

# Student Research on Contemporary Marketing Issues

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School of Marketing

DUBLIN INSTITUTE  
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## Introduction

Welcome to this third edition of Contemporary Research in Irish Marketing from students of the M Sc Marketing 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 as 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 methods. Such an engagement with research defines and differentiates these graduates and the 'black book' produced ensures that 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 range of themes around viral videos, social media marketing, key account management and consumer behaviour on and off-line.

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



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# **Taste: The Reconstruction of Social Positioning: The Role of Cultural, Economic and Educational Capital in the Determination of Taste in Literature.**

**Author: Amy Brazil**

**Supervisor: Dr Paddy Dolan**

## **Abstract**

This dissertation re-examines the determinants of consumer tastes. It does this in a modern Irish setting. Through the examination of individual's taste in literature in light of cultural, educational and economic capital it was found that individual's continue to reconstruct their social positioning on an inner level. This is seen in their tastes.

The factors that influence taste are not new. The literature review focuses on both old and new theories surrounding tastes. The literature review discusses both Bourdieu's (2010) classification of taste, and Veblen's conspicuous consumption. These theories were examined with a focus on individual's taste in literature.

The research itself was conducted using qualitative methods. In-depth interviews were used as the data collection method. The focus on taste in literature allowed for the topic of taste to be examined in a focused manner. The use of qualitative methods was also done in an attempt to address the lack of literature available in regard to the factors that determine reading behaviour and taste. All research found in this area was done using quantitative methods.

This dissertation concludes that cultural, economic and educational capital continues to have a role to play in the determination of taste. This is especially relevant to the consumption of art.



# **The Extent to which Brand Community Members use Social Media for Brand Engagement: The Cult of Apple in the Irish Market.**

**Author; Louise Cooney**

**Supervisor: Mary Lawlor**

## **Abstract**

Cult brands are described as brands that have a community of brand-devoted followers. Engagement in these cult brand communities is an essential requirement for success. These followers are passionate about the brand and are members of the community for various reasons.

Understanding the level of support, communication and encouragement needed by the members is key to managing a successful and durable cult brand. Literature until this point has referred to brand communities as being mainly online communities. It is important to note the presence or lack of presence of brands online in order to understand brand strategy. With so many brands using social media as a marketing tool to reach the masses, it is important to note the level of engagement that occurs over this channel.

This research focuses on the extent to which brand community members use social media for brand engagement. The case study of Apple and their brand community in the Irish market, ClubMac, is explored. The aim of this dissertation is to investigate what drives ClubMac's members' commitment to Apple, the importance of communication with the brand and the level of interaction that occurs over social media in this 'connected age'.

ClubMac is an exception to the literature, as most communication in the community occurs offline. Apple is not active on social media and they only offer one-way communication to their users. With consumer-brand relationships being so important in brand communities, it is interesting to note what drives this commitment without it. The members of ClubMac are devoted to Apple products, values and the brand community. Apple's lack of participation in social media is a strategic move to highlight their corporate nature. However, without any direct communication from Apple in Ireland, ClubMac's dissatisfaction with Apple's communication and interaction is evident.

In-depth interviews with Irish ClubMac members are used to generate the findings presented in this research.



# **A Quantitative Analysis of the Facebook Gratifications of Male and Female Users**

**Author: John Cullen**

**Supervisor: Adrienne Czerwin-Abbott**

## **Abstract**

The development of social networks such as Facebook has changed the way people interact with others and with brands.

Marketers face new challenges when attempting to engage with their target market on this new platform and, for this reason, it is crucial that an understanding of the gratifications and motivations of Facebook use is obtained.

This study will adopt quantitative methods in order to examine the validity of traditional media gratifications in this new media landscape, while also identifying the different ways in which these gratifications apply to male and female Facebook users.



# **To Elicit Which Commercial Viral Videos are More Likely to be Shared and Why.**

**Author: Sarah Greene**

**Supervisor: Valerie Gannon**

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to elicit which commercial viral videos are more likely to be shared and why. More than ever, brands are creating content with the hope of it becoming a viral hit, however, there is no one way to understand why, how and when content goes viral.

This dissertation identifies drivers that stimulate consumers sharing behaviour with regards to viral videos. Based on the existing literature, five drivers were outlined; engagement, valence of emotional tone, surprising content, humorous content, provocative and shocking content.

The research follows a quantitative format in order to analyse the potential impact these drivers may have on the dissemination of viral videos.

This dissertation examines the responses to seven different videos which were selected to be reflective of these drivers. In this rapidly evolving area, brands are desperately trying to discover how to create highly sharable content. This research has found that as of yet there is no one path to a successful viral campaign, rather there are certain areas of focus which may aid marketers in reaching that 'Holy Grail' – a viral campaign.



# **There is an old saying ‘Pensions are Sold not Bought’: An Exploratory Study into the Customers Perspective**

**Author: Emma Johnston**

**Supervisor: Gerry Mortimer**

## **Abstract**

The purpose of the study was to examine the decision making process of individuals in making decisions on pensions. The basic methodology was to look at consumers behaviours through the eyes of their financial advisers.

One to one structured interviews were conducted and the results analysed in detail.

The findings indicate that there is a general avoidance by consumers of considering pensions until they are getting close to retirement. In general the consumer likes to pass very important life decisions to third parties and default mechanisms.





# Constructing Online Identity through Self-expressive Behaviour: A Netnographic Analysis of the Fitness Community

**Author: Eve Maguire**

**Supervisor: Conor Horan**

## **Abstract**

The rise of the Internet and social media has led to profound changes in how consumers communicate and a subsequent need for marketers to understand online behaviour. Considering this, the current study investigated the relationship between online identity construction and acts of self-expression.

To do so, it adopted a symbolic-interactionist perspective, and explored how distinct identities can be developed from the self-expressive behaviours of the online fitness community. This involved conducting netnographic research to analyse the social media profile-pages of twenty community members.

Using a multimodal discourse analysis framework, participants' verbal, visual, and audio-visual posts were examined for implicit and explicit references to personal aspects. These were evaluated for indications of more general traits or qualities, which were then arranged according to the identity they suggested.

The process revealed five prevalent identities within the community; the Hard-Worker, the Expert, the Happy-Camper, the Friend, and the Aestheticist. By outlining how individual instances of self-expression correspond to comprehensive identities, the findings serve to demonstrate the role of self-expressive behaviour in online identity construction.

Consequently, the study enables marketers to recognise the potential meaning behind consumers' online behaviour and offers them an in-depth understanding of fitness community by detailing the components of members' online identities. Thus, the study provides marketers with valuable insight into online communication and identity construction in general, and that of the fitness community in particular.



# **Hiding in Plain Sight. An Exploratory Study of Activated Persuasion Knowledge and Consumer Brand Evaluation of Covert Marketing Practices.**

**Author: Alison S. McDonnell**

**Supervisor: Dr Kevina Cody**

## **Abstract**

The saturation of the marketing landscape, the fragmentation of traditional media outlets and the blind adoption of social media marketing has led to brands seeking for ways to break through the clutter (Martin and Smith, 2008). According to Ashley and Leonard (2009) consumer attitudes towards marketing are at an all time low. This has led to some brands engaging in covert marketing tactics in an attempt to remain invisible to sceptics, yet continue to generate awareness. This dissertation presents an exploratory study that aims to contribute to and enhance existing research in the areas of consumer brand evaluation, persuasion knowledge and covert marketing practices.

This dissertation will focus on the growing trend of covert marketing. Although there are academic articles pertaining to this topic, the effects of covert marketing on brands have never really been systematically investigated (Wei, Fischer and Main, 2008). Therefore, this dissertation will present an exploratory study of activated persuasion knowledge and consumer brand evaluation of covert marketing practices.

The author presents the research question and the main objectives of this research in addition to the research methodology executed by the researcher. This provides an in-depth account of the research process employed, including; research philosophies, strategies, data collection and data analysis techniques and procedures.

The researcher presents the findings and analysis of the primary data. In addition to delivering the findings and providing an interpretation of this data, the researcher revisits the literature.



# **An Investigation into Brand Sentiment Among Fans in the Gaelic Athletic Association as a Result of Team Sponsorship**

**Author: Niall McMorrow**

**Supervisor: Laura Cuddihy**

## **Abstract**

Sponsorship research to date has focused mainly on the recognition levels and recall effectiveness of sponsors with very little on the levels of brand sentiment caused by sponsorship and almost none on team rivalry effects.

This dissertation will examine the brand sentiment created through sponsorship within the GAA by researching the literature surrounding integrated marketing communications, sponsorship, sports marketing, branding, brand sentiment and other relevant areas.

This dissertation will use a sample of Dublin GAA fans and investigate their levels of brand sentiment towards AIG. This will then be contrasted to the same fans sentiment towards rival county Cork GAA's sponsor Chill Insurance. Respondents completed an online survey which asked them to complete questions regarding their relationship with their own team sponsor, rival teams sponsor, their purchase intentions, and their perception of both home team sponsor and rival sponsor.

The gathered data was analysed through the statistical software package SPSS with charts and figures being created using Microsoft Excel. Results indicated that while positive sentiment is created through sponsorship, there is no definitive negative sentiment created through the sponsorship of a rival team. Purchase intentions seem to be positive in regards to the home county's sponsor, AIG. However, purchase intentions were neither positive nor negative for the rival sponsor, Chill Insurance.



# **An Exploratory Study of Tourists and Their Use of Digital Media in the Destination Decision-making Journey**

**Author: Gavin Ó Broin**

**Supervisor: Laura Cuddihy**

## **Abstract**

The purpose of this dissertation is to gain a better understanding of tourists' use of digital media in their destination decision-making journey.

Word of mouth has always played a key role in the marketing of travel and tourism. For the majority of the 21st century advice from family and friends was the inspiration for organising holidays. However since the emergence of the Web 2.0 and other advances in digital technologies the concept of word of mouth has been completely transformed.

In recent years there has been much debate on how the explosion of digital media has drastically changed the consumer decision-making journey. The way consumers are evaluating, paying for and discussing products after they have made their purchase, has changed dramatically.

Despite this however there is little research regarding changes to consumer's destination decision-making journey. The researcher therefore decided to investigate tourists to Ireland use of digital media in their destination decision-making journey.

The data for the research was collected using quantitative research methods via surveys. The researcher surveyed one hundred respondents from four different nationalities and six different age groups.

The research found that the transformation in the consumer decision making journey is also applicable to the consumer destination decision making journey and that irrespective of age categories or nationalities tourists are harnessing the power of digital media to research, pay for and discuss their travel experience with others once they have returned home.



# **An Exploratory Study of Key Account Management Activities and Practices from the Supply Perspective among the Irish Chocolate Confectionary Market.**

**Author: Liam O' hObain**

**Supervisor: Laura Cuddihy**

## **Abstract**

This postgraduate research dissertation aims to explore Key Account Management (KAM) activities and practices from the suppliers' perspective. Organisations have shifted their focus from transactional marketing to building long-term collaborative relationships with those customers that represent a large proportion of their business.

Indeed, key accounts (KA) provide fundamental opportunities for firms to develop these partnerships and align resources with the needs of the customer.

The Irish chocolate confectionary market is the industry under investigation and that from which respondents were selected. As in any industry today, it is necessary for chocolate confectionary firms to build and grow profitable collaborative relationships with customers of strategic importance. Based on qualitative research carried out in this dissertation, a theoretical framework is developed regarding the basic components of the KAM process.

The research findings show that, understanding your customers' business is critical to the success of a KAM programme. Developing key account strategic marketing plans that are matched to the customer's strategy is fundamental to developing collaborative relationships that will ultimately drive both the buying and the selling companies business. Nonetheless, this cannot be achieved without effectively communicating with the supplier the key account plan proposed.

The findings show that cross-functional communication is a vital element of a key account programme so that experts in the buying company are communicating with experts in the supply company, resulting in the customers feeling more valued. Finally, the findings suggest that building strong relationships at senior levels is central to the success of any KAM relationship.

