Research on Contemporary Marketing Issues

M Sc Marketing

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School of Marketing

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Introduction

Welcome to this fifth edition of Contemporary Research in Irish Marketing from students of the M. Sc. Marketing full-time masters programme at DIT.

This is Ireland's premier 'conversion' programme, recruiting graduates from non-business disciplines such as arts, engineering, media and science and developing their capabilities to become excellent marketers in twelve months.

The dissertation task, a central feature of learning and research at the School of Marketing, allows the students to define, shape and research a marketing issue in great depth, using leading-edge theory to formulate a research question. This question is examined 'out there' in the word of marketing industry practice and consumer reality through the use of appropriate research methodologies. Such an engagement with research defines and differentiates these graduates and the 'black book' produced by them ensures that these graduates have demonstrated the core marketing competences needed at the highest level.

Students have provided a summary or abstract of his or her work in their own words. Their academic supervisor is also listed. If you are interested in any particular work you should contact myself or the staff member concerned. Details can be found on http://www.dit.ie/marketing/staff/

This year's collection features a wide selection of topics, contexts, and methodologies across a wide range of marketing-related domains, reflecting the scope of the discipline in the 21st century.

I hope you find the students' work stimulating and interesting.

Roger Sherlock,

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Investigating the Relationship Between Self-congruity and Brand Love

Author: Brian Lillis

Supervisor: Adrienne Czerwin-Abbot

Abstract

The convenience and variety of the modern markets has created numerous challenges for organisation looking to connect with their consumers. Studies have shown that building deep and meaningful bonds is the key to creation of strong and durable customer relations.

The primary aim of this research was to gain a greater understanding of the factors which lead to feelings of love for particular brands. Although the importance of brand love has been identified by researchers across a range of fields, studies into the concept are relatively few and far between in the grand scheme of things. As such this paper aims advance the academic understanding of the needs which drive brand love in consumers while providing practitioners with he steps necessary to creating emotional bonds with their target audience.

A quantitative analysis was designed in order to test the self-congruity as an antecedent of brand love while also looking to evaluate active engagement as an outcome of brand love. The data instrument received 113 responses with the results indicating that the actual self-congruity facet has a greater influence on brand love than ideal self-congruity. Furthermore, active engagement was found to be highly influenced by brand love. This is an important finding as active engagement on the part of the consumer involved positive WOM, brand advocacy and resistance to negative information among others.

The outcomes of this research should be quite useful to academics and practitioners and the results should be considered. Brand managers especially need to devise strategies which do a better job on connecting with consumers based on self-actualisation.

Exploring the Effectiveness of Viral Marketing in the Irish Tourism Industry

Author: Grace Farrar

Supervisor: Dr. Margaret-Anne Lawlor

Abstract

In a world where consumers are bombarded with advertising messages and overloaded with information, marketers are struggling to be heard over the incessant chatter of others with the same problem. As a result, marketers are constantly looking for innovative ways to engage and communicate with consumers. Drawn to social media sites because of the allure of a captive audience and encouraged to stay by the consumers who expect engagement and communication from their favourite brands, marketers looked for ways to utilise these channels.

One such company is the Irish tourism company, Tourism Ireland who utilises viral videos to market the island of Ireland to overseas tourists. While it is clear that the company is largely reliant on these campaigns, based on the number of videos it has produced and shared (423 videos and counting), little is known about their effectiveness in eliciting sharing behaviours and presenting brand Ireland positively to overseas tourists. The purpose of this research is to explore these factors.
This dissertation begins with an in-depth review of the existing literature on viral marketing.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the Irish tourism industry with a specific focus on Tourism Ireland and its role in attracting overseas tourists to Ireland. It outlines the key marketing activities employed by Tourism Ireland which includes a strong focus on the production of video content for distribution across social networks. This section identifies and conceptualises the Irish nation brand, which has its roots in Irish history and has been built and maintained by a number of organisations. The concept of Ireland's nation brand is essential to this study as Tourism Ireland is responsible for communicating the brand image to potential visitors overseas.

In chapter 4, the research process is examined and the chosen methodology for this dissertation is described. This chapter also outlines the research question and research objectives of the research. In Chapter 5 the findings of the primary research are discussed. These findings are divided into relevant themes and analysed alongside the literature reviewed in chapter 2 and within the context of the Irish tourism industry. The final chapter then presents the conclusions of the research with reference to the objectives of the research and the research question.

Sneakers and Spandex 24/7 Women's Athleisure Consumption: A Symbolic Interactionist Account

AUTHOR: Sophie Lyons

Supervisor: Dr. Paddy Dolan

Abstract

This research dissertation is concerned with uncovering the symbolic meaning that has been placed on the fashion of athleisure through social interaction under the theory of symbolic interactionism, coined by Herbert Blumer in 1969. While fashion as a topic of academic research was dismissed for a period of time, due to being widely associated with the women's pursuits and their exterior appearance, it has gradually gained acceptance in the academic world due to the wide scope which it covers today in the 21st century. Albeit a social phenomenon, it reaches far beyond the social sciences and has become a subject of interest in the fields of philosophy, history, geography, economics and cultural anthropology.

Athleisure, that is wearing athletic clothing as casualwear, has become increasingly popular within a very short space of time, sprouting up only four years ago. The increasing interest in health and wellness lifestyles, has caused the mind-set of many consumers to shift focus, and the rise of athleisure is thought to be a by-product of this. This dissertation endeavours to discover the meanings placed on athleisure by social groups, and investigate how does women's athleisure consumption depend on these meanings that are created through social interaction? Employing a qualitative method, seven semi-structured interviews were carried out with women, all of whom wore athleisure, but to different degrees.

Findings highlighted the contradictory yet co-existing meanings that have been placed on athleisure through social interaction and while respondents varied in ages, professions and led very different lifestyles, it was found that the general meanings that athleisure has acquired stayed relatively consistent. It was evident that the former restrictions experienced by women and the sacrifices they had to make, with regards to clothing and fashion consumption, were essentially dissolved by the emergence of athleisure. Function in a garment no longer means the absence of fashion, and comfort no longer means a sloppy aesthetic. This novel approach to casual dress was found to present the wearer with a fusion of these previously paradoxical needs. Athleisure facilitates the modern woman, all the while conforming to the rules that have been set by social groups and to a greater extent society, thus exhibiting social adaptation and obedience in dress in the 21st century.

An Exploratory Study Into The Challenges Of Regulating Alcohol Promotion In The Digital Era; a Case Study on Budweiser's Dream Big Campaign

Author: Shane Blackweir

Supervisor: Dr Olivia Freeman

Abstract

The research problem in this thesis concentrates on the lack of existing knowledge in regards to alcohol promotion and the difficulties regulating content in the digital era. This study provides insight to online alcohol marketing and the role consumer, media and regulator's play.

The research thematically analyses the Budweiser Dream Big campaign using documentation, observation, netnography and qualitative research methods. Findings suggest that consumers play a crucial role as unknown advocates for the alcohol brands through engagement with the content online. Furthermore, it is becoming increasingly difficult to judge between user generated and brand generated content within the digital environment.

With the introduction of the digital era, online media platforms have proven to be effective in exposing alcohol promotion to large unfiltered audiences, achieving publicity unattainable through traditional mediums. Regulators were effective in controlling the Dream Big campaign offline, however, regulations online were incapable of achieving similar results. Self-regulation online has been ineffective in successfully protecting the most vulnerable members of society. With the world becoming more digitally interconnected each day, accessibility to alcohol content online is an area requiring heightened surveillance if Ireland is going to amend their relationship with alcohol.

Consumer Awareness and Perceived Credibility of Brand-Sponsored Content on Fashion and Beauty Blogs: An Exploratory Study

Author: Shauna Grant-MacNamara

Supervisor: Dr Valerie Gannon

Abstract

This dissertation explores consumers' perceptions of and attitudes towards brand sponsored content on fashion and beauty blogs. Crucially, this research is concerned with understanding the factors that contribute towards the perceived credibility of blogs as an information source. Using a qualitative research methodology, through the use of in-depth interviews, data was collected from a small sample of Irish female consumers aged 18-26, who frequently engage with fashion and beauty blogs.

Findings indicate that blogs have overtaken magazines as preferred sources of both information and entertainment. Blogs have become an increasingly important source of product information, and consumers demonstrated a tendency to consult blogs in order to inform their purchasing decisions.

One of the most significant findings of this research was the importance of source credibility and source altruism in determining consumer trust of a blogger's recommendation. Bloggers that are perceived to be honest and acting in the best interests of their readers are considered credible sources of information. In contrast, bloggers whose actions are perceived to be influenced and motivated primarily by financial reward, are regarded with suspicion and distrust

The findings of this research contribute to the current body of research surrounding blog marketing, and provide an in depth insight into consumer attitudes towards the use of the blogosphere for marketing activities.

An Empirical Study Through a Lens of Reactance Theory: What are the Influencing Factors of Engagement in Mobile Display Advertising?

Author: Hiutung Ng

Supervisor: Dr Tara Rooney

Abstract

Mobile display advertising often interrupts users' primary activities. Grounded on reactance theory, this research proposes that users may perceive that their freedom of continuing the initial activities is threatened by intrusive mobile display advertising. Consequently, they could experience reactance and are aroused to restore the denied freedom. They may therefore neither engage cognitively nor behaviourally in mobile display advertising.

This research aims to examine the influencing factors of intrusiveness of mobile display advertising and also its impacts on advertising engagement. A conceptual model of engagement in mobile display advertising was developed along with five hypotheses. The research was conducted in a quantitative approach and data was collected through an online questionnaire. A non-probability sampling was employed and the sample consisted of 146 respondents, who were millennial and residing in Western Europe.

Descriptive analysis, Spearman's correlation analysis and linear regression analysis were utilised to test the model. The results show that the more intrusive the mobile display advertising, the less the users engage in it. The results further indicate that when users find less value in mobile display advertising and perceive their primary tasks as more important, they tend to perceive mobile display advertising as more intrusive. These findings recommend marketers to place advertisements on relevant mobile websites/applicants to provide utilitarian value and leverage interactive advertising to offer hedonic value. Marketers are also recommended to avoid placing advertisements on mobile websites/applications whose topics are important to users, such as healthy, finance, and privacy.

Viral: How Viral Video Content and the Emotions Used Within Impact on Attitudes Towards the Brand

Author: Andre Penco

Supervisor: Dr. Valerie Gannon

Abstract

The purpose of this research is to examine the potential impact of emotive viral video content on consumer attitudes towards the brand. This study initially discusses the literature on word of mouth and electronic word of mouth communications.

The researcher then examines the literature on viral marketing, online video and viral video. The literature highlighted how brands use emotive content in viral video to induce sharing behaviours and influence consumer perceptions towards the brand. Based on this, the researcher chose five different emotions which are used in viral video. These are; valence of emotional tone (positive and negative), provocation, humour and surprise.

From the literature review four research objectives were established comprising of sub-objectives. The research used quantitative analysis to answer the research objectives and analyse the potential influence these emotions may have on consumer perceptions towards the brand. This study investigates the responses to five different viral videos which were chosen to be representative of these emotions. In this area of growth, brands are constantly trying to explore new methods to create content with the goal of going viral and influencing the consumer.

The results of the research suggest that emotions play a crucial role in viral video and can have a significant impact on sharing intent, consumer attitude, consumer trust and purchasing intent towards the brand.

Does Consumer Brand Awareness and Brand Familiarity Impact The Effectiveness Of Product Placement Across Various Visual Media?

Author: David W O' Meara

Supervisor: Robert McMahon

Abstract

As consumers grow more and more averse to traditional methods of advertising, product placement emerges as a viable replacement option for marketers and advertisers. Therefore, when the opportunity arises to advertise to consumers while they're devoting their attention to a film, television program or video game, marketers and advertisers will jump at the opportunity. While there has been a large amount of qualitative research on product placement, there is a gap in the research in terms of quantitative research on the effectiveness of product placement, particularly in relation to the influence of brand awareness and brand familiarity.

The following research project intends to determine, by means of quantitative methods, whether newly-formed brand awareness, and pre-existing brand familiarity, impacts the effectiveness of product placement used in film, television programmes and video games. It is also investigated whether product placement, as a result, triggers consumer behaviour.

Overall, product placement effectiveness, and as a result, purchase intention, are found to be influenced by brand awareness and brand familiarity, depending on the medium it is presented within. Of the three visual mediums the researcher examined, video games are found to be the least effective vehicle for the practice. The placement of unfamiliar brands in films is found to negatively affect consumer behaviour. Furthermore, placement of familiar brands in films also affects purchase intention, however, in this case it affects it positively. Placements of familiar brands within television programs are found to negatively affect purchase intention. Placements found within comedic media (films, television programmes), or even comedic moments in scenes from normally non-comedic media, are found to be the most effective in terms of influencing consumer behaviour. Moreover, placements that are interpreted by the researcher to be prominent placements, i.e. incongruent with the plot or character motivations, are found to be the least effective in terms of inspiring purchase intention or even brand preference.