode		5	2	5	6

Table 4.1: Descriptive Statistics of Loyalty

The "Table 4.1" exhibits an overall perspective of the results by informing the mean, median and mode of the four questions, which are used in the following sections. Nevertheless, as explained in "3.2.1.2. Questionnaire's Items", the question 1 intends to represent **repeat patronage**, while the combination of questions 2 and 3 (weighted in 16 and 84% respectively) is designated to shape the **relative attitude**, subsequently correlated to repeat patronage to ultimately result in the **loyalty degree**, disclosed also in the form of the loyalty classifications, as next exhibited in "Figure 4.5".

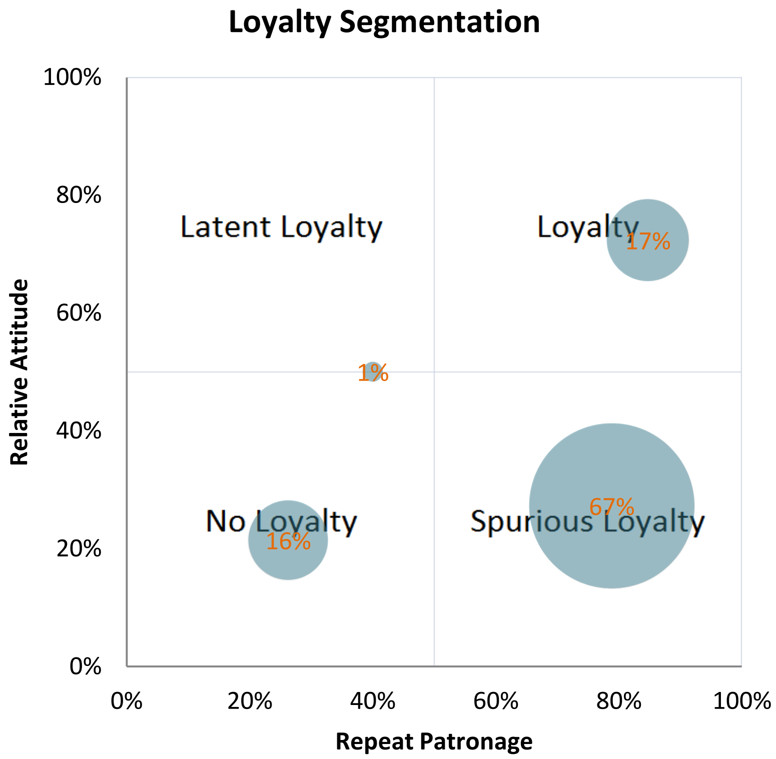

Figure 4.5: Loyalty Segmentation

The overall loyalty degree of the sample is 52.6% (or LD = 0.526, as explained in "3.3. Data Analysis Procedures"), and could be classified as "spurious loyalty" according to Dick and Basu (1994). Decomposing that number, as seen in the "Figure 4.5", the **loyalty** group represents 16.5% or 17 respondents, **no loyalty** is constituted by 15.5% or 16 participants, 1 individual or outlier is in the **latent loyalty**, while **spurious loyalty** cluster predominates with 69 or 67.0% of the respondents.

Additionally, according to the "Figure 4.5", the loyalty group is more loyal due to its repeat patronage than its relative attitude towards a food brand, whereas the spurious loyalty group is more inclined to be loyal than no loyal. In addition, it is clear that the latent loyalty representative is nearly incorporated in the group of no loyalty. Nevertheless, analyses of each question are realised in the subsequent sections.

4.2.1. Question 1 - "I always buy the same food brands if they are available"

Question 1's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin

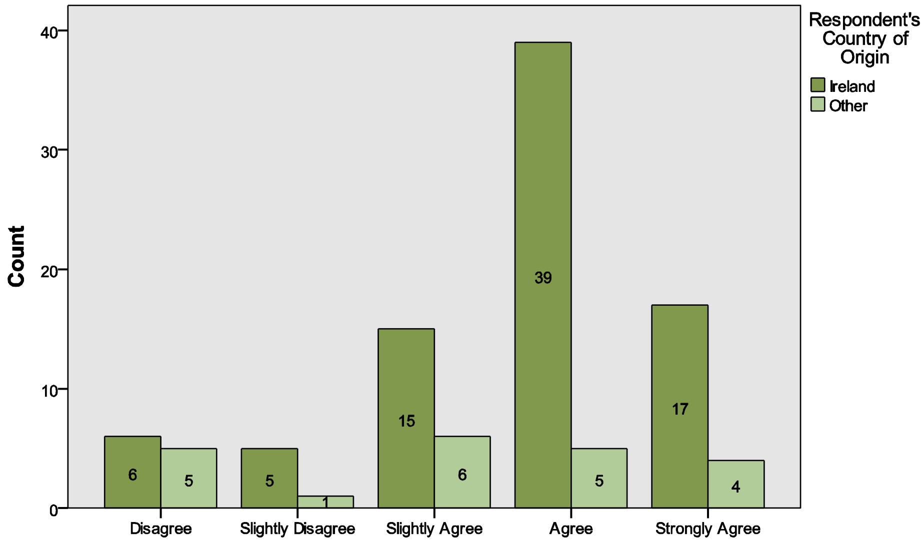

Figure 4.6: Question 1's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin

A share of 42.7% or 44 participants responded to agree with the first question's statement, greatly influencing the global answer's mean result of 4.56, representing an agreement consensus, where strong disagreement have not been chosen in a single instance. However, segmenting the sample into people originated in Ireland and people from other countries, as in "Figure 4.6", it is naturally perceived that the answer's distribution of Ireland's non-natives does not follow the same pattern as the natives. While Ireland's natives had a mean score of 4.68, i.e., indicating agreement, the non-natives scored 4.10, denoting a slight agreement.

Question 1's Mean Result versus Age Clustered by Gender of Ireland's Natives

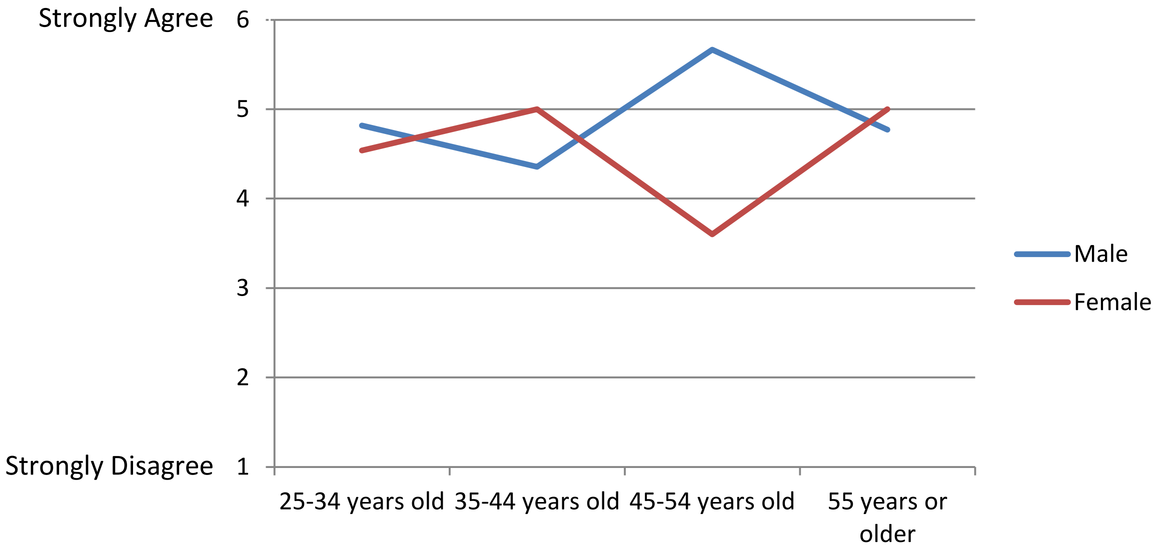

Figure 4.7: Question 1's Mean Result versus Age Clustered by Gender of Ireland's Natives

Additionally, segmenting the Ireland's natives in males and females, as visualised in "Figure 4.7", an opposite balanced variation of agreement levels along different ages is curiously noticed, most saliently to the group "45-54 years old", though with very restricted representativeness, notwithstanding, eventually converging the answers in the next age category. In fact, that counter positioning plus the convergence make the compounded result the third most stable variable analysed, holding a coefficient of variation (CV) of 0.262, as can be seen in "Appendix 6 - Descriptive Statistics". Nevertheless, the male Ireland's non-native subgroup of "18-24 years old", though with limited sample, represents the lowest scores in that question (of 3.33 points), also resulting in the least loyal subgroup, slightly disagreeing with the inquiry's statement.

4.2.2. Question 2 - "When I have to change my favourite food brand, I feel profoundly disappointed"

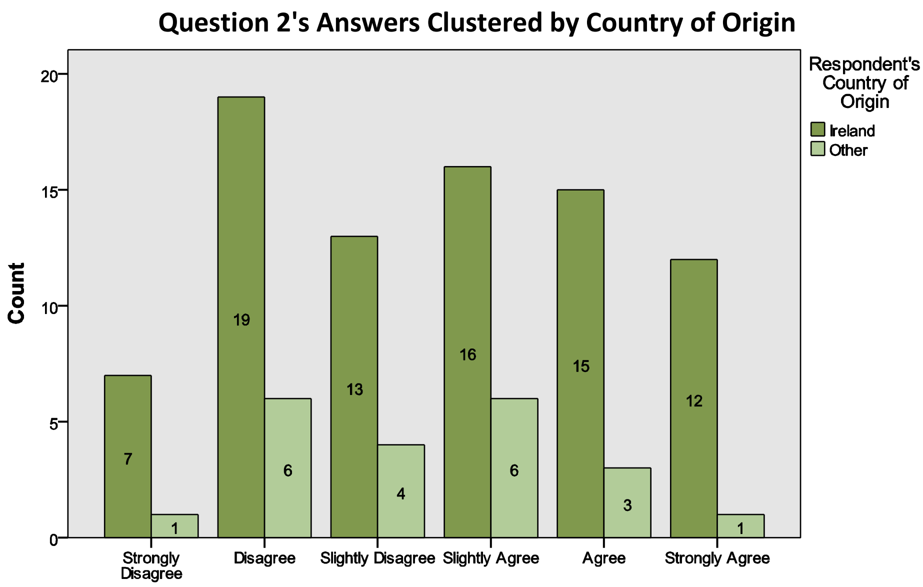

Figure 4.8: Question 2's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin

In the 2nd question, the responses frequency patterns visualised in "Figure 4.8" of Ireland's natives and non-natives are intriguingly similar. Additionally, its distribution make it one of the most unstable variables (CV = 0.431). Nevertheless, that distribution results into a global mean result of 3.54, the closest mean variable to a middle score (i.e., around 3.50), indicating a virtual neutrality.

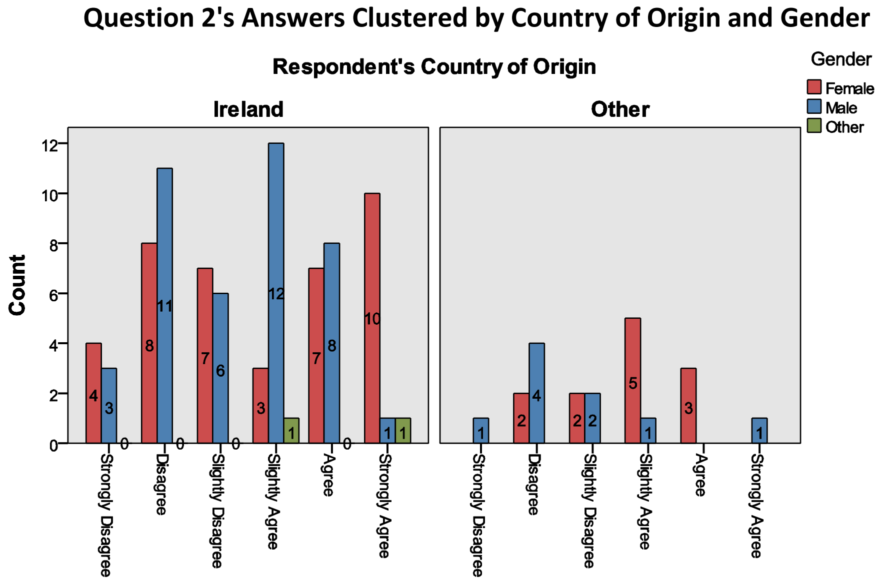

Figure 4.9: Question 2's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin and Gender

However, splinting up the clusters of "Figure 4.8" by gender, as illustrated in "Figure 4.9", it is observed that there are more males on the left side of the figure's charts, as well as more females on the opposite side of both the charts. As a result, Ireland's male natives and non-natives slightly disagree (presenting mean results of 3.34 and 2.78 points respectively), while female natives and non-natives groups slightly agree (with the corresponding numerical grades of 3.80 and 3.75).

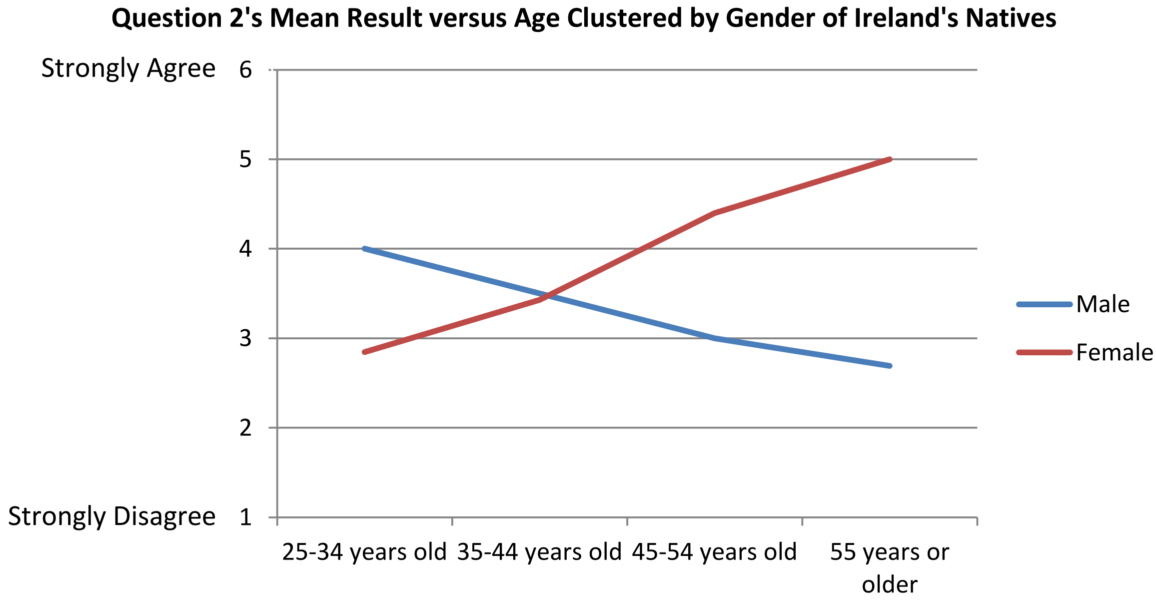

Figure 4.10: Question 2's Mean Result versus Age Clustered by Gender of Ireland's Natives

Nevertheless, another interesting particularity that attracts attention, as exhibited in "Figure 4.10", is that the pattern accentually switches across the age groups of Ireland's male and female natives. Additionally, the group "55 years or older" of female natives revealed the highest deviation, agreeing with the question's statement, demonstrated by a mean result of 5 points, while male native "55 years or older" group slightly disagreed, manifested by 2.69 points.

Backwards, similar pattern is visualised for "45-54 years old" groups, even though less accentuated, whereas native women are slightly agreeing (mean = 4.40) and native men are slightly disagreeing (mean = 3.00), however, scarcer samples should be noted. For the "35-44 years old" groups, the agreement patterns switch, however they both approximate neutral positions, i.e., mean results of 3.43 and 3.5 for female and male natives respectively. The answers evidently switches in the "25-34 years old" clusters, where native men slightly agree (mean = 4) and native women slightly disagree (mean = 2.85).

4.2.3. Question 3 - "I love to try new food brands regularly"

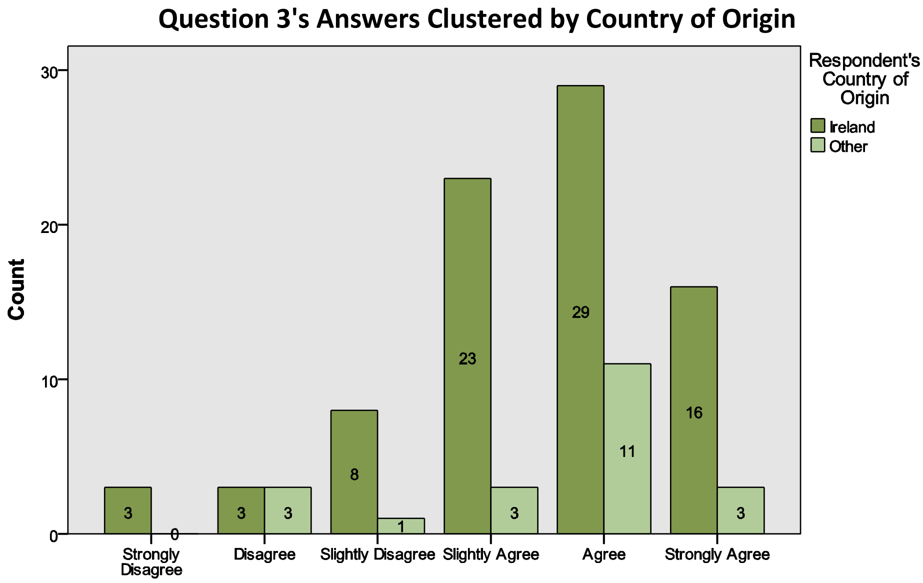

Figure 4.11: Question 3's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin

Even though segmenting the responses by country of origin practically does not affect the means of the question 3's answers between the clusters, which both are slightly lower than 4.50 (as detailed in "Appendix 4 - Mean Results Grouped by Demographic Variables"), the "Figure 4.11" displays a notable agreement portion, represented by 29 Ireland's natives and 11 non-natives, compounding 38.8% or 40 participants of the sample. Nevertheless, the composite of all the answers results into a mean of 4.47 points, thus, ultimately, standing for a slight agreement.

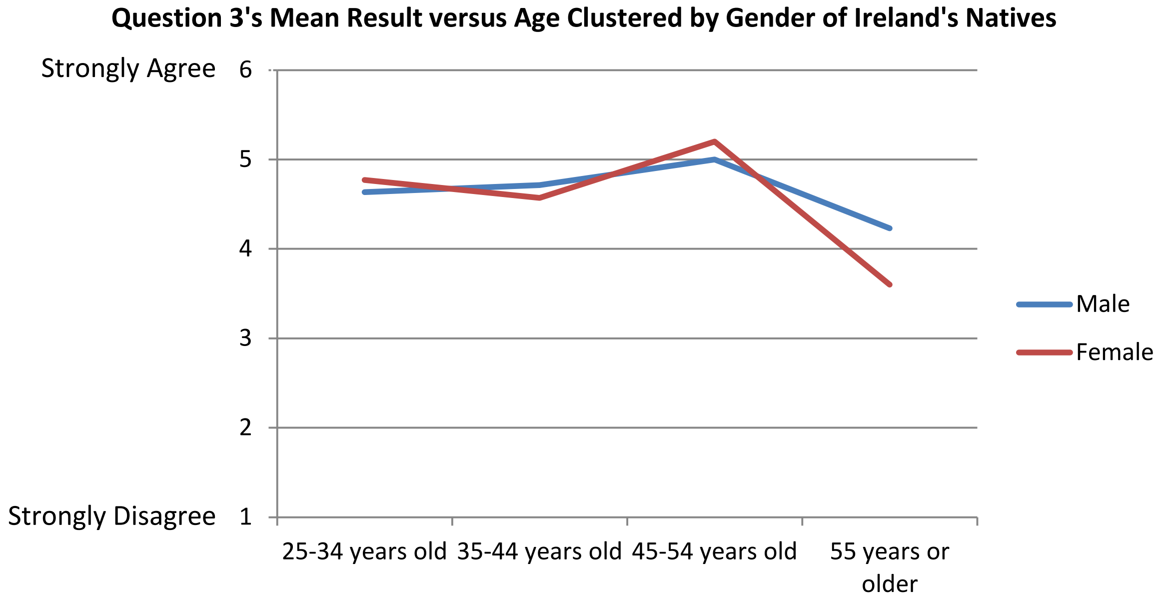

Figure 4.12: Question 3's Mean Result versus Age Clustered by Gender of Ireland's Natives

In addition, the compounded result of all answers reveals low dispersion (CV = 0.274), which is remarkably exhibited in "Figure 4.12" when clustering the Ireland's natives by age and gender, where only the groups "55 years or older" demonstrate a significant pattern change. The Ireland's female natives of this age cluster indicates a 38.1%* contraction in the answers' mean result from its preceding age group (i.e., from 5.20 to 3.60 points) and concurrently the male natives declined the mean score of 5.00 points from its antecedent age group in 19.3%* to 4.23.

* N.B.: Scores were converted before contrasted, as indicated in "3.3. Data Analysis Procedures".

4.2.4. Question 10.1 - Importance of brand loyalty when buying a food product

Question 10.1's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin

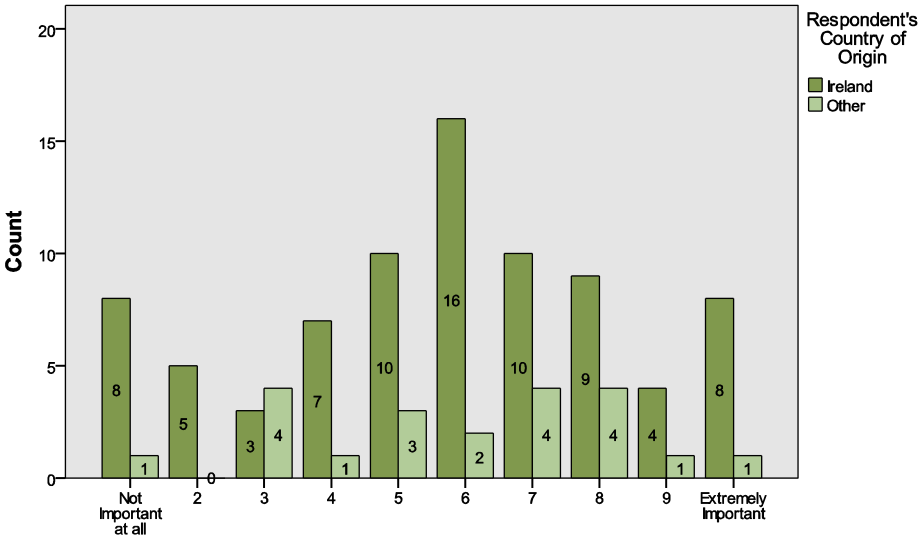

Figure 4.13: Question 10.1's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin

The "Figure 4.13" demonstrates a mode of 6, composed of 18 participants for the favourability of brand loyalty. The ratings are dispersedly distributed, where both of extremities accounts for 9 respondents each, yielding the second most dispersive pattern (CV = 0.447). The intense mode pattern is only observable for respondents originated in Ireland, where the group scored a mean result of 5.74. Nonetheless, the non-native cluster produced 5.86 mean points, however presenting a flatter distribution.

Question 10.1's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin and Gender

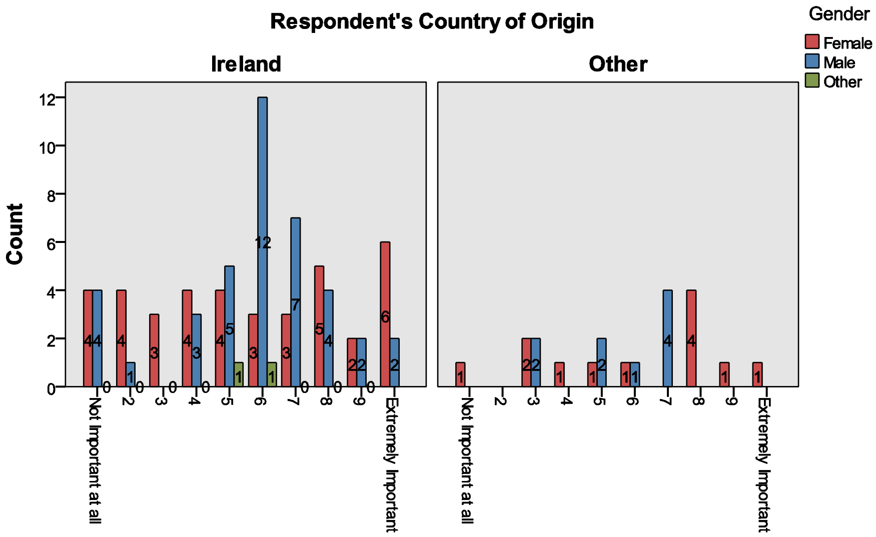

Figure 4.14: Question 10.1's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin and Gender

Interestingly, the mode's composition of 18 participants before mentioned is predominantly made up of males, representing 13 individuals or 72.2%.

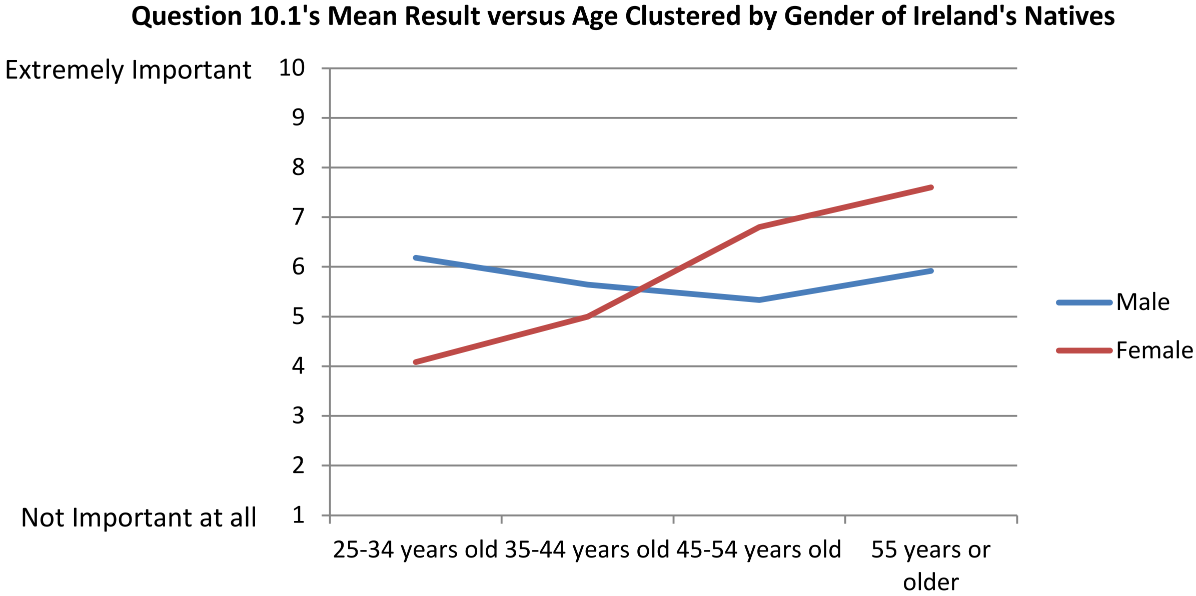

Figure 4.15: Question 10.1's Mean Result versus Age Clustered by Gender of Ireland's Natives

Additionally, "Figure 4.15" indicates a mild variation of the answers' means collected of Ireland's male natives across their age groups. Conversely, among the female natives of Ireland, loyalty for food brands demonstrates an augmentation in importance along with the age increments, totalling a +114%* variation.

* N.B.: Scores were converted before contrasted, as indicated in "3.3. Data Analysis Procedures".

4.3. Country of Origin

		4. "I know the country of origin of branded food products I purchase".	10.2. Importance of country of origin when buying a food product.
N	Valid	102	102
	Missing	1	1
Mean		4.01	5.93
Median		4.00	6.00
Mode		5	5

Table 4.2: Descriptive Statistics of Country of Origin

Country of origin is primarily studied by two components, as exhibited in "Table 4.2", where the question 4 reveals a slightly agreement or a 60.2% agreement level (converted from its mean of 4.01 points) for the consumer's knowledge regarding country of origin of branded food products, whereas the question 10.2 presents a less favourable result for its importance when buying food products, or a 54.8% consideration level (mean = 5.93).

Nevertheless, even though the question 4 is more specific than question 10.2, it does corroborate the country of origin consideration by presenting a greater response than the latter and a moderate correlation ($r = 0.381$, $p < 0.001$). Additionally, intersecting both variables (or questions' answers) to extract response levels above 50% for both inquiries, then 43 or 41.8% participants indicate some knowledge and consider using country of origin as an extrinsic quality cue. Notwithstanding, the questions are subsequently analysed individually.

4.3.1. Question 4 - "I know the country of origin of branded food products I purchase"

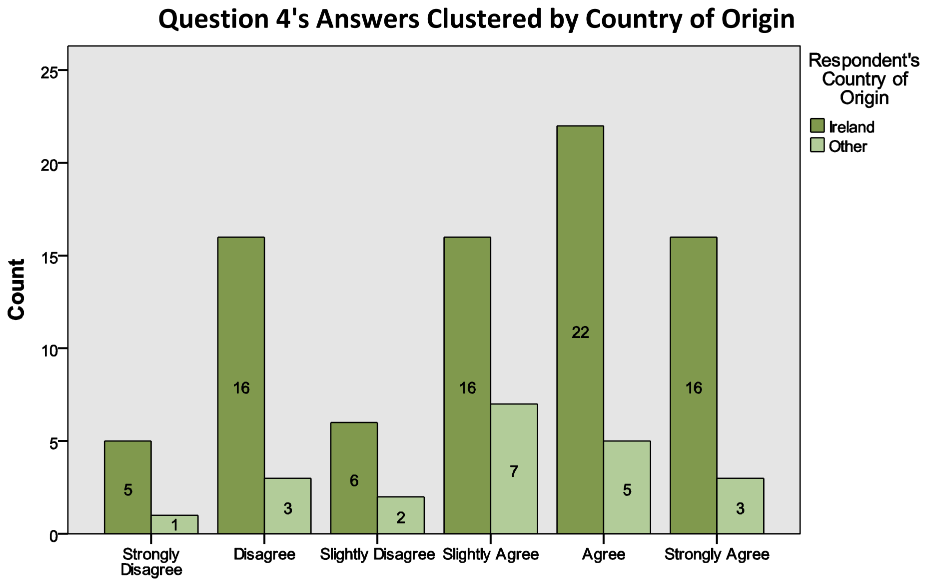

Figure 4.16: Question 4's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin

As illustrated in "Figure 4.16", the results of question 4 produce similar patterns between Ireland's natives and non-natives, only differentiating in the distributions' modes, where for the former cluster there are 22 respondents agreeing with the question's statement and for the latter, 7 slight agreeing. Nevertheless, the total mode is of 27 participants, presenting an agreement response.

Additionally, it is observable a dispersive distribution (CV = 0.385), where the distribution resembles a bimodal pattern. Although, supporting the total of 27 participants contribution for an agreement tendency, only 6 participants strongly disagreed, while 19 individuals strongly agreed. Nonetheless, 19 participants disagreed, 10 slightly disagreed and 22 slightly agreed, weakening the global mode and resulting in a mean response at a lower rank. As a consequence, a virtually equal slight agreement level is established for both native and non-native clusters, presenting a global mean of 4.01.

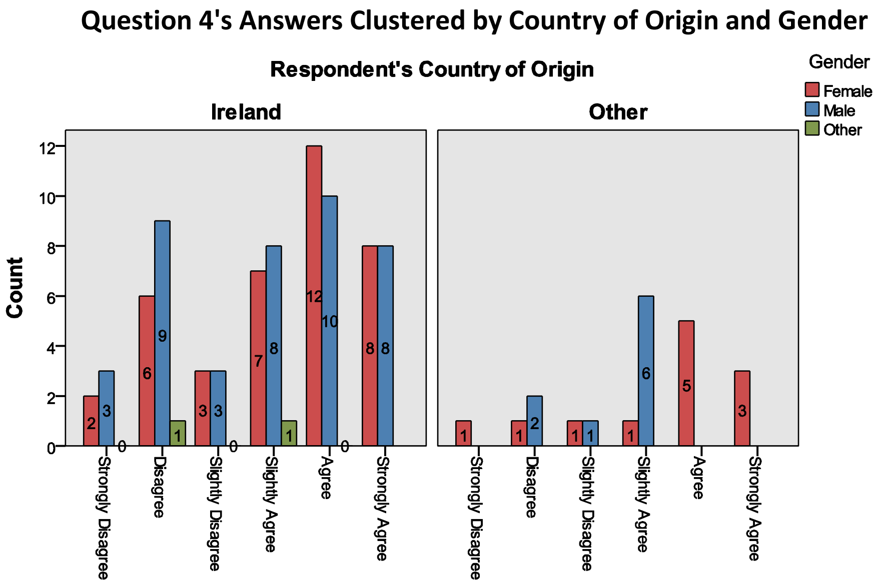

Figure 4.17: Question 4's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin and Gender

Nevertheless, comparing the responses of males with females, women tend to slightly agree 14.9%* more with the question's statement (mean = 4.24) than men (mean = 3.82). In addition, a slight disagreement is manifested by male non-natives (mean = 3.44).

* N.B.: Scores were converted before contrasted, as indicated in "3.3. Data Analysis Procedures".

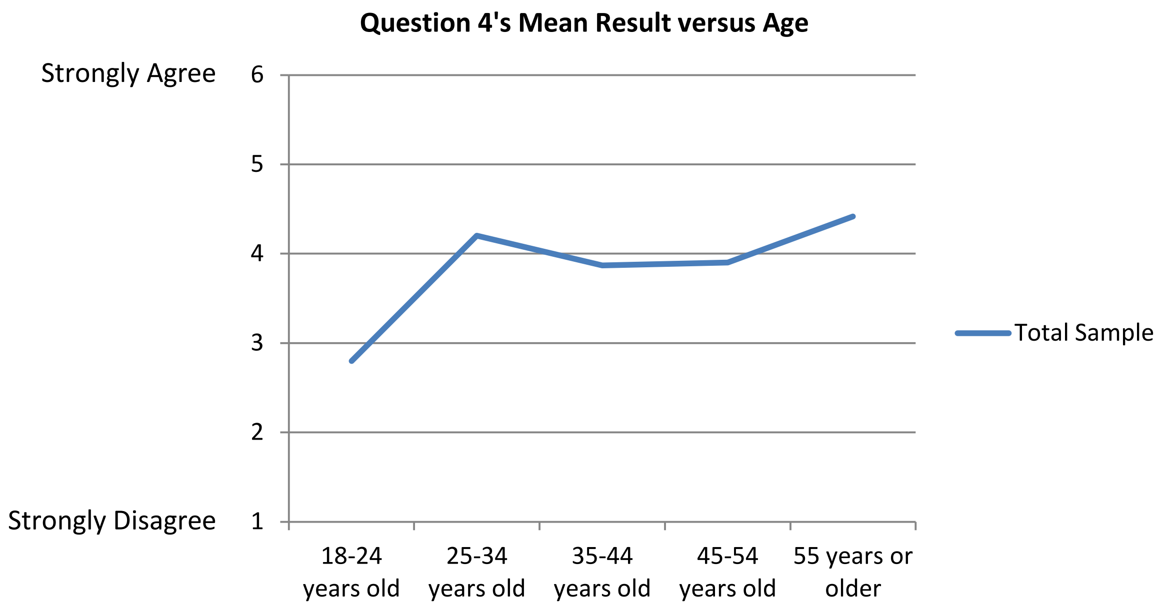

Figure 4.18: Question 4's Mean Result versus Age

Even though salient discrepancies are not visible between males and females, an accentuated slight disagreement is visualised when looking at the age composites, where the "18-24 years old" group (mean = 2.80) differs by at least 1.07 points less than any other age group. Conversely, the remaining groups demonstrate lower variance between them, while the "55 years or older" group illustrates the greatest level of slight agreement (mean = 4.42), followed by the groups of "25-34 years old" (mean = 4.20), "45-54 years old" (mean = 3.90) and "35-44 years old" (mean = 3.87).

4.3.2. Question 10.2 - Importance of country of origin when buying a food product

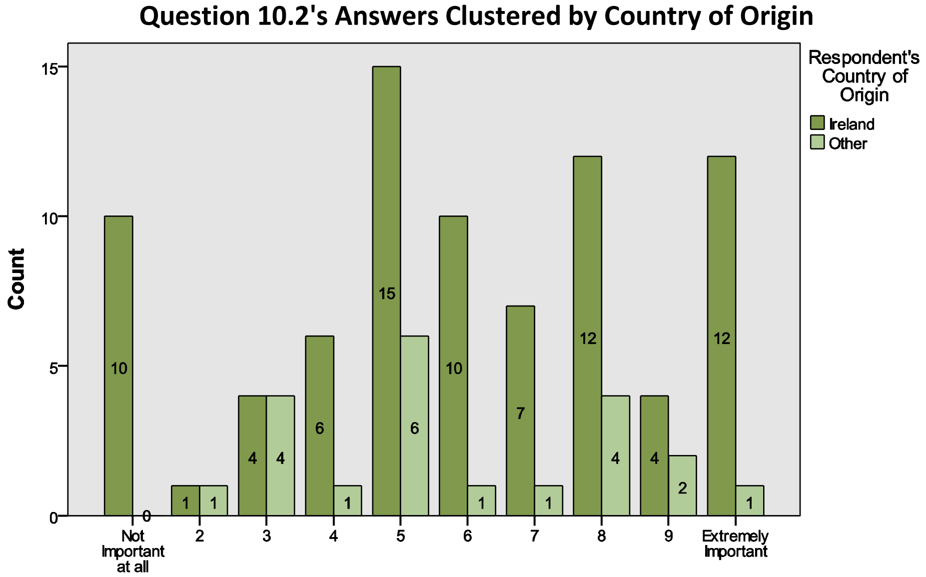

Figure 4.19: Question 10.2's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin

The distribution answers' ratings regarding the country of origin consideration is predominately concentrated from 5 to 8 points, where the two most salient scores are the 5 and 8 points, represented by 21 and 16 participants respectively. In addition, other two significant responses are positioned at the extremities, where the 1 point classification was elected by 10 respondents and 10 points by 13 individuals. The comprehensive answers' mean resulted in 5.93, where despite the patterns' differences between Ireland's native and non-native groups, both present some similarity between their means, the former producing a mean response of 5.98 points and the latter of 5.76.

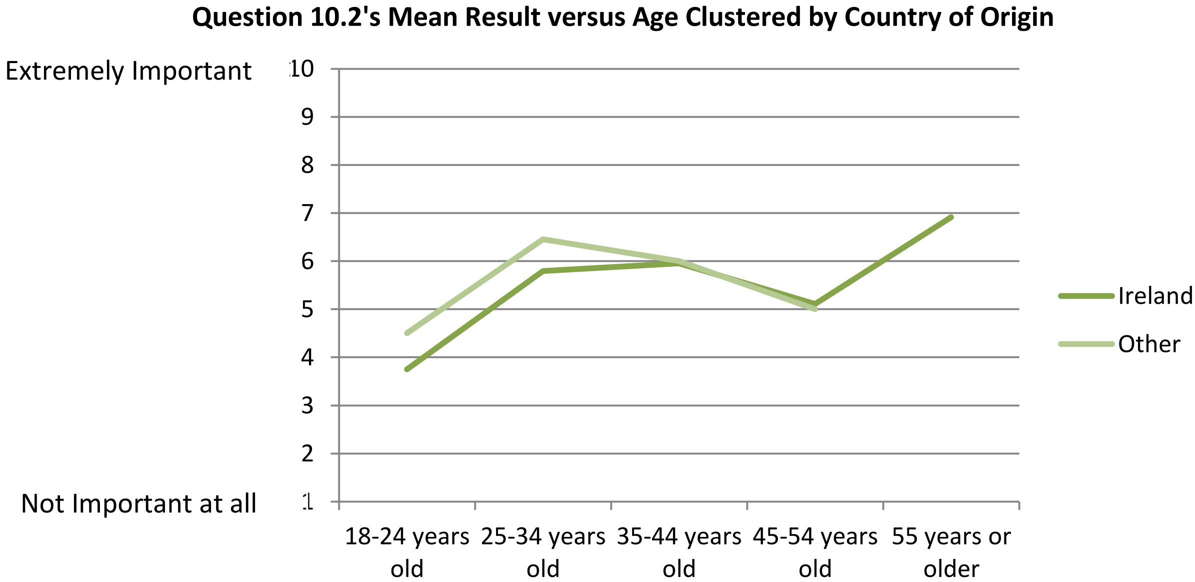

Figure 4.20: Question 10.2's Mean Result versus Age Clustered by Country of Origin

Additionally, the "18-24 years old" group presents some considerable difference in the face of other age groups, whereas specifically the Ireland's native "18-24 years old" group diverges from the native "55 years or older" group by 3.16 points or -53.5%*. Nevertheless, although a similar pattern between natives and non-natives is visualised in "Figure 4.20", there is no data for the non-native "55 years or older" group.

Segmenting ages groups by gender does not produce additional discrepancies, however, as expected to be in accordance with the question 4, the item 2 of question 10 also demonstrates higher grades of females (mean = 6.14), of which the answers' mean is 0.38 points or 7.98%* greater than the responses of males (mean = 5.76).

* N.B.: Scores were converted before contrasted, as indicated in "3.3. Data Analysis Procedures".

4.4. Irish Food Brands' Quality

Next, the overall quality perception on Irish food brands is analysed, as well as the specific intrinsic qualities that the study emphasises (i.e., health and taste).

4.4.1. Overall Quality

5. "Irish food brands are the best".		
N	Valid	103
	Missing	0
Mean		4.08
Median		4.00
Mode		4

Table 4.3: Descriptive Statistics of Overall Quality

The respondents' consideration for the overall Irish food brand quality reflects (in the "Table 4.3") a clear response convergence in the form of a slight agreement. Nevertheless, it is following detailed.

4.4.1.1. Question 5 - "Irish food brands are the best"

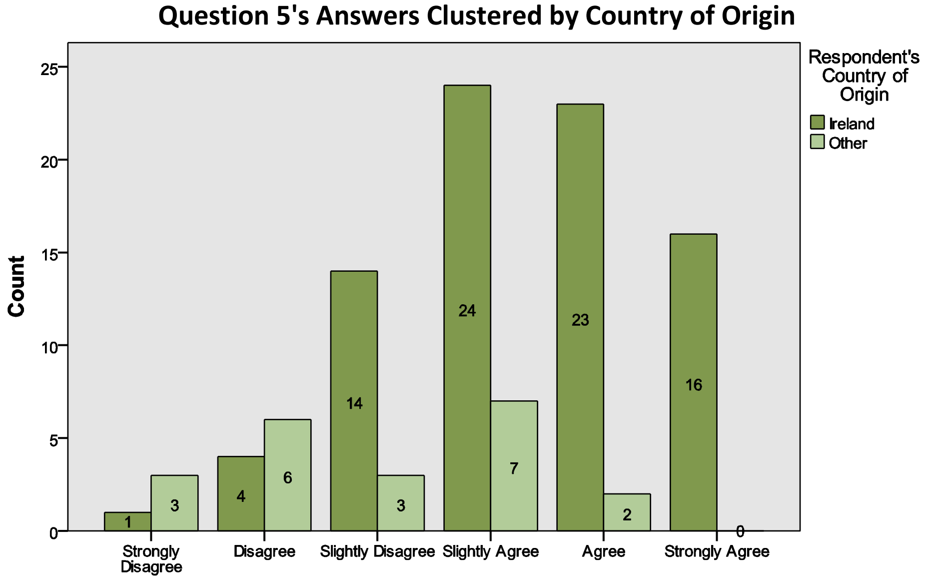

Figure 4.21: Question 5's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin

The answers' distribution of Ireland's natives is demonstrated in the "Figure 4.21" as predominant on the right side of the chart (mean = 4.37), generating a slight agreement response. Conversely, the concentration of non-native responses is mostly localised on the left side (mean = 2.95), symbolising a slight disagreement. Ultimately, the composition of both clusters expresses a slight agreement (of 4.08 points).

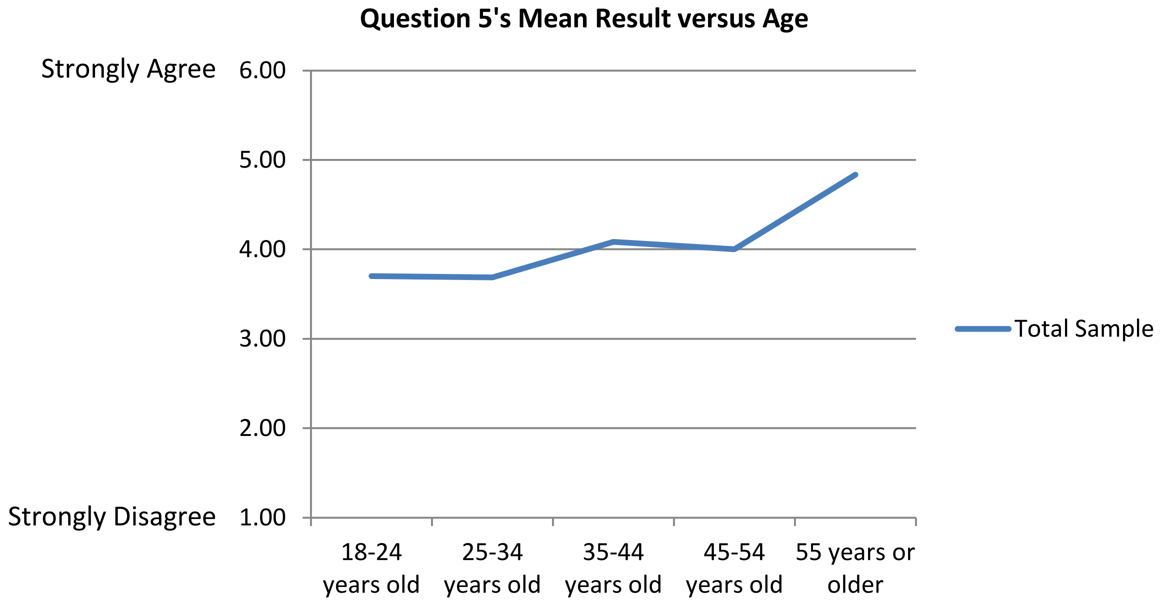

Figure 4.22: Question 5's Mean Result versus Age

Additionally, the answer does not significantly change among the age and gender clusters for both Ireland's natives and non-natives, producing almost a linear pattern, with an exception in the group of "55 years or older" (as illustrated in "Figure 4.22"), rising the pattern to 4.83 points, representing an increase of 0.83 points or 27.8%* contrasted to the preceding age group, corresponding to an agreement response.

* N.B.: Scores were converted before contrasted, as indicated in "3.3. Data Analysis Procedures".

4.4.2. Health

		6. "Irish food brands are healthier".	10.3. Importance of health when buying a food product.
N	Valid	103	102
	Missing	0	1
Mean		3.56	7.84
Median		4.00	8.00
Mode		4	10

Table 4.4: Descriptive Statistics of Health

Health consideration for food as well as for Irish food brands are appraised using the item 10.3, where a great positive disposition to consider health when purchasing food products is demonstrated (mean = 7.84), and using the question 6, which its responses slightly attest that Irish food brands are healthier (mean = 3.56).

4.4.2.1. Question 6 - "Irish food brands are healthier"

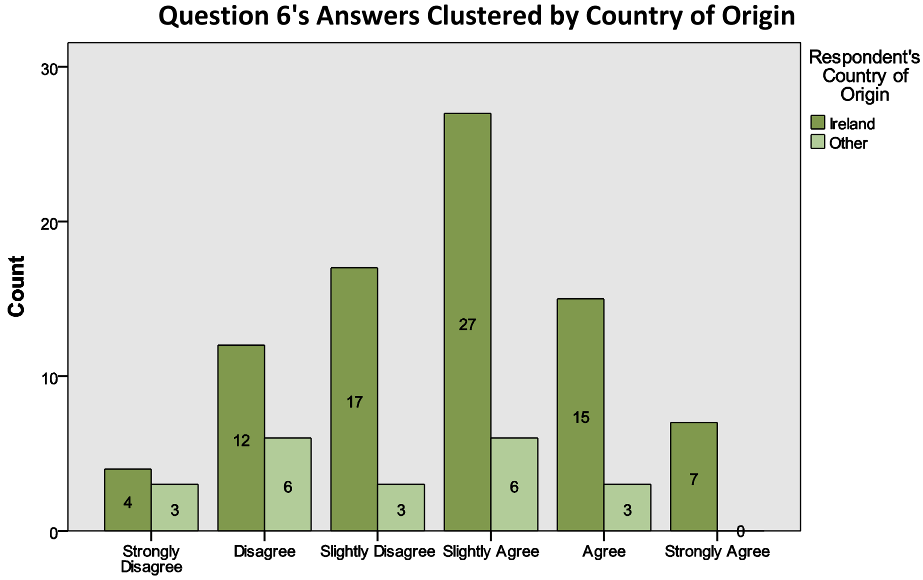

Figure 4.23: Question 6's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin

The "Figure 4.23" exhibits a normal distribution for the 6th question among the answers of Irish natives, despite the fact that the centre is not balanced. Nevertheless, the answers' mean reaches 3.56 points. Consequently, the slightly agreement response triumphs, represented by 32% or 33 participants. However, the result realistically implies a neutral answer.

Comparing the groups of Irish natives and non-natives, a slight agreement is more emphasised for natives (mean = 3.71), whereas non-natives demonstrate a slightly disagreement (mean = 3.00). Gender divergences are small and the pattern across age groups is similar to the 5th question (as in "Figure 4.22"), roughly presenting a linear pattern, where the "55 years or older" group elevates the response to 4.21 points, representing an increase of 1.01 points or 45.8%* contrasted to the preceding age group.

* N.B.: Scores were converted before contrasted, as indicated in "3.3. Data Analysis Procedures".

4.4.2.2. Question 10.3 - Importance of health when buying a food product

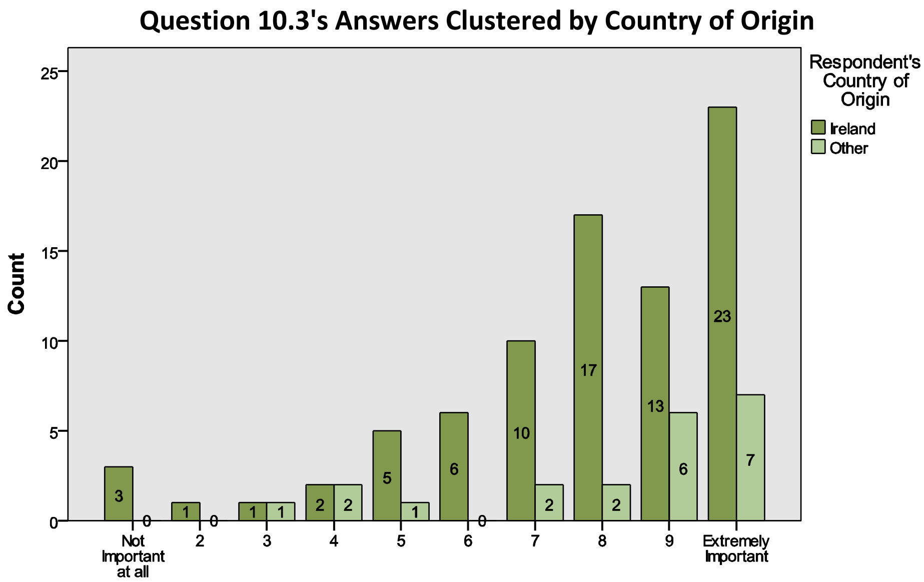

Figure 4.24: Question 10.3's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin

The substantial relevance of the item 10.3 is demonstrated in "Figure 4.24" by an increasing rating pattern, starting from 1 to 10, where the score of 10 attains 30 responses. The global mean score achieves 7.84 points, where the responses pattern of Ireland's non-natives might be argued to be similar to the Irish native pattern, where these groups yield respectively mean responses of 8.01 and 7.78 points.

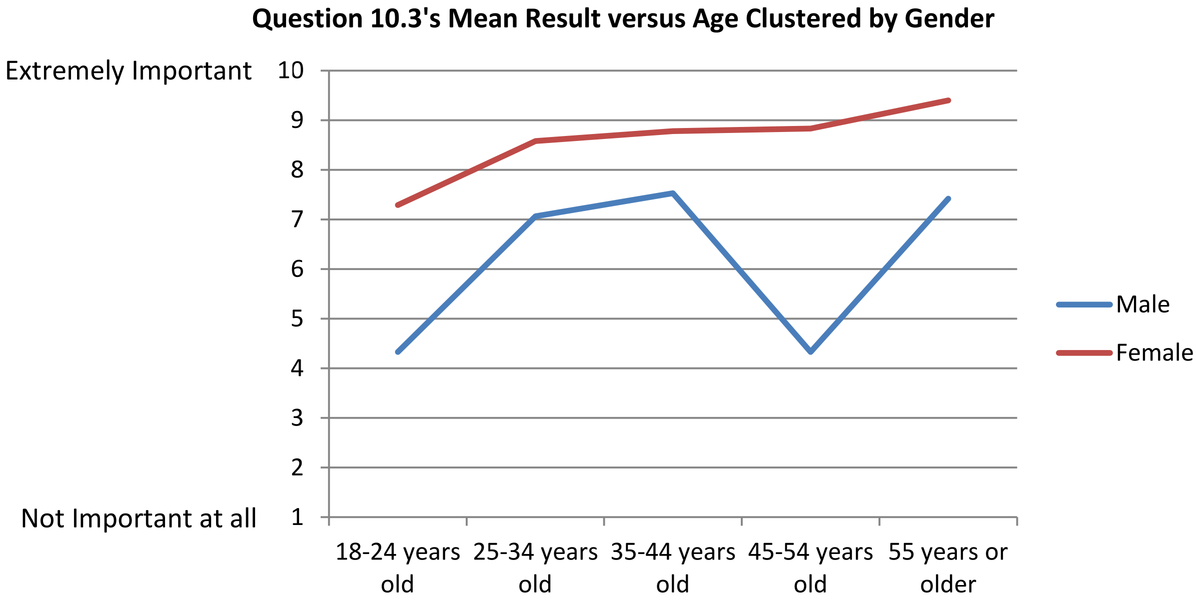

Figure 4.25: Question 10.3's Mean Result versus Age Clustered by Gender

Additionally, as visualised in "Figure 4.25", health is clearly assessed more important to women (mean = 8.63) compared to men (mean = 6.96), producing a difference of 1.67 points or

+28%*. Great discrepancies illustrated between males and females of the age subgroup "45-54 years old", as well as between the "18-24 years old" clusters, should be more carefully taken into consideration due to its representativeness, since both male segmentations consist of the smallest amount of samples, i.e., only 3 participants each (as exhibited in "Figure 4.4" or in "Appendix 4 - Mean Results Grouped by Demographic Variables"). Nevertheless, in the "55 years or older" category, a more legitimate discrepancy (of 1.98 points) is demonstrated.

* N.B.: Scores were converted before contrasted, as indicated in "3.3. Data Analysis Procedures".

4.4.3. Taste

		7. "Irish food brands are tastier".	10.4. Importance of taste when buying a food product.
N	Valid	103	102
	Missing	0	1
Mean		3.88	8.92
Median		4.00	9.00
Mode		4	10

Table 4.5: Descriptive Statistics of Taste

This section comprises question 7 and 10.4, as exhibited in the "Table 4.5", of which question 7 reflects a slight agreement for assessing Irish food brands tastier (mean = 3.88), while the item 10.4 portrays the taste's strength (mean = 8.92) as the most salient factor under the shoppers' consideration.

4.4.3.1. Question 7 - "Irish food brands are tastier"

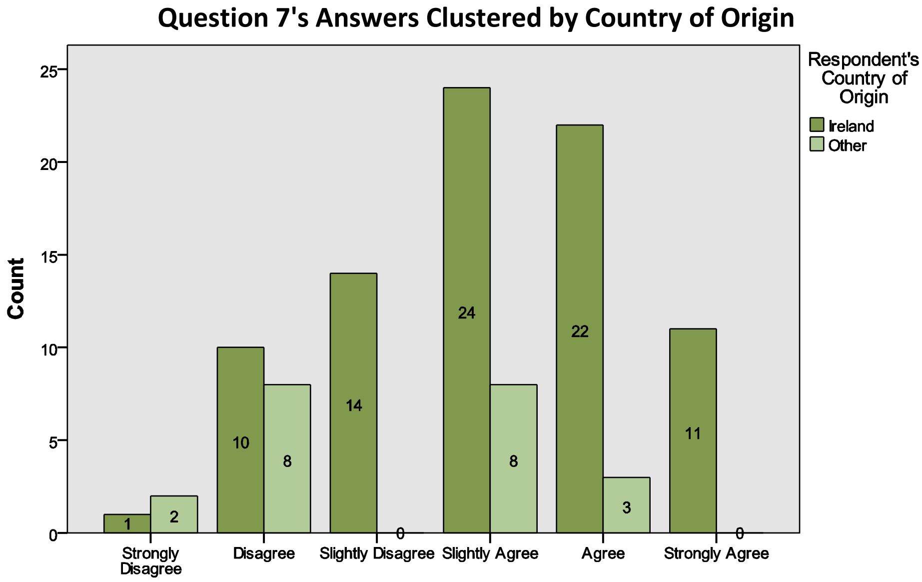

Figure 4.26: Question 7's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin

Question 7's answers present a similar pattern of the previous questions 5 and 6, producing slight respective differences of -0.19 and +0.32 points compared to these questions, where its overall mean result is of 3.88. Again Ireland's native respondents demonstrate to be inclined to slightly agree (mean = 4.08) and non-native to slightly disagree (mean = 3.10). No considerable differences were visualised among sub classifications, where the increase of agreement level of the "55 years or older" group contrasted to its preceding age group is of 0.62 points (or +22%*), therefore, less evident than the prior questions.

* N.B.: Scores were converted before contrasted, as indicated in "3.3. Data Analysis Procedures".

4.4.3.2. Question 10.4 - Importance of taste when buying a food product

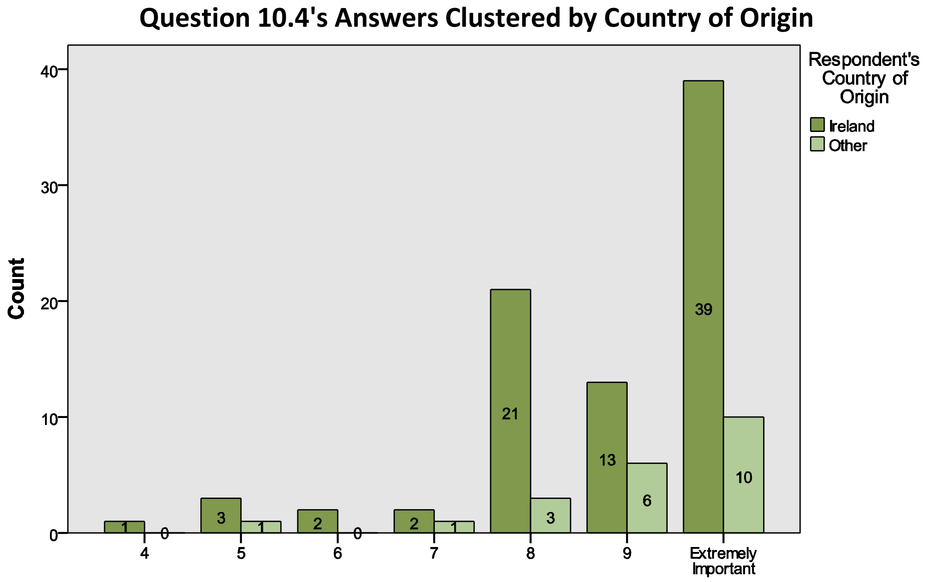

Figure 4.27: Question 10.4's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin

This item received the greatest consideration from the participants. There are few responses below 8 points, whereas 10 points were rated by 48% or 49 participants, leading to a answer's global mean of 8.92. The patterns for both Ireland's natives and non-natives, as illustrated in "Figure 4.27", do not present significant distinction, where their mean results are 8.89 points for the natives and 9.05 for the non-natives.

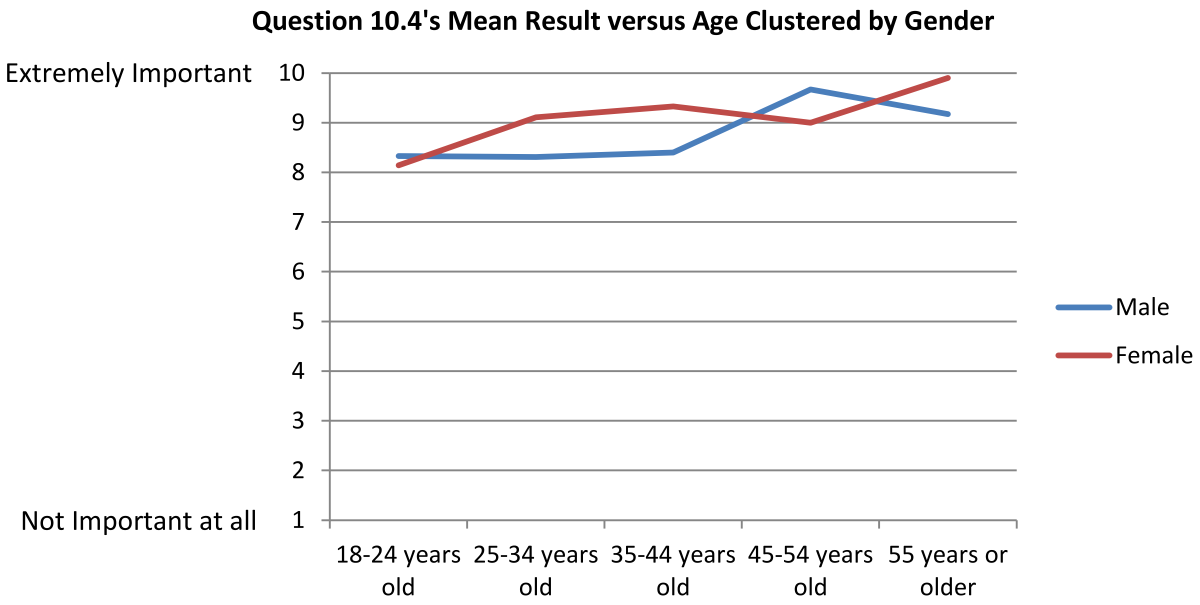

Figure 4.28: Question 10.4's Mean Result versus Age Clustered by Gender

Likewise, no significant discrepancies are observable from the age and gender clustering perspectives. However, it is noted in "Figure 4.28" that the assessment increases together the age classification increment, where females in general appraise the item in a slight higher degree than males.

4.5. Price

		8. "Irish food brands tend to be more expensive".	9. "I choose Irish food brands even when slightly costlier".	10.5. Importance of price when buying a food product.
N	Valid	103	103	102
	Missing	0	0	1
Mean		4.66	3.91	7.68
Median		5.00	4.00	8.00
Mode		5	5	10

Table 4.6: Descriptive Statistics of Price

This section provides the consumer response towards the price consideration for food products and price for Irish food brands, investigated using the three questions showed in the "Table 4.6". The importance of price for food products was vastly respected, scoring 8 out of 10 points. Despite of perceiving Irish food brands as more expensive, the shopper reports to support them when slightly costlier, predominantly in the "35-44 years old" group onwards, as further dissected.

4.5.1. Question 8 - "Irish food brands tend to be more expensive"

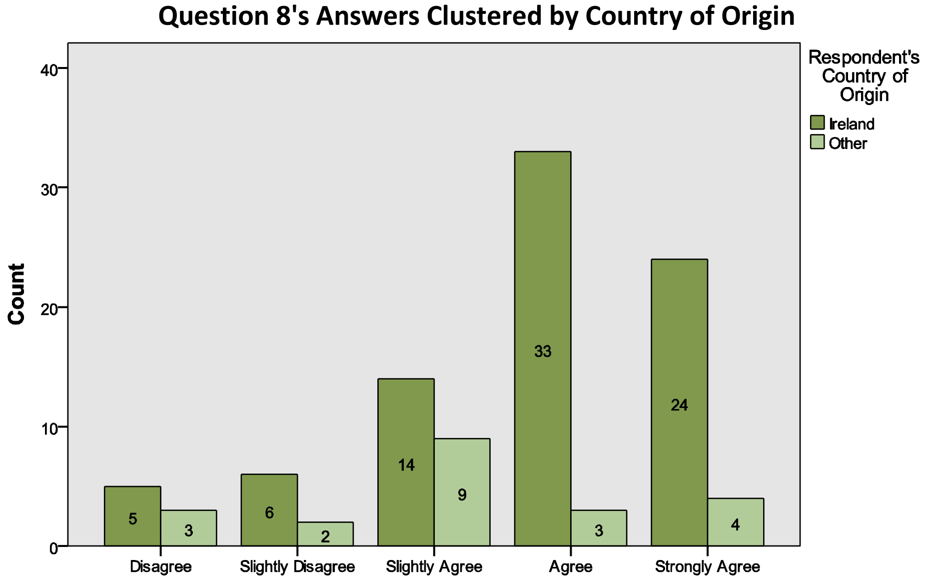

Figure 4.29: Question 8's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin

The answers' result of question 8 establishes a mean answer of 4.66 points, corresponding to an agreement response. A small discrepancy is perceived when segmenting Ireland's native and non-native people, as illustrated in "Figure 4.29", whereas 33 natives agree with the question's statement (mean = 4.79) and 9 non-natives slightly agree (mean = 4.14).

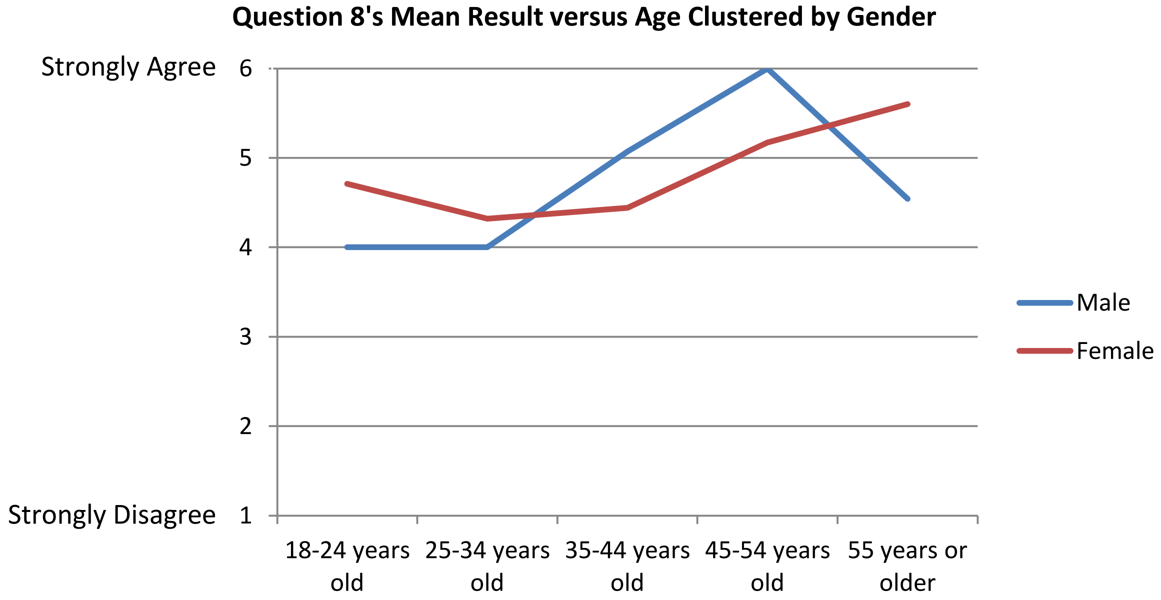

Figure 4.30: Question 8's Mean Result versus Age Clustered by Gender

Clustering results by gender, it is noticed a slight predominance of female ratings (mean = 4.75) over the male appraisal (mean = 4.58). Nevertheless, observing their age classification in

"Figure 4.30", the genders' patterns intersect twice, where the females prevail in the beginning and at the end. Additionally, both patterns increase in the age group of "35-44 years old" and keep the rising intensity for the next age group. Nonetheless, a substantial deviation is found in the male "45-54 years old" group, where all the participants strongly agree (mean = 6), however, this subgroup presents smaller representativeness. On the other hand, even neglecting the small sample, a dwindling pattern would still be visible for the male "55 years or older" subgroup.

4.5.2. Question 9 - "I choose Irish food brands even when slightly costlier"

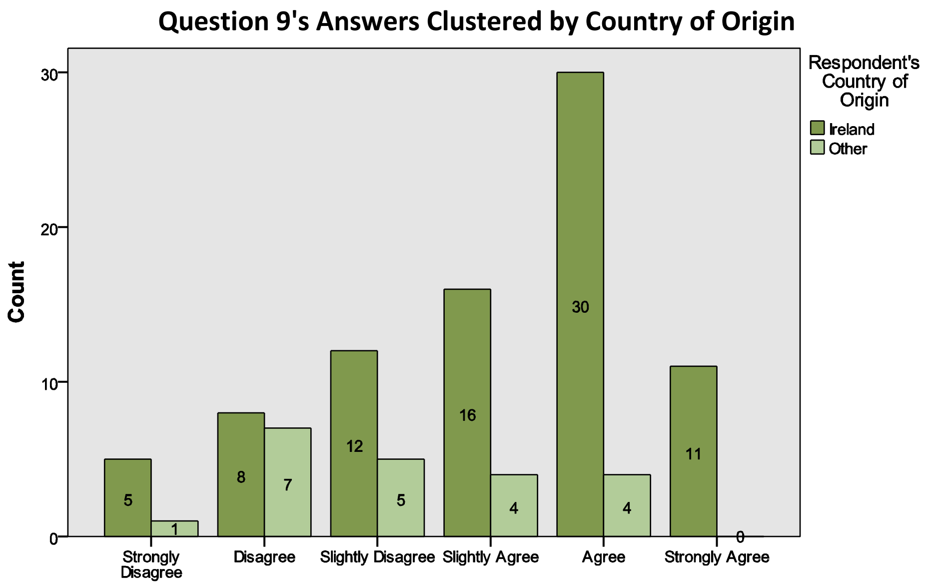

Figure 4.31: Question 9's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin

A slight agreement level is established in question 9 by a mean result of 3.91 or median of 4, however, greatly influenced by 33% or 34 respondents agreeing with the question. Nonetheless, dichotomising the participants in Ireland's natives and Ireland's non-natives, while the native group slightly agrees (mean = 4.11), the non-native group slightly disagrees (mean = 3.14).

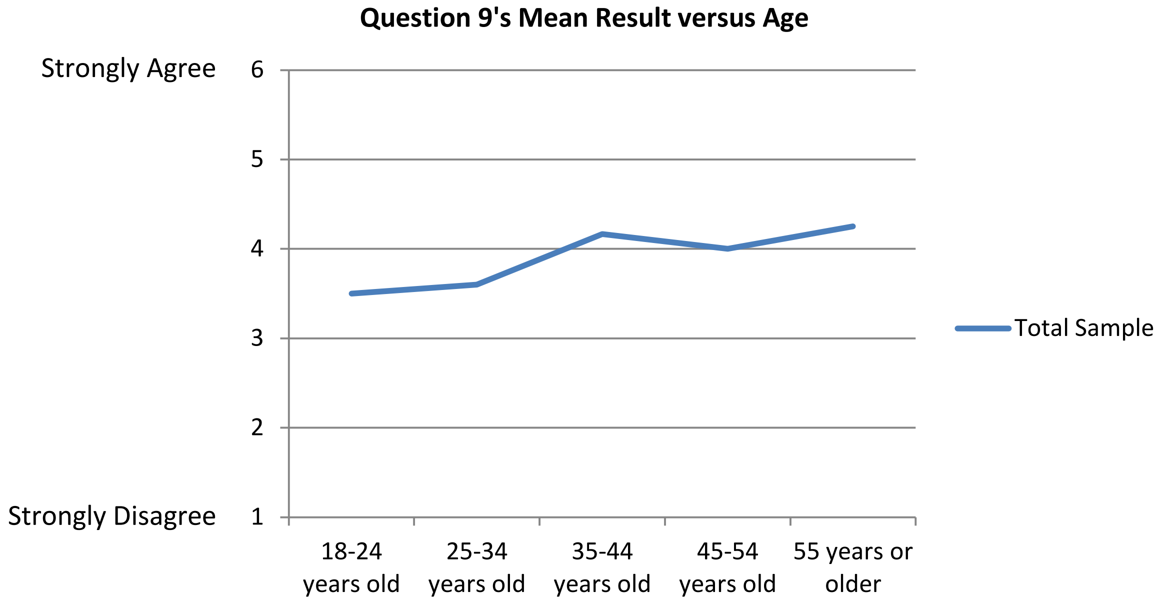

Figure 4.32: Question 9's Mean Result versus Age

However, the pattern directions according to the age classification are the same among genders and country of origin subgroups. In addition, no expressive deviations are found among these subgroups, where a salient increase of support occurred in the age group of "35-44 years old", reaching 4.17 points, presenting a difference of +21.8%* contrasted to the previous age group, as illustrated in the "Figure 4.32". That response intensity is onward kept, where the mean support result of the three oldest groups together is of 4.17 points* or 63.4%*.

* N.B.: Scores were converted before contrasted, as indicated in "3.3. Data Analysis Procedures".

4.5.3. Question 10.5 - Importance of price when buying a food product

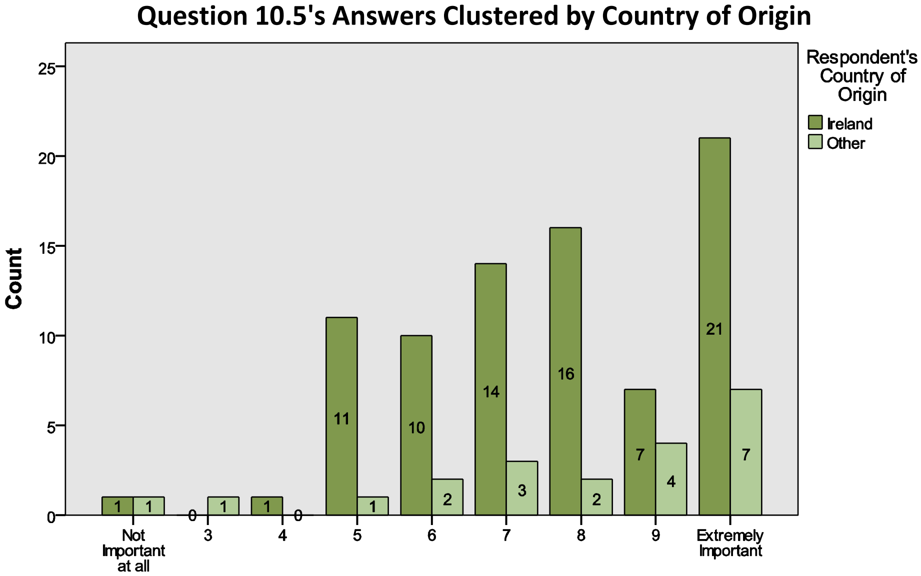

Figure 4.33: Question 10.5's Answers Clustered by Country of Origin

The price's importance is assessed as extremely important by 21 respondents natives of Ireland and 7 by non-natives. Contrasting the responses between these two groups in the "Figure 4.33", some similarities between the patterns are visualised. Consequently, their mean responses are similar, whereas the mean of natives' answers is of 7.64 points and of the non-natives represented by 7.81, resulting in a global responses' mean of 7.68 points.

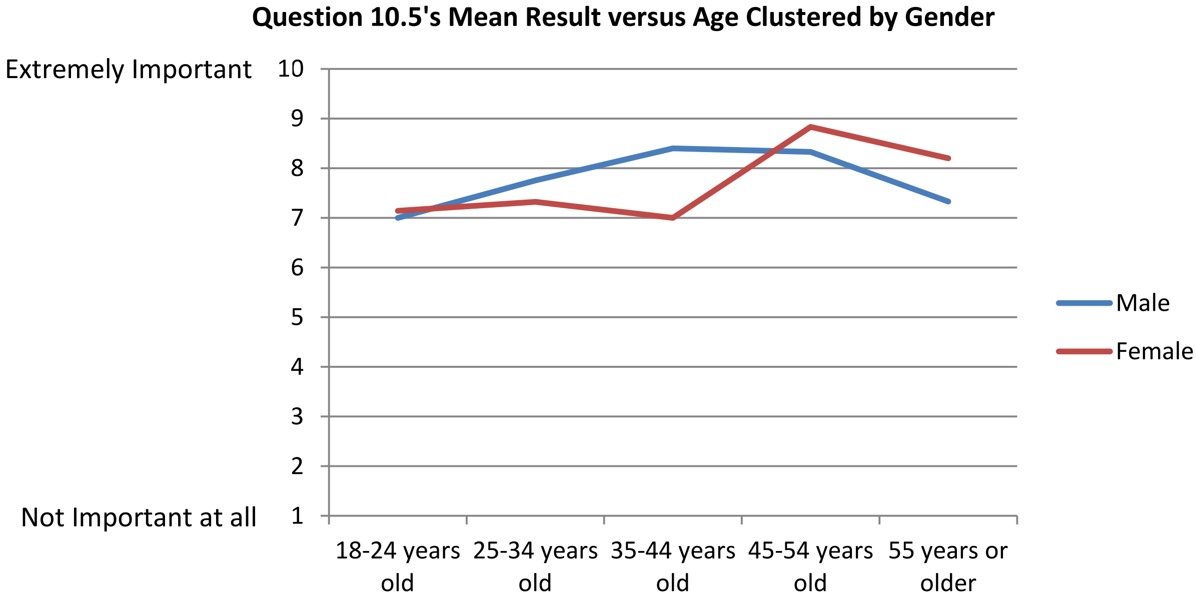

Figure 4.34: Question 10.5's Mean Result versus Age Clustered by Gender

Accordingly, no great disparities of the price importance is observed across ages and genders, however, a slight increasing pattern of males is noted by looking at age segmentation in "Figure 4.34", which turns into a decreasing pattern in the age group of "35-44 years old". That is the same age category where the female group changes its linear pattern and price concern starts to grow. However, a convergent direction is established between men and women in the next age group.

4.6. Additional Perspectives

Following, two additional perspectives are analysed. Firstly, the considerations of the question 10 are contrasted to each other to provide a global view of their respective prominences. Sequentially, a summary of attitudes towards Irish food brands is conceived.

4.6.1. Importance of Brand Loyalty, Country of Origin, Health, Taste and Price

Extracted from the question 10, this section provides a comprehensive perspective of the shopper's considerations on brand loyalty, country of origin, health, taste and price when purchasing a food product.

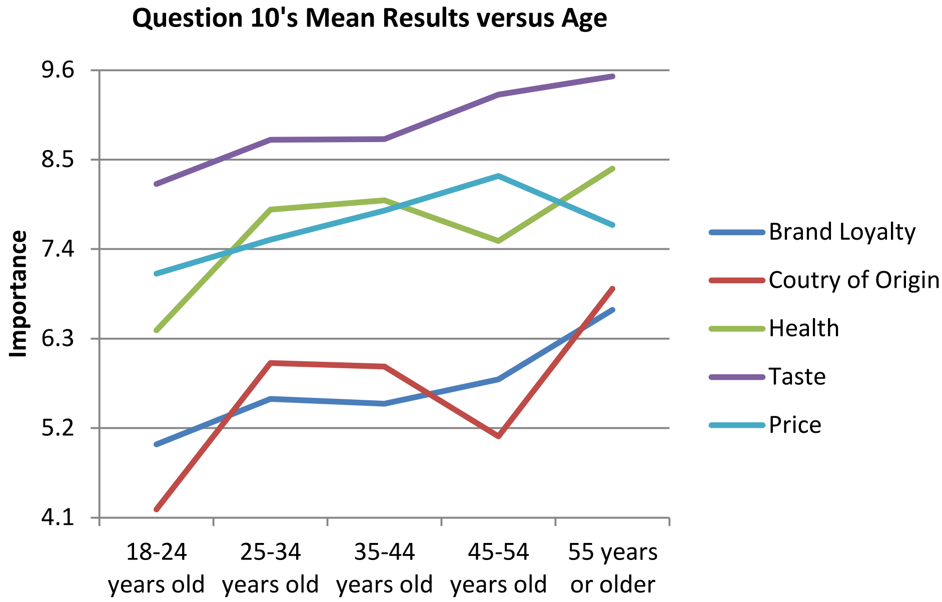

Figure 4.35: Question 10's Mean Results versus Age

Contrasting the five items, taste is ranked in the first position, producing a mean response of 8.92 points or 15.8%* greater than the second position, health, which presents an answers' mean of 7.84, or slightly greater in 0.17 points than price in third place (mean = 7.68), whereas country of origin is 1.75 points or 26.1%* lower than price, ranking the fourth position with a mean of 5.93 points, and finally, not aloof (in 0.17 points), brand loyalty is at the last position (mean = 5.76).

* N.B.: Scores were converted before contrasted, as indicated in "3.3. Data Analysis Procedures".

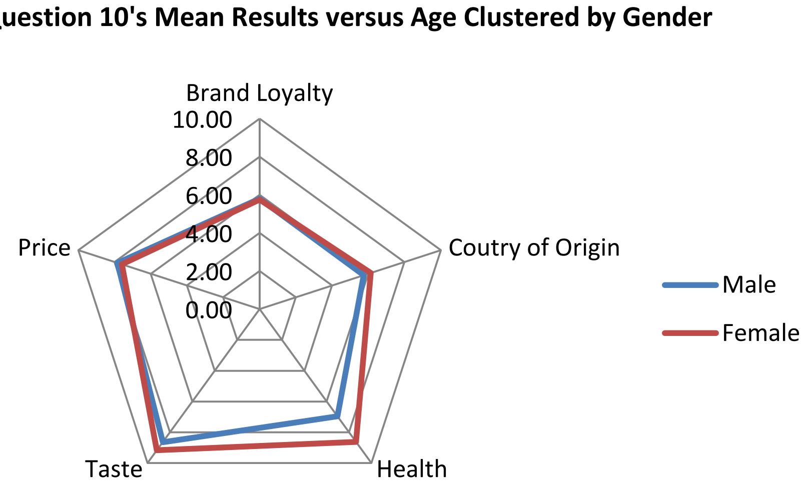

Figure 4.36: Question 10's Mean Results versus Age Clustered by Gender

Segmenting the sample by males and females, the difference in the health dimension protrudes among the others, where the female group (mean = 8.63) scores 1.67 points or 28.0%* higher than the male (mean = 6.96), as also demonstrated in "4.4.2. Health".

* N.B.: Scores were converted before contrasted, as indicated in "3.3. Data Analysis Procedures".

4.6.2. Shopping Irish Food Brands

The data analysis of the quality sphere of Irish food brands by the questions 5 ("Irish food brands are the best"), 6 ("Irish food brands are healthier"), 7 ("Irish food brands are tastier") and 9 ("I choose Irish food brands even when slightly costlier"), as well as the relevance for country of origin when shopping food, elicited by the questions 4 ("I know the country of origin of branded food products I purchase") and 10.2 (Importance of country of origin when buying a food product), all demonstrated to be positively inclined to consider Irish food brands.

Nonetheless, these perspectives could be interrelated to reveal the predisposition of considering to purchase Irish food brands when shopping food products. Accordingly, for the sake of simplicity, the participants who at least slightly agree with the questions 4, 5, 6, 7, 9 and consider a mark of at least 6 for the item 10.2, compounds a group of 25 food shoppers. Thus, it could be argued that about 1 in 4 respondents (i.e., 25 / 103) is predisposed to consider Irish food brands when shopping food. Even though that filtering considers minimum answers levels for both the differentiation of Irish food brands and the predisposition of considering purchasing it, the responses may reinforce each other, as indicated, although parsimoniously, in the studies of Miyazaki, Grewal and Goodstein (2005).

Complementary, focusing onto the "loyalty" group classification, a total of 4 loyal food consumers, or approximately 1 in 4 loyal food shoppers (i.e., 4 / 17) is predisposed to consider Irish food brands when shopping food, hence, they possibly represent shoppers who are consciously loyal to Irish food brands. In addition, as noticeable, that loyalty classification virtually did not affect the proportion of the prior view.

5. DISCUSSION

This section discusses the satisfaction of the research objectives based on the data analysis and the literature.

1. Investigate how loyal the shopper in Dublin is towards food brands.

The first research objective was primarily founded on the three initial items of the survey, grounded on the work of Dick and Basu (1994). Their framework was assessed to be the most appropriate to be employed when appraising any food brands, since it generates more loyalty indications compared to for instance the "net promoter score" system of Reichheld (2003).

The combination of these questions resulted in four loyalty group classifications, which are "no loyalty", "latent loyalty", "spurious loyalty" and "loyalty", represented respectively by 16, 1, 69 and 17 respondents. As a consequence, it can be said that 1 in 6 food shoppers (i.e., 17 / 103) is loyal to food brands.

Additionally, the participants' consideration on brand loyalty importance of 52.9%, appraised by the question 10.1 is slightly superior than the coefficient of loyalty degree developed (LD), which resulted in 52.6%, therefore, an overall near alignment of loyalty consideration and loyalty degree is observable in the sample, in which the slight superiority of consideration may indicate a favourability for a brand loyalty increase, since it represents an initial stimulus. Furthermore, it could be said that a LD above 50% favours food brands. Conversely, from a global perspective, perhaps an overall 50% loyalty degree is desirable in order to keep a loyalty equilibrium, that is, to sustain healthy relationships between consumers and companies in order to foster the growth of brands and prevent potential price abuses.

Even though less representative, findings were also realised across the groupings of respondents' gender, age and country of origin, which could dictate specific directions for a food company. Using the coefficient of loyalty degree to discuss the information analysed, it is possible to assume that Ireland's natives of the target population are 14% more loyal (LD = 0.540) than non-natives (LD = 0.475). In addition, females tend to be 5% more loyal (LD = 0.536) than males (LD = 0.512), predominantly in the age group "55 years or older" of Ireland (LD = 0.667), exhibiting 21% of higher loyalty compared to males of the same age group (LD = 0.552), and 67% contrasted to the least loyal cluster, which is composed of male non-natives of Ireland between 18 and 24 years old (LD = 0.400).

Additionally, question 2 indicated that attitude strength diverges between males and females across the age subgroups, while the question 3 illustrated that attitudinal differentiation are convergent among these subgroups. Both occurrences might be a reflection of the inherent human being relationships in the food brands relationships, that is, while the groups' integration or socialisation is probably the cause of the third question's congruence between the genders and ultimately determining loyalty patterns, the question 2's results may be for the reason that possibly the opposite nurturing levels between genders are naturally developed to balance relationships, which that nurturing attribute was demonstrated predominant in the group of women at the age of 55 years or older, therefore, suggesting a robust loyal target group.

2. Assess the consideration level of shoppers in Dublin regarding the country of origin of food brands.

The level consideration for the country of origin was primary assessed by the item 10.2 (Importance of country of origin when buying a food product), yielding an overall consideration level of 54.8%. In order to support that item's response, the question 4 ("I know the country of origin of branded food products I purchase") was designated to indicate a precondition to consider using country of origin for a food product, producing a 60.2% knowledge level, which was demonstrated in "4.3. Country of Origin" to indeed corroborate with its consideration, where intercrossing the results, 41.8% of the respondents indicated some knowledge along with considering the use of country of origin as an extrinsic quality cue.

Additionally, knowledge and consideration levels for both questions, as one might expect, were less evident for younger people. The oldest group indicated by far to hold more knowledge and consideration. For instance, that group reflected 90% more knowledge than the youngest cluster (mean = 2.80 or 36.0% knowledge level), where its answers' mean represented a slight agreement, portrayed by a mean of 4.42 points (in percentage represented by 68.4%), which could be argued as a considerable knowledge level to support the consideration for country of origin when shopping food. Nevertheless, the subsequent research objective brings the consideration for Irish food brands into focus.

3. Assess the likeability of Irish food brands.

Chiefly reflected in the result of question 5 ("Irish food brands are the best"), the consideration for Irish food brands is symbolised by a slight agreement response (mean = 4.37) of the natives of Ireland, predominantly visualised in the most senior group as an agreement (mean = 4.83), whereas the non-natives exhibited an opposite perspective by a slight disagreement (mean = 2.95).

As a consequence, Ireland's natives exhibited the tendency of valuating their own home country brand, as indicated in the literature, whereas most of the non-natives did not manifested that support for Irish food brands. Since the great majority of the non-natives (as mentioned in "4.1. Demographic Information") are from less developed countries, that invalidates the correlation indicated of the non-natives' tendency to evaluate products according to the economic development degree of countries (Bilkey and Nes, 1982; Zolfagharian and Sun, 2010), at least in the food industry.

The disruption of that correlation might be for the reason that food in general is a fundamental product that an individual is highly exposed and conditioned, where trust, tradition and taste, as some characteristic examples, have been developed over the years, which do not necessary require highly developed infrastructures, since the quality of a food brand is largely valuated using cues of naturalness in lieu of man intervention, as underpinned by the literature (Grunert, Bredahl and Brunsø, 2004).

The successive research objectives specifically take into account the three main components of food products that are used to assess or represent their quality, and thus to counterpose to the Irish food brands (i.e., health, taste and price). However, the question 5 fulfilled that correlation for country of origin consideration, inasmuch as it produced an overall quality evaluation. That is corroborated by the Spearman's correlation of question 5 with the related questions, demonstrating moderate strength correlations with the inquiries 6 and 9, which correspond respectively to the spheres of health ($r = 0.625$, $p < 0.001$) and price ($r = 0.570$, $p < 0.001$), as well as a strong correlation with question 7 ($r = 0.755$, $p < 0.001$), representing the Irish food taste.

4. Appraise the consideration of eaters in Dublin concerning health for Irish food brands.

Firstly, the consideration for health importance when shopping food products was drastically evidenced (using the question 10.3), reaching a mean of 7.84 points, where the female cluster demonstrated to be the most caring, strengthening its judgment response by the development of its age. Nevertheless, the health appraise for Irish food brands was measured using the question 6 ("Irish food brands are healthier").

In the pilot testing, both allusions to health suggested by Brunsø, Fjord and Grunert (2002) were unveiled, i.e., in the form of functional foods and as food safety concerns, where the latter highly permeated the "process" dimension of the "Total Food Quality Model" (in "2.4.1. Total Food Quality Model"). Nonetheless, the inquiry signalised a virtual neutrality response of how healthy the Irish food brands are, pronounced by a slight agreement of Ireland's natives and a slight disagreement of non-natives.

Even though the agreement's intensity of responses are less prominent than the 5th inquiry, questions 5 and 6 generated similar patterns. In fact, the researcher explicitly witnessed during both the phases of the data collection (pre and post testing) that some natives of Ireland answered the question 5 highly influenced by their patriotic feelings, making its warm up characteristic even more important in that case, so that some bias (or the quality perception of the home country preference) could possibly be discharged in favour of the succeeding questions.

On the other hand, the non-native responses exhibited nearly the same pattern and intensity as demonstrated in the question 5, corroborating the bias reduction assumption for natives, that is, the question 6's prominence level decreased in relation to question 5 for the Ireland's natives, while for non-natives the agreement level did not change.

5. Appraise the consideration of eaters in Dublin concerning taste for Irish food brands.

Taste (measured in the question 10.4) was the primary consideration when buying a food product, indicated to be 15.8% greater regarded against health. Notwithstanding, the general esteem towards the Irish food taste was evinced in the answers of question 7 ("Irish food brands are tastier"), constituting a favourable response in the form of a slight agreement (mean = 3.88).

Consonantly with the previous questions 6 and 5, the slight agreement produced in the 7th question also accounts for a slight agreement of Ireland's natives and a slight disagreement of non-natives. Most importantly, while the global answers' means among these three questions almost did not vary within the non-native group (i.e., variation between 2.95 and 3.10 points), a greater intensity was visualised in the native group, where the inquiry 7's mean response was (0.38 points) stronger than question 6, however (0.28 points) weaker than answers' mean of the item 5. That might again indicate the patriotic value influence emphasised in the question 5 and a natural finer evaluation (or less influence) for the next questions. Nevertheless, the own country brand preference as well as any other quality sphere can naturally permeate all the other interrelated spheres, as indicated throughout the literature and emphasised by Park, Lessig and Merrill (1982).

Analogously, that indication can also be visualised by inspecting the section "4.6.1. Importance of Brand Loyalty, Country of Origin, Health, Taste and Price", where it can be realised that it is difficult to delimitate the share representing each sphere, since they are interrelated and their correlations vary among the people (e.g.: Luomala et al., 2015; Werle, Trendel and Ardito, 2013). Therefore, the meaningfulness of the results (of questions 5, 6 and 7, or, of question 10's items) are in the differences between them.

6. Evaluate the shopper attitude in Dublin towards the price of Irish food brands.

Initially commenting the price for the item 10.5 (Importance of price when buying a food product), its level of consideration (mean = 7.68) approached the health importance (mean = 7.84), where in the pilot testing it was indicated to be mostly regarded by respondents as a sacrifice rather than a quality indicator, in accordance with the majority of evidences in the Zeithaml's (1988) research and which might indicate higher consciousness regarding the quality of food products (Grunert, 2005; Szybillo and Jacoby, 1974; Zeithaml, 1988).

Using the question 8, an unanimous perception that Irish food brands are more expensive was revealed. Nevertheless, a slight support to consider them when they are slightly costlier was also demonstrated (in the question 9's responses). However, the latter perspective was manifested only by Ireland's native shoppers. Nonetheless, even though less representative, the analyses produced some findings interrelating respondents' gender and age groups.

Males and females in the "35-44 years old" and younger groups demonstrated an opposite pattern in the way that the men regarded price when shopping food more than women. However, from this age grouping onwards, a change in both groups' directions were realised, therefore, towards a convergent direction, possibly indicating an integration of expenditures concern due to a gender partnership, whereas expenses are conjointly contemplated under two perspectives. That possible view is in accordance with the statistics of marriages and civil partnerships in Dublin, as well as in Ireland, where for both the geographic delimitations, the average age of grooms was in 2014 of 35 years old and of brides was of 33 years old (CSO, 2015b).

In addition, supportive attitudes of Ireland's natives were visualised at that age cluster for Irish food brands, slightly below (in 0.01 points) than the most supportive group of "55 years or older". That may be a reflection of a life stage in which support and compromise are essentialities to keep a healthy and happy conjugal relationship.

Nonetheless, the perception of Irish food brands as more expensive was accentuated in that age group onwards (by Ireland's natives and non-natives), possibly emphasising a value consciousness development along with their economic exertions. Interestingly, that perception was not shared within the male "55 years or older" subgroup, however it was stressed within the female subgroup of the same age classification, balancing the age group mean response.

Most importantly, as expected, that perception did not affect the support for slightly costlier Irish food brands, where the increase of support in the "35-44 years old" age group is of 21.8% contrasted to the preceding age group of "25-34 years old", sustaining that support level in the next age groups, therefore, increasing the potentiality of food shoppers at the age of 35 years or older for initiating a relationship towards loyalty.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section summarises the present research by discussing the research question, as well as the research's limitations, producing market recommendations and future research.

- What is the loyalty potentiality for Irish food brands in Dublin?

In previous chapters, the loyalty nature of shoppers towards food brands was developed and examined, representing the first research objective. Measuring the nature of loyalty for food brands was chosen to portray a realistic potentiality rather than restricting the view to Irish food brands, in view of the fact that a portion of the population might neglect the country of origin consideration for a food brand. Consequently, that led the researcher to conceptualise the first three questions, aligning with the work of Dick and Basu (1994), which were tested and demonstrated validity (as mentioned in "3.2.1. Questionnaire Design"). However, it should be noted that respondents may distort their reality (e.g.: Keller, 2013, p. 326).

As a result, the first research objective alone produces an answer for the research question, offering the best panorama to be primarily considered by an Irish food company, as well as by any other food company. Notwithstanding, other research objectives were established in order to take into account the Irish food brand quality, as well as the most salient concerns for food products considered by consumers according to previous research, i.e., taste, health and price.

Accordingly, it was firstly demonstrated that 1 in 6 food shopper in Dublin is a loyal food shopper, thus, a potential loyal customer for a food brand, answering the research question. Nonetheless, the reader should be aware of the target population's descriptiveness reported in "3.1.4. Sampling". In addition, it was also revealed that the mean shoppers' loyalty degree (or LD, which is the index developed based on the research of Dick and Basu, 1994) is of 52.6%, whereas the mean loyalty consideration is of 52.9%, suggesting an overall loyalty equilibrium.

Measuring the quality sphere of Irish food brands and their components (predominantly by questions 5, 6, 7 and 9) as well as the relevance for country of origin (by questions 4 and 10.2) substantiated the research question's answer in the form of a general favourable stance for considering Irish food brands, however, interrelating the components (as performed in "4.6.2. Shopping Irish Food Brands"), it was sensibly demonstrated that 1 in 4 consumers in Dublin is predisposed to consider purchasing Irish food brands. Nevertheless, that result is a simplified abstraction, and other quality cues that are not included in this study must obliviously be aligned with the consumer's appraisal, as the package looks for an instance.

Even though presenting less representativeness, two groups of the target population were specifically recommended in order to add more value to Irish food brands.

Firstly, food shoppers at the age of 35 years or older exhibited a modest price support (level of 63.4%) for slightly costlier Irish food brands, increasing the possibilities of initiating a relationship, which may eventually yield loyalty.

The second group was superiorly emphasised, albeit representing a smaller group. It was revealed that the female shoppers in Dublin in the age group of "55 years or older" is the most potential target group to be loyal to a food brand (which its LD is of 66.7%).

Nonetheless, additional market recommendations are next presented, taking also into consideration the secondary research.

6.1. Additional Market Recommendations

The research exposed that even considering Irish food brands costlier, the shopper in Dublin is reasonably supportive in the way that a company might prefer devoting efforts on value creation rather than adopting a cost leadership business strategy. In addition, the literature supported that perspective in the case of hedonic food products, counterposing to utilitarian food products (Maehle et al., 2015).

However, shaping a message to communicate the quality's value could be equally or even more important. That importance was evident in the literature (e.g.: Bech-Larsen, Grunert and Poulsen, 2001, cited in Brunsø, Fjord and Grunert, 2002; Wansink, van Ittersum and Painter, 2005). Therefore, even though different qualities should support each other to position a brand (e.g.: Miyazaki, Grewal and Goodstein, 2005), they might not be as effective as in the case of only one salient attribute is disclosed to the buyer.

That possibility is originated from the fact that the values among qualities of a product might diverge from each other according to the distinctiveness of consumers' perceptions and values (e.g.: Allen, Gupta and Monnier, 2008; Luomala et al., 2015; Maehle et al., 2015; Paasovaara et al., 2012; Werle, Trendel and Ardito, 2013).

Taste quality for instance was highlighted as the primary attribute to consider by the shopper when choosing a food product, demonstrating a difference of 15.8% compared to health. Consequently, efforts on marketing within that quality dimension may better contribute to food brands in general. Furthermore, by making it salient in the eater's mind, instead of bombarding the target consumer with many accentuated quality dimensions, could reduce the probability of distracting their attention, and thus, increasing the effectiveness of a marketing campaign.

Consonantly, attracting the consumer's interest and influencing the taste experience could be developed introducing as many taste quality cues as possible, such as visual, sounding and psychological to address a lead sensation that the eater will be exposed. That would corroborate and influence the acceptability of the efforts towards the only one aim (i.e., taste) established. However, from the same reasoning before mentioned concerning exposing many qualities, it is inferred that introducing several cues is a double-edged sword, that is, in the case that one of the cues is negatively perceived, it would oust the best conjoint effort, which is indeed emphasised in the literature (Allen, Gupta and Monnier, 2008; Miyazaki, Grewal and Goodstein, 2005; Paasovaara et al., 2012).

Therefore, deliberation is advised in the process. Furthermore, consistence in the message is primordial, as illustrated in the literature under the perspective of the foods enrichment as a natural extension (Poulsen, 1999).

On the other hand, obviously the importance of the other dimensions should not be ignored, just the opposite, they should be in alignment with the chief message, for instance, attention should be paid in regards on the way the health sphere would be perceived by eaters, considering the fact that their perception varies according to the corresponding idiosyncrasy, of which a buyer will either favourably or unfavourably associate healthy and tasty for a food brand (Luomala et al., 2015; Werle, Trendel and Ardito, 2013), thus, it involves the decision of whether including a neutral position and how to portray that standing.

Furthermore, the different value aspects can still be addressed to the consumer in a progressive efforts manner in long time frames, carefully crafting them to be aligned with the initial messages, educating the consumer's perception about the value consistence of the company, firming tradition and yielding loyalty.

Notwithstanding, the consumer demonstrated a positive attitude towards country of origin, which was aligned with the positive attitude for the Irish food brand, even though Ireland's non-natives did not present the same stance. That perspective, at least domestically, corroborated the quality recognition of the food produced in Ireland (as introduced in this work), which is a reason that a food firm could be motivated to raise its reputation by associating it with the Irish brand (Bord Bía, 2013; DAFM, 2011, p. 15; DAFM, 2015, p. 58).

Associations might be realised in many ways, such as making the brand's provenance visible on the food product's package, advertising the company's Irish values and naming the product with an Irish name, however, it should be noted that shoppers might be suspicious about the Irishness of a food brand and thus about claims on packaging and advertisements (Bord Bía, 2013; Bord Bía, 2015). Consequently, it is stressed the importance of consistency in actions as well as the company's exposition of internal values and procedures in order to generate trust and ultimately conquer the potential loyal customers.

Finally, an evident continuous and natural practice is to keep closely inspecting the relationship already in place between a food brand and its customers. Examining the most salient associations with the brand and their antecedents, a company can better improve their visibility in order to attract new consumers and to strengthen the relationship with the loyal customers.

6.2. Future Research

For the purpose of this research, the comprehensive study of loyalty was conceptualised. In view of the originality and value of this perspective, it is suggested that the loyalty construct, in the form of the first three questions of the questionnaire, to be examined through other lenses for appraisements on how accurate the consumers' loyalty is disclosed.

However, possibly gathering data of consumers of an industry or sector could be generally ungraspable in order to examine, for instance, their loyalty behaviour (which is equivalent to 50% of the loyalty construct), predominately when measuring it across multiple cultures (so that it could assist corporations that envisage entering new markets on devising strategies). Nonetheless, it is recommended to broadly employ the construct (adapted) into any industry or sector to probe the loyalty potentiality for the target market, mostly when data are scarce.

Accordantly, a broader suggestion is to appraise the loyalty potentiality for some business segments and other spheres such as in the conjugal domain, contrasting and analysing each other, to potentially produce new valuable discoveries.

Lastly, for the scope of this research, only the main components to identify and measure loyalty were extracted from the work of Dick and Basu (1994). Nonetheless, a final direction recommended for future research is to investigate the interplay between social norms and word-of-mouth promotion within the "spurious loyalty" and "loyalty" classifications, since that could produce novel insights to articulate marketing campaigns in the form of producing stimuli to initiate the brand's word-of-mouth promotion between consumers.

6.2.1. 10-Point Scale Recommendation

A recommendation is made concerning the 10-point numeric rating scale employed in the question 10. It is estimated that about 4% of the participants (considering both the phases of the data collection), mostly among the most senior people whereas the queries were read out by the researcher, reversed the scale of the question while grading the items, as firstly mentioned in "3.2.2.1. Pilot Testing".

Although the conventional scale from 1 to 10 was chosen (Bordens and Abbott, 2011, p. 264; Cummins and Gullone, 2000), respondents may be predisposed to intuitively associate the grade 1 as the most important, as occurred in the illustration just mentioned, therefore, it is advised to use a scale starting from 0 instead of 1, inasmuch a grade of 0 is hardly associated with the highest consideration.

In fact, in the case of appraising importance, 1 is counterintuitive to represent "not important at all", given that "not at all" implies nothing, thus, zero.

As alternatives, either a 10-point scale of whole numbers from 0 to 9 or a 11-point scale from 0 to 10 could be used. However, a final recommendation is to use the latter, once the researcher observed two cases when collecting data where participants confused the score of 5 with the middle point, which is not that case in an even-point scale, i.e., there is no neutral answer in the conventional 10-point numeric rating scale and the respondent may not be attentive to it.

However, in the case of a researcher intends to use an even-point scale, an alternative would be to label the midpoint of the question (at the expense of increasing its complexity).

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 - REFLECTIONS ON LEARNING

Evidently, the entire master's degree course had personal and professional contribution to my development due to all the knowledge and experience obtained among the disciplines explored, which patently leverages my employability and the probability of success in any personal and professional future endeavour. However, this chapter develops reflections on my learning during this work, beyond the scope already deliberated in the body of the paper.

As an introducing of my initial route, I was going to conduct a qualitative investigation by interviewing small food businesses' owners aiming at helping them to build their brand equity. I structured all the steps to take, candidates prone to accept my research invitation and elaborated an open-ended questionnaire, delimitating concerns from general topics to a chosen specific theme in order to guide the interviews and consequently gain both general and specific insights.

However, I decided to change the direction of my research to a quantitative study, motivated by the fact that I would complement my knowledge when learning the deductive approach, so that I could apply it to future research or job, bearing in mind that a career path that I might choose after the graduation is related to data analyses.

Consequently, a small portion of learning on that was extracted, for instance, I brought into play the Friedman test, Spearman's rank correlation and others techniques to weight the questions 1, 2 and 3, as well as the items of question 10, although they did not provide a foundation or valuable perspectives in order to justify their utilisations. I even analysed their algorithms, broadening my range of vision. In fact, there were other less emphatic alternatives that I intended to analysed, but the restricted time did not allow, directing me to balance the priorities.

In addition, a salient learning reinforced is that even though structuring or framing the study is essential to be guided, it also limits the perspectives. Conversely, even though being driven by data can generate fruitful angles, the new routes might become excessively dispersive. Therefore, it became more than evident that a (creative) balance was required, as in any life's journey.

Collecting data was also a motivation for changing the research's direction, once I would get in touch with more people than in the previous theme, thus, expanding my interpersonal experience, although, in a fragmented fashion. Nonetheless, additional advantages were realised when collecting data in person. Complementary to providing deeper understandings of the questionnaire's responses, it was personally gratifying to see participants contributing in different ways, such as referring friends to participate in the survey, extending discussions of the study's topics and even occasionally bringing up other unrelated themes. For instance, I met a lad who provided me some insights about the IT industry.

Particularly to the responses being inputted into the questionnaire, I am biased as any individual, and it was interesting to observe the halo effect in operation upon myself toward the respondents. That is, while on the one side I was striving to keep an impartial stance in order to not bias the respondents, on the other I was internally predicting their responses and, at circumstances surprised with their unexpected answers and respective reasons supporting them.

It reinforced the notion that we are just unable to predict or take into consideration the uncountable possibilities, even when we (mistakenly) presume there are not so many possible combinations for a reasoning. In view of the fact that knowledge are more strongly absorbed when emotions are conspicuously manifested, that consciousness reinforcement represents a lasting memory which changed my present world's perception.

Nevertheless, the theme of the new direction was also highly esteemed, predominantly on the chief study's concern, i.e., loyalty. When you scrutinise about the necessity of attachment and detachment included in the loyalty sphere in order to foster improvements between two parties, you correlated that view to the needs of other entities and of yourself, contrasting the implicated values and principles, as well as correlated beliefs, attitudes and behaviours.

As an obviously result of studying these perspectives is that they befall more salient, and their meanings become more pervasive, assisting on its operationalisation to promote the best posture en route for the best individual and collective outcomes.

Nevertheless, the human nature is an endless fascinating investigation which might direct myself to carry out new future research on it. My primary interest is on the different ways to conduct the research to elicit small particularities that could result in meaningful results.

In fact, a final affective learning was absorbed when analysing the data. Even in a modest sample, it was observed that small variances in mean results into distinct data segmentations still can be meaningful, that is a valuable information immersed that I was formerly inclined to neglect when looking at other researches of the same magnitude, however, perhaps for being suspicious about their reliability.

Either way, deliberating the steps to yield relativity and validity and consequently carrying out the research, produced two implications, the first is to better analyse the methodology of other researches, and secondly, that experience propels myself to not disregard conducting small future research at low cost to reveal subtle information.

In summary, the broad knowledge acquired by conducting this research, the path of conceiving the methodologies to implement throughout the work as well as the experience of collecting and analysing the data, imbued me with superior competence to professionally work in the domain of data, social and market analysis, reinforced the power of balancing perspectives on devising original angles as well as their underlying structures, enhanced my interpersonal skills, increased the awareness of human predictive limitations, and obviously the domains studied also added great personal value from the insights provided mostly in the psychology realms, which are easily transferable to the businesses fields.

APPENDIX 2 - MODELS OF DICK AND BASU

Attitude Strength	Attitudinal Differentiation	No	Yes
	Strong	Low Relative Attitude	Highest Relative Attitude
	Weak	Lowest Relative Attitude	High Relative Attitude

Model of Relative Attitude

Attitude Strength	Attitudinal Differentiation	No			Yes		
	Strong (Low Relative Attitude / Highest Relative Attitude)	0.166	0.333	0.500	0.666	0.833	1.000
		0.133	0.300	0.466	0.633	0.800	0.967
		0.100	0.266	0.433	0.600	0.767	0.934
	Weak (Lowest Relative Attitude / High Relative Attitude)	0.066	0.233	0.400	0.567	0.734	0.900
		0.033	0.200	0.367	0.534	0.700	0.867
		0.000	0.167	0.334	0.500	0.667	0.834

Model of Relative Attitude: Weights of Attitude Strength (0.166) and Attitudinal Differentiation (0.834)

Relative Attitude	Repeat Patronage	High	Low
	High	Loyalty	Latent Loyalty
	Low	Spurious Loyalty	No Loyalty

Model of Relative Attitude-Behaviour Relationship

Appendix 3 - Survey Questionnaire

Irish Food Brands Survey

My name is Julio Cesar Silva, I am carrying out an investigation on Irish food brands, for a M.Sc. in Management Practice from DBS. The research is under the supervision of Dr. Chantal Ladias, who can be contacted by e-mail on chantal.ladias@dbs.ie.

I will be very thankful if you answer the following questionnaire. This should not take more than 4 minutes.

You should be familiarised with some Irish food brands to complete this survey.

Please read the following statements and tick the most appropriate responses.

1. I always buy the same food brands if they are available.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Slightly Agree
- ○ Slightly Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

2. When I have to change my favourite food brand, I feel profoundly disappointed.

- ○ Strongly Agree
- ○ Agree
- ○ Slightly Agree
- ○ Slightly Disagree
- ○ Disagree
- ○ Strongly Disagree

3. I love to try new food brands regularly.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Slightly Agree
- Slightly Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

4. I know the country of origin of branded food products I purchase.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Slightly Agree
- Slightly Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

5. Irish food brands are the best.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Slightly Agree
- Slightly Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

6. Irish food brands are healthier.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Slightly Agree
- Slightly Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

7. Irish food brands are tastier.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Slightly Agree
- Slightly Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

8. Irish food brands tend to be more expensive.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Slightly Agree
- Slightly Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

9. I choose Irish food brands even when slightly costlier.

- Strongly Agree
- Agree
- Slightly Agree
- Slightly Disagree
- Disagree
- Strongly Disagree

10. Please indicate (on a scale of 1-"not important at all" to 10-"extremely important") how important each of the following criteria is to you when buying a food product.

Brand Loyalty

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Country of Origin

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Health

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Taste

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

Price

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○	○

11. What is your gender?

- Male
- Female
- Other

12. How old are you?

- 18-24 years old
- 25-34 years old
- 35-44 years old
- 45-54 years old
- 55 years or older

13. What is your country of origin?

Your answer

SUBMIT

APPENDIX 4 - MEAN RESULTS GROUPED BY DEMOGRAPHIC VARIABLES

Age	*Country*	*Gender*	Count	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Loyalty	COO	Health	Taste	Price	LD
			103	4.56	3.54	4.47	4.01	4.08	3.56	3.88	4.66	3.91	5.76	5.93	7.84	8.92	7.68	0.526
	Ireland		82	4.68	3.60	4.46	4.01	4.37	3.71	4.09	4.79	4.11	5.74	5.98	7.78	8.89	7.64	0.540
	Other		21	4.10	3.33	4.48	4.00	2.95	3.00	3.10	4.14	3.14	5.86	5.76	8.10	9.05	7.81	0.475
		Female	51	4.53	3.78	4.35	4.24	3.98	3.55	3.77	4.75	3.88	5.74	6.14	8.63	9.16	7.59	0.536
		Male	50	4.58	3.24	4.60	3.82	4.14	3.60	3.96	4.58	3.92	5.80	5.76	6.96	8.63	7.84	0.512
	Ireland	Female	39	4.64	3.80	4.39	4.18	4.31	3.77	4.03	4.95	4.18	5.63	6.18	8.56	9.08	7.46	0.545
	Ireland	Male	41	4.71	3.34	4.56	3.90	4.39	3.68	4.10	4.66	4.02	5.85	5.83	6.93	8.65	7.90	0.530
	Other	Female	12	4.17	3.75	4.25	4.42	2.92	2.83	2.92	4.08	2.92	6.08	6.00	8.83	9.42	8.00	0.508
	Other	Male	9	4.00	2.78	4.78	3.44	3.00	3.22	3.33	4.22	3.44	5.56	5.44	7.11	8.56	7.56	0.431
18-24 years old	Ireland	Female	4	4.75	3.75	3.75	3.00	4.50	3.75	3.75	5.00	3.75	5.00	3.75	6.50	7.75	7.50	0.608
18-24 years old	Other	Female	3	3.33	2.67	3.67	2.00	3.67	3.00	4.00	4.33	3.00	5.00	4.00	8.33	8.67	6.67	0.455
18-24 years old	Other	Male	3	3.33	2.67	4.33	3.33	2.67	3.33	4.00	4.00	3.67	5.00	5.00	4.33	8.33	7.00	0.400
25-34 years old	Ireland	Female	13	4.54	2.85	4.77	4.46	4.15	3.69	4.00	4.39	3.92	4.08	6.31	8.62	8.85	7.00	0.487
25-34 years old	Ireland	Male	11	4.82	4.00	4.64	3.64	4.36	3.36	4.09	4.00	3.91	6.18	5.18	6.46	8.09	7.91	0.545
25-34 years old	Other	Female	6	5.00	4.50	4.00	5.17	2.17	2.33	2.00	4.17	2.67	7.33	7.00	8.50	9.67	8.00	0.625
25-34 years old	Other	Male	5	4.00	2.20	4.80	3.60	2.80	2.80	2.80	4.00	3.20	5.60	5.80	8.40	8.80	7.40	0.420
35-44 years old	Ireland	Female	7	5.00	3.43	4.57	3.50	3.57	3.29	3.57	4.86	4.57	5.00	5.57	8.43	9.29	6.43	0.559
35-44 years old	Ireland	Male	14	4.36	3.50	4.71	3.86	4.21	3.57	4.00	5.00	4.07	5.64	6.14	7.43	8.43	8.29	0.484
35-44 years old	Other	Female	2	3.00	3.00	5.00	5.50	4.50	4.50	4.50	3.00	3.50	5.50	6.50	10.00	9.50	9.00	0.317
35-44 years old	Other	Male	1	6.00	6.00	6.00	3.00	5.00	5.00	4.00	6.00	4.00	7.00	5.00	9.00	8.00	10.00	0.583
45-54 years old	Ireland	Female	5	3.60	4.40	5.20	4.40	4.40	4.00	4.00	5.20	4.00	6.80	5.80	8.60	8.80	8.60	0.383
45-54 years old	Ireland	Male	3	5.67	3.00	5.00	3.33	3.33	2.67	3.33	6.00	3.67	5.33	4.00	4.33	9.67	8.33	0.583
45-54 years old	Other	Female	1	4.00	4.00	6.00	5.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	0.350
55 years or older	Ireland	Female	10	5.00	5.00	3.60	4.60	4.90	4.10	4.50	5.60	4.50	7.60	7.60	9.40	9.90	8.20	0.667
55 years or older	Ireland	Male	13	4.77	2.69	4.23	4.31	4.85	4.31	4.39	4.54	4.15	5.92	6.50	7.42	9.17	7.33	0.552
45-54 years old	Ireland	Other	1	5.00	6.00	4.00	2.00	6.00	2.00	6.00	5.00	6.00	5.00	5.00	9.00	10.00	5.00	0.650
55 years or older	Ireland	Other	1	5.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	4.00	3.00	6.00	5.00	10.00	10.00	7.00	0.617

Age	*Country*	*Gender*	Count	**Q1**	**Q2**	**Q3**	**Q4**	**Q5**	**Q6**	**Q7**	**Q8**	**Q9**	**Loyalty**	**COO**	**Health**	**Taste**	**Price**	**LD**
18-24 years old			10	3.90	3.10	3.90	2.80	3.70	3.40	3.90	4.50	3.50	5.00	4.20	6.40	8.20	7.10	0.500
25-34 years old			35	4.63	3.40	4.60	4.20	3.69	3.23	3.51	4.17	3.60	5.56	6.00	7.89	8.74	7.51	0.519
35-44 years old			24	4.50	3.54	4.75	3.87	4.08	3.63	3.92	4.83	4.17	5.50	5.96	8.00	8.75	7.88	0.496
45-54 years old			10	4.40	4.10	5.10	3.90	4.00	3.20	3.80	5.40	4.00	5.80	5.10	7.50	9.30	8.30	0.467
55 years or older			24	4.88	3.71	3.96	4.42	4.83	4.21	4.42	4.96	4.25	6.65	6.91	8.39	9.52	7.70	0.603
18-24 years old	Ireland		4	4.75	3.75	3.75	3.00	4.50	3.75	3.75	5.00	3.75	5.00	3.75	6.50	7.75	7.50	0.608
18-24 years old	Other		6	3.33	2.67	4.00	2.67	3.17	3.17	4.00	4.17	3.33	5.00	4.50	6.33	8.50	6.83	0.428
25-34 years old	Ireland		24	4.67	3.38	4.71	4.08	4.25	3.54	4.04	4.21	3.92	5.09	5.79	7.63	8.50	7.42	0.514
25-34 years old	Other		11	4.55	3.45	4.36	4.45	2.45	2.55	2.36	4.09	2.91	6.55	6.45	8.45	9.27	7.73	0.532
35-44 years old	Ireland		21	4.57	3.48	4.67	3.75	4.00	3.48	3.86	4.95	4.24	5.43	5.95	7.76	8.71	7.67	0.509
35-44 years old	Other		3	4.00	4.00	5.33	4.67	4.67	4.67	4.33	4.00	3.67	6.00	6.00	9.67	9.00	9.33	0.405
45-54 years old	Ireland		9	4.44	4.11	5.00	3.78	4.22	3.33	4.00	5.44	4.11	6.11	5.11	7.22	9.22	8.11	0.480
45-54 years old	Other		1	4.00	4.00	6.00	5.00	2.00	2.00	2.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	10.00	10.00	10.00	0.350
55 years or older	Ireland		24	4.88	3.71	3.96	4.42	4.83	4.21	4.42	4.96	4.25	6.65	6.91	8.39	9.52	7.70	0.603
18-24 years old		Female	7	4.14	3.29	3.71	2.57	4.14	3.43	3.86	4.71	3.43	5.00	3.86	7.29	8.14	7.14	0.543
18-24 years old		Male	3	3.33	2.67	4.33	3.33	2.67	3.33	4.00	4.00	3.67	5.00	5.00	4.33	8.33	7.00	0.400
25-34 years old		Female	19	4.68	3.37	4.53	4.68	3.53	3.26	3.37	4.32	3.53	5.17	6.53	8.58	9.11	7.32	0.531
25-34 years old		Male	16	4.56	3.44	4.69	3.63	3.88	3.19	3.69	4.00	3.69	6.00	5.38	7.06	8.31	7.75	0.506
35-44 years old		Female	9	4.56	3.33	4.67	4.00	3.78	3.56	3.78	4.44	4.33	5.11	5.78	8.78	9.33	7.00	0.505
35-44 years old		Male	15	4.47	3.67	4.80	3.80	4.27	3.67	4.00	5.07	4.07	5.73	6.07	7.53	8.40	8.40	0.491
45-54 years old		Female	6	3.67	4.33	5.33	4.50	4.00	3.67	3.67	5.17	3.83	6.17	5.67	8.83	9.00	8.83	0.378
45-54 years old		Male	3	5.67	3.00	5.00	3.33	3.33	2.67	3.33	6.00	3.67	5.33	4.00	4.33	9.67	8.33	0.583
55 years or older		Female	10	5.00	5.00	3.60	4.60	4.90	4.10	4.50	5.60	4.50	7.60	7.60	9.40	9.90	8.20	0.667
55 years or older		Male	13	4.77	2.69	4.23	4.31	4.85	4.31	4.38	4.54	4.15	5.92	6.50	7.42	9.17	7.33	0.553

APPENDIX 5 - SPEARMAN'S RANK CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

			Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10.1	Q10.2	Q10.3	Q10.4	Q10.5
Spearman's rho	1. "I always buy the same food brands if they are available".	Correlation Coefficient	1.000	.408**	-.229*	.201*	.296**	.222*	.335**	0.170	.338**	.381**	0.125	0.071	.256**	0.058
		Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.020	0.042	0.002	0.024	0.001	0.085	0.000	0.000	0.210	0.480	0.010	0.562
		N	103	103	103	102	103	103	103	103	103	101	102	102	102	102
	2. "When I have to change my favourite food brand, I feel profoundly disappointed".	Correlation Coefficient	.408**	1.000	-0.041	0.075	.340**	.196*	.271**	.252*	.336**	.542**	0.177	0.189	0.194	0.033
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.683	0.455	0.000	0.047	0.006	0.010	0.001	0.000	0.074	0.057	0.051	0.745
		N	103	103	103	102	103	103	103	103	103	101	102	102	102	102
	3. "I love to try new food brands regularly".	Correlation Coefficient	-.229*	-0.041	1.000	.215*	-0.027	-0.042	0.039	0.066	0.063	-0.174	0.173	0.189	-0.065	0.067
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.020	0.683		0.030	0.787	0.674	0.699	0.507	0.528	0.082	0.082	0.057	0.515	0.505
		N	103	103	103	102	103	103	103	103	103	101	102	102	102	102
	4. "I know the country of origin of branded food products I purchase".	Correlation Coefficient	.201*	0.075	.215*	1.000	0.085	0.132	0.017	0.084	0.143	.228*	.381**	.288**	.204*	0.077
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.042	0.455	0.030		0.394	0.185	0.864	0.402	0.151	0.022	0.000	0.003	0.041	0.444
		N	102	102	102	102	102	102	102	102	102	100	101	101	101	101
	5. "Irish food brands are the best".	Correlation Coefficient	.296**	.340**	-0.027	0.085	1.000	.625**	.755**	0.175	.570**	.336**	.331**	0.183	0.090	-0.057
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.002	0.000	0.787	0.394		0.000	0.000	0.076	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.065	0.369	0.571
		N	103	103	103	102	103	103	103	103	103	101	102	102	102	102
	6. "Irish food brands are healthier".	Correlation Coefficient	.222*	.196*	-0.042	0.132	.625**	1.000	.651**	0.054	.440**	.308**	.240*	0.091	0.075	-0.041
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.024	0.047	0.674	0.185	0.000		0.000	0.589	0.000	0.002	0.015	0.363	0.452	0.684
		N	103	103	103	102	103	103	103	103	103	101	102	102	102	102
	7. "Irish food brands are tastier".	Correlation Coefficient	.335**	.271**	0.039	0.017	.755**	.651**	1.000	0.122	.553**	.284**	.291**	.255**	0.109	-0.028
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.001	0.006	0.699	0.864	0.000	0.000		0.221	0.000	0.004	0.003	0.010	0.277	0.784
		N	103	103	103	102	103	103	103	103	103	101	102	102	102	102
	8. "Irish food brands tend to be more expensive".	Correlation Coefficient	0.170	.252*	0.066	0.084	0.175	0.054	0.122	1.000	0.161	.242*	-0.019	0.113	0.151	0.152
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.085	0.010	0.507	0.402	0.076	0.589	0.221		0.104	0.015	0.850	0.257	0.129	0.127
		N	103	103	103	102	103	103	103	103	103	101	102	102	102	102
	9. "I choose Irish food brands even when slightly costlier".	Correlation Coefficient	.338**	.336**	0.063	0.143	.570**	.440**	.553**	0.161	1.000	.354**	.568**	.272**	0.099	-0.032
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.001	0.528	0.151	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.104		0.000	0.000	0.006	0.321	0.753
		N	103	103	103	102	103	103	103	103	103	101	102	102	102	102
	10.1. Importance of brand loyalty when buying a food product.	Correlation Coefficient	.381**	.542**	-0.174	.228*	.336**	.308**	.284**	.242*	.354**	1.000	.407**	.218*	0.153	0.185
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.000	0.082	0.022	0.001	0.002	0.004	0.015	0.000		0.000	0.028	0.127	0.064
		N	101	101	101	100	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101	101
	10.2. Importance of country of origin when buying a food product.	Correlation Coefficient	0.125	0.177	0.173	.381**	.331**	.240*	.291**	-0.019	.568**	.407**	1.000	.393**	0.103	0.078
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.210	0.074	0.082	0.000	0.001	0.015	0.003	0.850	0.000	0.000		0.000	0.305	0.438
		N	102	102	102	101	102	102	102	102	102	101	102	102	102	102
	10.3. Importance of health when buying a food product.	Correlation Coefficient	0.071	0.189	0.189	.288**	0.183	0.091	.255**	0.113	.272**	.218*	.393**	1.000	.364**	0.109
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.480	0.057	0.057	0.003	0.065	0.363	0.010	0.257	0.006	0.028	0.000		0.000	0.273
		N	102	102	102	101	102	102	102	102	102	101	102	102	102	102
	10.4. Importance of taste when buying a food product.	Correlation Coefficient	.256**	0.194	-0.065	.204*	0.090	0.075	0.109	0.151	0.099	0.153	0.103	.364**	1.000	0.079
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.010	0.051	0.515	0.041	0.369	0.452	0.277	0.129	0.321	0.127	0.305	0.000		0.431
		N	102	102	102	101	102	102	102	102	102	101	102	102	102	102
	10.5. Importance of price when buying a food product.	Correlation Coefficient	0.058	0.033	0.067	0.077	-0.057	-0.041	-0.028	0.152	-0.032	0.185	0.078	0.109	0.079	1.000
		Sig. (2-tailed)	0.562	0.745	0.505	0.444	0.571	0.684	0.784	0.127	0.753	0.064	0.438	0.273	0.431	
		N	102	102	102	101	102	102	102	102	102	101	102	102	102	102

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

APPENDIX 6 - DESCRIPTIVE STATISTICS

	N.	Min.	Max.	Mean	Std. Deviation	Coef. of Variation
1. "I always buy the same food brands if they are available".	103	2	6	4.56	1.194	0.262
2. "When I have to change my favourite food brand, I feel profoundly disappointed".	103	1	6	3.54	1.526	0.431
3. "I love to try new food brands regularly".	103	1	6	4.47	1.227	0.274
4. "I know the country of origin of branded food products I purchase".	102	1	6	4.01	1.545	0.385
5. "Irish food brands are the best".	103	1	6	4.08	1.333	0.327
6. "Irish food brands are healthier".	103	1	6	3.56	1.333	0.374
7. "Irish food brands are tastier".	103	1	6	3.88	1.331	0.343
8. "Irish food brands tend to be more expensive".	103	2	6	4.66	1.184	0.254
9. "I choose Irish food brands even when slightly costlier".	103	1	6	3.91	1.429	0.365
10.1. Importance of brand loyalty when buying a food product.	101	1	10	5.76	2.574	0.447
10.2. Importance of country of origin when buying a food product.	102	1	10	5.93	2.7	0.455
10.3. Importance of health when buying a food product.	102	1	10	7.84	2.277	0.290
10.4. Importance of taste when buying a food product.	102	4	10	8.92	1.377	0.154
10.5. Importance of price when buying a food product.	102	1	10	7.68	2.05	0.267
Valid N (listwise)	100					

APPENDIX 7 - FREQUENCY TABLES

1. "I always buy the same food brands if they are available".

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Disagree	11	10.7	10.7	10.7
	Slightly Disagree	6	5.8	5.8	16.5
	Slightly Agree	21	20.4	20.4	36.9
	Agree	44	42.7	42.7	79.6
	Strongly Agree	21	20.4	20.4	100
Valid	Total	103	100	100	

2. "When I have to change my favourite food brand, I feel profoundly disappointed".

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagree	8	7.8	7.8	7.8
	Disagree	25	24.3	24.3	32
	Slightly Disagree	17	16.5	16.5	48.5
	Slightly Agree	22	21.4	21.4	69.9
	Agree	18	17.5	17.5	87.4
	Strongly Agree	13	12.6	12.6	100
Valid	Total	103	100	100	

3. "I love to try new food brands regularly".

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagree	3	2.9	2.9	2.9
	Disagree	6	5.8	5.8	8.7
	Slightly Disagree	9	8.7	8.7	17.5
	Slightly Agree	26	25.2	25.2	42.7
	Agree	40	38.8	38.8	81.6
	Strongly Agree	19	18.4	18.4	100
Valid	Total	103	100	100	

4. "I know the country of origin of branded food products I purchase".

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagree	6	5.8	5.9	5.9
	Disagree	19	18.4	18.6	24.5
	Slightly Disagree	8	7.8	7.8	32.4
	Slightly Agree	23	22.3	22.5	54.9
	Agree	27	26.2	26.5	81.4
	Strongly Agree	19	18.4	18.6	100
Valid	Total	102	99	100	
Missing	0	1	1		
Total		103	100		

5. "Irish food brands are the best".

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagree	4	3.9	3.9	3.9
	Disagree	10	9.7	9.7	13.6
	Slightly Disagree	17	16.5	16.5	30.1
	Slightly Agree	31	30.1	30.1	60.2
	Agree	25	24.3	24.3	84.5
	Strongly Agree	16	15.5	15.5	100
Valid	Total	103	100	100	

6. "Irish food brands are healthier".

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagree	7	6.8	6.8	6.8
	Disagree	18	17.5	17.5	24.3
	Slightly Disagree	20	19.4	19.4	43.7
	Slightly Agree	33	32	32	75.7
	Agree	18	17.5	17.5	93.2
	Strongly Agree	7	6.8	6.8	100
Valid	Total	103	100	100	

7. "Irish food brands are tastier".

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagree	3	2.9	2.9	2.9
	Disagree	18	17.5	17.5	20.4
	Slightly Disagree	14	13.6	13.6	34
	Slightly Agree	32	31.1	31.1	65
	Agree	25	24.3	24.3	89.3
	Strongly Agree	11	10.7	10.7	100
Valid	Total	103	100	100	

8. "Irish food brands tend to be more expensive".

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Disagree	8	7.8	7.8	7.8
	Slightly Disagree	8	7.8	7.8	15.5
	Slightly Agree	23	22.3	22.3	37.9
	Agree	36	35	35	72.8
	Strongly Agree	28	27.2	27.2	100
Valid	Total	103	100	100	

9. "I choose Irish food brands even when slightly costlier".

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Strongly Disagree	6	5.8	5.8	5.8
	Disagree	15	14.6	14.6	20.4
	Slightly Disagree	17	16.5	16.5	36.9
	Slightly Agree	20	19.4	19.4	56.3
	Agree	34	33	33	89.3
	Strongly Agree	11	10.7	10.7	100
Valid	Total	103	100	100	

10.1. Importance of brand loyalty when buying a food product.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Not Important at all	9	8.7	8.9	8.9
	2	5	4.9	5	13.9
	3	7	6.8	6.9	20.8
	4	8	7.8	7.9	28.7
	5	13	12.6	12.9	41.6
	6	18	17.5	17.8	59.4
	7	14	13.6	13.9	73.3
	8	13	12.6	12.9	86.1
	9	5	4.9	5	91.1
	Extremely Important	9	8.7	8.9	100
Valid	Total	101	98.1	100	
Missing	0	2	1.9		
Total		103	100		

10.2. Importance of country of origin when buying a food product.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Not Important at all	10	9.7	9.8	9.8
	2	2	1.9	2	11.8
	3	8	7.8	7.8	19.6
	4	7	6.8	6.9	26.5
	5	21	20.4	20.6	47.1
	6	11	10.7	10.8	57.8
	7	8	7.8	7.8	65.7
	8	16	15.5	15.7	81.4
	9	6	5.8	5.9	87.3
	Extremely Important	13	12.6	12.7	100
Valid	Total	102	99	100	
Missing	0	1	1		
Total		103	100		

10.3. Importance of health when buying a food product.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Not Important at all	3	2.9	2.9	2.9
	2	1	1	1	3.9
	3	2	1.9	2	5.9
	4	4	3.9	3.9	9.8
	5	6	5.8	5.9	15.7
	6	6	5.8	5.9	21.6
	7	12	11.7	11.8	33.3
	8	19	18.4	18.6	52
	9	19	18.4	18.6	70.6
	Extremely Important	30	29.1	29.4	100
Valid	Total	102	99	100	
Missing	0	1	1		
Total		103	100		

10.4. Importance of taste when buying a food product.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	4	1	1	1	1
	5	4	3.9	3.9	4.9
	6	2	1.9	2	6.9
	7	3	2.9	2.9	9.8
	8	24	23.3	23.5	33.3
	9	19	18.4	18.6	52
	Extremely Important	49	47.6	48	100
Valid	Total	102	99	100	
Missing	0	1	1		
Total		103	100		

10.5. Importance of price when buying a food product.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Not Important at all	2	1.9	2	2
	3	1	1	1	2.9
	4	1	1	1	3.9
	5	12	11.7	11.8	15.7
	6	12	11.7	11.8	27.5
	7	17	16.5	16.7	44.1
	8	18	17.5	17.6	61.8
	9	11	10.7	10.8	72.5
	Extremely Important	28	27.2	27.5	100
Valid	Total	102	99	100	
Missing	0	1	1		
Total		103	100		

Gender

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Female	51	49.5	49.5	49.5
	Male	50	48.5	48.5	98.1
	Other	2	1.9	1.9	100
Valid	Total	103	100	100	

Age

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	18-24 years old	10	9.7	9.7	9.7
	25-34 years old	35	34	34	43.7
	35-44 years old	24	23.3	23.3	67
	45-54 years old	10	9.7	9.7	76.7
	55 years or older	24	23.3	23.3	100
Valid	Total	103	100	100	

Respondent's Country of Origin

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
	Ireland	82	79.6	79.6	79.6
	Other	21	20.4	20.4	100
Valid	Total	103	100	100	