The Digital Tribal Communities of Irish Teenage Males and their impact on Brand Consumption

Irene Helen Gahan

MSC Marketing

Submitted to the National College of Ireland, August 2014

Abstract:

Title: The Digital Tribal Communities of Irish Teenage Males and its impact on Brand Consumption

Author: Irene Helen Gahan

The goal of this study is to explore the impact digital channels has on the consumer behaviour of adolescence males. To explore what influence digital has over their purchasing decision and to what extent their belonging to 'digital tribal communities' has on their consumer behaviour choices.

Never before has any group of teenagers had access to information, communication and entertainment at their fingertips 24/7. They have never known not having this unfettered access to instant comment, opinion and reviews. My intention is to examine the literature around consumer behaviour of Irish teenage males in the context of the brands that play a role in helping them identify themselves individually or as part of a 'tribe and keep them digitally connected.

By identifying some of the major products that help with the construct of self-identity, eight teenagers were interviewed in respect to the brands that they considered 'their' brands and how they were influenced to select these from 'evoked sets'. They relayed how they 'found these brands and to what extend digital had an influence in these choices particularly where 'tribes where involved'.

Keywords; tribes, digital marketing, brand consumption, teenagers

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

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Acknowledgements:

I would like to extend my thanks to my thesis supervisor Eva Perez of National College of Ireland and to my consumer behaviour lecturer Dr Darach Turley for their input, advice and exceptionally patient guidance throughout this process. I would also like to thank my class colleagues for their support especially my projects partner Ger Hayden.

The pursuit of an MSc isn't a solo endeavour I would like to thank my husband and son for their incredible support as well as my family and friends particularly my mother whose endless encouragement has followed me through my higher education journey.

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1.0 Introduction to Thesis

The marketing landscape has irreversibly changed forever. What was once considered standard marketing practice just twenty years previous has been challenged and changed beyond recognition. The fierce and unrelenting pace of technological change enhanced by digital access and devices, mobile proliferation and the rise and rise of social media has changed the landscape and profession of marketing irrevocably.

With the globalisation of brands and markets, marketing departments have finally gone beyond paying lip service to digital marketing. Those that will survive and thrive in the new digital economy are companies, products and brands that have embraced new technologies as a fundamental part of their marketing strategies.

One of the biggest challenges of this change is the fragmentation of marketing channels. Television viewing, radio listenership and print and publications readership are all in decline. The stalwarts of advertising and marketing positioning can no longer be depended on to deliver. Now budgets and planning include a multitude of digital channels in order to reach an increasingly fragmented target audience. Second and even third screen usage now need to be considered particularly when targeting teens.

With all the challenges it has also opened up opportunities. Brands and products that could never afford to compete on a global stage now have the opportunity to do so. Their ability to reach their target audience has gone from only local to truly global in a relatively short space of time.

Growing up with this technology are today's teenagers and tomorrows adults. Teenagers today have never known a life without this technology. Information technology is woven into the fabric of their lives (Oblinger, 2005).

They take for granted that they can have instant access to online information, products and entertainment. The IGen, digital natives, Net Generation or Post Millennials as they are currently classed, have still yet to be defined. Traditionally generations are cut off every twenty years and they become a generation defined.

The pace of cultural and technology change is accelerating these shifts to every ten years, requiring new 'labels' for marketing (Twenge, 2006).

The problem that this thesis looks to address is confirming that digital does have a defining role in the decisions of teenagers when it comes to brands and products. That teen's relationship with products and brands now transcends geographical locations and gives unending options and choices when it comes to defining their identity.

That today's teenagers draw their experience of brands from digital space. They watch videos on YouTube, see TV shows and movies on Netflix, share content that they have generated on Instagram and then communicate it to their peers using Facebook and Twitter. Their consumption learning is based on practicing social and entertainment activities via digital media. This in turn enables them to develop their consumption skills (Batat, 2006).

This research identifies the brands that are reaching out to teenagers through this digital divide. Teenage males in particular who have been shown to participate in more sport / leisure activities and be part of a tribal or brand community related to sports or gaming are the focus of this research.

Academic research shows that teenagers are still constructing their sense of self and move from brand to brand to create a sense of identity. With the advent of digital social marketing this research looks at how regardless of how many brands teenagers now have access to their evoked or chosen sets of brands are not as diverse as imagined when confined and examined in the context of tribal lifestyles or activities.

Seth Godin's book 'Tribes' popularisation of the theory of 'Tribes' originating from (Mafessoli, 1996)(Cova, 1997) explores the notions that individuals who are part of tribes were much more influenced in relation to brand choice by their membership of particular brand communities'. Brand loyalty is one of extreme external influence and that these brands help us to perform our identities (Kornberger, 2010). This is something that adolescents seek as 'self-identity by acquiring and accumulating selections of consumption objects (Belk, 1988).

Creating social online profiles provides marketers with endless information about the likes and wants of today's teenager. Looking at the Facebook profile of the average teen a brand manager can identify the 'products, brands and lifestyle activities' that teens follow. What music excites them, what teams or clubs they follow, the books they have read and what celebrities they follow. The public Facebook profile is very revealing of the construct of the persona of today's digital teenager.

Much of the studies done to date provide the figures and statistics of teenagers online. It provides how they go online, how many hours they are online combined with their purchase trends and intentions. In the 2014 spring survey, 'Taking Stock with Teens' the key findings identify the major expenditure habits of teens. This was based on 7,500 teens across 48 states in the US. However this research looks at the individual teenager and their construct of self for the major areas identified as important consumables in their lives and the brands that they value.

It takes about ten years for academic research to permeate to the surface of mainstream leaving most of the surveys and research in the area to be more commercial orientated rather that academic theory bound association. (Brown, 2008) This adds to the challenge of undertaking research that involves minors and all the inherent issues involved with this market segment group.

1.1 Chapter Outlines

Chapter one deals with introducing the research subject with some context around the challenges for marketers in the new digital economy, brand consumption and market segmentation. Then it identifies the main questions posed by thesis research.

Chapter Two outlines the literature on brand community and consumption of teenagers and the constructs of 'Teenagerhood' and how it influences their brand and product choices. It also examines the rapid pace of technology change that has impacted marketing and targeting in the digital media space.

Chapter Three outlines the primary research objective and four additional research questions for examination and consideration.

Chapter Four looks at the methodology employed to examine the research objectives and the rational of sample selection, research instruments and the limitations of the research along with ethical considerations for qualitative research when interviewing minors.

Chapter five reviews the findings of the interviews and revisits the main objectives and research questions.

Chapter six reviews the findings in the context of relevant literature, surveys and books.

Chapter Seven provides some conclusions around the findings and study and outlines areas potential future research and implications for the future teaching of marketing particularly digital marketing.

2.0 Literature Review

2.1 Branding in Childhood

It has been well documented in academic literature that children can identify brands as early as the age of two. Brand loyalty begins to invade childhood from the age of three with children recognising brands through logos and colours. Kids are customers, buyers, spenders, shoppers and consumers in their own right and command not only a growing allowance for consumption but also a growing influence on family expenditure (McNeal, 1992).

The commercialisation of childhood at an early stage provides clear evidence and research into the negative effects of turning children into consumers. Kids and teens are now the epicentre of American consumer culture (Schor, 2004). This new kid consumer culture is also the concern of (Linn, 2004) in which she describes marketing and advertising as the 'hostile takeover of childhood'. She believes that the kids of today are growing up in a maelstrom of marketing and the fact that children influence over $600 billion in spending a year has not been lost on corporate America.

The rise of economic globalisation, the commercialisation of childhood has become a global phenomenon. The rational based on 'cradle to the grave' marketing looks at attaching children to adult products and brands long before they ever purchase them and their increasing participant in parents purchasing decisions has also influenced this new market segment (Kanner, 2005)

Marketing to kids started in the 1980's with two major events. The release of two movies; Jaws and Star Wars in the mid 70's showed that not only could corporate America sell movies to teenagers it could also sell movie related merchandise from action figures to bed sheets and lunch boxes. The second event was where the US government tried to impose restrictions on targeting children specifically with marketing messages. It backfired and didn't work and marketers took the opportunity to increase targeting at kids in case it was ever appealed at a later date (Quart, 2006)

2.2 Advent of Tweens

Tweens are defined as that cohort of kids from the ages of 7 to 12. They are considered an economic force that is in charge of deciding what products are winners and losers in the years to come as they move on into the teenage market segment. Tweens is considered more a state of mind than any age related. The concept of Tweens was developed in the 1980's by North American marketers as a sub-category of teen marketing.

Teen and tween segments were created for the commercial exploitation of age and not an anthropological one (Cody, 2012). Research into this undefined state can cause a state of anxiety in children their 'betwixt and between' state provides them with no defined external evidence on where they fit (Cook and Kaiser 2004).

Tweens have clear brand preferences, they know which brands are cool and they covet them. Today's tweens are the most brand conscious generation in history. Today's youth have eagerly embraced an ethic of labels and logos. (Schor, 2004) Tweens also have more personal power, more money, influence and attention than any generation before them. They are the first generation (Lindstrom, 2003) contends that has been born and bred with an understanding of today's economic world.

Brands are part of tweens lives and they are exposed to more than 8,000 brands a day however (Lindstrom, 2004) contends they are also very sceptical and they will instantly question things if they don't seem right to them.

> *"Tweens divulge feelings of freakishness, hybrid and general ambiguity surrounding their perception of age and social status at this stage in life. Their existence in the 'twilight zone' of quasi childhood and pseudo adolescences fails to connect with the symbolic resources of the market place" (Cody, 2012)*

2.3   The Concept of 'Teenagerhood'

Teenagers in the western world are living in a world of increased consumerism and a growing dependence on media for information.

Teenagerhood is a socially developed period of time where physiological and emotional changes are influenced by language, dress and music. They now rely on other external frameworks for identifying with their peers (Danesi, 1994). The concept of teenager was developed again by advertising executives during the 1940's in the US as a separate market to be marketed to aside from children and adults (Quart, 2003).

Along with other 'branded children' experts they explore the notions of the negativity of advertising to teens and proposes that marketers and insinuate that advertisers targeting them should be ashamed at the lengths they go to get into teens lives and lifestyles suggesting that it is never too late to stop the never ending story of brand. There are now no geographical barriers for teens in the western world, that the new global language between teens is that of brands (Moses, 2000)

The cast of a thousand movies from Hollywood have constructed and deconstructed the stereo types in movies from the 80's such as The Breakfast Club, Clueless and Legally Blond all with the help of extensive product placement to bring the teen back to popularity and acceptability in the final scenes. Both recognise having the right brands is the right way to fit into the right group which is perpetuated on screen (Schor, 2004)

The new generation however or the IGen, digital natives or Net generation, anyone essentially born in the year 2000 has moved on from this generational gap of movies with messages. Generational cut offs occur every 20 years and they become defined by a generation with their own fashion, music and popular culture and also by external global events. But the pace of cultural and technological changes is accelerating these shifts are occurring every ten years and creating new generation labels (Twenge, 2006).

IGen teenagers value experimental learning, working in team and social networking. Information technology is woven into the fabric of a teenager's life. They have never

known a life without this technology (Oblinger and Oblinger, 2005). The internet and mobile phone are a central force in a teenager's life and the changing media landscape has become a 'battle ground' for the adolescence share of voice (Batat, 2006).

However there are physiological impacts to be considered when advertising to teenagers. Teens deal with a contradictory ideology. They want to create an individual identity but at the same time connect with their own group of friends (Gulland, 2006).

These changes create a lot of uncertainty about self-awaking. The contradictory needs of teenagers are a dichotomy. On one hand they look to belong to a secure group while at the same time trying to discover their own unique identity. Adolescents seek self-identity by acquiring and accumulating selections of consumption objects (Belk 1988). Self is a primary research topic in psychology. Self-concept is what comes to mind when we think about ourselves (Neisser, 1993).

In social psychology, there are two theories of identity. Identity theory that proposes, that individuals make decisions on how they see themselves and on how they would like to be seen by others. Social identity theory is the second, and based on comparison theory that proposes that individuals will strive to attach themselves to other individuals who are similar or slightly better. It focuses on on ways individuals perceive and sort themselves based on social and personal identities (Jacobson, 2003).

Choices of activities, friends, clothes, music are often crucial to social acceptance. They actively search for cues from their peers and advertising for acceptable behaviours (Solomon, 2003). Homogeny and old group stereo types are out and individualism and authenticity are in for teens (Forbes, 2006).

> *"Teens are unabashed consumers without losing their human values. They think independently, creatively and are buoyantly optimistic about the world" (Moses, 2000)*

Market segmentation is the focus on many chapters in marketing text books. The notion of generational marketing looks at the age profile and markets to that segment. The suggestion that marketers can use demography to make accurate forecasts about commerce, culture and economics make an assumption that each generation is bound together by similar wants, motivations and events and that 'all generations age and consume as they go' (Gronbach, 2000) is a rather outdated generalisation approach. Lifestyle segment marketing has achieved over $24 billion in revenues 2013 for Nike (Nike, 2014) who are consistently the top brand in a teenager's mind set in multiple lifestyle categories.

Saatchi & Saatchi identified four themes of conflict common to teens:

1. **Autonomy Vs Belonging**

Teens look for independence so they try to break free from families but they also feel the need to attach themselves to a support structure such as peers or tribal groups and communities to avoid feeling isolated or alone.

2. **Rebellion Vs Conformity**

They rebel against social standards of appearance and behaviour but they still feel the need to fit in and be accepted by peers. Products and brands assist both of these states.

3. **Idealism Vs Pragmatics**

Teens tend to view adults as hypocritical, whereas they see themselves as being sincere. They struggle to reconcile their world view with the realities they perceive around them.

4. **Narcissism Vs Intimacy**

Teens are often self-obsessed with their needs. On the other hand they also feel the need to connect with others on a meaningful level.

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Consumers in this age subculture have a number of needs including experimentation, belonging, independence, responsibility and approval from others. Product usage is a significant medium to express these needs. A teenager who is committed to a brand may continue to purchase it for years to come (Solomon, 2003).

Many studies on the mythology of youth suggest that being a teenager is a state of adapting and finding a position in life. As a brand seeking their attention it is competing against popular culture rather than other brands and suggests that the brand must become part of popular culture in order to sell to teens (Hine, 2007). This theory of the brand becoming popular culture is not new but brands are starting to embrace 'cool' to appeal to the newer MTV generation.

Teenagers have about 145 brand conversations each week (Keller Fay Group, 2007) The function of the product was the most important attribute during the 80's but since the 90's the brand has taken over and it's ultimately more important than function (Lindstrom, 2004).

2.4   Selling Cool to Teenagers

'Cool is the currency all brands can profit from'. Marketing brands in fashion or music are 'unlikely to prosper if they are not a 'step ahead of cool'. Many marketers in categories such as fashion and music realise that their brand is unlikely to prosper if they're not a step ahead of cool. The very aspects that society often tries to address are the very 'cool image that teenagers seek to adopt'. These 'illicit behaviours represent rebellion against the establishment and are attractive precisely because they contravene the laws and morals of dominant society (Bird, Tapp, 2008).

The Urban dictionary defines cool as the 'best way to say something is neat, awesome or swell. The phrase cool is very relaxed; never goes out of style and people will never laugh at you for using it.

Southgate suggests that 'cool is highly contextual'. The contrarian view of cool is that 'cool people always appear to be doing something ahead and apart from the uncool mass'. As fast as something is cool and mainstream it becomes the norm and is not necessarily cool any longer (Southgate, 2003). The symbolic and behavioural feature that distinguishes 'Teenagerhood' is coolness (Danesi, 1994). Advertising geared towards teens is typically action orientated and depicts a group of cool teens using the product (Solomon, 2003).

Teenagers increasing look to the media to provide them with a readymade identity constructed on what today's version of cool is (Rushkoff, 2002). Authors suggest that the notion of cool is fleeting. An insight into some of Britain's coolest brands suggest that the top cool brands for 2013/2014 are Apple, Nike, YouTube, Google, Twitter, Adidas, Sony and Spotify (Cool Brands UK, 2013).

The question is what is cool? Is it a philosophy, a sensibility, a religion, an ideology, a personality type, a behaviour pattern, an attitude, a zeitgeist, a worldview asks (Pountain and Robbins, 2000).

> *"Cool is the anvil on which many brands are made or broken. It is the currency all brands can profit from when they trade in it"*
> *(Southgate, 2012)*

2.5   Tribes Teens Belong To

French sociologist Michel Maffesoli first put forward the concept of neo tribes in academic format in his book 'The Time of Tribes'. He defines neo-tribes as more than a residual category of social life but rather they are 'the central feature and key social fact of our own experience of everyday living'. Lifestyles became the all defining properties of brand tribes (Maffesoli 1998).

In his book Tribes, Seth Godin outlines how it takes only two things to turn a group or crowd of people into a Tribe; either a shared interest or a way to communicate. Communication is not one way either it is leader to tribe, tribe to leader, tribe member to tribe member or tribe member to outsider.

> *"Being part of a tribe personifies half of fundamental life that each one of us is unique however the other half is that we are all part of something bigger" (Walker, 2008)*

Some of the most referenced studies on consumer brand behaviour are proposed by; (Cova, 2011)(Muinz & O'Guinn, 2001),(Fournier, 1998). The research focuses on the brand community and the influence factors that affect consumers either as individuals or as part of a tribe and those brands take on special meanings and consumers form relationships with brands in order to fulfil a sense of self.

It has been suggested that a brand community is a specialised, non-geographical bound community and is based on a set of social relationships among admirers of the brand (Muinz, 2001). This concept is extended by (McAlexander, 2002) to include relationships between the customers and products, the company and even one another.

The attachment that tribal members possess for their tribe (Cova, 1998) provides an opportunity for marketers to foster meaningful and symbiotic relationships with groups of consumers.

> *"The relationships extend beyond the focus up the level of repeat purchase behaviour, to those based on affective bonds of loyalty, with the potential of collective action and advocacy from the tribe"*
> *(Cova and Cova, 2002)*

With the rapid changes in digital membership brand societies and communities have become more defined and more identifiable beyond the brands. Facebook pages for brands, clubs, teams, sports, personalities all provide a more cohesive frame for a community with a shared interest. (Kronberger, 2012) The three qualities shared by brand communities are based on shared consciousness, rituals and traditions and a sense of moral responsibility (Muniz, 2001).

Digital communities facilitate adults and teens engagement and interaction on the same platform. Teens are given a voice to comment, respond, post and reply to status updates and be active participants as members of the tribe.

The example of skateboard culture as a sub culture community that has grown from marginalised individuals into main stream has its own brands and symbols to identify it as a community. (Walker, 1008) The surfing community is another example of a subculture with its own brands that has moved to mainstream.

Loyalty is first created among the group which then identifies with a particular brand. If several people in the group shift brand then the rest of the group will follow. Those that share brands belong to the same tribes (Linstrom, 2004).

Much of this movement to mainstream has been facilitated by digital allowing video sharing and communication among members of the 'tribe' regardless of geographical boundaries.

In contrast to (Gronbach, 2000) notion of targeting consumers by generational ages (Solomon, 2003) suggest that the best chance to success when entering new markets lies in identifying consumer segments that share a common world view beyond geographical borders and fuelled by the Internet and TV networks like MTV. Brands now serve as bridges between cultures (Hess, 2011).

Electronic tribes as (Kozinets, 1999) describes them are forming across the internet and seem too built around consumer interests. He outlines what are the strategic implications for the existence of both virtual and traditional community based participation. They must consider that following;

1. Consumers are more active and discerning;

2. They are less accessible to one-to-one process, and

3. They provide a valuable amount of information on culture (Kozinets, 1999)

2.6 Celebrity Culture impact on Teens

Celebrities from the world of sports form part of today's popular and media culture. (Bush, Martin, Bush, 2004) They lend their name to a wide range of endorsements (e.g., Rory McElroy and Nike in Golf, Lebron James for Nike Basketball, Lionel Messi for Adidas). The authors question whether or not celebrity endorses really make a difference on the bottom line for advertisers.

They suggest that the use of celebrity can be used to overcome some of the challenges of advertising to teens. Their findings suggest that celebrity sports athletes have a positive influence on adolescent's favourable word of mouth and brand loyalty and that celebrities in sport are important to teens when they make brand choices.

Chalip (1997) contends that heroism depends on the celebrity but putting a numerical value on the effect is difficult. Stuart (2007) cites it was found that there are three components of source credibility are important predictors of purchase intention; perceived expertise, trustworthiness and physical attractiveness.

2.7 Social Media Power

In the last year Liverpool FC has increased its Facebook followers from 13m to 21.6m and the club have 2.2 million Twitter followers. Social media has fundamentally changed the way people interact with their chosen sports. It only takes two things to turn a group into a tribe 'a shared interest' and a way to communicate' (Godin, 2008)

The Internet and the exponential rise in social media particularly by the digital generation has allowed these tribes to develop and grow at such a phenomenal rate that 'keeping up' with the tribes demands and attention becomes all consuming. Social media while allowing these tribes to flourish has yet to show a correlation that provides 'brand value' and a return on investment in social media activities.

Sport and the Internet look like a marriage made in heaven because of the unmatched enthusiasm and loyalty it generates among consumers. The nature of the activity of professional football and the characteristics of the fans suggest locking the fan more tightly into a relationship with the club.

With the global appeal of European football, fans from around the world will increasingly look to engage with clubs and players via social networks. Those that don't get a handle on it risk scoring a huge own goal online. (John Beech, Simon Chadwick, Allan Tapp, 2000)

The key goals of the social media strategy is to provide the fans with additional and inclusive streams of communication direct to and from the club; to provide additional, engaging and exclusive content to our fans on social media networks and to build virtuous relationships with fan sites, blogs and forums that already exist online. (Chris Nield, 2010)

The social dimension of football organisations suggests that it would be natural for clubs to try to build virtual communities since fans / consumers have a natural bond, one that extends well beyond the common purchase of identically branded products (Beech et al, 2000).

Liverpool FC Facebook page posts items every three to four hours with the content ranging from exclusive interviews, breaking news, team updates and transfers and then there are the commercial elements included. A post for FIFA 2015 EA game with a YouTube clip about the teams included and interviews with players and then an order here link.

The post was shared over 572 times and linked by nearly 8,000 followers and 1.8m You Tube views after going live less than 48 hours earlier and over 2,400 comments on the clip and a link to pre-order the game. The comments included positive things about the FIFA games franchise but also provided for brand feedback from players about their experiences and what they would like to see improved in the next version. According to bit.ly, the half-life of a Facebook post is 3.5hrs so ensuring that brand communities survives requires constant attention and nurture. (Beech et al, 2000)

2.8 Digital Natives

"Teenagers today have never known a life without this technology. Information technology is woven into the fabric of their lives"
(Oblinger, 2005)

The Internet provides an environment where adolescences observe and learn attitudes and behaviours within global communities. It is mainly used for social learning, community, social relationships and to foster a sense of belonging through shared play and virtual club membership.

The short attention span of a teen craves immediate responses to all actions and they are accustomed to twitch speed, multitasking random access, graphics first, active and connected. They thrive on immediate gratification receiving information not just fast but instantly (Oblinger, 2005)

The purchase choices of this instant always on audience are often made based on recommendations obtained via the Internet. Word of mouth influence is magnified

many times by the nature of the Internet as communication may flow rapidly through a global community (Lee, 2005).

"TV is dying a slow painful death with the iGeneration"
(TRU, 2012)

Results show from recent research suggests that over 56 million off the grid consumers are 'slipping past' advertisers because they are removing themselves from the live broadcast ad experience (TRU, 2012) no more so than teens who now have access to the internet through multiple devices 24/7 and their always on mind set doesn't allow for them to be dictated to by networks.

They want on demand and digital. Findings from this research show that 20% of all consumers fall into this segment. All of them watch less TV than they did a year ago and on demanders access video through a variety of devices that allows them to time and location shift to meet their lifestyles. This increased pace of TV view decline was discussed at a 2012 conference in Germany by (Courtois and D'heer, 2012) who contend that the media drenched, data rich, changing surfing age is about convergence. Not just technical convergence but daily life.

They suggest that while the TV screen is still present once a tablet is available it is used for multiple uses around the house rather in a fixed position and the TV viewing time is reduced as more time is spent on social media or on demand viewing on tablet and mobile devices.

US teens have the highest percentage of on demand requests in the world. Their preferred way to watch movies has over taken DVD purchase and rental and 14% have digital streaming and subscription (Piper Jaffray, 2014).

The digital space has become the new playground of teenagers. Usage of technology and web sites such as YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Vine, Pinterest and a multitude of other social networking sites, have taken their attention away from TV. They access them through multiple devices including Smartphone's, smart TVs, Tablets, desktops, iPods, laptops, e-readers and the list of digital connected devices

continues to grow. (McGivney, 2013) views it as 'digital disruption'. The notion that the next wave of innovation will come from digital disruption and mostly likely from a teenager that has co-created as part of team of online innovators something that inspires the iGeneration.

Something that (Anderson, 2006) explores in the theory of 'The Longer Tail', the follow up to the best seller about how digital is changing the economy and business activities long before anyone realises it. He believes that culture is driven by the obsession of top records. Box office takings for movies and the billboard charts have created a record obsessed economy which is driving global cultures. From celebrities to athletics to superstar CEO's culture is obsessed with hits and the misses are wiped from memory.

This has driven the race for the most likes, most views and most tweets for teens today. YouTube views of video sharing have surpassed the billions for a single music video who would not have achieved this hit if it wasn't for digital space. One upload and one viral campaign allowed through the concept of book Tipping Point to reach a global audience with no marketing budget other than word of mouth (Gladwell, 2000).

> *"The internet has become the main hub of activity for today's young adults, as over half now prefer to watch TV programmes online, rather than on the TV set. Brands would benefit from heeding this trend and adjusting their marketing mix to incorporate online sources and social media."*

Mobile phones, online video and social networking have become a highly central feature in the lives of today's teenagers, largely eclipsing the domination that was once held by television and music. As a result, almost half of today's teens' leisure time is spent communicating with friends and family, and data shows that there is an even split between how much time is spent doing this in the person, and doing this via text or online (Lifestyles of Young Adults, 2013).

This technology driven world is reflected in the Global brands 2014 report where five of the top global brands are technology related; Google, Apple, IBM, Microsoft and Amazon. Google is positioned at number one and Apple at number two. 'They represent the centrality of technology in our society in that they help to improve the lives of their customers' (Neilson, 2012). As a note the survey also reported that Amazon entered the top 10 for the first time and Facebook is the fastest rising brand with other social media sites such as Twitter and LinkedIn entering the top 100 for the first time.

A teenagers struggle for place and position in society, coupled with a brand stressed, celebrity culture obsessed society and all information at their fingertips has evolved teens brand consumption behaviours into lifestyle choices driven by tribal allegiances.

3.0 Research Questions

A number of research questions emerged from the main research question and they have been explored in the context of the methodology framework.

Main research question: Are the evoked sets and brand consumption of teenage males influenced by their 'tribal involvement'? **Aim**: Identify the teenagers participation in sports activities and 'tribal communities' and explore how their participation involvement.

Research Question 2 – To what extent are teenagers aware of the brands within their chosen 'tribal involvement'? **Aim**: Show that by participating in sports or tribe activities their awareness of brands is increased.

Research Question 3 - Do peers or celebrities have influence over their brand choices in the wider context of their lives? **Aim**: Show how much influence friends and celebrities or brand ambassadors have on their choices of brand. Are they able to name the brands and ambassadors attached to the tribes they follow and participate in.

Research Question 4 - Within a defined product range identified as important to teenagers do they have an evoked set of brands for consideration & what impacts their rational for consumption? **Aim**: Even with all the choices available there is still an evoked set of acceptance in a teenager's choice of brands the aim is to display their first and second selections in an evoked set and their reasoning why.

Research Question 5: To what extend does digital form a part of their lives when it comes to brand selection and information gathering? **Aim**: What social channels they use in their daily lives. How importance their use of social media as part of their brand consumption is when making purchase decisions.

4.0 Methodology

4.1 Review of Research Method Options and Design

There are two main ways of collecting data in primary research; Qualitative and Quantitative. Qualitative research is data analysis based on questionnaires from a larger group of respondents and quantitative research provides a more holistic view of a research problem by integrating a larger number of variables but asking on a few respondents (Hollensen, 2011).

Qualitative survey research yields only a little information about a lot of people. (Solomon et al 2010). Quantitative research refers to the meanings, concepts, definitions, characteristics, metaphors, symbols and descriptions of things. In contrast quantitative research refers to counts and measures of things. (Berg 2010) There is a heavy debate among academia about using qualitative or quantitative when one is considered 'words and the other numbers'. Berg cites (Dabbs, 1982) Qualitative and quantitative are not distinct'. Qualitative research is a long hard road with elusive data on one side and stringent requirements for analysis on the other.

Creswell (2003) however is very pragmatic about research design and states that there are three methods; quantitative that has been 'around for years', qualitative which has developed in the last few decades' and a newer still being defined 'mixed methods approach'. He conceptualises (Crotty, 1998) idea of a generalised framework with the consideration of four research questions into the three more pragmatic questions below including the more 'modern approach of including 'mixed methods'.
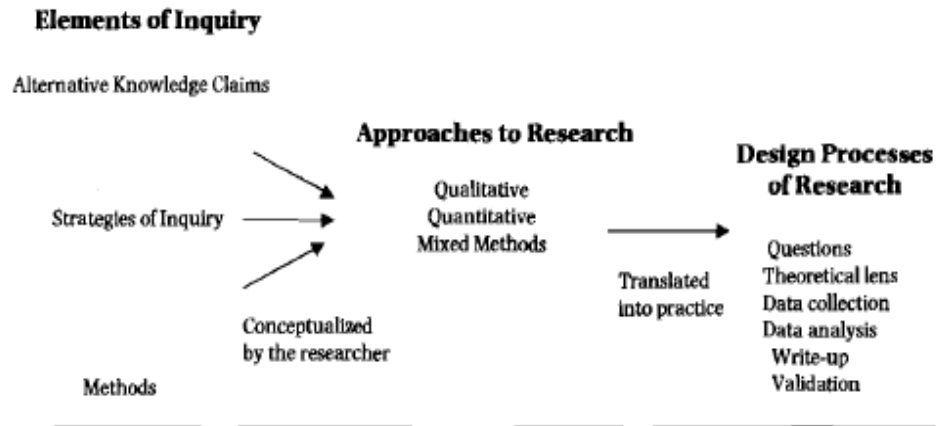
Elements of Inquiry

Alternative Knowledge Claims

Approaches to Research

Design Processes of Research

Strategies of Inquiry

Qualitative
Quantitative
Mixed Methods

Conceptualized
by the researcher

Translated
into practice

Questions
Theoretical lens
Data collection
Data analysis
Write-up
Validation

Methods

Figure 1.1 Knowledge Claims, Strategies of Inquiry, and Methods Leading to Approaches and the Design Process

1. What knowledge claims are being made by the research?

2. What strategies of inquiry will inform the procedures?

3. What methods of data collection and analysis will be used?

Generators of research design theory used qualitative data in a non-systematic and non-rigorous way in conjunction with their own logic and common sense. It was argued that work based on qualitative data was either not theoretical enough or too impressionistic as discussed in (Barney, Strauss, 2009) but Creswell feels his question approach is more accessible and instructive to researchers that have previously been 'taught' to follow one theory or another. His own research has developed in the last decade to include mixed methods or to pursue a less rigid discipline of either or when it comes to a qualitative or quantitative approach.

However (Richie, Lewis 2003) hold the view that small scale qualitative studies can be used to draw wider inference about the 'social world' provided there is appropriate adherence to the boundaries of qualitative research. They see qualitative research as a blend of empirical investigations and creative discovery or as has been touted by others as a mix of science and art.

"Quantitative Research is a skilled craft that brings unique understanding of people's lives and the social phenomena that form them" (Richie, Lewis, 2003)

However both methods can help refine and define the hypothesis of the other. Qualitative surveys can identify the numbers which then proves or disproves a theory or hypothesis and then quantities methods can get to the why of the results.

Selecting the qualitative approach for this research thesis it echoes (Barney, 2009) in that the 'crucial elements of sociological theory are often best found within a qualitative method'.

These crucial elements are typical of qualitative research where there is less definition between data retrieval and analysis as very often the next question in a personal interview will depend on the interviewer's interpretation of the previous answer (Hollensen, 2011).

This was found in each of the research interviews for this research where questions could lead further down one line of enquiring to gain more insight into the rationale behind the response. The qualitative approach incorporates much more of a literary form of writing and experience in conducting open ended interviews and observations. A qualitative approach allows room to be innovative and creative' (Creswell, 2003).

4.2 Research Method Adopted

With the research options considered the methodology of quantitative research was selected as the research method for data collection.

Psychographics which has been used since the 1970's is used interchangeably with lifestyle to denote the separation of consumers into categories based on differences in choices of consumption activities and product usage. Demographics allow us to describe who buys, but psychographics helps us to understand the why.

Psychographic identifies a target group then profiles these consumers on product relevant dimensions. (Solomon et al 2010) This blended approach to research has had mixed reviews but it has gained attention by academics and 'real world marketers'. It has however its critics as to whether there is value in interchanging lifestyle and activity and attitude (Wells, 1975).

4.3 Pilot Questioning

A pilot question test was conducted with two respondents who matched the sampling framework for the main research to ensure a clear understanding of the questions being asked. This is even more essential when interviewing early teens where the comprehension of language may not be particularly advanced. A number of suggestions about the questions, terminology and language was advised and the taken into consideration for the final interview questions.

4.4 Sampling Frame

There are many challenges when interviewing teenagers as highlighted by which contains many dimensions and challenges of using teenagers as research participants. These dimensions of challenge included; recruitment, trust, participation, location, prior information, logics and generation gaps of interviewer (Basset et al 2008). This challenge feeds into the requirement for sampling in this instance.

It is both impractical and too expensive for a researcher to contact all the people who could have relevance to the research problem. In practice a group of consumers that fit the market segmentation for the required target market are selected and

interviewed as a 'sample frame' the final number is actual sample itself (Hollensen, 2011).

In selecting the size of the sample it was recommended to interview five respondents and then if the researcher felt there was more information to be had interview a further two or continue until such time as the responses had become uniform or repetitive. However due to the time constraints and limitations of the research as well as access to the target sample population five respondents was considered sufficient to demonstrate some clear findings and assumptions.

4.5 Sample Selection

In order to gain insight into the hypnoses proposed for the research five male adolescence respondents were selected; two aged 14 and three aged 15. Their geographical location was East Meath. They were selected on the basis of elements influencing ethical considerations when interviewing minors; privacy, permission, suitability, availability and trust.

The main aspect of the research required questions of a personal nature around their relationships with brand and product consumption within the various hypotheses so some prior knowledge of the respondent was required in order to ensure that they could provide meaningful responses to the interview questions.

The common element was that respondents were heavily involved in various sporting activities in the local area. They attended two different schools; one public and one private and came from various socio economic backgrounds and they were both in first or second year in secondary education.

4.6 Data Collection

The data was collected through interviews during May to July 2014 with the five respondents at varying times. The interviews were limited to twenty to thirty minutes and voice recorded with additional notes taken.

Prior information was collected through limited field research with the respondents during the time frame of January to April 2014 to ensure suitability and also to enhance the focus of the questions.

The interviews were then transcribed and saved as PDF to ensure no loss or edits could be made. The data was sorted on desktop and also backed up on USB drive.

4.7 Data Analysis

Thematic analysis was used to identify important themes that were relevant to the research questions and hypotheses. Identify and grouping these themes and then creating profiles of each of the respondents based on the 'their' brands were essential to the research. An exploration of the brand profiles of each respondent was conducted post individual interviews.

4.8 Interviewing Teenagers

Encouraging a teenager to have a conversation in a semi structured research interview is fraught with difficulties. While teens are a tough group to interview, it is well worth the effort to develop strategies to meet the methodological challenges of this type of research (Basset et al 2008).

The lack of power over their lives is one overarching characteristic of being an adolescent. This notion is also explored by (Weber, Miracle, Sheehan 1994) and it can give rise to problems in the interviewing process. Issues are not unlike those encountered with interviewing adults but the probably of privacy being invaded or the construction of irrelevant questions can hinder accurate or useful reporting.

Interviewing teenagers in many surveys has been confined to 18 and 19 year olds to avoid the additional ethical considerations of interviewing essentially children. This is discussed in the section below. Until recently parents and teachers have been asked to report on their children's lives because of concerns about their cognitive ability to process and respond to questions centred on behaviours, perceptions, opinions and beliefs (Scott, 2000).

This is also echoed by (Weber, 1994) where they consider the period between 10 – 14 years one of transition and as the early adolescence has more competence in communicating thoughts and feelings they are still not yet adults but they may strive to be and this may be reflected in their responses.

> *"Children provide reliable responses if questioned about events that are meaningful in their lives".*

She also acknowledges that there are many problems to be solved when the respondents are children including problems of language use, literacy and different stages of cognitive development and whether an adult interviewer can obtain reliable and valid accounts from children. In addition issues of confidentiality and ethics become especially important when interviewing minors.

Standard interviewing practice shows that adolescences can understand and respond to questions constructed for adults however some adaptation in paraphrasing may be required to ensure understanding.

4.9 Ethical Considerations

The ethical considerations when interviewing teenagers needed to be considered once the theme of the research was established. The ethics that apply to interviewing children need to be more stringent than any other interview (Scott, 2010). In this instance particular attention was paid to explaining the research in advance in a comprehensive manner and obtaining consent not just from the parents but also from the teenagers themselves.

This is also emphasised by (Hall, 2005) where his ethical considerations for interviewing children or minors extends to clear explanations of the research and expectations of truthful responses and allowing the respondent to say 'don't know' as an option so as not to assert any undue pressure for a response regardless of whether it's accurate or fabricated.

Each respondent was assured that their responses were confidential but that each interview was being recorded and a transcript made. It would not identify the respondent by name and recordings would only be made available to the research supervisor or the thesis reviewers. Some of the answers and transcript would be part of the actual published thesis and available online and in the college library for review. However again it was clarified that respondent would not be identified by name.

Voice recordings of the interviews were made on an Apple iPhone and respondents assured that once they had been transcribed and emailed to a securely located desktop they would be deleted to ensure additional privacy in the event of the phone being misplaced or stolen.

4.10 Trust

Trust is a major component in interviews with teenagers. Parents knowing and trusting the interviewee is a serious consideration on the selection of respondents. The respondents also need to trust the interviewee to some extent to provide sufficient responses to questions that could provide any useful information for the research topic and to understand the gravity of the research in the life of trying to obtain meaningful responses for something as important as thesis research and the value their input has to the outcome of any results and findings.

4.11 Location

All but one interview was conducted in the kitchen at the table of the interviewee in an attempt to make the interview informal and conversational rather than authoritarian and potentially parental which could signal to the teenagers that more formal responses were needed requiring them to be more guarded and thoughtful in their answers.

All teenagers interviewed had previously been in the house so the informal and familiar setting provided a more conducive environment. One of the interviews was conducted in the family TV room which also provided a more informal environment. Not being overheard was also a consideration but with public visibility or access was also a concern.

4.12 Time & Attention

Teens have a much more limited attention span to adults particularly younger teens so time was a major element of consideration when crafting the research questions and conducting the interviews. The pre-set time was for a twenty minute interview however where it was felt that the respondent was comfortable to extend this to thirty minutes or they had more interest in questions of the research that were more relevant to them then more time was spent extending the focus on those questions.

4.13 Confidentiality

The interviews were started with informing the subjects that this was part of thesis research for a Masters in marketing about brands. Informing the teens that their answers were confidential but that they needed to be recorded gave a sense of importance to the proceedings where their opinion and information mattered and they were one of a small group that were going to help with research into a topic that some found interesting.

4.14 Prior information

Prior interaction with a teen can help improve the interview. All subjects were previously known to the interviewee for a period of more than five years through various education and lifestyle connections so knowing other aspects of the teens live helped with research design.

Using popular culture to gather response from teens was suggested by (Neal, 1995) and by establishing some frame of reference about the brand likes and lifestyle profile of the teen in advance assisted with establishing a dialogue that would yield truthful and more relevant responses.

Having some knowledge and an interest in the subjects most relevant to them and to know how to ask the right questions to ask in relation to specific areas is essential. There is however a concern of insider status of the research in that they will know how participants will respond and complete their sentences as highlighted by (Kanuha, 2000).

5.0 Research Analysis

5.1 Introduction

Qualitative; This research assisted in ascertaining the brand preferences of male teenagers ages 14 and 15 with respect to their construct of identity and product consumption for mobile phones, game consoles, sports brands and sports clubs and leisure activity.

The interviews provided an insight into the reasons **why** they selected particular brands as much as the **what**. In-depth interviews were conducted on particular product sectors to identify brand of choice or evoked set of brands and explore the rationale of why.

The interviews lasted between 20-30 minutes and were conducted in the interviewee's home with one exception. In this environment the interview lasted 40 minutes. The change of location may have provided the respondent with a more familiar environment and provided for a more relaxed and expansive answers to questions.

The questions focused on three main products that are important consumption segments to teens; gaming console, mobile phone, and sports brand. These three product elements make up the highest proportion of teenage expenditure. Their participation and consumption of sports activities and support looks at the time and social activity dimension. The interviews were recorded and transcribed and are located in the appendix of this research.

5.2 Data Analysis

A thematic analysis was conducted of the interviews to search for particular themes that emerged from the research. These were grouped together and examined further. The interviews were analysed for dominant themes.

It should be noted that interviewing teens is a challenge and due to limited vocabulary or comprehension of topic or the fact that they may not be able to articulate and adequately describe their feelings. Also, as some teens have more of a focus on specific lifestyle or activities their enthusiasm is reflected in their more detailed answers.

There were ten dominant brands (Table 1) and twenty seven brands (Table 2) mentioned across three categories for the five respondents. There were four tribal activities across the five respondents and these are displayed in tables in the appendix. There were four tribal communities across the five respondents which are also displayed in (Table 3).

5.2 Analysis & Findings Summary

Ten brands dominate the consumption of five respondents. There were twenty seven brands in total with thirteen peripheral brand mentions. The evoked set of each product was very narrow and the interviews teased out the rationale behind each of the evoked sets. While the interview was quantitative in nature some qualitative features appear in the findings.

The main research question was to examine if evoked sets and brand consumption of teenage males was influenced by their 'tribal involvement' with the aim of identifying how their participant in these communities impacts on their consumption of brands.

5.3.1 Themes>Gaming Activity Introduction

The initial question was around gaming activity. Playing a game console is one of the main activities of teenage males and takes up a considerable amount of their daily activity. Gaming is considered a tribal community activity and has gone from sub-culture to mainstream culture particularly within male dominated 'tribes'.

5.3.1.1 Themes>Gaming Activity>Ownership

In each case respondents had at least one game console but in some cases, several different versions of the same product but also others. The main consoles mentioned by brand were Microsoft Xbox, Sony Play Station and Nintendo Wii. The question focuses on the main console they use. They were also asked explain their rationale for selection, the product attributes and features of **why** they selected it as well as whether the product brand or manufacture brand have any impact on their decision.

Two out of the five respondents had Xboxes and three had PlayStations although in two instances they had both Xbox and PlayStation but they were more active on one particular console. All of the console purchases had been made greater than two years previous, only one had purchased the newer model of the Play Station 4 and only one respondent said that his console was not connected to the internet.

> *"I have an Xbox 360 for about two years that I got as a birthday present and I picked it"*

> *"I have a number of consoles will I name all of them? Xbox, Xbox 360, PlayStation 2, PlayStation 4 and Wii"*

The main usage centred on PlayStation and Xbox game consoles. These were considered the two main products in the evoked set of each of the respondents.

5.3.1.2 Themes>Gaming Activity>Purchase Factors

The peer influence brand was the biggest driver on the purchase option for game consoles. The influence of close friends had the most impact on decision as well as highlighting some aspects of peer pressure and the feelings of 'missing out' and 'my friends had this console so in order to play with the group' this was the one that I had to purchase.

> *"A lot of my friends in primary school had an Xbox so I felt I was missing out".*

> *"My friends would play both consoles and then cross over depending on what friends were playing at the time"*

> *"My friends all have a PlayStation"*

There was also a cost aspect to the purchase of the consoles with respondents citing that one console was slightly more expensive than another and that while games costs were more or less the same having to buy Microsoft points 'added up' over the year as well as having to purchase online access accounts for each. The Xbox while the most used came out as being slightly negative from a cost perspective but the average expenditure on additional points and games was about €200 per year.

> *"PlayStation once you buy the console and games that's it but with Xbox you have to pay more and more for points"*

> *"Cost was a factor as I had to pay for it myself and the games are slightly cheaper".*

When asked what they think of their chosen console and why they went with that option as additional product attributes the user experience differentiation of the consoles was suggested.

> *"It's based on the platform. Although lots of people went for the PlayStation 4, I went for the Xbox 360 because of the user experience".*

"The Xbox is pushing towards being more social. They have marketed it like a media console. Get your Netflix, Sky and use us for everything and turned it into a media thing".

"I know Microsoft is better than Sony. Microsoft computers are very good but for me the PS3 is probably Sony's best product but the Xbox for me is all backed up and has the people behind it"

5.3.1.3 Themes>Gaming Activity>Usage & Privacy

When asked how many hours they spent on their gaming console the general response was three to four hours a day and this was in additional to all but one used their device to connect to the internet to use video sharing sites and on demand services like Netflix.

One of the respondents acknowledged freely that their gaming console consumption was possibility excessive.

"I spend about three to four hours a day on my Xbox. I did hear that the average health amount is 2 – 4 hours".

"I spend about four or five hours a day playing my PlayStation"

Privacy was mentioned by one respondent as a concern with the recent hacking of online accounts for Play Station and although it would put him off purchasing a newer console version his opinion of the parent brand Sony was strong enough to overcome any issues he had around the privacy issue.

"I would ask around for advice on upgrading. I am not the most educated when it comes to them but I would probably stick with Sony are they are very consistent throughout all of their products even though they have been hacked".

When asked what product they would get if they were to upgrade their consoles all but one stayed with the same brand.

The Nintendo Wii was mentioned as a product that they were aware of but they perceived it to be more for younger kids and families that wanted to participate in sport or fun games with all the family rather than 'serious' games.

> *"The Wii would be for people who want to keep fit or don't want to go outside when it's cold. It's for people who want to have a bit of fun*"

5.3.1.4 Themes>Gaming Activity>Advertising

In response to where they found information or advertising for additional product purchase such as games there was a range of channels; adverts on the television, You Tube, friends, gaming web site, on console or in game advertising and social media.

> *"I watch a lot of YouTube so I would see the advertising there and I would click adverts"*

YouTube was offered by three respondents where they sought out information or had viewed comments in related to the most recent game console releases. All respondents followed or had some interaction with each of the two main brands on social media channels such as Facebook and Twitter and they 'followed' the brands online.

5.3.2 Themes>Sports Shoes>Summary

There were three brands selected in relation to sports brands for the five respondents and they directly link to the sporting activity of the respondents. The three brands were; Nike, Adidas and Canterbury. Nike was the one brand that all five mentioned. For the three participants that played soccer Nike and Adidas were the chosen brands. For the two players of rugby Nike and Canterbury were the two brands selected.

5.3.2.1 Themes>Sports Shoes>Brand Selection

The participation of sporting activities had a major impact on the brands selected. Nike and Adidas were the two major brands associated with respondents playing soccer for local football clubs and these respondents also supported Premier League football Teams. Their motivations for purchase were varying;

> *"I would buy Adidas or Nike, probably Nike. I have Nike football boots because they are reliable and cheap"*

> *"Adidas for sports gear and football boots, Adidas tends to fit me better. I have slim long feet so Adidas fits better".*

> *"For runners it would be Nike because of their reputation. They last about 18 months and that's the longest I have had runners for and I would still with them"*

One respondent was a basketball player and a football player and his motivations his brand selection provided some interesting responses.

> *"Always will be Nike"*

> *"For my basketball it's Nike. For football boots though the Nike Mercurial is very slim and I can't get my foot into them so Adidas are my choice. Nike did have wide ones but that stopped recently. I hate Puma. I have Nike runners and Adidas boots for football"*

> *"Adidas go for bigger and brighter. It's good to stand out".*

> *"For basketball one of my friends said have you seen the new Lebron James basketball boots so I looked them up on Google and there were various colours there were some cool green ones but they were limited edition and expensive but I saw the red and black ones".*

5.3.2.2 Themes>Sports Shoes>Influence

Asking each of the respondents where they got information about their sports shoes the influence of friends and team mates was a major factor.

"Mostly off my friends, a lot of information off my friends"

"I would see other members of my team with products and if they said they were good I would consider them and go get them myself"

"My friends would wear those brands"

"My friends mostly wear Nike as they are the most well-known"

"My friends said did you see the new Lebron basketball boots so I looked them up on Google".

5.3.2.3 Themes>Sports Shoes>Cost

There were a few comments made about the costs of sports related products such as football, rugby and basketball shoes in particular.

"I got a pair of Adidas football boots yesterday for €45 euro and they were cheap, there were others for about €80".

"My biggest expenditure is on Sports gear. I would spend about €1500 a year but that includes presents and things".

"They are expensive but they are made to last"(in response to question about cost of Canterbury products for rugby.)

"They were really expensive"

5.3.2.4 Themes>Sports Shoes>Digital Interaction

One of the key objectives of this research was to examine consumption in relation to brands that play a significant role in the leisure and sporting activities of respondents. There were a number of questions relating to the brands that fulfilled this objective.

> *"I follow Nike and Adidas online and nearly every basketball and football player"*

> *"I subscribe to Nike channel on You Tube"*

> *"I looked them up on Google" "Footlocker and NBA Store online had reviews about them"*

> *"I wouldn't be selling anything for them but I do like them on Facebook"*

In all cases the respondents had some form of interaction either through social media or through video sharing with the brands either for information gathering or for other user feedback or sharing and liking posts from the brand.

5.3.2.5 Themes>Sports Shoes>Celebrity Influence

Firstly the questions set out to identify if respondents knew brand ambassadors or celebrity endorsers relating to the products they use. Secondly it asked would they be influenced by celebrity endorsements. There were conflicting responses about whether sports celebrity endorsement of a brand would influence them.

> *"No, I would not be influenced"*

> *"Yes it does influence but it doesn't make me personally change my mind. It gets them out there though"*

> *"Nike has a really bad record with ambassadors like Lance Armstrong and Oscar Pistorius"*

"I would be more influenced by actions than products"

"Yes an endorsement would influence me" in relation to a question if Brian O'Driscoll was promoting a product in relation to rugby

"Yes it would, Lionel Messi" in relation to a question relating to would a celebrity endorsement encourage you to purchase Adidas football boots.

5.3.3 Themes>Sports Clubs>Summary

Consumption of brands by teenagers is considered related to the tribes that they follow. Tribes in this case are football, basketball, rugby teams and a cycling club. It must be also highlighted that there are different questions in relation to actual participation in sport and their consumption as opposed to their support of clubs and their brands. Their online interactions are also different.

5.3.3.1 Themes>Sports Clubs>Participation

Participation in sports clubs or teams needs to be treated slightly differently from supporting a club and there are differences in consumption of brand related products.

> *"I follow Boyne rugby and Leinster. But only support Boyne online as I play for them".*

> *"I used to play for Boyne rugby but now I just play for my school team.*

> *"I play for a local football club"*

> *"I play football for a local club and basketball for a local club and I play both in school too"*

> *"I play football in school and for a local club"*

5.3.3.2 Themes>Sports Clubs>Club Support

Three out of the five respondents supported Liverpool FC, one Manchester United and two supported Leinster rugby. One of the respondents followed both Liverpool and Leinster but only participated in rugby as a sport activity.

"I support Liverpool since I was 7 years old"

"I support Manchester United they are a good club"

"I have supported Liverpool since I was really young"

"I follow Leinster Rugby and the Irish National Team"

"I support Miami Heat in the East and LA Clippers in the West"

5.3.3.3 Themes>Sports Clubs>Club Support>Influence

The question of why they supported a particular team was of interest to establish influence. In one case it was because 'their father, step father and grandfather' all supported Liverpool. In another it was because all my family support Manchester United.

When it came to supporting rugby clubs it was because of parental preference and geographical location that influenced the support for Leinster Rugby. Peer influence was less of a factor in the selection of sports club to support.

5.3.3.4 Themes>Sports Clubs>Club Support>Tribe Consumption

Having branded club merchandise relating to the club that they supported was considered an important part of 'supporting the club'.

> *"I have 7 Man United jerseys, and pictures, books and posters signed by Alex Ferguson"*
>
> *"I have the jersey and away shorts"*
>
> *"I have most of the jerseys, shorts and socks"*
>
> *"I occasionally get the national jersey as they are good and they are one of the few things you can play in"* in response to being asked if they had a rugby jersey
>
> *"I have the jersey from two seasons ago that had my name on it and I am getting the new one for this season. I also had duvet a cover and poster"*.

5.3.3.5 Themes>Sports Clubs>Club Support>Celebrity Influence

There are a number of sports celebrities in each club that lend their name to brands. This is seen more so in Football and Basketball rather than rugby. The question posed was does celebrity have an influence on your consumption of those branded products.

> *"Stephen Gerard and Louis Suarez but not many people like Suarez while he scored lots of goals people preferred Gerard as he is more loyal to Liverpool. He (Suarez) wasn't a very nice person"*
>
> *"Van Persie and Louis Van Gaal the new manager of the club"*
>
> *"Daniel Sturridge and Stephen Gerard, lots of people but I like to stand out a bit. I have these bright blue Adidas boots. Everyone else gets yellow and orange but I like to stand out"* in response to would the celebrity players in the club have an influence on football shoe purchase.

> *"Derek Rose is Adidas, Lebron James is Nike, Kobe Byrant is Nike, Fabregas is Puma, Ozil is Adidas, Ronaldo is Nike and Messi is Adidas"*

5.3.3.6 Themes>Sports Clubs>Club Support>Club Brands

In football there are a number of brands that supply the kit to many of the top league clubs in the UK. By posing the question if they are aware of the kit suppliers and kit sponsors the inference between their club choice and brand choice can be deducted.

> *"Yes, Warrior and I have seen the new boots and I am starting to like them. They are starting to develop more football products. They have nice designs. My friends put them on Snap Chat. Standard Charter sponsor the kit, my friend told me but I always forget". In response to a question about the new team kit suppliers of Liverpool were and information about the kit sponsors.*

> *"I think the jersey is Adidas and the sponsor is Standard Chartered. I think it's a bank"*

> *"Two years ago I could have told you most of about it. Adidas was the kit and Carlsberg was the sponsor but Standard Chartered is now the shirt sponsor"*

> *"Canterbury would be a huge one. Puma and Nike have come up in the world of rugby too"*

> *"Canterbury makes the national kit, Aon sponsored the Women's rugby and I think 02 sponsor the national team and Bank of Ireland sponsor Leinster" in relation to brands and rugby*

> *"Giant, Scott, Focus and Bianchi would be the four brands. Giant is bikes generally but they also do kit. Scott is also US Bikes but they are bikes that would be used on Tours. Giant are more for regular Joes but they also have an exclusive range too. Focus is German but they make bikes but they are a bit heavier. Bianchi also make bikes and they are known for the colour of their bike they are bright blue*

and the winner of the Tour using cycles one of them". In relation to brands and cycling

5.3.3.7 Themes>Sports Clubs>Club Support>Digital interaction

The questions posed were to see how much if any interaction with the clubs they support and follow was online.

"I follow nearly every football and every basketball player online. I don't really comment on the Liverpool Facebook page I just use it for information. I would like the post.

"I like the NBA on Facebook and Miami Heat and follow all the players. It's hard to keep up with the time difference in Ireland. I catch up with clips daily on You Tube".

"I follow Manchester United online. I use Facebook as my main source for information"

"I watch cycling highlight clips on You Tube"

"I follow all the players except for Louis Suarez"

"If they were doing well I would comment 'Come on Liverpool' but I would also be happy say something negative".

5.3.4 Themes> >Mobile Phones>Summary

One of the questions was into mobile phone selection. Activities relating to digital access depend on access options. Having an understanding of their motivations around mobile phone selection helps with an insight into how the communicate digitally with peers and brands and how they consume media.

5.3.4.1 Themes> Mobile Phones>Brand

Out of the five respondents one participant didn't have a phone as he previously had a smart phone and had lost it and he was saving up to replace it. One had an old Nokia and the other three had Smart Phones.

> *"I have a basic Blokia. I got it for free with Vodafone. I didn't pick it but I probably would have picked it anyway it does exactly what I want calls and texts. The odds of losing all your credit in one go are better if you have a smart phone"*

> *"I had a Samsung as it's pretty good and cheap and it doesn't break as easily as the iPhone"*

> *"My friends have Samsung, not a lot of them have an iPhone because they are too dear"*

> *"I have a Samsung. I am on bill pay with my parents on Vodafone. We were due an upgrade and the Samsung was free but I am edging towards an iPhone 4 which is still very good and I could probably get it for free with bill pay".*

> *"I have a HTC. I picked it yes. Looks sturdy I always drop my phones. If I upgraded I would get an Apple as loads of people have it and it's easy to use".*

> *"I use Snap Chat a lot and the Samsung camera is very bad compared to the others. Apple has a better range of apps, FaceTime and iMessage so I feel I am missing out. It's about the technology not the brand"*

"I like the HTC so if I was to get another one I would probably get another HTC. Samsung is a bit girly and the iPhone is dumbed down. They are good and fast and the company is good at making them. It seems like it's been simplified and it's really expensive. HTC is good for the price it is. I know the Apple devices are better but they cost times more so price is a major factor"

5.3.4.2 Themes >Mobile Phones>Purchase Influence

The question tried to identify if peer influence had an impact on the purchase choices of a phone. The level of responses and shorter answers in this section for 4 out of the 5 respondents provided for much less information and the objective was to focus on brand choice, attributes and influence.

"My dad recommended it"

"Picked it in the shop"

"Probably go to the store and ask"

5.3.4.3 Themes> Mobile Phones>Digital communication

None of the respondents followed their chosen brands relating to their mobile phones on social media however they did all follow Apple.

6.0 Discussion >Introduction

In this section the research will be interrupted in relation to the main research questions and secondary aims and objectives. The relationship between the findings and aims will be explored in this section.

6.1 Tribal Involvement

(Godin, 2008) identifies two things to turn a group of people into a tribe; a shared interest and a way to communicate. With this regard being players in a football team, member of a cycling group, member of a basketball team, supporter of a basketball team and league, supporters of a professional football or rugby club or gamers that play platforms all qualify as a shared interest. The way they communicate is now online through smart phones, tablet devices, laptops, desktops, game consoles and smart TV's.

Football clubs in the UK and Ireland have long been a tribe of generations. Tribes seek a shared emotion through experience. (Cova, 2000) Social tribes in particular a football community passes down this shared 'emotion through experience' through generations. The findings in this research suggest that family plays the biggest part in determining what football club you support. The common denominator of post-modern tribes is the community of emotion or passion (Cova, 2000).

A tribe is defined as a network of heterogeneous persons, in terms of age, sex, income etc - who are linked by a shared passion or emotion. A tribe is capable of collective action. Its members are not simple consumers. They are also advocates for the brand (Cova 2001).

The research suggests that respondents are members of multiple tribes simultaneously and their selection of brands corresponds directly with the influence and involvement the brand has on the tribe.

Categorising oneself as a member of a particular group can impart a sense of ownership and belonging, as well as promoting confidence, assertiveness and self-esteem. Fans' allegiance to football clubs is strongly incorporated into their identity

and retained even in the face of negative evaluations by external sources (Wolfson, 2008).

All respondents are active members of their chosen tribes and are influenced in their brand consumption by their tribal involvement. There are three dimensions to the level of involvement. What sport they play, what team they support and what brands they consume? When they play football their chosen brands for sports shoes are part of an evoked set directly related to the sporting activity. For soccer Nike and Adidas and for rugby Nike or Canterbury highlighted.

One brand however stands out above all; Nike. In 2013 Nike had sales revenue of over $24 billion making it the number one sports brand in the world (Nike, 2014). It also features at the top of the Coolest Brand List for the UK and the top of preferred clothing brands and preferred footwear brand (Taking Stock with Teens Survey, 2014).

6.2 Peer Influence

A recent US report suggest, there are six sources of influence on a teen; friends, Internet, television, sports, movies and magazines. (Taking Stock with Teens, 2014) This doesn't match with the findings from this research. The only sources that were offered were friends, the Internet, television, sport and family influence. Magazines and Movies however were outside the scope of this research.

Peer influence is important in their selection of brands when it is motive by tribal participation such as football boots or apparel and game consoles and games. It is less evident in the selection of mobile phones and being the supporter of clubs. The influence in selecting a team to support is more from family and can be a generational influence and a shared family activity.

The influence in mobile phone purchase was an adult such as sales personnel as there is a much higher involvement in both cost and selection for mobile phones. Selection of mobile phones brands and models is extensively about cost rather than brand or features. There are aspiration considerations for the selection of an Apple iPhone which is perceived to be the most expensive but the best.

6.3 Celebrity Influence

Celebrities are part of modern popular culture and media. From this research celebrities do play some part in influencing brand consumption choices. While some respondents state they are not influenced by celebrities they can name all the celebrity endorsers of each of their evoked brand sets. However teenagers are able to recognise the credibility and trust worthiness of a celebrity and can evaluate their contribution to the brand in a positive and negative manner.

6.4 Brand Evoked Sets

The findings show that there are very few brands in the evoked set of a teen. This is in direct contradiction to the level of 'brand conversations' it is suggested a brand has on a daily basis. There is an element of me too in the choices of brand but then within that brand they want to stand out and customisation is how these global brands are looking to achieve this.

6.5 Digital Interaction

Teenagers today are totally wired in one way or another. They use the internet to communicate with friends, social networks and tribes as well as search for information online. This technology is not going away. It is only going to get more developed and infiltrate further into our lives but more so teens as they have never 'not known' this technology. The level to which they interact digitally from this research is driven clearly by tribal associations and communities. Some interactions are passive and some are more highly evolved.

Commenting on a Facebook page, sending a photo of a new product on Snapchat, sharing a picture on Instagram of your new boots all add to the digital experience. Some of the teens had a high level of involvement with technology and had multiple devices to access the internet including mobile. All had at least three ways of accessing the Internet available to them. Mobile phone digital interaction was gauged to be the lowest and then direct brand interactions using social media but video sharing could be considered to make up for that.

Second access means that TV advertising is going to continue declining. The amount of time that was spent on game consoles and then participating in sports left little time to 'watch TV' unless it was on demand or recorded and played back.

The level to which teens were 'wired' in two instances was alarming and potentially damaging. Their construct of self was based around the number of social applications that they were using and following. The over load of information, scores, video clips, product releases was not only pushed out through social media

but also through text alerts to their phone. This could just be an advanced technological teen and every teen is hurtling towards this instant gratification of media and content. It is another area for consideration for future research.

7.0 Thesis Conclusions & Recommendations

The aims of this study were to examine the brand consumption practices of teenage males in the context of their tribal community and digital experience. It took a holistic approach however to identify the brands that were important to the five participants and built up profiles of each respondent from a brand identity perspective. Following on from an introduction to the construct that is 'Teenagerhood' and how brand consumption shapes their identity.

A literature review was compiled examining the relevant academic themes. This was a challenge as there are a number of characteristics that will impact a teenager's consumption. Firstly the level of advertising they are exposed to in childhood. The period during which they were considered a 'tween' and their level of digital experience and involvement as an early teen along with the challenges of interviewing teenagers provided findings that were consistent with more recent academic and research.

The findings indicate that teenagers belong to multiple tribes simultaneously and that their sense of belonging to a tribe is just as important as standing out and being an individual within that community. The external impacts of access to broadband, having digital devices and being able to embrace technology has a significant influence on their interaction with brands. There are of course limitations to this study. Teenage males were selected as a sample because they were more inclined to participate or support some form of sports related activity or club.

The limitations of this study and the time involved only allowed for five interviews to be conducted however with some prior information about the respondents a fuller profile and persona could be established. The study didn't look at the emotional values that they attached to their product consumption but did take into account their purchase aspirations. The interviews were also only twenty to thirty minutes long so a limited amount of information was realised.

They not only relied on word of mouth recommendations from their friends but they were also still under the influence of an element of peer pressure but this declined as they were older. Their propensity to consumer products related to their tribal

community was extensive and celebrity endorsement paid some part in influencing them.

They acknowledged when a celebrity was a good endorser and recognised a bad role model as someone they were not interested in aspiring or emulating and they had very fixed views on the less than stellar behaviour of some brand ambassadors. Their knowledge of brands was extensive but their evoked set of brands they would consider was limited within each product category reviewed.

They had aspirations to acquire luxury brands but they recognised that they did not yet have the financial clout to make such purchasing choices but that they would be willing to 'save' to accumulate them. Practical decisions about sizes and functionality and finance were made very practically and while they wanted the best they could also recognise that cost was a major factor in most of their consumption activities.

While much of their responses concurred with some of the more recent academic literature on brand communities and consumption it could be suggested that more research into the motivations behind teen's aspirations and involvement with tribes is conducted. The use of technology and the impact it has on their growing choices and influences will have wider ramifications for marketers. Much of their expenditure is based on presents and gifts from parents rather than pocket money. These are larger and more considerable products with much higher price tags associated.

It could be suggested that as a teen becomes an adult parents provide them with less 'pocket money' or purchases and older teens much take part-time jobs to afford or acquire the brands. This new economic positioning may reduce a teen's brand selection due to restricted finances and change their evoked set or it may lock in an older teen to a product that they know is tried and tested.

In relation to their practical experience of technology most were extremely proficient in using digital devices. However most if not all of their activity was based on internet access at home or on the go using data on smart phones or free wireless. There was no mention of school as having any influence in their experience or identity.

The Internet and digital media is a changing environment and educators should be ahead of the curve in teaching today's teen about responsibility and acceptable use

however IT studies in the Irish context of secondary school is still not a priority on the ground for educators. Schools should become more involved in educating teens at second level about digital technologies in an effort to ensure safe consumption. Guidelines on limits for time spent on digital devices would be pointless for this generation but acceptable usage advice for parents and teens would be recommended.

A longer term view of brands from Tween to Teen to Adult would make for an interesting study. What brands they would consider at the Tween ages of 11 and 12 through to 13 to 15 and then older teenagers of 16 – 19 particularly in parallel with the rapid paces in technology. Much of the research suggest the what of teenagers consumption behaviour it is the why that is more elusive (Oblinger, 2007).

From this researcher's perspective as a relatively digitally minded individual that works in the field of digital marketing the adoption of digital communications and access to digital devices provides parents, educators and policy with some challenges ahead. The lack of broadband in school to firstly but secondly the skills in understand all the new technologies and opportunities that digital that will help teens construct their future selves. Rather than stumbling upon this technology there should be a structured educational school program that teaches teens how to use the technology for both social and education.

8.0 Appendix

8.1 Table 1: Dominant Brands of Choice

	GAME CONSOLES	SPORTS BRANDS	MOBILE PHONES
Teen 1	Play Station	Adidas Nike	No
Teen 2	Xbox	Adidas Nike	Samsung
Teen 3	Xbox	Nike Adidas	Samsung
Teen 4	Xbox	Nike Canterbury	HTC
Teen 5	Play Station	Nike Canterbury	Nokia

8.2 Table 2: Tribal Activities

	ACTIVITIES	SPORTS CLUBS	GAMING
Teen 1	Soccer Gaming Gaelic	Liverpool	Gamer
Teen 2	Soccer Gaming	Manchester United	Gamer
Teen 3	Basketball Gaming Gaelic	Miami Heat	Gamer
Teen 4	Rugby Gaming	Leinster Rugby	Gamer
Teen 5	Cycling Rugby	Liverpool Leinster Rugby	Gamer

8.3 Table 3: Additional Brands Mentioned by Product

GAMES CONSOLE	Xbox
	Playstation
	Wii
	Microsoft
	Sony
	Nintendo
MOBILE PHONES	HTC
	Samsung
	Nokia
	Apple
SPORTS BRANDS	Nike
	Adidas
	Puma
	Warrior
	Spalding
	Canterbury
	Under Armour
	Giant
	O'Neil's
SPORTS RETAILERS	Elvery's
	Footlocker
SPORTS CLUBS	Liverpool
	Miami Heat
	NBA
	Leinster Rugby
	IRFU
	Manchester United

8.4 Interviews>Respondent 1

Do you play a game console? *Yes.*

What one do you play? *PlayStation*

How long do you have it? *About three years.*

Did you pick it yourself? *Yes, it was a present but I got to pick it.*

Why did you pick it? *Because my friends all have Play Stations*

What does the brand mean to you? *It's the easiest to use I though and the games are a bit cheaper than Xbox.*

If you were to upgrade, what would you buy? *PlayStation 4*

Is there a difference between consoles? *Xbox has better connect system and has better cameras and voice recognition. PlayStation is easier to use it and it has great graphics definition and there is €100 in the difference.*

Was that a factor for you? *Yes as I had to pay for it myself and the games are slightly cheaper.*

Do you follow PlayStation online? *Just what's on the trailers but I don't really watch them. I see the game trailers on the telly.*

Is there advertising for the games on TV? *Yes TV advertising.*

What about You Tube? *Just if the game is out I will watch the trailers for it there.*

Do you follow any of them on social media? *No*

How often do you play PS3 every day? *About four or five hours a day*

Is that separate to TV? *Yes.*

Would you send more time on console or TV? *Console*

SPORTS BRANDS

What sports brand do you like? *Adidas for all sports gear and clothes.*

Why do you like Adidas? *Tends to fit me better, I have Adidas Football boots.*

If you couldn't get Adidas what other brand would you consider? *Nike.*

Do you friends wear these brands? *Mostly Nike as its more, well known. I have slim long feet so they fit me better.*

So the benefits of the brand for you are they fit better. *Yes*

Do you think they are cheaper than Nike? *Not particularly.*

Do you follow them online? *No*

Where would you get your information about new runners or clothes? *Go to the shop and look at them.*

If you saw a new shoe of Facebook would that encourage you go to into the shop to see them? *Yes*

Would celebrity endorsement encourage you to buy them and who do you associate with Addias? *Yes it would. Lionel Messi.*

Do you know of any other celebrities that endorse sports brands? *No.*

Are you on Facebook? *Yes.*

Do you follow any brands on Facebook? *No*

MOBILE PHONES

Do you have a mobile phone? Yes HTC.

Did you pick it? Yes,

Is it the one you wanted and why? Looks sturdy as I always drop my phones

Where did you buy it? *Picked it in the shop*

Do you use the internet to find out more information about it? Use it to look for solutions to phone problems.

Do you buy apps for it? *No.*

What other brands did you consider? *Apple.*

If you bought a new phone tomorrow what would it be? *Apple.*

Why? *As loads of people have it and it's easy to use*

SPORTS CLUBS

What sports clubs do you support? Liverpool

Why do you pick Liverpool? Supporting since I was really young. I like the players and my dad and step dad support Liverpool.

Do you have Liverpool gear? I have most of the jerseys.

Do you have any other merchandise? I have shorts and the socks.

What brands do you associate with Liverpool FC? I think the Jersey is Adidas and the sponsor is Standard Chartered. I think it's a bank.

Do you like Adidas more because it's associated with Liverpool and supplied the kit? *Yes I like Adidas more because of Liverpool.*

Do you follow Liverpool online? No

8.5 Interviews>Respondent 2

GAME CONSOLE

Do you play a game console? Yes.

And why did you pick that particular one? Specs on the Xbox are better than the PS3.

Where did you find out about the specs? Online gaming website www.IGN.com

How long have you had the Xbox? 7 Years.

If you are going to upgrade or change your Xbox what would you get? Something different, a PS4.

Other than the Xbox do you have anything else? Yes a Gaming console where I bought the parts and got a company to assemble it.

Do you play the same games as Xbox or PlayStation or Wii? No they are different as the Xbox and Wii wouldn't have high enough specifications to play the games I play.

Do your friends play on the same console or do they play across a few? They would play on a few and cross over depending on what their friends were playing.

In terms of Xbox where do you get your information? I would probably go on You Tube and go to channel to IGN which is a games network.

Where would you see the advertising for new games? I watch a lot of You Tube so I would see the advertising for it there and through adverts.

Do you ever click on the ads? Yes I do.

In the last 12 months how much would you have spent on games and points for the Xbox? 200 Euro

Do you think there is much difference between the various game consoles? Yes some consoles have better specifications so would like to play better spec.

Would you consider the prices the same? No so when Microsoft sold their new Xbox it was 100 Euro more expensive than Play station so that is why Sony sold more consoles than Xbox.

Do you follow any of them on Facebook or twitter? Yes I follow Xbox on Twitter and I follow multiple gaming web sites on the PC.

If you saw a new release would that encourage you to buy it? Yes that's where I would get my information about it and see if I have enough money to get it.

SPORTS BRANDS

Do you participate in Sports? Yes, Soccer.

Do you play for school team or club? A Club

What would be your favourite brand for sports clothes? Adidas or Nike, probably Nike.

Are you current football boots? Nike.

Why would you have that brand? Because they are reliable and pretty cheap.

Where do you get information do you follow Nike online? No.

Where would you find out about new Products? Mostly off my friends, a lot of information off friends.

And would your friends wear those same brands? Yes

What other brands would you consider outside of Adidas or Nike? They are the main ones.

And if your friends were wearing them would that encourage you? Yes even more so

Do you follow any of them on social media? Yes I subscribe to Nike on You Tube channel.

MOBILE PHONES

Do you have a mobile phone? No.

If you did have one what would it be? Samsung Galaxy.

Why would you pick that? Like the look and it's pretty good and cheap and doesn't break as easily as an iPhone.

Would you consider an iPhone? I would if I had a million euro but no.

Do your friends have Samsung? Yes Samsung, not a lot of them have iPhone.

Why do you think that is? Because they are too dear.

When you go to get a phone where will go you to get information on it? Probably go to the store and ask.

Would you ask your friends? No

SPORTS CLUBS

Do you follow any sports clubs or associations? Yes Manchester United.

Why do you support Manu U? They are a good club.

What brands would you associate with Man U? They are having a new kit launched soon but I am not sure with who. Aon Insurance is their current sponsor?

Do you follow them online? Yes

Do you have any Man U items? Like jerseys? Yes I have 7 Man United jerseys. I have pictures/posters and books signed by Alex Ferguson.

What other brands do you associate with the club? Nike

Who would be the principle ambassadors associated with Man U? Van Persie, Louis Van Gaal the new manager.

Which would you use more Facebook, Twitter or You Tube? My source of information would be Facebook.

 Is that your principle place for information? I would go to Facebook.

Do you think celebrities Van Persie, Rooney would that affect your decision to buy the boots? For me personally no but I other people who would but they would be other peoples role models so they would.

Would your friends support Man U? No but most of my family support Man United.

8.6 Interviews>Respondent 3

GAME CONSOLES

Do you have a game console? Yes, will I name them all? Xbox, Xbox 360, PlayStation and Wii.

What's your favourite? Xbox. How long have you had the Xbox? Seven years.

What do you think about the Xbox experience? It's very pushing towards being social. They have marketed it more like a media console. Get your Netflix and sky, use this for everything. More turned it into a media thing.

Do you use it for more than playing games? Netflix and Sky.

Would you upgrade the Xbox? Yes.

What would be your next upgrade? Xbox One

How much would you send on games and points a year? 200 -250 Euro.

Do you participate in any online groups for them? No.

Where would you get information on them though? You Tube channels

Would you find information there about game releases? Yes.

Where else? There would be ads on Xbox, before you start playing a game there would be adverts for them which will show coming soon.

What would influence you to purchase a game? Who made it? The studio.

Would your friends have a influence on the games you buy? Yes very influenced by friends opinions.

Of all the consoles you have which would be your favourite? Xbox 360

SPORTS BRANDS

What sports do you play? Rugby.

What brands do you associate with Rugby? Canterbury they make all the Rugby clothes and under armour.

Would you buy all your gear from Canterbury? Yes.

Would you buy all your boots there too? Yes.

Do you follow them online? No.

Where would you go to find out information about them? Elvery's but not online.

Where would you see ads? I would see other members of my team with products and if they say they are good I would consider them and go get them myself.

Do they all wear the same brand? Half would wear Canterbury the other half would wear Nike.

What would be most popular in boots? Nike

In terms of other things around brand around rugby do you follow? Leinster Rugby and the IRFU I follow them.

Do you know who sponsors rugby in general? No.

What about brands for rugby? Canterbury is the main one. They only specifically make them for Rugby.

What do you like about it? Good quality and made to last.

Do you think it's expensive? Yes.

Do you think it's expensive because it's rugby? No just it's very strong and made to last.

Would a celerity endorsement encourage you to buy a product? Yes. If Brian O'Driscoll was endorsing something would that influence you to purchase? Yes.

MOBILE PHONE

Do you have a mobile? HTC.

Why did you pick a HTC? It seemed good value for what was offered and my dad recommended it.

Is there any other phone you would like to have? Not really any others that I like. I like the HTC so if I was to buy another one I would probably get another HTC.

Why would you not consider others? Samsung seems a bit girly. The iPhone is dumbed down they are good and fast the company is good at making them. It seems like it's been simplified and it's really expensive.

What would you consider are the benefits of the HTC? It's good for the price it is. I know the Apple devices are better but they cost almost 7 times more.

So price is a major factor? Yes

SPORTS CLUBS & ASSOCIATIONS

Do you follow any clubs? Yes I follow Boyne and Leinster? But I only support Boyne Rugby online as I play for them.

Do you support football clubs? No.

Are there other sports you follow? Just Rugby.

What brands do you associate with the club? Canterbury

8.7 Interviews>Respondent 4

GAME CONSOLE

Do you have a game console? Yes I have a PlayStation 2.

Have you had it long? About 6 or 7 years

Do you play online? No, it's not connected to the Internet.

What do you think about the PS2? As a brand I think that they are good but they got hacked. The newer models got hacked so that would put me off buying a new one.

Are there differences between Xbox and PS2? PlayStation is more once you buy the console and games that is it with the Xbox you seem to just pay more and more.

All the add-ons? Yes all the points cost money.

If you were to upgrade what one would you go for? I would ask around for advice. I know I am not the most educated when it comes to them but I would probably stick with Sony as they are very consistent throughout all their products even though they have been hacked they are more consistent.

Where would you get your information from? Friends.

Would you look online for information? Yes I would but I would be very conscious about bias.

So in relation to P24 do you particulate in online forums? I probably would if they came up on my feeds. I wouldn't be selling stuff for them put it that way.

SPORTS BRAND

What would your favourite sports brand be for sports clothes and shoes?

For runners it would be Nike because of their reputation. They last about 18 months and that's the longest I have had a pair of runners for and I would stick with them and also they are not exorbitantly priced.

What about sports clothes? Whatever is cheapest the brand doesn't matter to me.

Are there any other brands that you would consider other than Nike? If you couldn't get Nike I would probably get Canterbury for Rugby because they produce a lot of jerseys and boots.

Would your friends wear those brands? Yes they would

Do you know any sports people associated with Nike? Yes they have a really bad record with ambassadors like Lance Armstrong, Oscar Pistorius and a whole rake of people.

Do you think it's damaged them in any way? Yes I think they probably have to spend more in marketing to try and compensate for it. They probably can't lean on their ambassadors as much as they would like to like Adidas leans on Stephen Gerard for Liverpool but I don't think oh yes Lance Armstrong he wears our cycling top isn't going to work anymore.

MOBILE PHONES

Do you have a mobile? It's a basic Blokia. I got it for free with Vodafone so I got if for free.

It wasn't one you picked? No but I probably would have picked it any way it does exactly what I want it to calls and texts. The odds are you losing your credits all in one go are much better than if you were on a smart phone.

Would you go with any other brands if you bought one again? I would probably go for a Sony!!!

Do you follow any of them online? No but I do, there is an awful lot made out about various CEO's like Steve Jobs and Bill Gates and I follow them as individuals.

Would they influence you to purchase a product? Yes if it was their message yes.

SPORTS CLUBS AND ASSOCIATIONS

What sport do you follow and what sport do you participate in? Cycling and Rugby

What sports do you follow? Soccer

What teams do you support for Soccer? Liverpool

Let's talk about cycling first? Can you name any brands associated with cycling? Giant, Scott, Focus and Bianchi would be the four of them. Giant is bikes generally but they also have kit. Scott is also US bikes but they are bikes that are used on Tours. Giant are more used by regular Joes but they also have exclusive range too. Focus are German and they make bikes but they are a bit heavier. Bianchi also make bikes and they are known for the colour of their bike it's a light blue and the winner of the Tour usually has one of them.

What is your bike brand? Giant and I probably will always have Giant unless I am going to spend about two grand unless I make a lot of money I won't be leaving

Giant. I have it under a year but my dad also cycles giant. I heard about it from bike shops in general in Ireland they sell the mostly Giant.

In terms of Giant do you follow them online? Yes and I do make a point and I would go out of my way to.

What kind of costs is involved? My bike to buy new costs about 800 euro.

Where would you buy your clothes? Through the cycling club I am involved in.

Do they have a Facebook group? Yes but it's more informative rather than trying to market it.

Do you watch the Tour de France? Yes I will watch on clips on highlights on You Tube.

Do you follow a rugby team? Irish National Team and Leinster rugby and do you follow them online? Yes both of them.

Do you have any of the jerseys? Yes, I occasionally will get the national jersey for what they are they are good and they are one of the few things you can play in as the material they are made of you can play in them without getting it torn.

Do you follow any of them online? Yes I follow a lot of the players online but personally it doesn't matter to me.

What about brand? Canterbury would be a huge one. Puma and Nike have come up in the world of rugby though too.

Do you follow them online? Yes

If they had a new product would it influence you to buy it online? Yes a small bit it would because of their reputation. They would have a large market share.

Do you know who sponsors the kits? Canterbury supplies national kit. Aon sponsored Women's Rugby and I think it could be 02 that sponsor the national team and Bank of Ireland that sponsor Leinster.

What football team do you follow? Liverpool

How long have you supported Liverpool? Yes since I was 7 years old.

And do any of your friends support Liverpool? Some do but up until 2 or 3 years ago most would have followed Manchester United.

Do you know any of the brands associated with Liverpool?

Eh, two years ago I could have told you most about it. Adidas was the kit and Carlsberg was the sponsor but Standard Chartered is now the shirt sponsor.

Do you follow them online? Yes I do and all the players except for Louis Suarez.

Would you make comments on the Liverpool Facebook page? Yes like if they were

doing well like 'Come on Liverpool' but I would be happy to say something negative but it's not based on an artificial personal.

So even when they are doing badly you are still a fan? Yes but I don't buy the jersey when they are doing badly?

Do you have the Jersey? Yes and I have away shorts that I got in a sale.

If Stephen Gerard was a brand ambassador for a new product would that encourage you to buy it? No but I would be influenced by the sort of things he did. If he did something for charity then they would come up in your estimation.

Who would be the biggest ambassador for Stephen Gerard? Stephen Gerard and Louis Suarez but not as many people like Suarez while he scored loads of goals and people were calling his name they prefer Gerard as he's more loyal to Liverpool. And he (Suarez) wasn't a very nice person.

8.8 Interviews>Respondent 5

GAME CONSOLES

Do you have a game console? Yes I have an Xbox 360

How long have you had it? About two and a half years and I got it for my birthday as a present.

Did you want an Xbox specifically? A lot of my friends in primary school had an Xbox and I felt I was missing out.

So that influenced you? Yes

Do your friends have Xbox? Yes

What do you think of the Xbox? It's very well made purely based on the system, although lots of people when to for the PS4 I went for the Xbox 360 because of the user experience.

Was there a price issue, was that a factor? I heard the Xbox one was dearer but games were the same and they would compete against each other.

What about Xbox points? I think they are about the same

Do you follow Xbox and PS4 online? Yes both of them as it's good to know what is going on with PlayStation too to see where they are both at and I know Microsoft are better than Sony but Microsoft the computers are very good but for me the PS3 is probably their best product. Xbox for me is all backed up it has the people behind it.

Do you think the Wii is for younger kids? It has different kinds of games. It has like Lego game that is for a younger market but it's still a bit of craic for teenagers.

If you had a chance to upgrade what console would you buy? Xbox One, I follow You Tube channels a lot and You Tube comment a lot on Xbox one that was released at Christmas.

Do you use Facebook? Yes, Twitter, Instagram and Vine and You Tube definitely.

How many hours would you use Xbox a week? About three to four hours a day. I did hear that average healthy amount is 2 – 4 hours on TV.

SPORTS BRANDS

What's your favourite sports brand? Always has been always will be Nike.

What about any Nike products in particular? For my basketball it's Nike. For football boots though the Nike Mercurial is very slim I can't get my foot into them so Adidas are my choice. Nike did have wide ones but that stopped. I recently had

this problem with a few brand. I hate Puma but my feet are quite wide as I am a 10 ½ and men's sizes don't come in half so Adidas. I have Nike shoes and Adidas boots for football.

So for you the factor influencing you is how it fits? Yes and also Adidas are very nice and they go for bigger and brighter. And it's good to stand out.

Do you think there is a price different? Depends on how new they are. I got Adidas yesterday and they were 45 euro and they were cheap and there were others going for 80.

Do you know who would be the brand ambassadors for the different brands? Yes Derek Rose is Adidas, Lebron James is Nike, Kobe Bryant is Nike, Fabregas is Puma, Ozil is Adidas, Ronaldo is Nike and Messi is Adidas.

Do you thinking having celebrities makes people buy the products? Yes it definitely does but it doesn't make me personally change my mind. It gets them out there. For Fabregas for example, the only really good idea Puma has was the two different colour shoes. It's about being standing out rather than fashion.

Do your friends were those brands similar to you? Yes Nike and Adidas.

Do you follow any of them online? I follow Adidas and Nike online. I follow nearly every football and every basketball player online.

So if they were launching new product would you see it come up on your feed? Yes mostly through my feed. So yes I would see them. I got Basketball boots in America for my birthday as they were really expensive. I got Nike Lebrons.

Did you see them online the boots before you bought them? No, one of my friends said did you see the new Lebron basketball boots and I looked them up on Google and you would see them online and I saw different colours and there was some cool green ones but they were limited edition and expensive but then I saw the red and black ones but I didn't really like the blue even though they would have gone with all my team sports.

Do you remember the site you saw them on? Foot Locker and NBA store and you get reviews about them when people recommend boots and said for very slim foot and I have a low arch so they support that.

How much do you think you would spend on basketball and soccer clothing a year? I got a new basketball, Nike shoes, new football boots and new runners and it was about 220 Euro in total just yesterday which was ridiculous. If I added up all the rest

I have just hit a growth spurt so I need to get loads of things. I mainly get my things for presents for Christmas and birthdays.

So your biggest expenditure is your sports gear? Yes it's not games. I would spend about €1500 per year including presents and things.

MOBILE PHONE

Samsung, did you pick it. I am on bill pay with my parents on Vodafone. Yes as we were due an upgrade and Samsung was free but I am edging towards an iPhone 4 which is still very good and I would probably get it for free with the bill pay.

 Why would you pick an iPhone for you upgrade? I use Snap chat a lot and the Samsung camera is very bad compared to others. Apple has a better range of apps, face time and iMessage. So I feel I am missing out.

So your very technology driven. Yes its' about the technology not the brand.

Do you follow them online? No

SPORTS CLUBS

What sports do you play? Soccer, Gaelic, Basketball and Golf

In terms of Soccer who do you follow? Liverpool

Do you follow them online? Yes Facebook, Twitter not really YouTube and Instagram.

How long have you followed them? Since I was six my dad supported West Ham when he was younger but now I support Liverpool he kind of supports them now too.

Do you have any jerseys? I have the jerseys from two seasons ago I had the one with my name on the back and I had the Carlsberg on it. I am going to get a new one this season. I had the duvet and a poster.

Do your friends support Liverpool? Manchester and Liverpool mostly

Do you know the new kit provider? Yes Warrior and I have seen the new boots and I am starting to like them. They are starting to develop new football products. They have nice designs. My friends put them on Snap Chat.

Do you know who the Liverpool jersey sponsor is? Standard Charter

Do you know who they are? No but my friend told me and I always forget.

Would you comment on the Liverpool page? Not really I just use it for information.

If they won would you make a comment? No I would just like the post.

Who is the celebrity for Liverpool? Daniel Sturridge and Stephen Gerald

If they bought out a new product would that influence you to buy it? Loads of people would but I like to stand out a bit. I have these bright blue boots everyone else gets yellow and orange but I like standing out.

What about basketball who do you follow? I support Miami Heat and LA Clippers in the West.

Do you follow the NBA online? Yes I like it on Facebook and Miami Heat and follow all the players. It's hard to keep up with the time difference in Ireland.

Do you watch the clips on You Tube? Yes I catch up with it daily.

Do you have any merchandise? Yes my Lebron Miami Heat jersey which I will have to burn now

Would you buy the Cleveland gear now? 'Hell no, that's a band wagoner'.

How do you watch the games? I record them on the sports channel. ESPN station does them. I would watch the main games for Miami Heat to catch up. I even get the scores on my phone. I have an app that catches me up with everything.

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