



**The Influence of Brands, Self-concept and Reference Group
towards the Willingness to Pay Premium of Career Women in
Ireland in Fashion Clothing Industry**

Nadja Faris

*A thesis submitted Partial fulfillment for the
MSc in International Business*

Submitted to the National college of Ireland, August 2019

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to determine the relationship of brands, self-concept and reference group and the willingness to pay premium of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing. The study revealed that fashion clothing in Ireland is growing vastly and in correlation to the growing number of career women, influence factors such as brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group, they are motivated into willing to pay premium for fashion clothing.

The methodology for this research followed a quantitative research design where primary data were obtained by quantitative research design. A total of 152 participants responded to the survey distributed where data are then collected and gathered in SPSS. Based on the results from the findings of the research, it was learnt that career women in Ireland are willing to pay premium in fashion clothing where brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group had a shown positive relationship with the willing to pay premium. Secondary data were acquired through literature review to develop theoretical understanding, objectives and to support the findings. According to the findings, recommendations are also stated where marketers can apply for improvement in the business of an organisation to further understand the willingness to pay premium within career women in Ireland especially in fashion clothing.

Keywords: Willingness to pay premium, career women, fashion clothing, brand status, brand attitude, self-concept, reference group

Declaration Page

National College of Ireland
Research Students Declaration Form
(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

Name: Nadja Faris

Student Number: x17162297

Degree for which thesis is submitted: MSc in International Business

Material submitted for award

- (a) I declare that the work has been composed by myself.
- (b) I declare that all verbatim extracts contained in the thesis have been distinguished by quotation marks and the sources of information specifically acknowledged.
- (c) My thesis will be included in electronic format in the College Institutional Repository TRAP (thesis reports and projects)
- (d) I declare that no material contained in the thesis has been used in any other submission for an academic award.

Signature of research student: _____

Date: _____

Submission of Thesis to Norma Smurfit Library, National College of Ireland

Student name: **Nadja Faris** Student number: **x17162297**

School: **School of Business** Course: **MSc in International Business**

Degree to be awarded: **MSc in International Business**

Title of Thesis: **Influence of Brands, Self-concept, Reference Group towards the Willingness to Pay Premium of Career Women in Ireland in Fashion Clothing**

One hard bound copy of your thesis will be lodged in the Norma Smurfit Library and will be available for consultation. The electronic copy will be accessible in TRAP (<http://trap.ncirl.ie/>), the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository. In accordance with normal academic library practice all thesis lodged in the National College of Ireland Institutional Repository (TRAP) are made available on open access.

I agree to a hard-bound copy of my thesis being available for consultation in the library. I also agree to an electronic copy of my thesis being made publicly available on the National College of Ireland's Institutional Repository TRAP.

Signature of Candidate: _____

For completion by the School:

The aforementioned thesis was received by _____ Date: _____

This signed form must be appended to all hard bound and electronic copies of your thesis submitted to your school

Acknowledgment

All praise to the Almighty for his mercy and compassion which allowed me to complete this research paper. He has managed to ease this journey even through tough times.

First and foremost, I would like to express my gratitude and appreciation to my advisor, Jason Healy for his kindness, understanding, advice and time. I am utmost grateful especially for his guidance throughout this whole journey by providing helpful comments, feedbacks and suggestions.

A word of thanks goes to my beloved parents who sent me abroad and providing the opportunity for me to study overseas. Their endless motivation, strength and support helped me to complete this research paper with success. Although it was tough being far away, they never stopped motivating me and providing prayers for my success.

I would also like to give many thanks to my friends for the constant support and motivation especially during times when I felt lost. They had managed to guide me through a few tough times that I had encountered while completing this research paper.

I am grateful to the lecturers and staff at National College of Ireland that has helped and guided me to obtain new knowledge which I am able to practice in the years to come.

Finally, to those who were involved directly or indirectly throughout this research, I would like to give my appreciation for being there at the right time by lending their hands and providing opinions so that this research paper was able to be completed with success.

Table of Contents

Abstract.....	i
Declaration Page	ii
Acknowledgment	v
Chapter 1: Introduction	
1.1 Research Background	1
1.1.1 Career Women in Ireland.....	1
1.1.2 Fashion Branding	2
1.1.3 Fashion Branded Clothing among Career Women in Ireland.....	2
1.2 Purpose of Study: Justification of Research	3
1.3 Research Aims and Objectives.....	4
1.4 Research Questions.....	4
1.5 Hypotheses	5
1.6 Summary of Research Methodology.....	5
1.7 Structure of the Research.....	6
Chapter 2: Literature Review	
2.1 Chapter Introduction.....	8
2.2 Brand	9
2.2.1 Brand Status	9
2,2,2 Brand Attitude	10
2.3 Self-concept.....	11
2.4 Reference Group	11
2.5 Willingness to Pay Premium.....	12
2.6 Career Women and/or Career Women in Ireland.....	13
2.7 Understanding the Willingness of Career Women to Pay Premium	14
2.8 Fashion Clothing and the Involvement of Career Women Willingness to Pay Premium.....	15
2.9 Understanding Brands, Self-concept, Reference Group towards the Willingness to Pay Premium of Career Women in Ireland in Fashion Clothing	16

2.10 Literature Review Conclusion.....	19
Chapter 3: Research Methodology	
3.1 Chapter Introduction.....	20
3.2 Research Design	20
3.2.1 Quantitative Study	22
3.2.1.1 Experimental and Survey Research Strategy	23
3.3 Time Frame and Research Plan	23
3.4 Data Collection Method	25
3.4.1 Sampling: Research Participants	25
3.4.2 Primary Data: Survey	26
3.4.2.1 Questionnaire Design	26
3.4.2.1.1 Structure of Questionnaire	28
3.4.3 Secondary Data	29
3.5 Hypotheses.....	30
3.6 Data Analysis	31
3.6.1 Validity and Reliability Analysis	32
3.6.1.1 Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test	33
3.6.2 Descriptive Analysis	33
3.6.3 Correlation Analysis	35
3.6.3.1 Pearson Correlation Analysis	35
3.6.4 Multiple Regression Analysis.....	36
3.7 Ethics.....	37
Chapter 4: Research Findings and Analysis	
4.1 Chapter Introduction.....	39
4.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents	39
4.2.1 Respondents Living in Ireland	41
4.2.2 Employment Status of Respondents	42

4.2.3 Education Level of Respondents	43
4.2.4 Age of Respondents.....	44
4.2.5 Annual Income of Respondents	45
4.2.6 Marital Status of Respondents	46
4.3 Reliability Test	47
4.4 Descriptive Analysis	48
4.4.1 Willingness to Pay Premium.....	48
4.4.2 Brand Status	49
4.4.3 Brand Attitude	50
4.4.4 Self-concept	51
4.4.5 Reference Group	52
4.5 Pearson Correlation Coefficient	53
4.6 Multiple Regression Analysis.....	54
4.6.1 Model Summary	54
4.6.2 Multiple Regression (ANOVA)	55
4.6.3 Multiple Regression (Coefficient)	56
4.7 Hypotheses Result	57
4.7.1 Hypotheses 1.....	57
4.7.2 Hypotheses 2.....	58
4.7.3 Hypotheses 3.....	58
4.7.4 Hypotheses 4.....	59
Chapter 5: Discussion	
5.1 Chapter Introduction.....	60
5.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents	60
5.3 Discussion on Findings	60
Chapter 6: Conclusion, Limitation and Recommendation	
6.1 Chapter Introduction.....	61

6.2 Conclusion	61
6.3 Limitation.....	64
6.4 Recommendation.....	65
References.....	67
Appendices.....	77

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research Background

This research is to discover the factors influencing the willingness to pay premium towards the buying behaviour of career women in Ireland especially in the fashion clothing industry. The matters focused in this research is very much relevant as it involves the current issues where the buying behaviour of consumers differ from one consumer to another towards fashion clothing and the number of career women in Ireland is increasing over the years. Chapter 1 will provide readers with the essential information for further understanding of the following chapters. In most parts of the world years ago, many women were not exposed in being involved with the ‘working life’ or being independent. However, over the years this concept and thinking has changed where women are now being more involved in being employed and are fighting for their rights. In a recent development in Ireland, there has been an increase in the women’s labour force employment and participation where the increase of women employment rate is from 37% in 1993 to 42% in 2004 (Russell, *et. al.*, 2009). The increase in number of career women in Ireland has a high potential in contributing to the growth of the fashion clothing industry where market researchers are constantly focused on.

1.1.1 Career Women in Ireland

Ireland represents a country with a population of over 4 million and to be exact as of April 2018, the population has reached to 4.9 million (cso.ie, 2018). Over time, the population of females has surpassed the population of males and as of 2018, it is recorded that there is a population of 2.5 million females in Ireland (cso.ie, 2018). Moving onto the employment rate, there has been an increase in percentage of employment rate in Ireland especially after the economic crises and with the data

provided, this proves that there is a high possibility that the number of employment for women has also been increasing. As of 2016, the percentage of employment rate of women in Ireland is at 59.5%. The gap between employment rate between men and women is at 10.4% as of the year 2016 showing that the women employment rate is catching up to men employment rate as compared to the previous years where the gap in 2015 was at 11.1%. (cso.ie, 2018).

1.1.2 Fashion Branding

Fashion branding according to Zeb et al., (2011) is defined as a ‘behavioural observable fact evidence in a diversity of material and non-material contexts’ which in other words mean that a consumer can attain both tangible and intangible benefits through fashion branding. Brands has always played a major role towards the buying behaviourr of consumers and with the association of fashion lifestyles, marketers are constantly giving extra attention to this matter. The awareness of fashion branding established to the public will eventually convince consumers to invest in clothes (Bruce and Kratz, 2007). One of the many reasons that marketers are very focused on brands is to achieve differentiation through competitive advantage (Zeb *et al.*, 2011). Consumers are dependent on brands and places trust towards it because it is able to avoid uncertainty and quality related issues (Elliot and Yannapoulou, 2007). A study in Malaysia was conducted and it was found that the availability of shopping malls, brand outlets in Malaysia, consumers are prone and motivated into purchasing branded goods (Tajuddin, *et al.*, 2014).

1.1.3 Fashion Branded Clothing among Career Women in Ireland

Considering the fashion clothing in Ireland, it has been growing tremendously, creating many organisation to drive their brand name to be known to the consumers. Perhaps consumers in Ireland want to be more involved with what they wear to achieve a more meaningful relationship. The involvement of branded fashion clothing within the career

women community in Ireland is important because it reflects their connections (Banister and Hogg, 2004) and identify themselves with others (Piamphongsant and Mandhachitara, 2008). As this study looks into career women between the ages of 18 until 50 years of age, the population sums up to an estimation of 1,180.6 million (cso.ie, 2018).

1.2 Purpose of Study: Justification for Research

The purpose of this study is to examine the influences of brands towards the buying behaviour of career women in Ireland especially in the fashion clothing industry. A survey of career women consumers between the ages of 18 – 50 in Ireland will be conducted in this research where data will be collected and analysed to produce a certain result which can be explained and to provide recommendations particularly to marketers. There are four contribution to brand that has been identified which influences the buying behaviour of career women. These contributions include brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group that will be studied to further understand which one will contribute most, which influences the willingness to pay premium of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing.

However, there has not been enough research which looks into the factors influencing the willingness to pay premium towards the buying behaviour of career women in Ireland especially in the fashion industry. This study could help the marketers to consider and obtain a better understanding for improvement in their products and services. Although there has not been many research done, a few related past studies showed that the number of employed women is increasing in Ireland and this could be a contribution towards the increase in purchases of branded fashion clothing by career women. According to a recent report published by World Economic Forum (2018) Ireland is in the top ten position among the most advanced countries globally in narrowing the gender gap which proves that women are catching up in the employment status. In a recent study, it has been identified that the influence of brand status, brand attitude and self-concept is the most significant in the involvement of female consumers

in fashion clothing (Zeb, *et. al.*, 2011). There is definitely a gap and limitation in this study as there has not been many research on this particular area which is the more reason for this study to be conducted.

1.3 Research Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research is to examine the important factors of brand that influences the buying behaviour of career women especially in the fashion clothing industry in Ireland. The objective of this study is to:

RO1 To determine the relationship between brand status and the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing

RO2 To determine the relationship between brand attitude and the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing

RO3 To determine the relationship between self-concept and the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing

RO4 To determine the relationship between reference group and the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing

1.4 Research Question

Research question are questions inquired by the researcher to assist in a research by providing guidance and structure towards the procedure of collecting and analyzing information to achieve the purpose of a study. There are several research questions intended for this study which were based on the variables as follows:

RQ1 What is the relationship between the influence of brand status towards willingness to pay premium of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing

RQ2 What is the relationship between the influence of brand attitude towards willingness to pay premium of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing

RQ3 What is the relationship between the influence of self-concept towards willingness to pay premium of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing

RQ4 What is the relationship between the influence of reference group towards willingness to pay premium of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing

1.5 Hypotheses

Hypotheses is a prediction or assumption on a certain expected outcome. The outcomes are referred on an existing knowledge where these existing knowledge can be specified to either be accepted or rejected.

In this research, the researcher provides predictions based on the relationship between the dependent which is the willingness to pay premium with the independent variables which includes brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group explained as follow:

H1: Brand status has a positive relationship with the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland when buying fashion clothing

H2: Brand attitude has a positive relationship with the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland when buying fashion clothing

H3: Self-concept has a positive relationship with the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland when buying fashion clothing

H4: Reference group has a positive relationship with the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland when buying fashion clothing

1.6 Summary of Research Methods

Primary data collection was performed through questionnaires based on survey method. Questionnaires was then collected to identify the significance of the factors that affects the brand in fashion clothing industry towards the buying behavior of career women in Ireland. A five point likert scale was used to measure all the variables. The scale varies from 1 representing strongly disagree, 2 representing disagree, 3 representing neutral, 4 representing agree and 5 representing strongly agree respectively. A total of 152 career women respondents participated in this study.

1.7 Structure of the Research

Chapter 2 reviews the applicable literature which discuss brand (brand status and brand attitude), self-concept, reference group, willingness to pay premium, career women and/or career women in Ireland, understanding the willingness of career women to pay premium, fashion clothing and the involvement of career women willingness to pay a premium and understanding brands, self-concept and reference group towards the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing.

Chapter 3 is the research methodology section where the collection and analysis of data from participants is presented, followed by the discussion of ethics surrounding the data collected, the validity and reliability of the data collected and produced.

The findings of this research is based from the research questions that will be listed and

discussed in chapter 4 and the analysis of the research questions will also be included in this chapter.

Chapter 5 consists of the discussion where the findings of the primary data research from chapter 4 will be discussed and compared to the secondary data gathered for their similarities and differences.

The final chapter, chapter 6 consists of conclusion and recommendation that is based on the data that has been discovered. The influences, recommendations and limitations for this research will be clarified especially for future references especially for future business opportunities.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Chapter Introduction

A literature is a research which has already been executed and published (Quinlan, 2011, p. 481), and it is an evaluation of articles from professional literature or journals and books that is related to a particular study (Cooper and Schindler, 2014, p. 94). This chapter provides the findings of secondary research carried out by the author of the present thesis, which involved rigorous review of peer-reviewed journals, government publications, and research textbooks predominantly, locating any findings relevant to the present study. In identifying gaps, it is hoped that this chapter will provide a better insight into the reasons for this study and highlight the need for more.

This research looks into the influences of brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group towards the willingness to pay premium of career women in Ireland and especially in branded fashion clothing industry where there has been a growth with a revenue of \$3.7 billion in 2017 in the fashion industry in Ireland (MarketLine Industry Profile, 2018). The growth of branded fashion clothing could be as a result from the increase of the employment level after the economic crisis which occurred between the year 2006 and 2007, displaying a strong increase in the Irish consumer spending. The growth in population of Ireland and the combination of favorable age demographics will encourage the spending of consumers in the fashion industry (MarketLine Industry Profile, 2018).

2.2 Brand

A brand can be defined as an image where it is easy to be remembered by the public especially when it creates a positive brand (Aaker, 1997) and usually related with a specific image that can create a distinct connection to the minds of consumers such as a perception of a good or service which is a reflection of consumers' memory about the product.

Brands do not only refer primarily to the product, but it can also refer to the surrounding of consumption (Arvidsson, 2005). Consumers will become more attracted towards a certain brand when they have more knowledge about the goods and services such as the price, quality and other features, being more aware of the brand (Chakraborty, *et. al.*, 2017). Sakara and Alhassan (2014) mentioned that there are a few different sources and levels of knowledge that is linked to brand and the way a consumer understands it which includes the awareness, benefits, attributes, feelings, attitudes, images thoughts and experience. It is also said by Chakraborty et al., (2017) that 'a brand is built over time and people use brands to categorize their choices'.

Brands represents a significant tool which communicates marketing strategies and the positioning of brand to consumers and business markets (Ghauri and Cateora, 2010). A brand functions as a platform for action as mentioned by (Arvidsson, 2005), enabling production of certain immaterial use-values making the brand to become ubiquitous. Brands become more valuable as it signifies one of the most valuable intangible asset of an organisation is the brand and consumers see brands as something that can assist them in simplifying choices, provide a promising feeling as brand is perceived to have a certain quality level, reduce risk and gain trust (Keller and Lehmann, 2006).

2.2.1 Brand Status

Brand status as defined by O'Cass and Frost (2002) is how consumers interpret a brand's quality, price, prestige and its ability to act as a status or success symbol.

O'Shaughnessy and O'Shaughnessy (2002) states that a brand status is perceived by consumers which depends on the life experiences, knowledge and awareness that they have regarding a particular brand. Brand status is significant in purchase decision especially when consumers are more concerned regarding the brand's association with its prestige and symbolism (Kao, 2015).

Brand status can be perceived by consumers in various criteria such as its history, awareness, exclusiveness (Kirmani *et. al.*, 1999), pricing, technical superiority and its aesthetics (Vigneron and Johnson, 2004). It is important for marketers to study and understand a brand's status as the functionality and symbolic meaning that meets their physical or psychological needs is what assist in them to make a purchase decision (Kao, 2015). Del Rio *et al.*, (2001) also mentioned that a brand status is the predicted item of the symbolic goods embedded within the brand or brand name. Therefore, organization will have to strengthen their brand status position towards the minds of consumers so that it could compete with other competitors with an established brand status and compete in terms of ranking from low to high (O'cass and McEwen, 2004).

2.2.2 Brand Attitude

Brand attitude is defined as an individual's overall evaluation of a brand (Mitchell and Olson, 1981). An attitude towards a brand represent a significant component in valuing a brand's equity (Liu, *et. al.*, 2011). The attitude towards a particular brand depends on the consumer's perception and Shrimp (2010) mentioned that brand attitude has been discussed whether it represents a reliable predictor of a consumers' behaviour towards brands. When a brand becomes an important part of a consumer's life, this will most probably build a favourable and positive attitude towards a particular brand especially when there is a higher level of involvement because it is likely that the attitude a consumer has towards a brand will be positive (Magnussen, 2008). A brand that possesses a strong personality in terms of attitude that is consistent with what consumers imagine it to be, this creates a greater preference towards a brand from consumers (Rio, *et. al.*, 2001).

2.3 Self-concept

It is explained by Phau and Lo (2004) that self-concept is about the thoughts and feelings that an individual experience solely. It is based on an individual's self-determination and interdependence where it involves the thoughts, feelings and behaviour that are not considered by others but oneself. According to Shukla (2010) factors such as self-concept, self-image and product image that shows an interactive effect between consumers is being expressed where individuals are able to display their wealth through expenses and achievement. Self-concept mostly consist of the value that a person views themselves as which is known as self-esteem where else self-image is the perception that one has towards what they themselves are like (Runyan, 1988). The existence of self-concept has made marketers to become interested and are focused into this direction to further recognize self-concept because consumers purchasing decision towards product and brands are based on their self-image as it could enhance their own self-image. Mowen and Minor (2000) states that marketers should consider self-concept as an influence because it forms a fragment towards an individual's personality.

2.4 Reference Group

A reference group consist of a person or group of people that is able to influence the behaviour of an individual (Bearden and Etzel, 1982). Consumers especially the socialize to attain knowledge, skills and attitudes that are relevant to their execution as consumers (Zeb, *et al.*, 2011). Through the process of socialising, parental influence represents one of the most important reference group because parents are the one that provides confidence in developing skills to select and interpret the knowledge of a particular product. Moreover, past research has established that celebrities also play an important role for an individual because of their credibility and trustworthiness especially as endorsers. Many individuals have at least one celebrity that they idolise and wishes to look or even be like them, which may result in purchasing and wanting to have what the celebrity have. Siblings and friends are also known to be a part of the reference group which may influence an individual as they are role models for each

other and this sometimes create peer comparison which result in an individual to be influence (Zeb, *et. al.*, 2011).

2.5 Willingness to Pay Premium

The willingness to pay a premium is defined by Netemeyer et al., (2004) as being prepared to pay more for a certain service brand compared to another similar brands. Li et al., (2012) states that the willingness to pay a premium price for products or services reflects on a consumer purchasing intentions. Premium price can be explained as a relatively higher price of products and services as compared to another similar product and service (Farris, *et. al.*, 2010). The perceived brand uniqueness, quality and value cost signifies a direct antecedent towards the willingness of consumers to pay a premium price for a particular brand (Netemeyer, *et. al.*, 2004). Most consumers expect that the higher the quality of a product or service is, the higher they will have to pay for as the price will be more expensive (Farris, *et al.*, 2010).

It is important for marketers to understand the mechanism and drivers towards consumers' willingness to pay premium for one brand which they prefer to other alternatives especially in today's competitive service sector that is increasing tremendously (Ligas and Chaidhuru, 2012). Organisation should take the matter of willingness to pay premium behaviour of consumers seriously as they are the ones that will have the purchase intensions which could lead to a higher profitability and sustain a competitive advantage (Casidy and Wymer, 2016). Previous research had explained that the willingness to pay premium results in the effective of brand management as it considers a brands ability to command a higher price as compared to its competitors (De Chernatony and Segal-Horn, 2003) and again, Davcik et al. (2015) states that the willingness to pay premium is being perceived by consumers as the value and quality the a brand possess and that the higher the price will reflect in a better quality.

2.6 Career Women and/ or Career Women in Ireland

There has been a change in the role of women as there is an increase of working women in the work force leading towards a major demographic trend (Bartos, 1977). The shifting of cultural change occurred because women worldwide were becoming more educated and discovering greater opportunities especially knowing that they are able to be more independent in many ways (Ball, 2015).

The legal age for a female in Ireland to be able to work a regular full-time job according to the Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act 1996, is that one must be above 16 years of age (irishstatutebook.ie, 2019). The working role is now more open to the women in today's society as a result from the cultural change as compared to the days back then where careers was once exclusively men-oriented (Guha, 2013). According to Bartos (1977), once these women have achieved something professionally such as education, they obtain a career life for their own satisfaction or simply just to help their family to maintain a better standard of life.

Sandy who was interviewed by Forbes (2013) stated that even though she has become a mother and having to wake up at 6am in the morning for diaper change and feeding, it did not stop her from doing her best at her work place as a career women. It was to a point where she said she could become the next Marissa Mayer and also states that 'success is getting what you want and happiness is wanting what you get'. Furthermore, it was mentioned by a recent study, presented to the American Sociological Association that mothers who returns to work within weeks prior to giving birth are less depress and more energetic as compared to those who stays at home for months under maternity leave (Forbes, 2013).

The strong outflowing number of employed women had recently contributed to the rapid economic growth in Ireland (Russell, *et. al.*, 2007) and Ireland has witnessed major changes from the size of the workforce to the composition within the past decade. Ireland is ranked at the 9th position as the country that represents the most gender-equal country and there is an improvement in closing the gender gap based on the income (WEF, 2018). It is said that many of the women in Ireland have been able to achieve

the status of being a career women as there has been an increase in percentage of career women within the past years. (cso.ie, 2018). More women than ever before are now able to feel the experience of professional success (Forbes, 2013).

2.7 Understanding the Willingness of Career Women to Pay Premium

The buying behaviour of every individual or group is different from one another. It is also presumed that there is also a certain characteristics in the buying behaviour of career women. Bahtia et al., (2014), mentioned that middleclass working women are the gatekeepers and ones making the decision in major purchases as they are now more educated with high literacy. ‘Women today are financially independent’ creating a stronger impact in decision making (Manchanda, 2012) which also guides them into the willingness to pay premium because of having the financial independency. In addition, Bartos (1977) stated that a working woman are more likely to have saving accounts, regular checking accounts and credit cards as compared to non-working housewives which could prove towards the willingness to pay a premium behaviour of career women to be different from housewives. Career women are prone to indulge themselves on branded items as they are more independent financially from the result of the growing number of women being employed. A career-oriented working women dominates the financial activities with an addition of having investments. Having purchasing power, the will to purchase and financial independence make career women more vulnerable to spending (Manchanda, 2012) and attain the behaviour of willingness to pay more for a product or service.

Women shop, purchase and spend as a delightful activity (Faber, *et. al.*, 1987), leisure, (Elliot, 1994) and relaxation (Campbell, 2000). Manchanda (2012) suggested that marketers should aim at career women because they have autonomy in terms of decision making when making a purchase. Working women are prone into compulsive purchasing behavior due to the independency and income level that they attain (Mick, *et al.*, 2004). The multiple roles that a working women has does not only influence their own buying behavior, but also the buying behavior of their family members (Bartos,

1977). According to Machandra (2012), physical and social appearance consciousness is one of the many reason that women shop and also a way to pamper themselves. Furthermore, Elliot (1994) stated that women shop to self-express and enhance their self-image (Dittmar and Drury, 2000). The income level, social class and lifestyles will have an impact towards the buying behavior of the female consumers (Chander and Raza, 2015).

2.8 Fashion Clothing and the Involvement of Career Women Willingness to Pay a Premium

‘Fashion lifestyles is an important characteristic of consumers’ and it represents an important variable as it assists in predicting the shopping behaviour of consumers for brands (Ko, *et. al.*, 2007). It has been identified that there are six dimensions of fashion lifestyles in the female apparel market in the US by Kim and Lee (2000) and these dimensions includes price, fashion and time consciousness, information seeking, self-confidence and attitude towards local stores (Li, *et. al.*, 2012).

The fashion industry in Ireland is growing vastly and with the high demand as stated by Fumi et al., (2013) the phenomena of shelf-out-of-stock must be avoided by retailers. Fashion industry includes clothing, footwear and other accessories like cosmetics and even furnishing (Bohdanowicz and Clamp, 1994). Its high value sector supports a substantial number of economies and individual incomes around the world (De Felice and Petrillo, 2013) also resulting in the fashion industry to become highly competitive (Bhardwaj and Fairhurst, 2009). Women’s wear segment made a revenue of \$2.2 billion in the year 2017, making it the industry that provided the most profit which further explains that the clothing industry is in demand and it is the largest segment of apparel retail industry in Ireland (MarketLine Industry Profile, 2018).

Deliberating that the behaviour of career women varies, it applies the same towards the fashion clothing industry. Even though proven that the number of purchases in the fashion clothing industry is increasing, marketers should be aware that the fashion sense

in a career woman differs from other. This is because they have a certain dress code, status which needs to be portrayed. From an interview, Kerpen stated that what a person wear should not affect how it feels at work, but it actually does affect and appearance is very important because it does not only project what other perceive of us but also about how we perceive ourselves, being able to look and feel confident (Forbes, 2017).

2.10 Understanding Brands, Self-concept and Reference Group towards the Willingness to Pay Premium of Career Women in Ireland in Fashion Clothing

Brands, self-concept and reference group influences the fashion industry and because of this, the competitive level is rising resulting in the establishment of a stronger brand image by many organisations (Anggraeni and Rachmanita, 2015). Escalas and Bettman (2005) mentioned that having a brand in the fashion industry will have its own symbolic meaning which is compared to other product categories and this may result in consumers being able to pay more for that particular product or brand. The desire to possess certain brands to achieve status and self-fulfillment is one type of behavior that a career woman develop (O'Cass and Siahtiri, 2013). Particularly the brands of fashion strongly influence the consumer's lifestyle (McColl and Moore, 2011) as these working women are more fashion conscious, constantly following the trend and being up-to-date with the fashion (Casidy, 2012). According to Vieira (2009), it was found that the fashion clothing involvement was related highly to personal characteristics which in turn influences a consumer confidence in making decision in their purchase and even for some, being motivated to pay more for fashion clothing. Stall-Meadown and Davey (2015) has mentioned how important it is to understand the various consumer behaviour as price premium has proven to be an important factor in the fashion industry.

According to Malik, et al., (2013), the buying behavior of a female consumer is greatly and positively affected by the brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and the opinion of others. However, this research focus on the willingness to pay premium as the behaviour where the research believe that consumers are driven and are motivated to

pay more for a particular product or service based on the brands, self-concept and reference group especially for career women in Ireland in fashion clothing. O'Cass and Choy, (2008) states that the perception of a brand status could influence the consumer's attitude. Brand status consumption is a motivational process that an individual try to improve and achieve to be able to show their social standing (O'Cass and Frost, 2002). Those who are highly materialistic and are status conscious will be more involved, putting in more effort for the branded item (Zeb, *et. al.*, 2011).

A brand attitude on the other hand can be perceived as a positive or negative predisposition towards a particular brand and if a certain brand provides a positive attitude towards a consumer, there is a higher possibility that the particular brand will be liked by the consumer as stated by (Chang and Thorson, 2004; Escalas, 2004). A brand that has been assessed by consumers that developed a positive reaction may become attached and an important part in their lives which mostly creates a favourable attitude towards a brand (O'Cass and Choy, 2008). When there is a favourable attachment and commitment (Riaz, 2015) it creates a behaviour where one is willing to pay a premium towards that particular brand. The willingness to pay a premium can be understood as the consumer's acceptance of paying extra for a particular brand in additional of its utilitarian value (O'Cass and Choy, 2008). Some researchers had found out that consumers are willing to pay more for the symbolic of a brand or a brand with a symbolic value where symbolic value is defined as the benefits that consumers receive or obtain through the possession or consumption of a branded product (O'Cass and Choy, 2008).

A past research has mentioned that consumers are willing to pay extra because of a particular brand which has a symbolic meaning and value (Wu, *et. al.*, 2006). The willingness to pay premium towards a specific fashion clothing brand is definitely affected by the status of a brand (O'Cass and Choy, 2008) and as stated by Manchanda, (2012) that career women are financially independent. Therefore, this will result in the capability of a career women to willingly pay more for branded fashion clothing as it assists them with the multiple roles that they portray (Bartos, 1977). Bruce and Kratz (2007) mentioned that consumers in China are becoming more brand aware and are

willing to invest more in fashion brands. Although this study does not refer to consumers in China, this proves that consumers are becoming more brand conscious.

Furthermore, owning branded fashion clothing will enhance the self-image of a career women (Elliot, 1994). Self-concept influences the buying behaviour of female consumers and especially within career women because to them, the physical and social appearance is very important as there is a certain standard that they feel they need to fulfill and that is why they purchase (Machandra, 2012) and to some extent they feel that it is worth to spend more to achieve self-concept. Women is said to be more involved in fashion clothing as compared to men and it is highly related with the status of a brand or the symbolic value that it carries because it acts as self-expression (Michaelidou and Dibb, 2006), self-identity, provides satisfaction and augment their self-image (Khare, *et. al.*, 2012). Based from a past study, Li et al., (2012) discussed that luxury brands may expose social and emotional meanings in which consumers could seem more successful, sophisticated and be respected when they wear luxury fashion brands resulting in consumers being more inclined to pay extra.

The influence of others surrounding a career woman such as family, friends, celebrities and especially colleagues could be a result in the behaviour to spend more. There is a high possibility that consumers are influenced by others when making a decision to purchase branded fashion clothes. They could also be influenced by others when purchasing fashion clothing because they want to 'blend-in', seeking conformity in social group (Khare, *et. al.*, 2012) and assisting in improving their social image (Phamphongsant and Mandhachitara, 2008).

The opportunity of sales of branded fashion clothing will be higher because women in Ireland can be employed as early as 16 years of age, allowing them to be financially independent and establish the behaviour of willing to pay a premium in fashion clothing at a very young age. Istudor and Pelau, (2014) states that those who spend more than initially planned are the younger people. It is very important for a brand to concentrate on their customers and focusing on career women as they will become the potential

market. Stall-Meadows and Davey (2015) has mentioned how important it is to understand the various consumer behaviour as price premium has proven to be an important factor. In other words, consumers are considering paying a premium towards a particular product or service due to influence of brands where in this research will study the brand status and brand attitude, self-concept and reference group.

2.9a Literature Review Conclusion

It can be concluded that there are differences in the buying behaviour of a consumer but as the study focuses on the buying behaviour of career women the behaviour is more or less the same as they are catagorised in the same group with a certain level of similarities. An increase of career women in Ireland will have an impact in their buying behaviour towards branded fashion clothing especially the willingness to pay premium. Marketers will constantly have to be conscious with this particular behaviour as it is not always necessary to put a higher price towards a product or service that won't be able to provide what career women perceive in the willingness to pay premium. Marketers will have to make sure that when fashion clothing are at a higher price, career women in Ireland are willing to pay more as it is able to provide and satisfy their wants and needs where brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group are associated with. The hypothesis for this research is also mentioned where all the hypothesis including brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group leads to a positive relationship towards the willingness to pay premium of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Chapter Introduction

Chapter 3 will discuss the research methods that could be used when conducting a research which may include publication research, surveys, interviews and other research techniques provided with information from the past or present (Kumar, 2019). This chapter is where the researcher will explore, to be able to achieve the objectives which is to determine the relationship of brand status and the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing, determine the relationship of brand attitude and the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing, determine the relationship of self-concept and the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing and to determine the relationship of reference group and the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing. ‘The knowledge of research methodology provides you with the techniques to find answers to your research questions’ (Kumar, 2019).

3.2 Research Design

Research design indicates the blueprint or framework during the process of executing a research paper. It displays the measures that are necessary for obtaining information needed to organise or solve the problems of a research. A research design represents a plan of action where it could be carried out to identify the procedures for data collection, measurement and analysis (Cooper and Schindler, 2014, p. 82). According to McGahie et al., (2001), a research design has three main purpose which includes (1) to provide answers to research questions for better decision making, (2) to provide a guideline for piloting a study using scheduled and deliberate approach that (3) organizes qualitative observation and explain or controls quantitative variation.

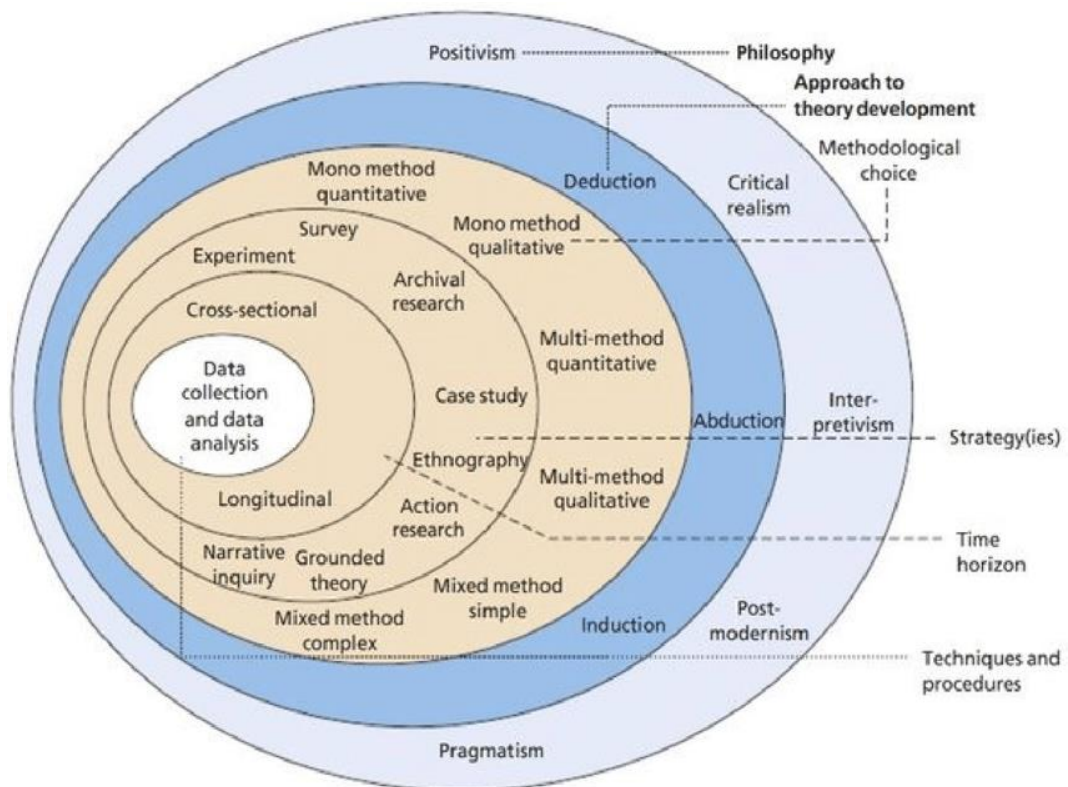


Figure 3.2 Research Onion (Saunders et. al., 2016 p. 124)

A research design can be developed with the help and understanding of a research philosophy where it consist of the ‘research onion’ as shown in Figure 3.2, assisting in figuring out which of the five management philosophy will be applied in a research study.

Saunders et al., (2016) explains a research philosophy as a ‘system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge’. Throughout the process of completing the research study, one will continuously have assumptions at every stage that will establish a research philosophy credible enough to allow the researcher to distinguish the methodological choice, research strategy, data collection techniques and analysis procedures.

A positivism philosophy best describes this research study compared to the other philosophies such as critical realism, interpretivism, postmodernism and pragmatism because as Saunders et al., (2016) had explained, positivism is a philosophy which

associates natural science or scientific method and the observable social reality (realism) to create a law-like generalization that assures a definite and accurate knowledge which is what this research is regarding. Positivism is to obtain pure data and facts that is not influenced by bias or human interpretation that provides a hypothetical explanation and can be tested and confirmed based on the theory that already exist. However, some positivism study may not necessarily begin with an existing theory.

3.2.1 Quantitative Study

This study is a quantitative research paper where it is usually associated with positivism, especially when it is being used with predetermined and highly organized data collection techniques (Saunders, *et. al.*, 2012). In addition, it is closely related with an experimental and a survey research strategy where a survey research strategy is usually carried out through questionnaire, a structured interview or observation.

Quantitative Data	Qualitative Data
Based on meanings derived from numbers	Based on meanings expressed through words (spoken or textual) and images
Collection results in numerical and standardized data	Collection results in non-standardised data requiring classification into categories
Analysis conducted through the use of diagrams and statistics	Analysis conducted through the use of conceptualization

Table 3.2 Distinction between Quantitative and Qualitative Data (Saunders, *et. al.*, 2016)

A quantitative study represent the most appropriate analysis for this research rather than a qualitative study because a quantitative approach allows the researcher to determine the relationship of two or more variables (Tweksbury, 2009). This research consist of objectives where the relationship of the variables such as brand status, brand attitude,

self-concept and reference group needs to be distinguished. Therefore, a quantitative research is much more suitable as it is based on the meanings of derived numbers, the collection of results is in a numerical and standardized data and the analysis conducted are through the usage of diagrams and statistics (Saunders, *et. al.*, 2016).

3.2.1.1 Experimental and Survey Research Strategy

The purpose of an experiment research strategy was to study the possibility of a change in an independent variable that causes a change in another, variable which is the dependent variable. An independent variable is explained as a variable to measure its impact on a dependent variable that is manipulated or changed, where else a dependent variable is a variable that could change in response to changes in other variables (Saunders, *et. al.*, 2016). An experimental research strategy also consist of hypotheses mentioned in 3.5. A survey research strategy was applied to obtain results that would achieve the objective of this research.

3.3 Time Frame and Research Plan

The time frame for this research will be cross sectional study. A cross sectional study is defined as ‘the study of a particular phenomenon at a particular time and it often employ the survey strategy’ (Saunders *et. al.*, 2012). This is because the data will be collected once throughout this research. This research will take about 8 months which is from January 2019 until August 2019 to be completed.

STAGE	DATES
Research proposal	4 th January 2019
Research plan updating	1 st April
Literature review	17 th April
Selecting primary research methods	20 th May
Data collection (surveys)	19 th June 2019
Data analysis (SPSS)	1 st August 2019
Writing thesis and reporting findings	6 st August 2019

Table 3.3a Stages and Dates of Research Plan

Activity/Month	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A
	a	e	a	p	a	u	u	u
	n	b	r	r	y	n	l	g
	u	r	c	i		e	y	u
	a	u	h	l				s
	r	a						t
	y	r						
	y							
Proposal								
Introduction								
Research Methodology								
Findings and Analysis								
Conclusion								
Reference								
Bibliography and Appendix								
Thesis Submission								

Table 3.3b Grantt Chart, Time Frame (Quinlan, 2011, p. 26)

Based on Table 3.3a and 3.3b, this research was very well organised as the starting date was as early as on the 4th of January which was the research proposal followed by the literature review that was revised in the month of March until June that also included the research methodology. The data collection was done on 19th June onwards and the surveys were all collected within 3 weeks which was then followed by the findings and analysis was done through the months of July until August. Finally, the conclusion and finalising the thesis writing was done throughout the month of August and the thesis was submitted on the 21st of August 2019.

3.4 Data Collection Method

3.4.1 Sampling: Research Participants

Research participants are also known as respondents who are those that are invited to take part and have taken part in a certain study (Given, 2008). The respondents for this research has a specific description where it consists of career women or working women consumers in Ireland that is based on the legal act which is the Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act, 1996, which this research will study the career women in Ireland between the ages of 18 until 50 years old with a sample of 150 consumers distributed randomly in parts of Ireland.

The snowball sampling technique which is a non-probability sampling was applied for this research study where the researcher firstly distribute the questionnaire to friends which was then shared to their friends and colleagues who would fit the description and are interested in participating. A snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling method where subsequent respondents are obtained from the initial respondents that had then distributed the information to them (Saunders *et. al.*, 2016, p. 728) and the researcher was able to collect a large quantity that is more effective and less time consuming.

The data collection was done through Internet- and intranet-mediated questionnaire where it is distributed via emails or website (Saunders, *et. al.*, 2012). Most of the questionnaires were also distributed through social platforms such as Facebook (refer to Appendix 2), Twitter (refer to Appendix 3), Linkedin (refer to Appendix 4) and Whatsapp (refer to Appendix 5) where there was a total of 142 respondents via google form. A total of 10 survey were distributed and collected personally to respondents who fit the description on the streets of Dublin (refer questionnaire to Appendix 1).

At the beginning of this research, a total of 300 respondents. However, perhaps the number of 300 respondents was too large and with time constrain and lack of support from potential respondents, the number of respondents was reduced to 150. A total of 152 respondents was received from supportive participants which still represents an acceptable number in this research, that result in a large amount of data collection for an accurate result.

3.4.2 Primary Data: Survey

Data collection is the gathering and measuring of information based on the variables of interest that usually contain numerical data or other data to answer stated research questions and to meet the objectives of a research (Saunders, *et. al.*, 2012).

3.4.2.1 Questionnaire Design

The primary data collection is performed through questionnaires based on survey method that is available in the appendices as appendix 1. Questionnaires was be collected to identify the significance of the factors that affect the brand image in fashion clothing industry towards the buying behavior of career women in Ireland. Five point likert scale will be used to measure all the variables. The scale varies from 1 representing strongly disagree to 5 representing strongly agree for all the questions in the questionnaire. Most quantitative research which includes the method of collecting

data via survey are based on questionnaires or scales (Quinlan, 2011, p. 322).

The questionnaire for this research was adopted and adapted by a recent validated study by Zeb et al., (2011) that will have an influence towards the structure of the questionnaire. Saunders et al., (2012) mentioned that adopting and adapting questions is more efficient as there is a strong reference rather than developing new questions and data collected is able to answer the research question(s) and meet the objectives. The questionnaire in this research includes category questions and rating questions where a five likert scale is applied. It is known that questionnaires and scales represents gathering instruments that is very accurate and is designed to produce short accurate responses to the questions (Quinlan, 2011, p. 336-337). Saunders *et. al.*, (2012), mentioned that category questions is designed in a questionnaire for respondents to answer only in one category or choose one option that represents or is close to the respondent. Rensis Likert developed the likert scale that is used widely by many researchers as a measurement instrument to measure attitudes (Quinlan, 2011, p. 481).

3.4.2.1.1 Structure of Questionnaire

Section 1	Introduction, purpose and expectation of questionnaire
Section 2	Questions designed to acquire demographic profile of respondents
Section 3	Questions designed to acquire information on willingness to pay premium
Section 4	Questions designed to acquire information on brand status
Section 5	Questions designed to acquire information on brand attitude
Section 6	Questions designed to acquire information on self-concept
Section 7	Questions designed to acquire information on reference group

Table 3.5.1.1 Structure of Questionnaire

There are 7 section for the questionnaire in this research. The questionnaire for this research can be referred to the appendices as Appendix 1. Section 1 will be an explanation regarding the researcher, purpose and what to expect in the questionnaire. Section 2 is the demographic section where the respondent will have to choose one option from the multiple choices provided, that best describes the respondent. It includes questions related to whether they are living in Ireland, their employment status,

education level, age, annual income and marital status.

Section 3 until section 7 is where respondents will have to answer based on the ratings from 1 to 5 on a five likert scale, where 1 represents strongly disagree followed by 2 for disagree, 3 for neutral, 4 for agree and 5 for strongly agree. Section 3 consists of only three questions where else sections 4, until 7 consists a total of four questions. Section 3 consists of questions that are designed to acquire information regarding the willingness to pay premium. Section 4 consist of questions discussed on the importance and perceptions of brand status in fashion clothing towards career women. It is hoped that section 4 will be able to prove the importance of brand status. Section 5 on the other hand is designed to acquire information regarding brand attitude to understand further the perception of career women towards a particular brand based on the attitude it exposes. The following section which is section 6 consists of questions that are designed to obtain information regarding the self-concept. Finally, section 7 consists of questions that are designed to obtain the information on reference group.

Section 3 are questions related to the dependent variable that is willingness to pay premium, where else section 4 until 7 are questions related to the independent variables such as brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group respectively. These sections of the questionnaire are associated with the hypotheses (refer to 3.5) where section 3 and section 4 explains H1, section 3 and section 5 explains H2, section 3 and section 6 explains H3 and section 3 and section 7 explains H2 respectively.

3.4.3 Secondary Data

Secondary data collection is also performed which is accessed through articles, journals, company records, annual reports of companies, government publications, websites and the internet (Saunders, *et. al.*, 2012). Cooper and Schindler (2014) define secondary data as studies that was made by others with a purpose of their own and these secondary data may be in the form of textbooks, encyclopedias, handbooks, magazines and newspaper articles. Secondary data will support the collection of primary data and

assist in further understanding and clarification of the study (Sekran and Bougie, 2013).

3.5 Hypotheses

A hypothesis is (1) a statement that can be tested which shows the association, difference or relationship between two or more variables or (2) a proposition that can be tested regarding the relationship between two or more concepts or events (Saunders *et. al.*, 2016, p. 717). It is also a prediction of a particular expected outcome that is referred to base on an existing knowledge.

There has been a number of research done on this particular study however in other parts of the world and not in Ireland. Most of the research resulted in branded fashion clothing is the prime focus which influences the buying behaviour and according to researchers, individuals that are status conscious and highly materialistic puts in more effort in being involved to products and brands (Zeb, *et. al.*, 2011).

Consumers who feels that they have a certain status to represent are the ones who purchase products that are branded to satisfy their symbolic needs and Zeb et al, (2011) suggested that the higher the brand status is, the more inclined they are to being involved in the willingness to pay premium for branded products. Thus:

H1: Brand status has a positive relationship with the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland when buying fashion clothing

A brand is able to demonstrate a certain attitude and when consumers perceive that a particular brand is important, it will build a favourable and positive attitude towards it. Therefore, a positive brand attitude will influence the consumer's involvement in purchasing branded fashion clothing. Thus:

H2: Brand attitude has a positive relationship with the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland when buying fashion clothing

Consumers are being influenced by the representation of their self- image and the image they wish show to others (Zeb, *et. al.*, 2011) which leads to the willingness to pay

premium. Factors such as self-concept is an essential factor that is able to influence the purchasing behaviour (Shukla, 2010) especially in the involvement of branded fashion clothing. Thus:

H3: Self-concept has a positive relationship with the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland when buying fashion clothing

It is suggested that the more a particular reference group is involved, it will result in a higher branded fashion clothing adoption (Zeb, *et. al.*, 2011) and that this will trigger a consumer into wanting to purchase and willing to spend more as they are being influenced. Thus:

H4: Reference group has a positive relationship with the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland when buying fashion clothing

3.6 Data Analysis

Data collected and gathered from the questionnaire distributed is analysed via Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) IBM software (refer to Appendix 6). However, the data was firstly gathered in an excel sheet spread (refer to Appendix 7) manually before converting it into SPSS. This step was prepared to avoid inaccuracy.

The questionnaire is divided into several sections which includes introduction, demographics and ranking questions based on willingness to pay premium, brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference groups. The distribution of questionnaires was done with the expectation to provide answers to the research. Since the questionnaire consists of category and rating questions, it was able to obtain a quantitative data which will be able to assist in determining the answers to the objective of this research which is to: (1) to determine the relationship between brand status and the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing, (2) to determine the relationship between brand attitude and the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing, (3) to determine the relationship between self-concept and the willingness to pay premium

behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing and (4) to determine the relationship between reference group and the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing. Most of the analysed data was calculated in percentage form and are measured to identify the impact of brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference groups towards the willingness to pay premium behavior of career women and the involvement in branded fashion clothing in Ireland. A statistical data will also allow the recognition of patterns in the willingness to pay premium behavior of career women.

3.6.1 Validity and Reliability Analysis

A questionnaire must be valid as this will allow accuracy in the data accumulated that measures the concept interested in this research, where else a reliable questionnaire will allow a consistency in the data gathered (Saunders, *et. al.*, 2012).

Validity is defined as the relation to how truthful, reasonable, logical, meaningful, robust, sound and useful a research is (Quinlan, 2011, p. 42). It also the degree where data collection or methods is able to precisely measure what it is intended to measure (Saunders, *et al.*, 2012).

The questionnaire used in this research is adopted and adapted from a past research, 'The Influence of Brands towards the Buying Behaviour of Female Consumers' by Zeb et al, (2011), proving that the questions in the questionnaires are valid and reliable. The questionnaire in this research has also been approved to be valid and reliable by the supervisor after a few adjustments and amendments made from feedbacks received from a few participants and the supervisor. There were however some questions from the research done by Zeb et al, (2011) where the researcher for this research had to remove completely as it felt that the questions were unnecessary and would not be able to provide much accuracy in the result for this research.

3.6.1.1 Cronbach's Alpha Reliability Test

Cronbach's Alpha is generally applied to evaluate the consistency of responses to a set of questions that are combined as a scale to measure a particular concept. The value between 0 and 1 presents the alpha coefficient that consists in Cronbach's Alpha. (Saunders, et. al., 2016) where the higher the reliability, the higher and stronger the result will be (Hinton *et al.*, 2004).

Alpha Coefficient Range	Strength of Associations
0.50 and below	Low Reliability
0.50 to 0.70	Moderate Reliability
0.80 to 0.90	High Reliability
0.90 and above	Excellent Reliability

Table 3.6.2.1 Hinton et. al., (2004) Reliability Scale

The table above shows the reliability scale presented by Hinton et al, (2004) that will be referred to on for this research for the dependent and independent variable strength of reliability. Table 3.6.2.1 explains that a reading of Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of 0.50 and below indicates that the strength of reliability is low. A reading between 0.50 until 0.70 indicates a strength of moderate reliability which is then followed by a reading of 0.80 until 0.90 that indicates a strength of high reliability. The highest strength that is known as an excellent reliability is represented by a reading of 0.90 and above.

3.6.2 Descriptive Analysis

Descriptive analysis allows the researcher to describe and compare variables numerically that leads to a choice of statistics from the research question(s) and objectives. The statistics describing a variable should focus on two aspects which includes (1) the central tendency and (2) the dispersion (Saunders *et. al.*, 2007, p. 527).

Descriptive Statistics	
Measures of central tendency	
The mean	The mode is the most commonly occurring value in a range of values
The mode	The mode is the most commonly occurring value in a range of values
The median	The median is the middle value of a range of values
Measures of dispersion	
The range	The range is the minimum and maximum value in a range of data.
The interquartile range (IQR)	The interquartile range (IQR) is a robust measure of sample dispersion. It eliminates outliers by focusing on the difference between the first and third quartiles. Outliers are extreme measures that skew a distribution
The standard deviation	The standard deviation measure the spread of data about the mean. It is used to compare sets of data that have the same mean but a different range of data. The standard deviation is calculated as the square root of the variance. Variance in a data set is the extent to which the values in the data set differ from the mean.
Proportions	Proportions are a type of ratio in which the denominator is the total number of cases
Frequency distributions	A frequency distribution condenses information into a simple format which will allow the reader to picture the way in which the variable is distributed.

Table 3.6.3 A Summary of Descriptive Statistics (Saunders *et. al.*, 2007)

The central tendency is when a data is described for both samples and populations quantitatively which usually provides the general impression of values that could be perceived as common, middling or average and is then discussed. There are three method to measure the central tendency which includes: (1) value that occurs most frequently (mode), (2) middle value or mid-point after the data have been ranked (median), and (3) value, often known as the average that includes all data values in its calculation (mean) (Saunders, *et. al.*, 2016, p. 528-529).

Dispersion can be described as: (1) the difference within the middle 50 per cent of values (inter-quartile range range) and (2) the extent to which values differ from the mean (standard deviation) (Saunders, *et. al.*, 2016, p. 531).

In this research, the descriptive analysis is being applied for willingness to pay

premium, brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group. Section 1 is the demographic section where the analysis used is frequency analysis and enables the researcher to acquire the percentage of respondents living in Ireland, employment status, education level, age, annual income and marital status can be found from the set of questionnaire in section 1. As for section 2 until section 6, the central tendency and dispersion is measured by mean and standard deviation of every variable which includes willingness to pay premium, brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group. Descriptive analysis for this research is applied to firstly achieve the research objective where it had assessed the current level of willingness to pay premium.

3.6.3 Correlation Analysis

A correlation analysis enables the researcher to quantify the strength of the linear relationship between two ranked or numerical variables (Saunders, *et. al.*, 2016). Furthermore, correlation analysis is applied when the researcher wishes to initiate the possibilities of connections between variables (Malholtra, 2010).

3.6.3.1 Pearson Correlation Analysis

Pearson Correlation (r) analysis was used for this research as it can identify how the variables relate to one another (Saunders, *et. al.*, 2016).

The strength of a linear relationship can take on any value between +1 and -1. The direction of relationship is determined by a (+) or (-) sign. In Pearson Correlation (r) testing, a value of $r(+1)$ signifies a perfect positive correlation where it explains that two variables are specifically related and as one of the variable values increase, the value of the other variable will also increase. Moreover, a value of $r(-1)$ signifies a perfect negative correlation which means that the two variables are specifically related

but if values of one variable increase, the value of the other variable will decrease. Correlation coefficients between +1 and -1 represent weaker positive and negative correlation, a value of 0 meaning the variables are perfectly independent (Saunders, *et. al.*, 2017). Also, if the result is 0, this indicates that there is no relationship between the two variables as mentioned by Malholtra (2010).

The significance level for a Pearson Correlation testing is at 0.001 or 99% of the confidence level. If the significant value (p-value) is less than 0.01, the hypothesis will be accepted (Malholtra, 2010). This can further be explained by the Saunders *et al.*, (2016) where:

- P-value < 0.001, there is significant relationship and the hypothesis is accepted
- P-value > 0.001, there is no significant relationship and the hypothesis is rejected

3.6.4 Multiple Regression Analysis

Multiple regression analysis is to recognize the relationship between dependent variable and two or more independent variables. This method is applied when there is more than one independent variables that is used to explain the variance in the dependent variable (Sekaran, 2013). Multiple regression will assist in achieving the objectives of this research which is to (1) determine the relationship between brand status and the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing, (2) determine the relationship between brand attitude and the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing, (3) determine the relationship between self-concept and the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing and (4) determine the relationship between reference group and the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing.

According to Saunders et al, (2016), to calculate the multiple regression coefficient, it is best to use the statistical analysis software where it will automatically calculate the significance where the reading are as follows:

- If the significant value (p-value) < 0.005 , this shows that there is a relationship
- If the significant value (p-value) > 0.005 , this shows that there is no relationship

The coefficient of determination (r^2) and coefficient of multiple determination (R^2) can both take on any value between 0 and +1. It is used to measure the degree of linear correlation variable that exists in regression analysis. A multiple regression analysis is applied for this research as it consists the calculation of a coefficient of multiple determination and regression equation which uses two or more independent variables (Saunders et. al., 2016). The higher the value of R^2 which is between 0 and +1, the more reliable and beneficial it is as it has a better variance in which a higher degree of dependent variable is being explained by the independent variable.

The next multiple regression analysis is the ANOVA and is being applied in this research as a hypotheses testing to discover if the means between the two or more groups has a difference. ANOVA analyse the variance by comparing the means from the range of data values between and within groups of data. The F statistic or ratio signifies these differences and if it display a probability of less than 0.05, it is known to be statistically significant (Saunders et. al., 2016, p. 544). In this study, the researcher use ANOVA to identify the significant level between the independent variables and also the impact on willingness to pay premium.

3.7 Ethics

An ethical guideline and procedure will be followed by the ethical standards of National College of Ireland as there is the involvement of human participants. Saunders et al, (2012) discussed ethics as the criteria of behavior that guides the researcher to the rights of those who become the subject or are involved with when conducting a research. All

the participants in the questionnaire are above the age of 18 years old and they will be verified as a career women before participating in the questionnaire. It is hoped that most of the participants purchase branded fashion clothing and are living in Ireland as this will be determined by a question in the questionnaire. Furthermore, if the participants do purchase branded fashion clothing and are living in Ireland, the findings of this research will become beneficial to them. The safety aspects will be discussed firstly to the respondents as it concerns them because it deals with public and that the participants are not from vulnerable groups such as children or young adults with a diminished mental capacity. Saunders et al, (2012) stated that no harm, pain, stress or embarrassment must be caused during the collection and usage of data.

Although the questions may be personal to a number of the participants, they will be assured that the data collected and stored from the questionnaire are in a secure manner and that their participation is anonymous. Participation in this research will be voluntary and they will be able to retreat from this research at any time. The findings of this research will also be available to the participants via email upon request once the thesis is finalised, corrected and graded (Saunders, *et. al.*, 2012).

3.8 Methodology Conclusion

Chapter 3 discuss upon the consideration of a number of qualitative and quantitative research methods based on the retrieval of information that is relevant to this study. It is then decided that this study will have a quantitative approach where data is collected via distribution of questionnaires. The multiple adjustments and amendments made before finalising the questions assisted in the structure of the questionnaire to be clearer for the participants. Furthermore, the target population, sampling techniques and data collection has also been discussed in this chapter. The issues related with the data analytics, ethics, validity and reliability was also discussed, assisting in providing justification in the chosen research methodology.

Chapter 4: Research Findings and Analysis

4.1 Introduction

Research findings represent the results that is obtained from the research and is analysed where in this research, the findings from the questionnaire were analysed by using SPSS. This chapter is where the researcher explains further regarding the demographic of the respondent, reliability analysis of the variables, the correlation between the buying behaviour of career women in Ireland and the influences of brands especially in fashion clothing. Furthermore, re-evaluation through item elimination procedure may occur to certain variables that are found to attain lower strength with the purpose of providing a higher reliability of the characteristics of each scale, their individual distributions and shape.

4.2 Demographic Profiles of the Respondent

The first section of the questionnaire consist of the demographic profile of the respondent which included the place they live in, employment status, education level, age, annual income and marital status. For this research, a total of 152 participants responded to this survey and therefore, (n=152). The demographic of the respondents are demonstrated in 'Table 4.2.1' until 'Table 4.2.6' below with pie charts which presents the percentage and frequency of the observation.

Demographic Variables	Research Sample (n=152)	
	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Living in Ireland		
Yes	135	88.8
No	17	11.2
Employment Status		
<20hrs/week	14	9.2
20-30hrs/week	25	16.4
>30hrs/week	96	63.2
Unemployed	13	8.6
Self-employed	4	2.6
Level of Education		
None	0	
Primary/Secondary	4	2.6
3rd Level Education	64	42.1
Postgraduate/Masters	84	55.3
Age		
18-29	96	63.2
30-40	43	28.3
41-50	13	8.6
Annual Income		
< €20,000	47	30.9
€20,000-€30,000	29	19.1
€30,000-€40,000	22	14.5
€40,000-€50,000	20	13.2
€50,000-€70,000	18	11.8
> €70,000	16	10.5
Marital Status		
Single	67	44.1
In a Relationship	35	23
Married	49	32.2
Seperated/Divorce	1	0.7

Table 4.2 Summarised of Respondents' Demographic Profile

4.2.1 Respondent living in Ireland

Living in Ireland

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	135	88.8	88.8	88.8
	No	17	11.2	11.2	100.0
	Total	152	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2.1 Table of Respondents' Living in Ireland

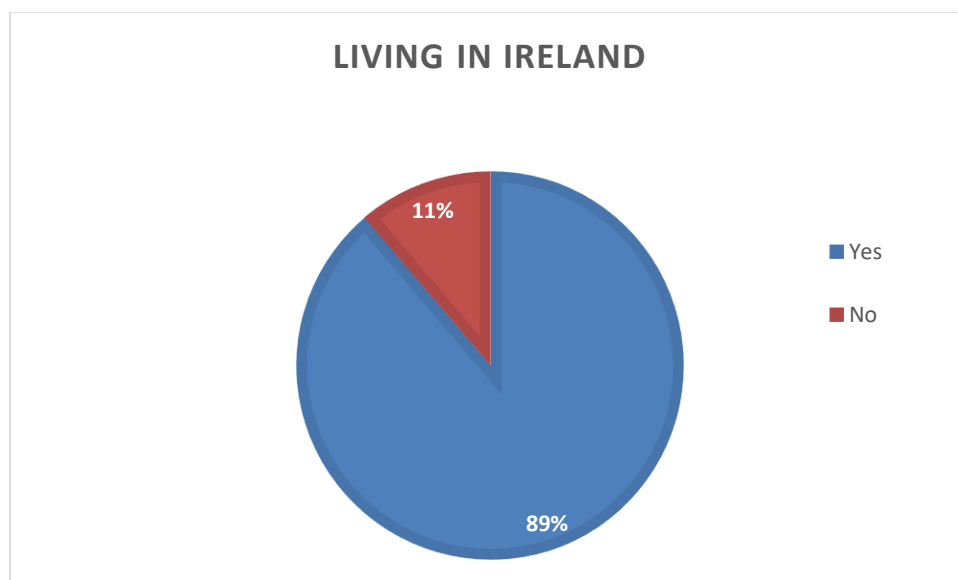


Figure 4.2.1 Pie Chart of Respondents' Living in Ireland

This research focus on the career women that are living in Ireland which is the reason as to why the respond of 'yes' obtained the highest percentage which is at 89%. However, there were some respondents which had participated and states that they do not live in Ireland. This small percentage of participants who do not live in Ireland would not have much effect on this research and will be explained further in limitation.

4.2.2 Employment Status of Respondent

		Employment		Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
		Frequency	Percent		
Valid	Employed <20hr/week	14	9.2	9.2	9.2
	Employed 20-30hr/week	25	16.4	16.4	25.7
	Employed >30hr/week	96	63.2	63.2	88.8
	Unemployed	13	8.6	8.6	97.4
	Self-employed	4	2.6	2.6	100.0
	Total	152	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2.2 Table of Respondents' Employment Status

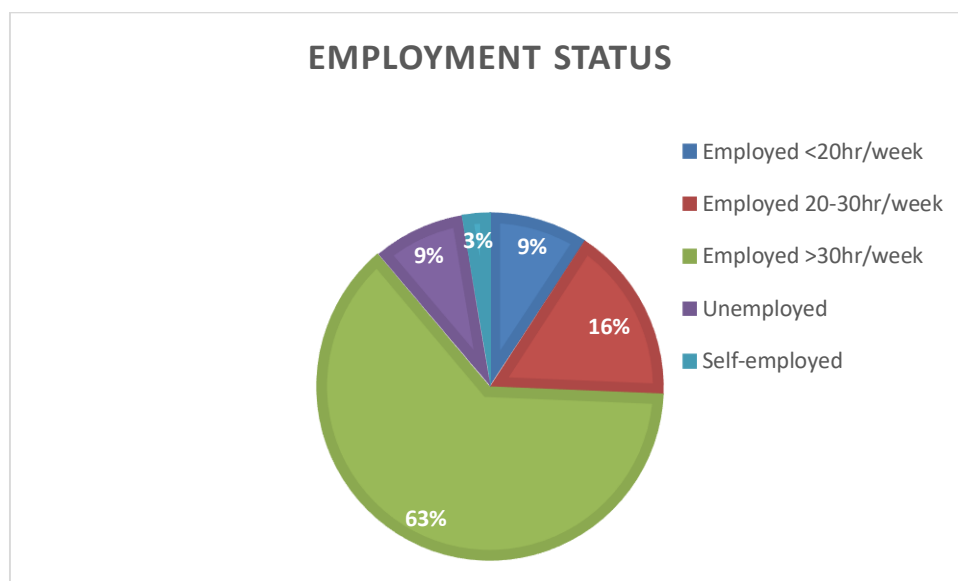


Figure 4.2.2 Pie Chart of Respondents' Employment Status

The findings for employment status shows that the highest percentage of career women in Ireland based on the respondent participated are employed with more than 30 hours per week with a percentage of 63%. This is then followed by those who are employed 20 to 30 hours with a percentage of 16% and a same percentage of 9% for those who work less than 20 hours per week and unemployed. There is a small percentage of 3% of respondent participated who are self-employed.

4.2.3 Education Level of Respondent

		Education			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Primary/Secondary	4	2.6	2.6	2.6
	3rd Level	64	42.1	42.1	44.7
	Postgraduate/Master s	84	55.3	55.3	100.0
	Total	152	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2.3 Table of Respondents' Education Level:

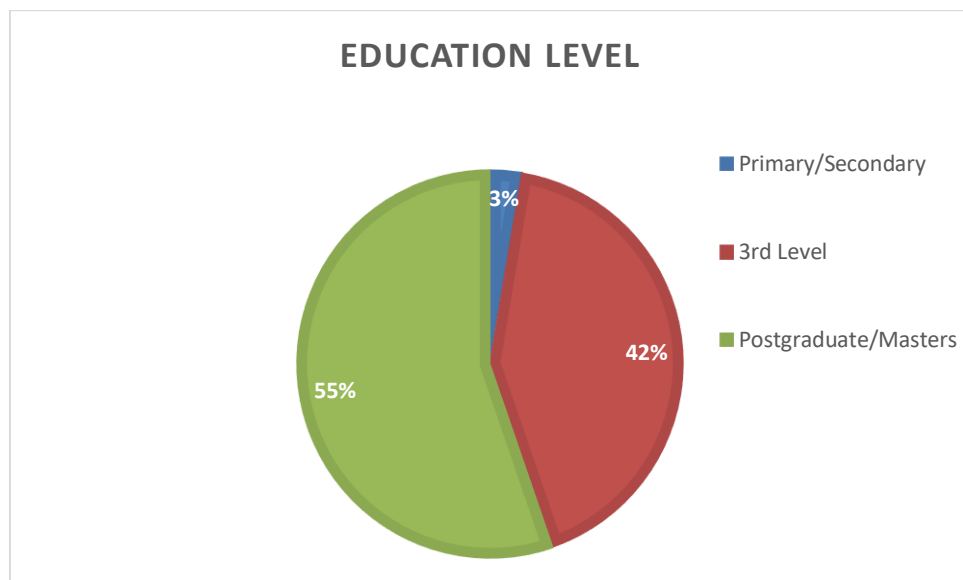


Figure 4.2.3 Pie Chart of Respondents' Education Level

Table 4.2.3 and pie chart 4.2.3 above shows that most of the respondent have obtained an education level of postgraduate or master's degree with the highest percentage of 55% followed by a 3rd level of education with a percentage of 42% and an education level of primary or secondary with a percentage of 3%.

4.2.4 Age of Respondent

		Age			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	18-29	96	63.2	63.2	63.2
	30-40	43	28.3	28.3	91.4
	41-50	13	8.6	8.6	100.0
	Total	152	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2.4 Table of Respondents' Age

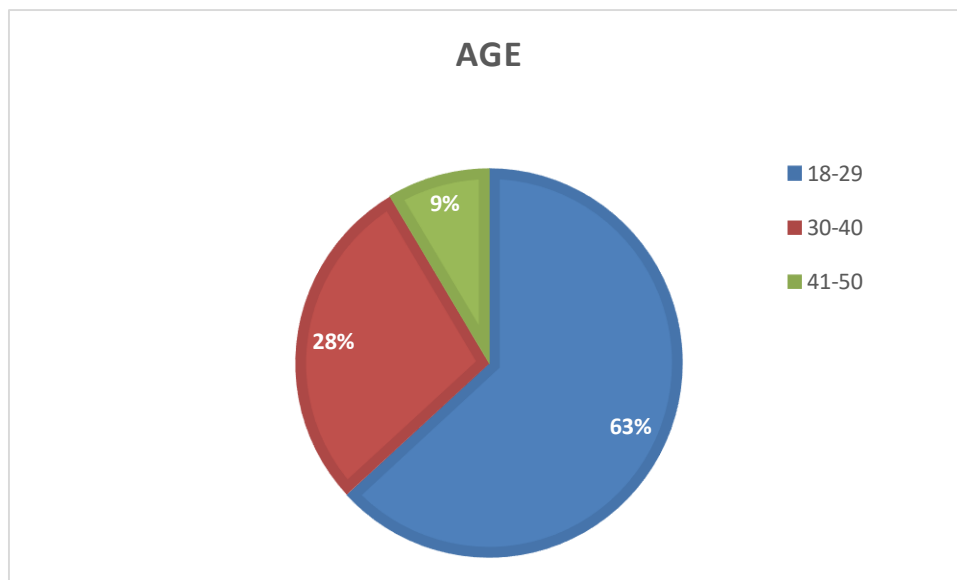


Figure 4.2.4 Pie Chart of Respondents' Age

Table 4.2.4 and Figure 4.2.4 above shows the frequency and the percentage of the respondents' age that are between 18 until 50 years of age. The highest percentage of career women that contributed to this research are those between the ages of 18 until 29 with a percentage of 63%. This is followed by career women who are between the ages of 30 to 40 with a percentage of 28%. The lowest percentage are career women who are between the ages of 41 to 50 with a contribution of 9% to this research.

4.2.5 Annual Income of Respondent

Annual Income					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	<20k	47	30.9	30.9	30.9
	20-30k	29	19.1	19.1	50.0
	30-40k	22	14.5	14.5	64.5
	40-50k	20	13.2	13.2	77.6
	50-70k	18	11.8	11.8	89.5
	>70k	16	10.5	10.5	100.0
	Total	152	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2.5 Table of Respondents' Annual Income

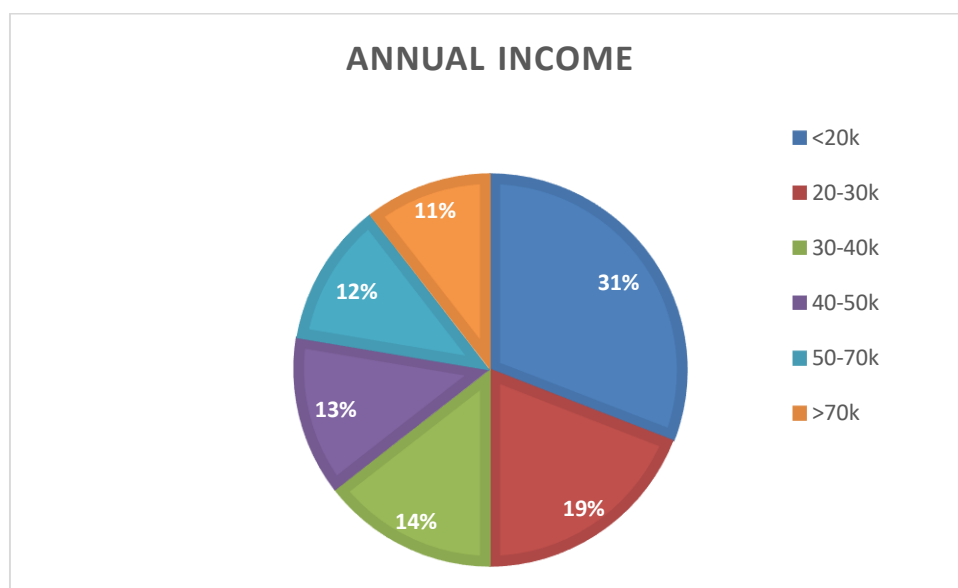


Figure 4.2.5 Pie Chart of Respondents' Annual Income

According to Table 4.2.5 and Figure 4.2.5, most of respondent have an annual income of less than €20,000 per year with a percentage of 31%. This is then followed by career women who earn €20,000 to €30,000 per year with a percentage of 19%, €30,000 to €40,000 per year at 14%, €40,000 to €50,000 per year at 13%, €50,000 to €70,000 per year at 12% and more than €70,000 per year at 11% respectively.

4.2.6 Marital Status of Respondent

		Marital			
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	single	67	44.1	44.1	44.1
	in a relationship	35	23.0	23.0	67.1
	married	49	32.2	32.2	99.3
	separated/divorced	1	.7	.7	100.0
	Total	152	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.2.6 Table of Respondents' Marital Status

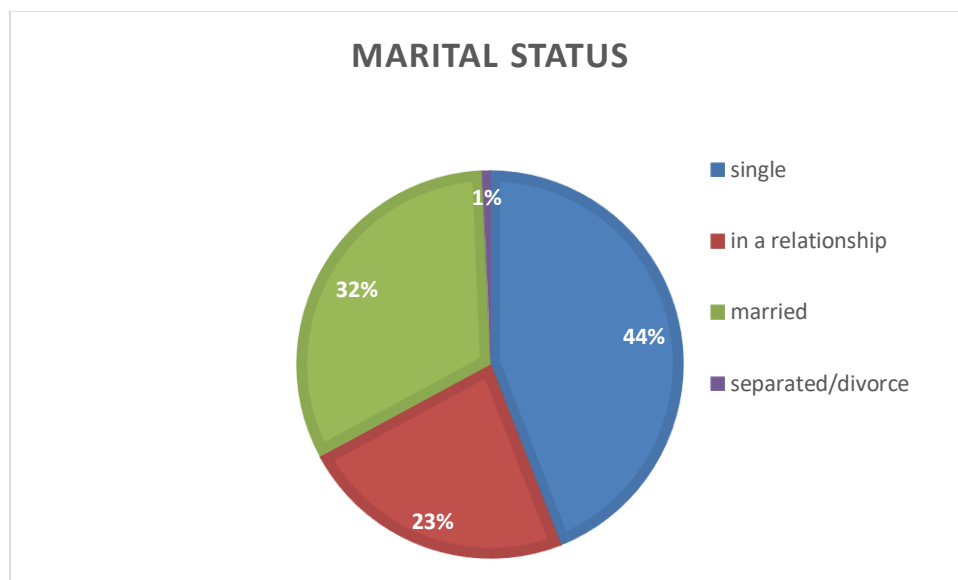


Figure 4.2.6 Pie Chart of Respondents' Marital Status

The findings from Table 4.2.6 and Figure 4.2.6 above shows the marital status of the respondent, where the highest contributor to the questionnaire comes from career women who are single with a percentage of 44% and followed by career women who are married with a percentage of 32%. Career women who are in a relationship contributed to a percentage 23% and followed by the lowest percentage of 1% contributed by career women who are separated or divorced.

4.3 Reliability Test

A reliability test is to focus on measuring the internal consistency of the data values collected from 152 respondent by implementing Cronbach's Alpha test to the individual scales.

Construct	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Items
Brand Status	Independent	0.843	4
Brand Attitude		0.674	4
Self-concept		0.8	4
Reference Group		0.586	4
Willingness to pay premium	Dependent	0.789	3

Table 4.3 Reliability test of Actual Survey

Based on the Table 4.3, the result of Cronbach Alpha coefficient is from 0.586 to 0.843. Brand status shows the highest Cronbach Alpha which is at 0.843 resulting in having the strongest reliability for this research which is then followed by self-concept with a reading of 0.800. The willingness to pay premium shows a reading of 0.789, followed by brand attitude which shows a reading of 0.674. Reference group obtained the lowest reading for Cronbach Alpha coefficient which is at 0.586.

The alpha coefficient values obtained in this research from SPSS proves to be acceptable as the lowest reading is above 0.5, where an alpha score of below 0.5 usually indicates a scale of low reliability, 0.5 to 0.75 is generally accepted as it indicates a moderate reliable scale and an alpha score of above 0.75 is taken to indicate a scale of high reliability (Hinton et. al., 2004, p. 363). Therefore, all statements used in this research are considered to be reliable.

4.4 Descriptive Analysis

This section presents the descriptive analysis on willingness to pay premium, brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group.

4.4.1 Willingness to Pay Premium

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
WTPP1 If a brand enhances my status, I will be willing to pay more for that	152	1	5	2.65	1.141
WTPP2 It is important to me that I purchase branded clothing with a higher price	152	1	5	1.80	.984
WTPP3 I prefer to pay higher prices to purchase branded clothing products	152	1	5	2.08	1.113
Valid N (listwise)	152				

Table 4.4.1 Willingness to Pay Premium (Dependent Variable)

Table 4.4.1 shows the descriptive statistics for willingness to pay premium. The range of mean is from 1.80 until 2.65 meanwhile the range for standard deviation is from 0.948 until 1.141. Question 1 for willingness to pay premium contributed to the highest mean. The result shows that most of the career women in Ireland are willing to pay more if a brand enhances their status.

4.4.2 Brand Status

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
BS1 Branded fashion clothing is important	152	1	5	2.77	1.142
BS2 Branded fashion clothing adds quality to my life	152	1	5	2.72	1.209
BS3 I prefer wearing branded clothing products only	152	1	5	2.15	1.132
BS4 I purchase branded items which make a good impression	152	1	5	2.77	1.253
Valid N (listwise)	152				

Table 4.4.2 Brand Status (Independent Variable 1)

Table 4.4.2 shows the descriptive analysis of brand status which is an independent variable with a mean and standard deviation reading of 2.15 to 2.77 and 1.132 to 1.253 respectively. The highest contribution of mean to brand status is both question 1 and question 4 where most career women in Ireland believe that branded fashion clothing is important and that they purchase branded items which make a good impression.

4.4.3 Brand Attitude

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
BA1 I think a lot about which branded fashion clothing to buy	152	1	5	2.49	1.261
BA2 Reliable and trusted brands are important to me when I purchase clothing products	152	1	5	3.47	1.162
BA3 Brands do not add quality to my life	152	1	6	3.30	1.311
BA4 I prefer using a brand I favour regularly	152	1	5	3.74	.938
Valid N (listwise)	152				

Table 4.4.3 Brand Attitude (Independent Variable 2)

The mean for independent variable, brand attitude from table 4.4.3 above shows a reading from 2.49 until 3.74 and a standard deviation from 0.938 until 1.311. The result shows that question 4 obtain the highest mean which explains that career women in Ireland prefer using a brand that they favour regularly.

4.4.4 Self-Concept

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
SC1 Branded clothing product improves my personality	152	1	5	2.26	1.263
SC2 Branded clothes play an important role in my life	152	1	5	2.01	1.077
SC3 Do you agree with the following statement, “You are what you wear”?	152	1	5	2.87	1.355
SC4 Brands enhance my status and make me a more successful person	152	1	5	2.34	1.122
Valid N (listwise)	152				

Table 4.4.4 Self-concept (Independent 3)

Table 4.4.4 above shows the descriptive statistics for self-concept. The range of mean is from 2.01 until 2.87 where else the standard deviation has a range from 1.077 until 1.355. Question 3 from self-concept has the highest contribution to the mean where it can be explain that career women in Ireland agree with the statement that “you are what you wear”.

4.4.5 Reference Group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
RG1 I am not easily influenced by an opinion from someone about branded clothing products	152	1	5	3.68	1.182
RG2 My family and friends influence me a lot when I purchase clothing products	152	1	5	2.67	1.233
RG3 Celebrities influence me a lot when I purchase clothing products	152	1	5	2.17	1.254
RG4 I judge people's personally by the brands that they are wearing	152	1	5	1.91	1.112
Valid N (listwise)	152				

Table 4.4.5 Reference Group (Independent 4)

Reference group represent another independent variable where the reading of the mean is from 1.91 until 3.68 meanwhile the range for standard deviation is from 1.112 until 1.254. From table 4.4.5, question 1 contributed to the highest mean. Thus, the result shows that family and friends influence a career women a lot when she purchase clothing products.

4.5 Pearson Correlation Coefficient

		Correlations				
		WTPP	BS	BA	SC	RG
Willingness to Pay Premium	Pearson Correlation	1	.658**	.548**	.643**	.413**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.000	.000
	N	152	152	152	152	152
Brand Status	Pearson Correlation	.658**	1	.571**	.714**	.361**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000	.000	.000
	N	152	152	152	152	152
Brand Attitude	Pearson Correlation	.548**	.571**	1	.484**	.443**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000		.000	.000
	N	152	152	152	152	152
Self-concept	Pearson Correlation	.643**	.714**	.484**	1	.426**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000		.000
	N	152	152	152	152	152
Reference Group	Pearson Correlation	.413**	.361**	.443**	.426**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.000	.000	
	N	152	152	152	152	152

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

Table 4.5 Correlation on Willingness to Pay Premium

In the result of Pearson Correlation test, a significant correlation was shown between willingness to pay premium and brand status ($p=0.000 < 0.001$). Hence H1 is accepted. The magnitude of association between willingness to pay premium and brand status had obtained a moderate relationship ($r = 0.658$). The direction of the relationship for these variables is positive meaning that these two variables will increase or decrease together.

Furthermore, table 4.5 shows that there is a significant association between the willingness to pay premium with brand attitude ($p=0.000 < 0.001$). Thus, H2 is accepted. The strength between the variables has a moderate relationship ($r = 0.548$). Thus, the direction of the relationship between the willingness to pay premium with brand attitude is positive resulting in the two variables to increase or decrease together. The correlation table above shows a significant relationship between the willingness to pay premium with self-concept ($p=0.000 < 0.001$). Therefore, H3 is accepted where the magnitude of relation had obtained a moderate relationship ($r = 0.643$). In addition, the direction of the relationship between willingness to pay premium with brand attitude is positive which results in the two variables will increase or decrease together.

Finally, the relationship between willingness to pay premium and reference group from table 4.5 proves that there is a significant relationship ($p=0.000 < 0.001$). Thus, H4 is accepted and the strength between the variables is moderate ($r = 0.413$). The direction of these variables are positive which demonstrates that they will increase and decrease together.

4.6 Multiple Regression Analysis

4.6.1 Model Summary

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.730 ^a	.532	.520	.62856

a. Predictors: (Constant), referencegroup, brandstatus, brandattitude, selfconcept

Table 4.6.1 Multiple Regression (Model Summary)

Table 4.6.1 presents the table of model summary that displays the list of dimensions. The dimension includes all of the independent variable that may influence the willingness to pay premium behaviour. Based on the table above, it shows that R square

is 0.532 or 53.2%. This indicates that the dependent variable that is willingness to pay premium can be explained by the four independent variables in this research which is brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group. However, the remaining 46.8% of the variance in willingness to pay premium may be explained by other variables that are not mentioned in this model.

Furthermore, every 1% change in the independent variable will lead to a change of 53.2% of the dependent variable. The higher the value of R square, the better the model fits the data.

4.6.2 Multiple Regression (ANOVA)

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	66.126	4	16.532	41.843	.000 ^b
	Residual	58.078	147	.395		
	Total	124.204	151			

a. Dependent Variable: willingness

b. Predictors: (Constant), 55eference, brandstatus, brandattitude, selfconcept

Table 4.6.2 Multiple Regression (ANOVA)

Based on the table above, it shows that the significant value (Sig.) is smaller than 0.05 (p-value < 0.05), in which the p-value of the finding is 0.000, where F= 41.843. This explains that the model is fit to be used for any further research analysis. Therefore, this model has explained the significant amount of the variance in willingness to pay premium using the combination of brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group.

4.6.3 Multiple Regression (Coefficients)

		Coefficients ^a				
		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-.069	.204		-.337	.736
	Brand Status (BS)	.284	.080	.306	3.534	.001
	Brand Attitude (BA)	.196	.075	.190	2.619	.010
	Self-concept (SC)	.278	.079	.293	3.505	.001
	Reference Group (RG)	.096	.067	.094	1.433	.154

a. Dependent Variable: Willingness

Table 4.6.3 Multiple Regression (Coefficients)

The table above displays the Coefficients of Multiple Regression where it provides the information to develop multiple regression equation that explains willingness to pay premium in terms of brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group.

To predict the value of a variable from one or more other variable, an equation is formulated from the table above as follows:

$$Y_i = \beta_0 + \beta_1 BS_i + \beta_2 BA_i + \beta_3 SC_i + \beta_4 RG_i$$

Where:

β_0 is the regression constant

β_1 , β_2 , β_3 and β_4 represent the beta coefficients

BS is brand status

BA is brand attitude

SC is self-concept

RG is reference group

$$Y_i = -0.69 + 0.284B + 0.196C + 0.278D + 0.069E$$

Unstandardised coefficients (β) acquired from the regression coefficient explains the degree of effects of each predictor towards the dependent variables, if the effects of all other predictors are held constant, but it also explains the positive and negative relationship between the dependent variable with each predictor variables.

Table 4.6.3 illustrates that there is a positive effect between brand status (0.306), brand attitude (0.190), self-concept (0.293) and reference group (0.094). This means that when there is an increase in every single score in brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group, the score of willingness to pay premium will increase by 0.284, 0.196, 0.278 and 0.096 respectively.

From the result shown in table 4.6.3, by considering the influence of variables with regression coefficients, it is found that brand status is a factor which has the greatest and strongest influence towards the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland since it has the highest unstandardized coefficient value of 0.284 among brand attitude, self-concept and reference group.

4.7 Hypotheses Result

4.7.1 Hypotheses 1

H1: Brand status has a positive relationship with the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland when buying fashion clothing

The analysis result from Multiple Regression (Coefficients) shows that the relationship between brand status and the willingness to pay premium was significant since the p-value is 0.001 which is less than 0.05. Standardised coefficient beta for brand status is 0.306. Based on the multiple regression (coefficient) equation in 4.6.3, since the value of unstandardized coefficient beta for brand status is positive, it shows that there is a positive relationship between brand status and the willingness to pay premium. The relationship was supported at 95% confidence interval. Thus, H1 is accepted.

4.7.2 Hypotheses 2

H2: Brand attitude has a positive relationship with the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland when buying fashion clothing

The Multiple Regression (Coefficients) from table 4.6.3 shows that the relationship between brand attitude and the willingness to pay premium was significant since the p-value is 0.010 which is less than 0.05. The standardised coefficient beta for brand status is 0.190. Based on the multiple regression (coefficient) equation in 4.6.3, since the value of unstandardized coefficient beta for brand attitude is positive, it shows that there is a positive relationship between brand status and the willingness to pay premium. The relationship was supported at 95% confidence interval. Thus, H2 is accepted.

4.7.3 Hypotheses 3

H3: Self-concept has a positive relationship with the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland when buying fashion clothing

The analysis findings from Multiple Regression (Coefficients) shows that the relationship between self-concept and the willingness to pay premium was significant since the p-value is 0.001 which is less than 0.05. Standardised coefficient beta for

brand status is 0.29. Based on the multiple regression (coefficient) equation in 4.6.3, since the value of unstandardized coefficient beta for self-concept is positive, it shows that there is a positive relationship between brand status and the willingness to pay premium. The relationship was supported at 95% confidence interval. Thus, H3 is accepted.

4.7.4 Hypotheses 4

H4: Reference group has a positive relationship with the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland when buying fashion clothing

The analysis result from Multiple Regression (Coefficients) shows that the relationship between reference group and the willingness to pay premium was insignificant since the p-value is 0.154 which is more than 0.05. The relationship between reference group and willingness to pay premium was not supported at 95% confidence interval. Standardized coefficient beta for reference group is 0.096. Based on the multiple regression (coefficient) equation in 4.6.3, since the value of unstandardized coefficient for beta for reference group is positive, it shows that there is positive relationship between reference group and willingness to pay premium. Thus, H4 is accepted.

Among the influence mentioned in this research which includes brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group, brand status influence most towards the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing. This is because the findings from Pearson Correlation for brand status and willingness to pay premium indicates the highest r-value ($r = 0.658$) among the other influences. The multiple regression coefficient of brand status also indicates a p-value of 0.010 where ($p\text{-value} < 0.05$) and that the value for standardized coefficient beta are both positive.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss the findings on the primary research based from chapter 4 which includes the hypotheses result, followed by the discussion based from the findings on secondary research from chapter 2. The discussion for this chapter will compare the similarities and differences that has been obtained in this research.

5.2 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The findings of demographic profile based on 152 respondents who participated are living in Ireland with a percentage of 89% and are working for more than 30 hours per week on average mostly with a postgraduate or master's degree level in education. Moreover, most of the respondents are between the ages of 18 until 29 years of age, earning an annual income between €30,000 until €40,000 and are mostly single. The findings with the highest percentage from the 152 respondents who participated for employment status, education level, age, annual income and marital status are represented by 63%, 55%, 63%, 31% and 44% respectively.

5.3 Discussion on Findings

The researcher concludes that this study had achieved the objectives where this study is to determine the with the gap of gender in employment rate decreasing in Ireland, more women are becoming employed which results in having a source of income. It has been mentioned that career women are inclined to indulge themselves in branded items. Based on this research, the branded items are represented by fashion clothing. The involvement of fashion clothing was found to be significant to career women

because they have a certain image that they have to portray.

The findings had identified that all of the influences which includes brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group all had a positive relationship towards the willingness to pay premium of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing.

Hypotheses 1 explains that brand status has a positive relationship with the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland when buying fashion clothing. It has been clarified that brand status have the most influence towards willingness to pay premium of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing because a brand with strong status proves to have a symbolic meaning, value and high quality. As mentioned in the literature review, the desire to possess fashion clothing with a high or strong brand status allows career women in Ireland to achieve a particular status and self-fulfillment. Thus, proving to H1.

Brand attitude has a positive relationship with the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland when buying fashion clothing is identified as hypotheses 2. A brand attitude that exposes a positive vibe could develop the feeling of attachment with the consumer. Career women who acquire these affection could lead to brand loyalty which is however not being studied in this research. Fashion clothing that deliver a positive brand attitude would affect the willingness of a career women to pay extra which could be a result to achieve a particular image as mentioned earlier. Therefore, H2 is supported with the literature.

Hypotheses 3 states that self-concept has a positive relationship with the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland when buying fashion clothing. Although it may not be the most influential impact, but self-concept is significant when contributing to the willingness of career women in Ireland to pay premium in fashion clothing. This is because everyone exist with thoughts and feelings of their own as mentioned in literature review, creating a unique personality. From personality or personal characteristics, it leads to an image that one wishes to represent especially for career women where explained earlier that they do have a certain image to show thus,

supporting the literature.

Even though reference group represent the influence with the lowest impact towards the willingness to pay premium, it still have a positive relationship with the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland when buying fashion clothing. It represent the lowest because reference group such as family, friends, celebrities and colleagues may not have much impact. Most of the respondents participated had proven in the findings that reference group do influence them, but it does not influence them as much as brand status, brand attitude and self-concept do in willing to pay more for fashion clothing. In the literature review, it explains that reference group is an important factor that influence career women to pay more for fashion clothing because they could 'blend-in' and seek conformity in social groups. However, perhaps this could not be the only reason as presented by the multiple regression coefficient that the relationship was insignificant due to the p-value being more than 0.05.

Chapter 6: Conclusion, Limitation and Recommendation

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 consists of the conclusion, recommendation and limitation based from the findings of this research. The conclusion indicates the overall findings obtained from this study regarding the relationship between brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group towards the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in fashion clothing. Also, the researcher provides suggestions in recommendations that are well associated in this study and for future study. The limitations are also explained in this chapter where the researcher had to encounter some restrictions during the course of this study.

6.2 Conclusion

This research was conducted to fill in the gap which had existed from the literature review (chapter 2) to be able to provide a better understanding in regards to the influences of willingness to pay premium of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing as career women represent a vast growing consumer segment in Ireland.

The aim of this research was to determine the influences and its relationship towards willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland especially in fashion clothing. Such influences includes brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group that are known to have an influence towards the willingness to pay premium. It is necessary to understand the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women as marketers are able to overcome the pricing strategy in fashion clothing products and are able to obtain competitive advantage.

Moreover, the findings had shown that there are positive relationship between brand status, brand attitude, self-concept and reference group towards the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing.

It has been discovered that most career women in Ireland who works more than 30 hours per week on average with a postgraduate or masters degree perceive that brand status influences them most in willingness to pay premium in fashion clothing. Furthermore, these career women are also between the ages of 18-29 with an annual income between €30,000 until €40,000 and are mostly single.

6.3 Limitations

This research was absorbed on studying the willingness to pay premium behaviour of career women in fashion clothing. Thus, the researcher had encountered a number of limitation throughout the process of this study.

The sample size for this research was considerably small as it only focused on career women in Ireland with an interest in fashion clothing. The original number of respondent was aimed at 300 participants. However, due to difficulties in data collection, the researcher was only able to collect 152 responses from the respondents. From this, the researcher had realised that many career women are not willing to voluntarily participate in this study which perhaps were caused by personal issues.

In addition, this research had a limitation where it only focused on career women and in fashion clothing. The researcher had not considered that, not all career women are interested in the fashion clothing. Thus, they might behave otherwise when responding to other product category or industry. Also, the findings for this research could only be applied to certain industry and/or sector especially in fashion clothing and career women.

Time constraint was one of the major limitation as it did not only limit the number of sample size which could have been larger if more time was given, but also towards the accuracy of data as the researcher had realise a mistake in the questionnaire. However, due to time restriction, the researcher could not make amendments but to just use the data that was already collected and gathered.

Another limitation towards this study was the snowballing sampling method where there was a possibility that this method turned out to be bias for example, the questionnaire were firstly distributed to respondents who are acquaintance of the researcher. The snowball sampling method limits the respondents to a specific segment of population that could be based on the demographic profile such as the employment status, education level, age, income and marital status. Furthermore, this research represent a quantitative analysis and findings such as descriptive facts acquired from the questionnaire regarding self-concept for example, is hard to generalise because the actual responds in regards to self-concept personally may vary.

6.4 Recommendations

The sample size for this research is considerably small although results regarding the influence of brands, self-concept and reference group towards willingness to pay premium of career women in Ireland in fashion clothing were still able to be acquired. However, it is recommended that the sample size should be of larger size because this will result in a more realistic findings. By obtaining a larger number of sample size, it will be able to increase the accuracy and decrease the error's margin.

As mentioned in the limitations, this research only focus on career women and fashion clothing. The researcher suggests that perhaps this study should consider to focus on other industry where the consumers are more brand conscious so that the results will be more precise. Future research for example could study on automobile industry where the findings could clarify better in regards to the influence of brands, self-concept and reference group and compared to fashion clothing because consumers are more

conscious in automobile industry.

It is also suggested that this research includes the demographic profile information of respondents especially in future research such as employment status, education level, age, annual income, and marital status as a variable to determine the influence towards willingness to pay premium of career women in fashion clothing. The association of demographic profile information of respondents may be able to provide alternative results which is more reliable, clarified and accurate. Therefore, marketers too are able to obtain further understanding and insights on the career women of Ireland and fashion clothing.

Time constraint was one of the limitation for this research, thus, it is recommended that for future study, more time is spent especially in developing the questionnaire as the questionnaire for this research had encountered some gaps and difficulties. Allocating extra time towards this can assist in acquiring a more reliable and accurate result.

It is highly recommended that for future studies, the mentioned limitations and recommendations should be considered as it can achieve what was not able to accomplish in this research.

References

- Aaker, D. A. (1996) 'Building strong brands: building, measuring, and managing brand equity', *Free Press*.
- Aaker, J.L. (1997) 'Dimensions of brand personality'. *Journal of marketing research*, 34(3), pp. 347-356.
- Anggraeni, A. (2015) 'Effects of brand love, personality and image on word of mouth; the case of local fashion brands among young consumers', *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 211, pp.442-447.
- Arvidsson, A. (2005) 'Brands: a critical perspective'. *Journal of consumer culture*, 5(2), pp.235-258.
- Ataman, B. and Ülengin, B. (2003) 'A note on the effect of brand image on sales', *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 12(4), pp.237-250.
- Bakshi, S. (2012) 'Impact of gender on consumer purchase behaviour', *Journal of Research in Commerce and Management*, 1(9), pp.1-8.
- Ball, J. (2015) 'Identity and the professional millennial woman: a cross-cultural examination', *Review of Business*, 36(1), p.71.
- Bartos, R. (1977) 'The moving target: The impact of women's employment on consumer behavior', *The Journal of Marketing*, pp.31-37.
- Bearden, W.O. and Etzel, M.J. (1982) 'Reference group influence on product and brand purchase decisions'. *Journal of consumer research*, 9(2), pp. 183-194.
- Belén del Río, A., Vazquez, R. and Iglesias, V. (2001) 'The effects of brand associations on consumer response'. *Journal of consumer marketing*, 18(5), pp. 410-425.
- Bhardwaj, V. and Fairhurst, A. (2010) 'Fast fashion: response to changes in the fashion industry', *The International Review of Retail, Distribution and Consumer Research*, 20(1), pp.165-173.

- Bhatia, P., Ali, S.H. and Mehdi, Z. (2014) 'A Factorial Study of Consumer Buying Behaviour towards Durable Goods With Reference To Urban Working Women', *International Journal on Recent and Innovation Trends in Computing and Communication*, 2(3), pp.424-434.
- Bohdanowicz, J. and Clamp, L. (1994) *Fashion Marketing* Routledge.
- Bruce, M. and Kratz, C. (2007) 'Competitive marketing strategies of luxury fashion companies', *In Fashion marketing* Routledge, pp. 154-174.
- Casidy, R. (2012) 'An empirical investigation of the relationship between personality traits, prestige sensitivity, and fashion consciousness of Generation Y in Australia' *Australasian Marketing Journal (AMJ)*, 20(4), pp.242-249.
- Casidy, R. and Wymer, W. (2016) 'A risk worth taking: Perceived risk as moderator of satisfaction, loyalty, and willingness-to-pay-premium price'. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 32, pp. 189-197.
- Central Statistics Office (2018) *Population and Migration Estimates* Available at: <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/pme/populationandmigration/estimatesapril2018/> [Accessed 8th July 2019].
- Central Statistics Office (2018) *Women and Men in Ireland 2016: Employment* Available at: <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-wamii/womenandmeninireland2016/employment/> [Accessed 14th January 2019].
- Chakraborty, U. (2017) 'The Impact of Brand Personality on Consumer Buying Behaviour'. *CLEAR International Journal of Research in Commerce & Management*, 8(11).
- Chander, S and Raza, M. (2015) 'Consumer Buying Behaviour: A Comparative Study of Male and Female Users of Electronics', *Abasyn University Journal of Social Sciences*, 8(1), pp. 47-61.
- Chang, Y. and Thorson, E. (2004) 'Television and web advertising

synergies'. *Journal of Advertising*, 33(2), pp.75-84.

Cooper, D. R. and Schindler, P. S. (2014) *Business research methods*. McGraw-Hill Education (The McGraw-Hill/Irwin series operations and decision sciences).

Davcik, N.S. and Sharma, P. (2015) 'Impact of product differentiation, marketing investments and brand equity on pricing strategies: A brand level investigation'. *European Journal of Marketing*, 49(5/6), pp.760-781.

De Chernatony, L. and Segal-Horn, S. (2003). 'The criteria for successful services brands'. *European journal of Marketing*, 37(7/8), pp.1095-1118.

De Felice, F. and Petrillo, A. (2013) 'Key success factors for organizational innovation in the fashion industry', *International Journal of Engineering Business Management*, 5(Godište 2013), pp.5-27.

Dittmar, H. and Drury, J. (2000) 'Self-image—is it in the bag? A qualitative comparison between “ordinary” and “excessive” consumers', *Journal of economic psychology*, 21(2), pp.109-142.

Elliott, R. (1994) 'Addictive consumption: Function and fragmentation in postmodernity', *Journal of consumer policy*, 17(2), pp.159-179.

Elliott, R. and Yannopoulou, N. (2007) 'The nature of trust in brands: a psychosocial model'. *European Journal of Marketing*.

Escalas, J. E. (2004) 'Narrative Processing: Building Consumer Connections to Brands', *Journal of Consumer Psychology (Taylor & Francis Ltd)*, 14(1/2), pp. 168–180. doi: 10.1207/s15327663jcp1401&2_19.

Escalas, J.E. and Bettman, J.R. (2005) 'Self-construal, reference groups, and brand meaning', *Journal of consumer research*, 32(3), pp. 378-389.

Faber, R.J., O'Guinn, T.C. and Krych, R. (1987) 'Compulsive consumption', *ACR North American Advances*.

Farris, P.W., Bendle, N., Pfeifer, P. and Reibstein, D. (2010). 'Marketing metrics:

The definitive guide to measuring marketing performance'. *Pearson Education*.

Forbes, M. (2013). *Career Women And The New Definition Of Success*. [online] Forbes.com. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/moiraforbes/2013/03/06/women-and-the-new-definition-of-career-success/#5d4b188a659d> [Accessed 18th July 2019].

Fumi, A., Pepe, A., Scarabotti, L. and Schiraldi, M.M. (2013). 'Fourier analysis for demand forecasting in a fashion company'. *International Journal of Engineering Business Management*, 5(Godište 2013), pp.5-30.

Furajji, F., Łatuszyńska, M. and Wawrzyniak, A. (2012). 'An empirical study of the factors influencing consumer behaviour in the electric appliances market'. *Contemporary Economics*, 6(3), pp.76-86.

Ghauri P N and Cateora P (2010), *International Marketing*, 3rd Edition, p. 682, McGraw Hill, London.

Given, L.M. (2008), 'The sage encyclopedia of qualitative research methods', *SAGE Publications, Inc., Thousand Oaks, CA*, doi: 10.4135/9781412963909.

Guha, S. (2013) 'The changing perception and buying behaviour of women consumer in Urban India', *IOSR Journal of Business and Management*, 11(6), pp.34-39.

Grant, I.J. and Stephen, G.R. (2006) 'Communicating culture: an examination of the buying behaviour of 'tweenage' girls and the key societal communicating factors influencing the buying process of fashion clothing'. *Journal of targeting, measurement and analysis for marketing*, 14(2), pp.101-114.

Hinton, P.R, Brownlow, C., McMurray, I., and Cozens, B. (2004) *SPSS Explained*. Routledge.

Irish Statute Book (2019) *Protection of Young Persons (Employment) Act, 1996*, Available at: <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1996/act/16/enacted/en/print> [Accessed 18th January 2019].

- Istudor, N. and Pelau, C. (2013) 'Impulsive buying behavior depending on gender'. *The International Journal of Management Science and Information Technology (IJMSIT)*, (10-(Dec)), pp.138-146.
- Kandulapati, S. (2010) 'Brand Image Analysis: A Study on Cosmetics in Hyderabad', *Pragyaan*, p.32.
- Kao, D. T. (2015) 'Is Cinderella resurging? The impact of consumers' underdog disposition on brand preferences: Underdog brand biography and brand status as moderators', *Journal of Consumer Behaviour*, 14(5), pp. 307–316. doi: 10.1002/cb.1521.
- Keller, K.L. and Lehmann, D.R. (2006) 'Brands and branding: Research findings and future priorities'. *Marketing science*, 25(6), pp.740-759.
- Kerpen, C. (2017) *Yes, It Matters What You Wear to Work*. Forbes.com. Available at: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/carriekerpen/2017/02/28/yes-it-matters-what-you-wear-to-work/#78edd60345f0> [Accessed 27th July 2019].
- Khare, A., Parveen, C. and Mishra, A. (2012) 'Influence of normative and informative values on fashion clothing involvement of Indian women'. *Journal of Customer Behaviour*, 11(1), pp.9-32.
- Kim, Y. K. and Lee, J. (2000) 'Benefit segmentation of catalog shoppers among professionals. *Clothing and Textiles Research Journal*, 18(2), pp. 111-120.
- Kirmani, A., Sood, S. and Bridges, S. (1999) 'The ownership effect in consumer responses to brand line stretches. *Journal of Marketing*, 63(1), pp. 88-101.
- Ko, E., Kim, E., Taylor, C.R., Hoon Kim, K. and Jeong Kang, I. (2007) 'Cross-national market segmentation in the fashion industry: A study of European, Korean, and US consumers'. *International marketing review*, 24(5), pp.629-651.
- Kumar, R. (2019) *Research methodology: A step-by-step guide for beginners*. Sage Publications Limited.

- Li, G., Li, G. and Kambele, Z. (2012) 'Luxury fashion brand consumers in China: Perceived value, fashion lifestyle, and willingness to pay'. *Journal of Business Research*, 65(10), pp.1516-1522.
- Ligas, M. and Chaidhuri, A. (2012) 'The moderating roles of shopper experience and store type on the relationship between perceived merchandise value and willingness to pay a higher price. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 19(2), pp. 249-258.
- Magnussen, K. (2008) *Womenswear – UK – March*. Mintel Group Ltd Available at: http://reports.mintel.com/display/280183/?_cc=1# [Accessed 8th July 2019]
- Malhotra, N. K. (2007). *Marketing research: An applied orientation*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson/Prentice Hall.
- Malik, M.E., Ghafoor, M.M., Iqbal, H.K., Ali, Q., Hunbal, H., Noman, M. and Ahmad, B. (2013) 'Impact of brand image and advertisement on consumer buying behavior', *World Applied Sciences Journal*, 23(1), pp.117-122.
- MarketLine Industry Profile: Apparel Retail in Ireland (2018) *Apparel Retail Industry Profile: Ireland* p. N.PAG. Available at: <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip.cookie.shib&db=ent&AN=133210887&site=eds-live&scope=site> [Accessed 18th August 2019].
- McColl, J. and Moore, C. (2011) 'An exploration of fashion retailer own brand strategies', *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 15(1), pp.91-107.
- McGahie, W. C., Bordage, G., Crandall, S., and Pangaro, L. (2001) 'Research Design', *Academic Medicine*, 76(9), 929-930.
- Michaelidou, N. and Dibb, S. (2006) 'Product involvement: an application in clothing'. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour: An International Research Review*, 5(5), pp. 442-453.

- Mick, D.G., Broniarczyk, S.M. and Haidt, J. (2004) 'Choose, choose, choose, choose, choose, choose, choose: Emerging and prospective research on the deleterious effects of living in consumer hyperchoice', *Journal of Business Ethics*, 52(2), pp.207-211.
- Mitchell, A.A and Olson, J.C. (1981) 'Exploring consumer status and conspicuous consumption. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour: An International Research Review*, 4(1), pp. 25-39.
- Mowen, J. C. and Minor, M.S. (2000), 'Consumer Behaviour: A Framework', *Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, NJ*, pp. 00-105
- Netemeyer, R.G., Krishnan, B., Pullig, C., Wang, G., Yagci, M., Dean, D., Ricks, J. and Wirth, F. (2004) 'Developing and validating measures of facets of customer-based brand equity'. *Journal of business research*, 57(2), pp. 209-224.
- O'Cass, A. and Choy, E. (2008) 'Studying Chinese generation Y consumers' involvement in fashion clothing and perceived brand status'. *Journal of Product & Brand Management*, 17(5), pp.341-352.
- O'cass, A. and Frost, H. (2002) 'Status brands: examining the effects of non-product-related brand associations on status and conspicuous consumption'. *Journal of product & brand management*, 11(2), pp.67-88.
- O'cass, A. and McEwen, H. (2004) 'Exploring consumer status and conspicuous consumption'. *Journal of Consumer Behaviour: An International Research Review*, 4(1), pp.25-39.
- O'Cass, A. and Siahtiri, V. (2013) 'In search of status through brands from Western and Asian origins: Examining the changing face of fashion clothing consumption in Chinese young adults', *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 20(6), pp.505-515.
- Phau, I. and Lo, C.C. (2004) 'Profiling fashion innovators: A study of self-concept, impulse buying and Internet purchase intent'. *Journal of Fashion Marketing*

and Management: An International Journal, 8(4), pp. 399-411.

Piamphongsant, T. and Mandhachitara, R., 2008. Psychological antecedents of career women's fashion clothing conformity. *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 12(4), pp.438-455. doi: 10.1108/13612020810906119.

Quinlan, C. (2011) *Business research methods: [electronic book]*. Cengage Learning. Available at: <http://search.ebscohost.com/login.aspx?direct=true&AuthType=ip.cookie.shib&db=cat05743a&AN=nci.29639&site=eds-live&scope=site> [Accessed 1st August 2019].

Rehman, F.U., Bin Md Yusoff, R., Bin Mohamed Zabri, S. and Binti Ismail, F. (2017) 'Determinants of personal factors in influencing the buying behavior of consumers in sales promotion: a case of fashion industry'. *Young Consumers*, 18(4), pp.408-424.

Riaz, H.A. (2015) 'Impact of Brand Image on Consumer Buying Behavior in Clothing Sector: A Comparative Study between Males and Females of Central Punjab (Lahore) and Southern Punjab (Multan)'. *Kuwait Chapter of Arabian Journal of Business and Management Review*, 33(2584), pp.1-12.

Runyan, W.M. ed. (1988). *Psychology and historical interpretation*. Oxford University Press. Available at: http://www.williamrunyan.com/article_content/A%20Historical%20and%20Conceptual%20Introduction%20to%20Psychohistory.pdf [Accessed 12th August 2019].

Russell, H., O'Connell, P.J. and McGinnity, F. (2009) 'The impact of flexible working arrangements on work–life conflict and work pressure in Ireland'. *Gender, Work & Organization*, 16(1), pp.73-97.

Sakara, A. and Alhassan, F. (2014) 'An Assessment Of How Branding Influences the Purchase Behaviour of Female Cosmetic Consumers: A Case of Career Women in the Wa Municipality, Ghana'. *International Journal of Economics*,

Commerce and Management, 2(10).

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2012) *Research methods for business students*. 6th edn, Edinbrugh Gate Harlow: Pearson.

Saunders, M., Lewis, P. and Thornhill, A. (2012) *Research methods for business students*. 7th edn, Edinbrugh Gate Harlow: Pearson.

Sekaran, U., and Bougie, R. (2013) *Research methods for business: A skill-building approach*. Chichester, West Sussex: Wiley.

Shrimp, T.A. (2010) *Integrated Marketing Communication in Advertising and Promotion*/por Terence A Shrimp (No. 658.8 S45).

Shukla, P. (2010) 'Status consumption in cross-national context: socio-psychological, brand and situational antecedents'. *International Marketing Review*, 27(1), pp.108-129.

Spáčil, V. and Teichmannová, A. (2016) 'Intergenerational analysis of consumer behaviour on the beer market'. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 220, pp.487-495.

Stall-Meadown, C. and Davey, A. (2013) 'Green marketing of apparel: Consumers' price sensitivity to environment marketing claims'. *Journal of Global Fashion Marketing*, 4(1), pp. 33-43.

Tajuddin, R.M., Zainol, A.S. and Sahil, S.A.S. (2014) 'An evaluation of malaysian female consumers' attitude scale towards buying fashion branded goods'. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 130, pp.340-346.

Vieira, A. A. (2009) 'An Extended Theoretical Model of Fashion Clothing Involvement', *Journal of Fashion Marketing and Management: An International Journal*, 13(2), pp. 179-200.

Vigneron, F. and Johnson, L.W. (2004) 'Measuring brand luxury perceptions. *The Journal of Brand Management*, 11(6), pp. 484-508.

- World Economic Forum. (2019). *The Global Gender Gap Report 2018*. [online]
Available at: <https://www.weforum.org/reports/the-global-gender-gap-report-2018> [Accessed 24th July 2019].
- Yakup, D. and JablonskÄ, S. (2012) 'Integrated approach to factors affecting consumers purchase behavior in Poland and an empirical study', *Global Journal of Management And Business Research*, 12(15).
- Zeb, H., Rashid, K. and Javeed, M.B. (2011) 'Influence of Brands on Female Consumer's Buying Behavior in Pakistan', *International Journal of Trade, Economics and Finance*, 2(3), p.225.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Questionnaire

8/14/2019

Influence of Brands Towards the Buying Behaviour of Career Women in Ireland

Influence of Brands, Self-Concept and Reference Group Towards the Willingness to Pay Premium of Career Women in Ireland

Dear Respondent,

I am a student at National College of Ireland and this is a research project for a Master's thesis. The purpose of this questionnaire is to obtain information and identify the significant influences of brand towards the buying behaviour of career women. This questionnaire contains a few demographic questions and questions about brand status, brand attitude, willingness to pay premium, self-concept and reference group.

The full questionnaire should take approximately seven minutes to complete. Your participation is voluntary, anonymous and entirely confidential. No identifying data will be collected. The findings of the research will be provided to you on request.

I would be grateful if you could fill in and please feel free to forward on survey to anyone you feel would have an interest in taking part.

Should you have any enquiries, you can email me at nadja_1302@yahoo.com. Thank you for your cooperation.

Nadja Faris

Section 1: Demographics

Choose one of the multiple choices provided

1. Are you living in Ireland?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Yes
☐ No

2. What is your employment status?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ Employed and working less than 20 hours per week on average
☐ Employed and working 20 to 30 hours per week on average
☐ Employed and working more than 30 hours per week on average
☐ Unemployed
☐ Self-employed

3. What is the highest level of education that you have completed to-date?

Mark only one oval.

- ☐ None
☐ Accomplished primary or secondary education
☐ Accomplished third level education qualification
☐ Accomplished postgraduate or master's degree

4. What is your age?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ 18 - 29
- ☐ 30 - 40
- ☐ 41 - 50

5. What is your annual income?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Less than €20,000
- ☐ €20,000 – €30,000
- ☐ €30,000 – €40,000
- ☐ €40,000 – €50,000
- ☐ €50,000 – €70,000
- ☐ More than €70,000

6. What is your marital status?*Mark only one oval.*

- ☐ Single
- ☐ In a relationship
- ☐ Married
- ☐ Separated / Divorce

Section 2: On a 5 point scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree, please indicate what degree you would disagree or agree with the following statements regarding willingness to pay premium (higher) prices.

- 1 - Strongly Disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Neutral
- 4 - Agree
- 5 - Strongly Agree

7. If a brand enhances my status, I will be willing to pay more for that*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

8. It is important to me that I purchase branded clothing with a higher price*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

9. I prefer to pay higher prices to purchase branded clothing products*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

Section 3: On a 5 point scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree, please indicate what degree you would disagree or agree with the following statements regarding brand status.

- 1 - Strongly Disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Neutral
- 4 - Agree
- 5 - Strongly Agree

10. Branded fashion clothing is important*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

11. Branded fashion clothing adds quality to my life*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

12. I prefer wearing branded clothing products only*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

13. I purchase branded items which make a good impression*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

Section 4: On a 5 point scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree, please indicate what degree you would disagree or agree with the following statements regarding brand attitude.

9. I prefer to pay higher prices to purchase branded clothing products*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

Section 3: On a 5 point scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree, please indicate what degree you would disagree or agree with the following statements regarding brand status.

- 1 - Strongly Disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Neutral
- 4 - Agree
- 5 - Strongly Agree

10. Branded fashion clothing is important*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

11. Branded fashion clothing adds quality to my life*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

12. I prefer wearing branded clothing products only*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

13. I purchase branded items which make a good impression*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

Section 4: On a 5 point scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree, please indicate what degree you would disagree or agree with the following statements regarding brand attitude.

19. Branded clothes play an important role in my life*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

20. Do you agree with the following statement, "You are what you wear"?*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

21. Brands enhance my status and make me a more successful person*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

Section 6: On a 5 point scale that ranges from strongly disagree to strongly agree, please indicate what degree you would disagree or agree with the following statements regarding reference group.

- 1 - Strongly Disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Neutral
- 4 - Agree
- 5 - Strongly Agree

22. I am not easily influenced by an opinion from someone about branded clothing products*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

23. My family and friends influence me a lot when I purchase clothing products*Mark only one oval.*

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

8/14/2019

Influence of Brands Towards the Buying Behaviour of Career Women in Ireland

24. Celebrities influence me a lot when I purchase clothing products

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

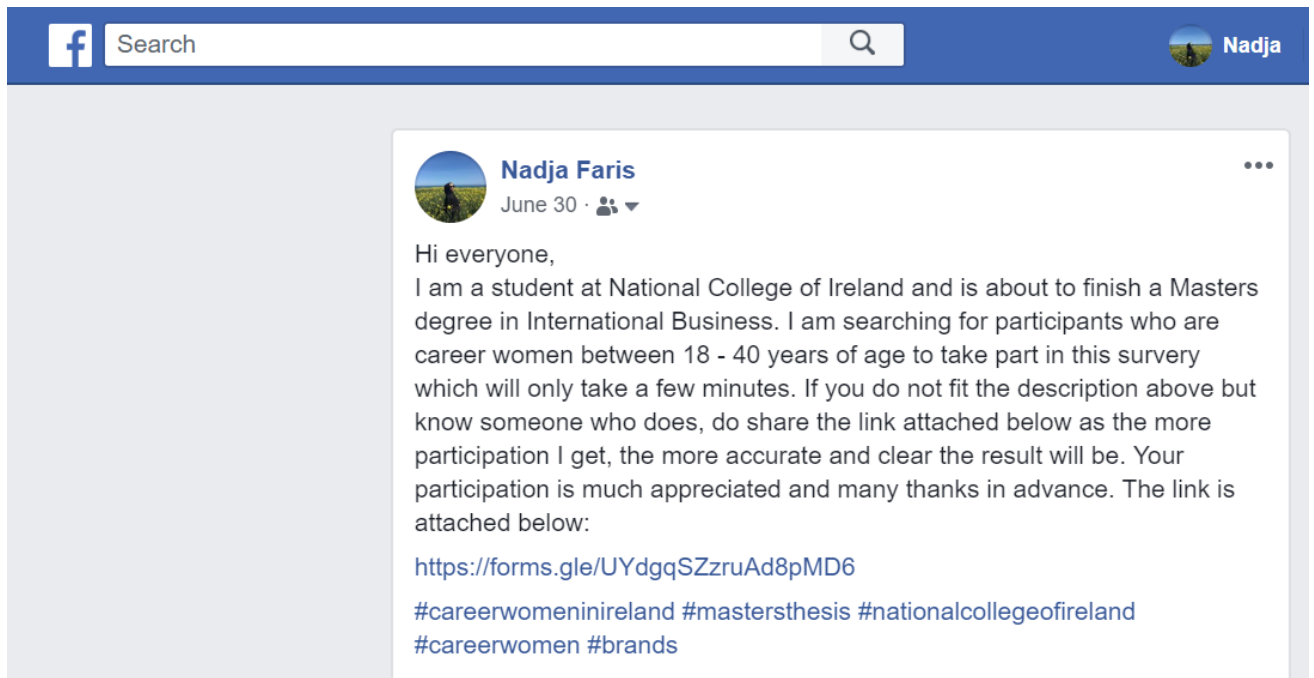
25. I judge people's personality by the brands that they are wearing

Mark only one oval.

	1	2	3	4	5	
Strongly Disagree	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Strongly Agree

Powered by
 Google Forms

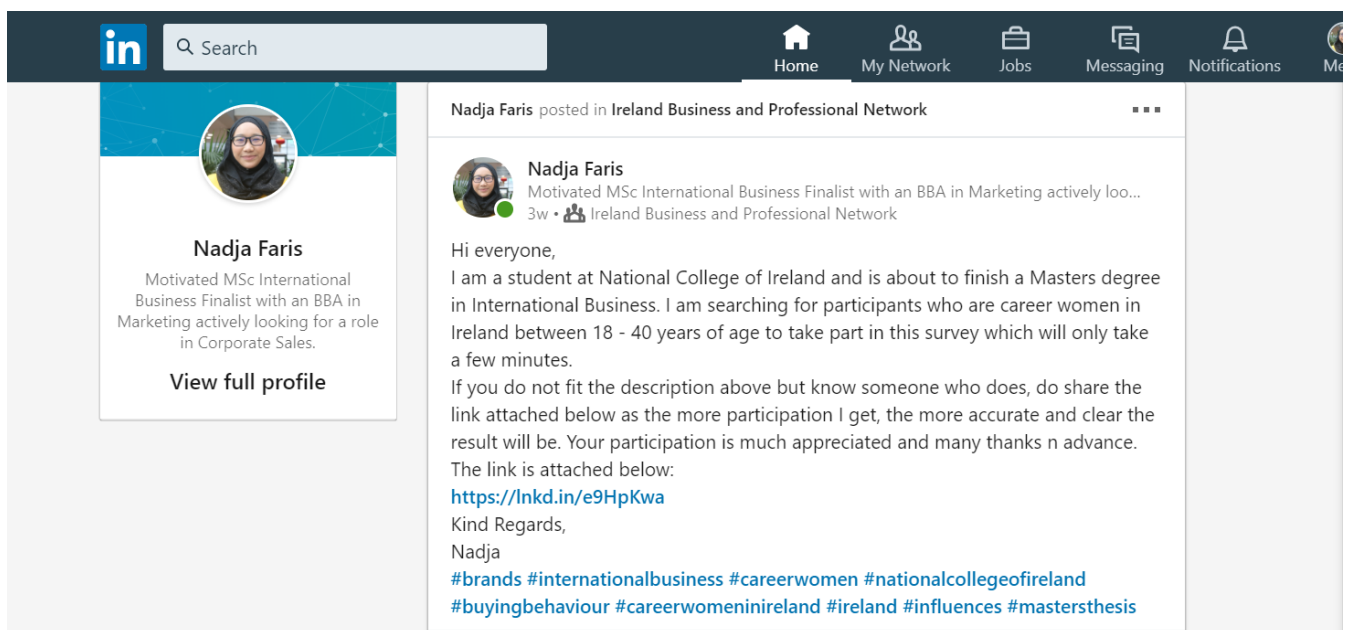
Appendix 2



Appendix 3



Appendix 4



Appendix 5

The screenshot shows a WhatsApp chat interface. The main chat area is titled 'MSc IB @NCI' and lists members: Abiram, Balqis, Daniel, DG, Faisal, Flavia, Fortune, Gabriel, Gonul, Indrani, Komal, Nathalia, Ninad, Pra... A message from an unnamed contact reads: 'Hi everyone, I am a student at National College of Ireland and is about to finish a Masters degree in International Business. I am searching for participants who are career women to take part in this survey which will only take a few minutes. If you do not fit the description above but know someone who does, do share the link attached below as the more participation I get, the more accurate and clear the result will be. Your participation is much appreciated and many thanks in advance. The link is attached below: <https://forms.gle/UYdgqSZruAd8pMD6>'. Below this, a message from 'Flavia' says 'Hi everyone, I am a student at National College of Ireland and is about to finish a Masters degree in International Business. I am searching for participants who are career'. A response from 'You' says 'Done!'. Another message from 'Balqis' says 'Hi everyone, I am a student at National College of Ireland and is about to finish a Masters degree in International Business. I am searching for participants who are career'. A final response from 'You' says 'Done'. The left sidebar shows a list of chats: 'MSc IB @NCI' (Yesterday), 'MSc IB JANUARY 2018' (7/24/2019), and 'MSc IB' (7/30/2019). The 'MESSAGES' section shows three messages from 'MSc IB @NCI' with links to Google Forms.

Appendix 6

nadja_spss.sav [DataSet1] - IBM SPSS Statistics Data Editor

	Name	Type	Width	Decimals	Label	Values	Missing	Columns	Align	Measure	Role
1	Living	Numeric	1	0		{1, yes}...	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
2	Employment	Numeric	1	0		{1, Employe...	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
3	Education	Numeric	1	0		{1, none}...	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
4	Age	Numeric	1	0		{1, 18-29}...	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
5	Income	Numeric	1	0		{1, <20k}...	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
6	Marital	Numeric	1	0		{1, single}...	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
7	Status1	Numeric	1	0		None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
8	Status2	Numeric	1	0		None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
9	Status3	Numeric	1	0		None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
10	Status4	Numeric	1	0		None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
11	Batt1	Numeric	1	0		None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
12	Batt2	Numeric	1	0		None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
13	Batt3	Numeric	1	0		None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
14	Batt4	Numeric	1	0		None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
15	Willing1	Numeric	1	0		None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
16	Willing2	Numeric	1	0		None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
17	Willing3	Numeric	1	0		None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
18	Selfcon1	Numeric	1	0		None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
19	Selfcon2	Numeric	1	0		None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
20	Selfcon3	Numeric	1	0		None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
21	Selfcon4	Numeric	1	0		None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input
22	Ref1	Numeric	1	0		None	None	12	Right	Nominal	Input

Data View Variable View

Open data document IBM SPSS Statistics Processor is ready Unicode:ON

Appendix 7

A2				Demographics
	A	B	C	D
1				
2	Demographics			
3	Q1	Living in Ireland	Yes	1
4			No	2
5				
6	Q2	Employment Status	Employed <20hr/week	1
7			Employed 20-30hr/week	2
8			Employed >30hr/week	3
9			Unemployed	4
10			Self-employed	5
11				
12	Q3	Education Level	None	1
13			Primary/Secondary	2
14			3rd Level	3
15			Postgraduate/Masters	4
16				
17	Q4	Age	18-29	1
18			30-40	2
19			41-50	3
20				
21	Q5	Annual Income	<20,000	1
22			20-30K	2
23			30-40K	3
24			40-50K	4
25			50-70K	5
26			>70K	6
27				
28	Q6	Marital Status	Single	1
29			In a relationship	2
30			Married	3
31			Seperated/Divorce	4

</