Mirror, mirror on the wall

An investigation into consumer behavior and consumption of image altering products and services in an Irish context

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Abstract

Background Consumers invest considerable amounts of their income in clothing, cosmetics and treatments to preserve or renew their attractiveness. "In 2009 the Irish cosmetic surgery market was valued at €50 million, this figure has reduced slightly due to recessionary times, but cosmetic clinics in Ireland find business is still booming" (O'Callaghan, 2013). A study into the consumer behaviour in relation to image in Ireland is reported here.

Results Quantitative results are shown to highlight the behaviour and preferences of Irish consumers. It is shown that Irish consumers portray a number of similarities to that of international examples as shown in the literature. It is identified that a high level of social comparison exists before a purchase decision is made. Consumers use friends as their main source of influence in which they base their perception of beauty. Consumers show high levels of low self-esteem as a result of exposure to television and other media. Where body satisfaction is low product consumption is high.

Conclusions Irish consumers behave in a similar fashion to that of international examples. Consumers are prone to marketing, media and friends when it comes to identifying a self-concept.

Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

It was reported in June 2013 that the Irish cosmetic surgery market was valued at €50million O'Callaghan (2013). An estimate which is down from recent years due to a recessionary climate in Ireland. It is reported by O'Callaghan (2013) that consumers are willing to pay up to and above €10, 000 to undergo a painful and complex surgical procedure in the hopes of improving their appearance. Eisend & Moller (2006) report that the beauty industry is one of the most prosperous sectors in todays developed economies. Spending on advertising cosmetic products reaches above and beyond €1.5 billion per campaign, this is from a single cosmetic organisation (Case, 2007). Why do consumers feel the need to change how they look? Soloman, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg (2010) state that a person's physical appearance is a large part of their self-concept and that body image refers to a consumer's subjective evaluation of their physical self. This self-concept is influenced through social interactions and exposure to media. Richins (1991) stated that exposure to advertising with attractive models can temporarily raise comparison standards for physical attractiveness by those prone to advertising. The purpose of this research is to investigate whether Irish consumer's behaviour matches that of international examples or whether Irish consumers behave in an opposing way. A lot examples exist (Dwyer 1993, Wiseman, Gray, Moismann & Ahrens 1992, Wetzel 2007) in the literature of how consumers behave in relation to consumption of image products, none of which of an Irish example. This chapter sets out the process of the study at hand, the following chapters are broken down with an explanation of purpose to the study.

1.2 Literature review

The literature review provides a breakdown and analyses of the existing literature surrounding the topic of consumer behaviour and self-image. Journals, newspaper articles, books and online databases were used to gather as much relevant data as possible to gain a clear understanding of the existing problem at hand.

1.3 Methodology

The methodology chapter consist of a breakdown of the research method. This chapter states how the method was selected while providing a review of alternative data collection methods. The chosen data-collection method will be justified and the application process will be demonstrated.

1.4 Results

Results of the gathered data will be analysed and displayed. Important themes and issues will be highlighted and presented to the reader.

1.5 Interpretation of findings

The results will be reviewed again in comparison to the research hypotheses to discover whether or not the researcher was successful in supporting the chosen hypotheses. The research objectives will guide the findings chapter and lead to the evaluation of the purpose of this study.

1.6 Conclusion

The conclusion chapter will tie all relevant findings together and again lay out the key themes and facts of this research study. A list of areas for further research will also be considered and presented to the reader.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.0 Literature review

2.1 Introduction

According to Eisend & Moller (2006) the beauty industry is one of the most prosperous sectors in todays developed economies. Consumers invest considerable amounts of their income in clothing, cosmetics and treatments to preserve or renew their attractiveness. "In 2009 the Irish cosmetic surgery market was valued at €50 million, this figure has reduced slightly due to recessionary times, but cosmetic clinics in Ireland find business is still booming" (O'Callaghan, 2013). In many cultures and societies body-image is an important component of the self-concept and has stimulated the demand of certain products and services, such as dietary, slimming, exercise and cosmetic items (Sturrock & Pioch, 1998). The purpose of this study is to evaluate consumer behaviour in relation to beauty in Ireland. The aim is to look at Irish consumer's reaction to cosmetic marketing and how an individual can be impacted as a result of such exposure to the 'norm' of the beauty industry. Throughout this literature review authors discuss the beauty industry and how image conscious consumers are impacted and how they act as a result of self-perception. There is universal agreement throughout the literature that media, culture, social groups and fashion trends impact upon on an individual's view of beauty and ultimately an ideal-self which will be discussed in more detail below. This chapter provides a review of the literature surrounding the topic area of consumer behaviour and image enhancing products, relevant themes will be highlighted that will then allow the progression of this investigation. The literature will be divided into the following themes and addressed separately, media impacts, cultural impacts, male beauty, social impacts, motivational influences and differences in gender. The purpose of this study is to evaluate whether Irish consumer behaviour differs from that of international examples. The aim is to discover whether or not Irish consumers behave in the same way as highlighted within the literature.

2.1.1 Consumer behaviour

Consumer behaviour can be described as "the activities people undertake when, obtaining, consuming and disposing of products and services" (Blackwell, Miniard and Engel, 2001: p6). Wright (2006) stated that there are many factors that will influence human behaviour and the buying process, really beginning from early childhood through the teen years and into adult life. In regard to consumers behaviour this study evaluates an individual's behaviour in relation to their appearance. Soloman, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg (2010) state that a person's physical appearance is a large part of their self-concept and that body image refers to a consumer's subjective evaluation of their physical self. Solomon, Bamossy, Askegaard and Hogg (2009) note that the field of consumer behaviour is the study of processes involved when individuals or groups select, purchase, use or dispose of products, services, ideas or experiences to satisfy needs and desires. The sociocultural attitudes towards appearance (SATA) construct is often referred to as the 'thin' ideal for women and the 'muscular' ideal for men (Thompson et al., 2004; Wilksch et al., 2006). This construct is what males and females base their perception as an ideal-self, this perception is further strengthened due to exposure or media images.

2.2 How media impacts consumer perception

When referring to media, it is noted that media involves all sources of mass communication such as TV, advertising, social media and magazines. Richins (1991) stated that exposure to advertising with attractive models can temporarily raise comparison standards for physical attractiveness by those prone to advertising. The images of women presented in the media are thinner than the majority of the female population according to Wiseman, Gray, Moismann & Ahrens (1992). As a result to exposure of such images Grabe and Hyde (2006) state that consumer's may develop low self-esteem and feelings such as anger and depression which could lead to eating disorders such as bulimia. In a study conducted by Dwyer (1993) the author found that out of 3000 students 62% stated that the media are the number one cause of the lack of female self-esteem. Dwyer (1993) further explains how an individual's opinions and views about themselves are undermined by the media. Wetzel (2007) stated that television and media raise viewers expectations to an unrealistic level and at the same time encourage and influence them to behave in a way that they would have not normally considered. 'The truth about television, advertising and media is that features are enhanced by special effects capable of minimizing the least imperfection, many models and actor's project virtually unattainable levels of beauty and physical attractiveness' (Warrington & Gourgova, 2002: p37). The portrayal of false beauty presents consumers of an unachievable

task for reaching this level. Soloman et al (2010) states because many consumers are motivated to match up to an ideal appearance they often go to great lengths to change aspects of their physical selves. From cosmetics to plastic surgery, tanning salons to diet pills, a multitude of products and services are directed towards altering or maintaining aspects of the physical self in order to present a desirable appearance.

2.2.1 Media spend

It was reported that in 2006 health and beauty products contributed $1.63 billion to prime time advertising in America. Case (2007) explains how this figure was up $1.53 billion from the year previous. Case (2007) further notes how beauty companies like Procter & Gamble(P&G), L'Oreal and Johnson & Johnson secure primetime viewing spots between shows like Grey's anatomy and Ugly Betty due to the high viewer numbers of a female audience. P&G spent $389.4 million in 2006, which increased by 9.6% from 2005, L'Oreal spent $145.3 million which was up 11.1% from 2005 while Unilever spent $112.8 million up 16% from 2005. These figures show the value that beauty brands hold for advertising to target audience suggesting how that the effect of advertising must generate a return on spend. In the UK Baker (2012) reported that major beauty brands such as Boots, L'Oreal and Procter & Gamble have come under fire over claims that the ad industry perpetuates low self-esteem by creating an unattainable image of women in the media. In January 2012 the Advertising Standards Authority (ASA) banned an L'Oreal print campaign for featuring an airbrushed image of actress Rachel Weisz. Asked by conservative MP Caroline Nokes if the success of the beauty industry was based on perpetuating a lack of confidence in order to sell more products, L'Oreal group director of communications Louise Terry defended the cosmetics firm's advertising as "aspirational" and "sincere" Baker (2012). Elizabeth Fagan, marketing director for Boots quoted "Women don't want to see unattractive or everyday people - they want to be aspirational". The report by Baker (2012) coincides with the views of Wiseman et al (1992) of how images portrayed in the media can negatively impact on viewers, even 20 years after the problem still exists. This point highlights that the effect of advertising in the beauty industry has caused concern for a long time but little has been done to dramatically change the tactics of advertisers, suggesting that a change to such tactics may be damaging to the net worth of the industry.

2.3 Cultural impacts and consumer extremes

Culture also impacts upon consumers perceptions of ideal beauty. "A person's satisfaction with the physical image they present to others is affected by how closely that image corresponds to the image valued by their culture" (Soloman et al, 2010:22). Orbach (2011) reported on how western culture impacted on young females in Fiji. In 1995, a television channel in Fiji began showing imported U.S shows, such as Friends. By 1998 11.9% of Fijian adolescent girls were over the toilet with bulimia, where previously no such cases of bulimia existed. Other example of cultural influences on beauty perceptions shown by Orbach (2011) is of a fashionable operation in Shanghai where the thigh is broken to extend the leg by 10 centimetres. 'In Singapore the latest craze is for a western nose and in South Korea, 50% of teenage girls have the double eyelid slit operation to westernize the look of the eyelid' (Orbach, 2011). According to Eisend & Moller (2006) the cosmetic surgery industry has seen enormous growths for instance the number of plastic surgeries in Germany has increased by about 38% from 2003-2004. Suggesting that consumers are willing to take expensive, drastic and in some cases dangerous actions in order to achieve what they view as an ideal-self. McQuinn (2012) reported in the Irish independent that over 1,500 women in Ireland have undergone breast augmentation surgery where Poly Implant Prothese (PIP) implants were used. Nearly 140 of these women have experienced ruptures in their implants, causing industrial-grade silicon to leak into their bodies. McQuinn (2012) further notes that in December 2012 the High Court ordered the winding up of Dublin-based Harley Medical Group (Ireland) Ltd, a cosmetic surgery clinic being sued by a number of women who claim the clinic fitted them with allegedly defective silicone breast implants. Wetzel (2007) reported how 57% of cosmetic survey patients surveyed over a 4 four year period were high-intensity television viewers and 79% said that they were influenced in their decision to seek cosmetic surgery by television or the media.

2.4 Social impacts

Smeesters, Mussweilder & Mandel (2009) discuss how consumers gather a perception of beauty through social comparison. The authors state that "individuals are driven by a desire for self-evaluation, by which they compare their own attributes and abilities with those of others". Social comparison can be shown to inspire an individual or in some cases further separate themselves from the standard. "The consequences of social comparison can be complex, as evaluations of the self can assimilate to or contrast away from the comparison standard" Mussweiler (2003). Upward social comparisons may affect consumer self-judgement and behaviour, as they may find upward comparisons threatening to their self-

esteem, causing them to misinterpret themselves to others, Argo, White & Dahl (2006). Comparisons with others occur spontaneously, even when not explicitly requested or induced Mussweiler (2003). Smeesters et al (2009) discuss how during a social comparison a person may engage in one of two alternative hypothesis testing mechanisms: similarity testing or dissimilarity testing. "Both mechanisms involve a selective focus on hypothesis-consistent information about the self and a standard, so that a person engaging in similarity testing selectively activates information indicating that self and standard are similar and ignores information indicating that self and standard are different, while a person engaging in dissimilarity testing selectively activates information indicating that self and standard are different and ignores information indicating that they are similar" Smeesters et al (2009). This relates to the type of media that impacts consumers as if the standard and self are dissimilar the consumer will act in an opposing way to the standard and if the consumer views the standard as similar then they will behave in a similar manner. This leads on to motivating factors of media on consumer's image.

2.5 Motivational impacts

It is proposed throughout the literature that exposure to certain media can motivate consumers towards a healthier lifestyle. Richins (1991) discussed how deviations from the ideal-self should provide a path to body satisfaction, if there is a gap between the real and ideal self, an individual strives to achieve the ideal state, and behaviour is more likely to reduce this gap. Opposing to this view that such media is motivating is the evidence that 59% of Americans and 40% of Europeans are overweight or obese; (www.who.org) exposure to such slim and beauty models in media and advertising is having the adverse effect as previously described by Mussweiler (2003). In a study conducted by Klesse, Goulens, Geyskens & DeRuter (2012) it was found that exposure to thin models resulted in a self-esteem shift that influenced participant's motivation to diet. As part of the study two sets of groups were separately exposed to two sets of models, the first a thin model, second being a normal-sized model. The study applied a goal perspective to examine the effect of exposure to thin models on dieter's motivation to lose weight. Female participants who were exposed to the thin model perceived their dieting goals as less attainable and engaged in more goal in-consistent behaviour (I.e. consuming unhealthy snacks) and had less success losing weight. This study shows if the comparison gap between the individual and the standard to too wide then exposure will have an adverse effect. A study conducts by Bolkan & Anderson (2009) evaluated the theory of image induction and social influence; this theory suggested that social

influencers can manipulate a targets self-image to gain increased compliance. The authors claim that by preceding a request with a question that creates a salient self-image in a target, targets are more likely to behave consistently with that image by complying with the request. The reason for this is believed that individuals have a desire for consistency, and it is upon this desire that they may be manipulated in a variety of ways (Cialdini, 2008). Guadagno & Burger (2007) found that people who were labelled as helpful (and who were clear in their self-concepts) behaved in a manner consistent with this 'helpful' label when confronted with a situation where assistance was optional. As part of the study Bolkan & Anderson (2009) conducted numerous tests which went on to prove the theory to be true. The authors maintained that once you have a person's self-image where you want it, you can get that person to comply with a variety of requests consistent with the way they imagine themselves. After answering yes to a suggested self-image, people may look to external cues to justify their internal states. As previously described, the desire to be consistent is important Cialdini (2008), according to Abelson, Aronson & McGuire (1968), it is ''a basic tendency of the human organism to maintain a state of consistency or equilibrium with his cognitive system''. The above study suggests that the desire to be consistent and to act in a consistent manner is a powerful motivator. This proposes the thought that if this theory was to be applied to individuals and their need to buy beauty products to comply with a perceived self-image would the results be as consistent.

2.6 Impacts of Gender and age

Eisend & Moller (2006) point out that feminist theory in today's society view women as objects to be looked at and how there is a strong cultural emphasis on girls and women's physical appearance. Allgood-Merten, Lewinsohn & Hops (1990) show that perception of physical attractiveness is strongly associated with self-esteem for girls more than boys. "When it comes to comparing the real self with an ideal body image, women tend to assess their actual body image more discrepant to their ideal than men" (Fallon & Rozin, 1985). Eisend & Moller (2006) suggest that this may be due to the fact that women in general are less self-confident than men which results from different gender roles: "male roles are consistent with high self-esteem and self-confidence is stereotyped as a masculine characteristic. Hence while media influences the perceptions of an ideal self for men and women in the same way, the perception of the actual self is lowered with respect to body images (Eisend & Moller, 2006). Warrington & Gourgova (2002) report that males are more influenced by lifestyles portrayed in media and advertising rather than physical appearance of

models. The authors suggest that the male consumer is influenced by portrayals of financial success rather than physical attractiveness of models. Suggesting that women are more susceptible to influences on perceived image preferences. In research conducted by Dwyer (1993) the author agrees that females are more easily influenced than males in reference to their image, she stated that "teenage girls are finding themselves and look to others for comparison of their self-image and self-acceptance" comparative outlets used are media portrayals, cultural influences and social groups. "The medias worship of women who are sexy and svelte affects boys expectations of girls" Dwyer (1993) further explains how girls base their image of what is deemed appealing to attract attention from boys, whereas boys gather their opinion on what they find attractive through the way in which media deems women. Soloman et al (2010) explains how consumers experience and knowledge can be more resilient to media influences on perceived ideal-image "an individual's knowledge can prove resilient against influences from the media, as decisions are based more on experience than perception". This suggests that as a person ages and gains more life experience then they may become less likely to be influenced by media and other sources.

2.6.1 Growth of the male market

Despite the fact that the cosmetic industry is traditionally associated with women; there is an increasing demand for cosmetics by men (Souiden & Diagne, 2009). In 2015 it is expected that 50% of males will be claim to use a facial care product compared to only 4% in 1990 (Souiden & Diagne, 2009). In 2009 figures show that in western countries, skin care products for men represent more than 30% of the whole cosmetic market. In the UK it is reported that males spend £100 million a year on cosmetics while in the US males spend as much as $2.3 billion (Euromonitor International, 2007). Botta (2003) established that men's attitudes and behaviours are strongly influenced by societal expectations; therefore as society changes, men's perceptions unconsciously alter. Hyman (2004) affirms that traditional masculinity has collapsed and this has impacted the changes in society due to revolutionizing social and cultural acceptance. It has been found that men and women process information differently with regard to their consumption of products (Coley & Burgess, 2003). Women's behaviour is generally thought as being more emotionally and psychologically rooted than men, suggesting that men are less susceptible to impulse purchasing (Souiden & Diagne, 2009).Recent studies show that men aged between 18-34 shop considerably more than older men in retail channels and that those aged 16-24 are more openly shopping for health and beauty aids than in the past years (Coley & Burgess, 2003). Cosmetics are increasingly being

marketed to men by conjuring up the notion that the use of such products will make them more presentable and attractive to potential sexual partners (Firat, 1993). Supporting this opinion it is reported that one of the main stimuli for the consumption of male grooming products is the creation, development and maintenance of a self-image (Featherstone, 1991).Coley and Burgess (2003) argues that lifestyle determinants such as social class, values and personality have a huge impact on how individuals behave toward the consumption of products. Thus they determine consumer's attitude in a particular purchase situation (Souiden & Diagne, 2009). The use of celebrity endorsers such as sports starts that gain a lot of coverage in the media has positively changed men's attitude towards the consumption of cosmetics. Such a tactic is a good strategy to reach the male target market because they convey a uniform image in people's minds; these icons exert a form of cultural leadership by promoting and reinforcing subconsciously certain attributes (Souiden & Diagne, 2009).

2.6.2 Metrosexual males

The emergence of the term "metrosexual males" refers to those who live in big cities, attribute high importance to aesthetic appearance and spend a considerable amount of money and efforts to boost their self-images and lifestyles (Souiden & Diagne, 2009). Souiden & Diagne (2009) further discus components of a males self-concept, stating that the self-concept include physical, psychological and social attitudes, habits, beliefs and ideas. Due to their nature, cosmetics may be considered as one of the tools that men may use to boost their self-concept and image (Souiden & Diagne, 2009). A study that focused on men's reactions to the portrayal of the male body in magazine adverts concluded that men were being expected to conform to two different ideals of masculinity that combined softness and strength (Apeagyei, 2011: p243). Apeagyei (2011) states this description of men as 'soft' is similar to definitions of the 'metrosexual' male, a phenomenon based on recent trends in which men are portrayed as image-conscious. According to Pringle (2004) the metrosexual man displays many character traits and behaviours that would have been once regarded, pejoratively, as effeminate. Research substantiates that the pursuit of achievement and status has changed. A key shift has been in culture and attitudes towards appearance management. Fashion reflects our society, culture and how people define themselves (Solomon & Rabolt 2004). Crane (2000) highlights that technological advancement and global communications since the 20th century has had an impact on status and trends, with men's fashion being used as a status symbol for portraying aspects of identity, occupation and social class.

2.7 Overview of the literature

Media is a powerful tool; the literature has shown how exposure to certain media can change an individual's thinking and behaviour. In some cases consumers conduct some drastic actions such as dangerous procedures in an aim to achieve an ideal-self. A common theme highlighted in the literature is how consumers are susceptible to many forms influencers whether it is family, friends or TV: they are easily persuaded to think and act according to these influencers. Effects of such exposure can negatively impact consumers by developing low self-esteem and body dissatisfaction. Feelings of self-dissatisfaction and low self-esteem result in higher purchase behaviour of image products. The exposure to false ideals further creates a gap in the mind of the consumer of their real self and ideal-self. The money spent on beauty advertising as highlighted by Case (2007) and Baker (2012) shows the scale in which advertising is highly regarded by cosmetic companies. With figures this high and constantly increasing it demonstrates the power advertising has on consumers if companies are willing to continually invest large sums of money towards advertising. Souiden & Diagne (2009) note an industry change has occurred over the last couple of years: that male consumers are becoming a major target for the cosmetic market. The identification of the metrosexual male consumer offers a new avenue for brands to develop their product offering.

2.8 Rationale for research

Before defining the problem at hand, let's discuss the reason for this research. The literature review highlighted important facts and figures in regards to consumer behaviour and the impact the decision making process has in regard to image altering products. The size and scale of the industry highlights how broad the findings are. The following hypotheses have been developed in accordance with findings from the literature. These hypotheses are to be applied to a sample of Irish consumers hence specialising the study. The aim is to focus on the Irish consumer and to analyse consumer behaviour under the following hypotheses:

Hypothesis1: Consumers base their purchase decision on influences through media, family and friends

Hypothesis2: Relationship status will have an impact on the consumption of image products.

Hypotheses3: There will be a difference between males and females in their use of image enhancing products and services

Hypothesis 4: Age will impact upon the consumption of image altering products.

hypothesis5: Individuals with low body satisfaction will have a higher use of image products and services.

Hypotheses6: Individuals influenced by media (including social media) and television will have a lower self-esteem level.

2.8.1 Research objectives

In addition to the above hypothesis this research aims to investigate the various factors that influence consumers to make their purchase decisions. The aim is to:

1. Evaluate the influencing factors that lead to the consumption of image altering products/services and whether there is a difference in male and females influence. (TV, Staff, Family etc.)
2. Discover the consumers purchase process in relation to the buying of image products and highlight if consumers are susceptible to certain marketing techniques when it comes to image alteration (e.g. impulse buying)
3. Highlight the types of products/services used by gender category.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter portrays a detailed description of the research topic at hand. As highlighted in the literature, there exists little example of such consumer behaviour in an Irish context. The aim of this study is to investigate this gap and provide insight to this topic in an Irish context. Research objectives will guide the study and the findings will aim to support the pre-determined hypotheses. The following chapter relates to the chosen research method. The methodology chapter analyses the gathering of primary data based on the findings from the literature.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.0 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter sets out for the reader the research process underpinning the study. Saunders et al. (2009) describe the 'research process' as the various stages necessary to develop understanding. Teddlie and Tashakkori (2009, p: 21) describe the research methodology process as a broad approach to a scientific inquiry specifying how research questions should be asked and answered. They further note that this includes worldview considerations, general preferences for designs, sampling logic, data collection and analytical strategies, guidelines for making inferences and the criteria for assessing and improving quality. Creswell (2009) describes the research process as a methodology and indicates it is the method by which knowledge and understanding are established. Creswell (2009) indicated that a clear 'research design' (akin to Saunders et al. 2009 description of the research process) is essential to ensure the research question under study is comprehensively addressed. Creswell (2009, p.3) describes the research design as "plans and procedures for research that span the decisions from broad assumptions to detailed methods of data collection and analysis" In order to develop the research strategy for this study, a review of the problem at hand as well as the rationale for examination was undertaken (Section 1.2). Hence a discussion of the research process (design) guided by the Saunders research onion approach is outlined. Each stage in the research process is described in detail with a critique and rationale for selection included (Section 1.3). The specific methodological approach emphasised for this study is outlined and a justification for its usage is given (Section 1.3.3). Finally a critical review of the chosen research process is conducted with an analysis of the other options available (Section 1.4). For the purpose of this study questionnaires were chosen after reviewing the alternative options available. The research process was based on guidance by theorists found in the literature. The demographic profile of participants is included in section 1.4 and the concluding remarks for the chapter are summarised in Section 1.5

3.2 Problem definition

Malhotra and Birks (2006) state that problem definition is the most important step in a research project, it involves stating the general problem and identifying the specific components of the research problem. Only when the research problem has been clearly defined can research be designed and conducted properly. For this study the problem has been identified as investigating

consumer behaviour when purchasing image altering products. A gap in the literature was noted which was 'the purchasing behaviour of Irish consumers in relation to the consumption of image altering products/services'. The majority of the literature available highlights international examples of consumer behaviour as well as contrasting views of product consumption. Little evidence exists on this particular research topic in an Irish context, in which the researcher aims to compare findings with that of the literature.

3.2.1 Research Rationale

It has already been noted in the literature review of how an individual's body perspective can cause drastic behaviour (Grabe & Hyde, 2006, Dwyer, 1993, Soloman et. al, 2010). As shown by (Eisend & Moller 2006, Case, 2007) the beauty industry is one of the most prosperous sectors in todays developed economies. Coupled with the impact the industry can have on consumers and how they behave in relation to their self-image, the topic of consumer behaviour and image altering products was found by the author to a fascinating study topic. Evidence shown by Case (2007) & Dwyer (1993) highlights the sometimes harmful affect the media can have in influencing consumers to alter their self-image. The findings portrayed in the literature review show how various factors impact upon a consumer's behaviour financially, emotionally and physically. The literature shows a global example of consumer behaviour in relation to image and beauty; the aim of this study is to focus on an Irish sample group and compare results to those found in the literature review.

3.3 Research process
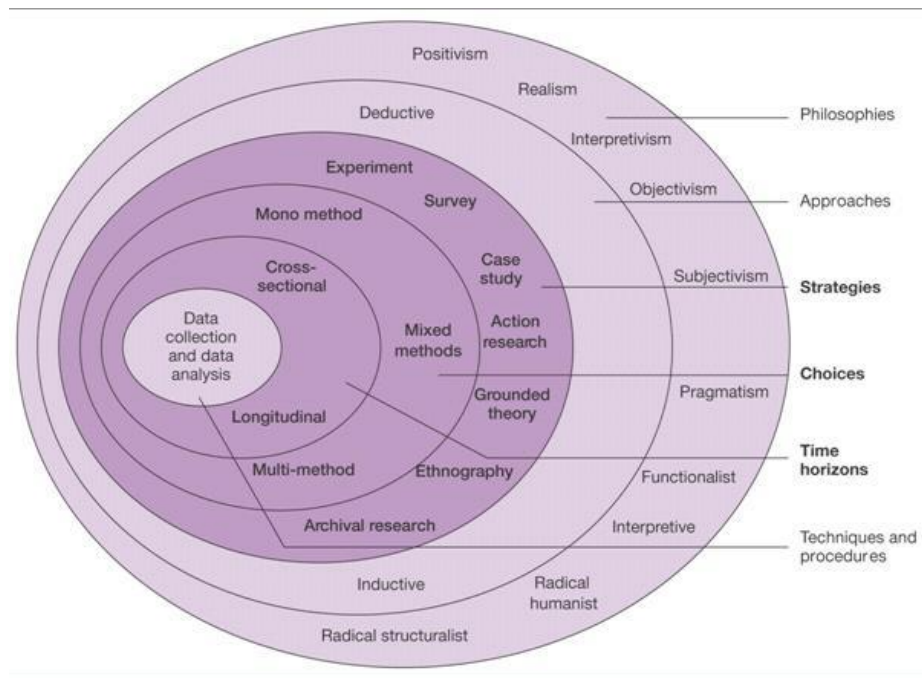
Source: (Saunders et al 2009: 183)

According to Saunders, Lewis & Thornhill (2009, p:107) the research process refers to a set of stages that detail a number or sequence of tasks a researcher undertakes to gather and report valid and reliable information to assist with decision-making. Saunders et al. (2009) describe these stages using the 'research onion' as demonstrated in Figure 1. The Research onion has been adopted to guide the research process for this research study. The authors compare the research process to an onion, claiming that there is six layers to the research onion, they are:

- Research philosophy
- Research approach
- Research strategy
- Choices
- Time horizons

Each section will be analysed and reviewed basing thinking around the research question at hand.

3.3.1 Research philosophy

According to Saunders et al (2009) the research philosophy adopted provides important assumptions about the way in which the researcher views the world. These assumptions underpin the research strategy and the methods chosen as part of that strategy. There are three major aspects which guide the research philosophy choice: epistemology, ontology and axiology. Each aspect contains important differences which will influence the way in which the researcher thinks about the research process.

3.3.2 Epistemology and Interpretivism

According to Bryman & Bell (2007) an epistemology issue concerns the question of what is (or should be) regarded as acceptable knowledge in a discipline. The authors further explain that a particularly central issue in this context is the question of whether or not the social world can and should be studied according to the same principles, procedures, and ethos as the natural sciences. The position that affirms the importance of imitating the natural sciences is invariably associated an epistemological position known as positivism. Bryman and Bell (2007) state that interpretivism is a term given to contrasting epistemology to positivism. According to Fisher (2007) Interpretivism research refers to the belief that reality is socially constructed. This means that the understanding of reality is not a simple account of what is: rather, it is something that people in societies and groups form from their interpretation of reality and other people's interpretation. 'Interpretivism is taken to denote an alternative to the positivist orthodoxy that has held sway for decades' (Bryman and Bell, 2007: p.19). Bryman and Bell (2007) further explain that Interpretivism is predicated upon the view that a strategy is required that respects the differences between people and the objects of the natural sciences and therefore requires the social scientist to grasp the subjective meaning of social action. Interpretivism opposes positivism within the research onion.

3.3.3 Ontology and axiology

According to Bryman and Bell (2007) questions of ontology are concerned with the nature of social entities. The authors further explain that the central point of orientation here is the question of whether social entities can and should be considered objective entities that have a reality external to social actors, or whether they can and should be considered social constructions built up from the perceptions and actions of social actors. 'These positions are frequently referred to respectively as objectivism and constructionism' (Bryman and Bell, 2007: p22). Axiology is a branch of philosophy that studies judgements about value' (Saunders et al, 2009: p137). Saunders et al (2009) explain that this may include values we possess in the fields of aesthetics and ethics; it is the process of social enquiry with which we are concerned with. The researchers own values play a role in all stages of the research process which is of great importance in order for the research results to be credible.

3.3.4 Positivism

Bryman and Bell (2007) describe positivism as an epistemological position that advocates the application of the methods of the natural sciences to the study of social reality and beyond. Saunders et al (2009) note that if research reflects the philosophy of positivism then the author will adopt the philosophical stance of the natural scientist. This means "the author will prefer working with an observable social reality and that the end product of such research can be law-like generalisations similar to those produced by the physical and natural scientists" (Remenyi et al 1998, p.32) Williams, Money & Swartz. 1998:32). It is noted by Bryman & Bell (2007) that positivism is taken to entail the following principles.

1. The purpose of theory is to generate hypotheses that can be tested and that will thereby allow explanations of laws to be assessed (the principle of didacticism).
2. Only phenomena and hence knowledge confirmed by the senses can genuinely be warranted as knowledge (the principle of phenomenalism).
3. Knowledge is arrived at through the gathering of facts that provide the basics for laws (the principle of inductivism).
4. Science must be conducted in a way that is value free (that is, objective).
5. There is a clear distinction between scientific statements and normative statements and a belief that the former are the true domain of the scientist.

3.4 Research approach

Saunders et al (2009) highlights the importance of choosing a research theory. The authors claim that the theory chosen influences the research design and the presentation of results. A research theory can either be inductive or deductive. A deductive approach refers to the development of hypothesis and hence development of a research strategy to test the hypothesis The inductive approach, is the alternative approach whereby a theory –building approach where data is collected and theory is developed as a result of data analysis.

3.4.1 Deductive & inductive approach

Deductive theory represents the commonest view of the nature of relationship between theory and research. The researcher, on the basis of what is known about a particular domain and of theoretical considerations in relation to that domain, deduces a hypothesis that must be subjected to empirical scrutiny (Bryman & Bell 2007:11). Deduction involves developing a theoretical position prior to data collection (Saunders et al 2009). This can be interpreted as a positivist approach as previously described. An inductive theory is the opposite; this involves exploring data and developing theories that will relate to the literature. According to Saunders et al (2009) unlike deductive theory the researcher does not start with any predetermined theories or conceptual frameworks, but the

research still has a clearly defined purpose. After reviewing the two approaches the researcher chose a deductive approach for the purpose of this study. The researcher agrees with the literature and aims to prove the set hypotheses. This involved gathering quantitative data which was collected through questionnaires. This allowed statistical data to be generated and conclusions drawn from this data. The process of deduction as described by Bryman & Bell (2007) involves:

1. Theory
2. Hypothesis
3. Data collection
4. Findings
5. Hypothesis confirmed or rejected
6. Revision of theory

The research approach is an overall blueprint, guideline, plan of action or framework for the rest of the research process to facilitate later decisions that need to be made. Domegan and Flemming (2007) explain to classify the nature of the required information is according to three terms: exploratory, descriptive or casual/explanatory. Exploratory study is a valuable means of finding out "what is happening, to seek new insights, to ask questions and to assess phenomena in a new light" (Robson 2002:59). Exploratory studies are often associated with an interpretivist philosophical stance and an inductive research approach. Explanatory or Causal studies however are often underpinned by a positivist philosophical approach.

(Robson 2002:59) describes the object of descriptive research is to portray an accurate profile of persons, events or situations. This can be an extension of a piece of exploratory or explanatory research; it is simply put as a describing data. Studies that establish casual relationships between variables may be termed as explanatory research. According to Saunders et al, (2009) the emphasis here is on studying a situation or a problem in order to explain the relationships between variables. Within this research a deductive approach guided by a positivistic approach to the research has been selected given the nature of the research questions under study. As such this research study can be termed as an explanatory study. Creswell (2009) explain that there are three types of research designs which can be utilised in order to address the research question under study: qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem whereas quantitative research is a means for testing objective theories by examining the

relationship among variables. Creswell (2009) further explains that mixed methods are an approach to inquiry that combines or associates both qualitative and quantitative forms.

3.4.2 Quantitative research:

Zikmund (2003) explains that quantitative research reaches a large number of people and is easily measured. This is involved with gathering responses from a large group of individuals on a similar topic. Creswell and Piano Clark (2007) explain that quantitative data includes closed-ended information such as that found on attitude, behaviour, or performance instruments. The analysis consists of statistically analysing scores collected on instruments, checklists or public documents to answer research questions or test hypotheses.

3.4.3 Qualitative research

As described by Creswell & Piano Clark (2007) qualitative data consists of open-ended information that the researcher gathers through interviewing participants. The general open-ended questions asked during these interviews allow the participants to supply answers in their own words. The authors further explain how qualitative data may be collected by observing participants or sites of research, gathering documents from a private or public source, or collecting audio-visual material such videotapes or artefacts.

3.4.4 Mixed Method Research

A mixed method incorporates elements of both qualitative and quantitative approaches (Creswell, 2009, 4). Teddlie & Tashakkori (2009) state that there are two basic mixed method data-collection strategies: Within-strategy mixed method data collection and Between-strategies mixed method data collection. A within strategy involves the gathering of both qualitative and quantitative data using the same data collection strategy. Between-strategy involves the gathering of both qualitative and quantitative data using more than one data collection strategy. Creswell & Piano Clark, 2007 describe mixed methods research as a research design with philosophical assumptions as well as methods of inquiry. Creswell & Piano Clark describe this as involving "philosophical assumptions that guide the direction of the collection and analysis of data and the mixture of quantitative and qualitative data in a single study or studies". The author has decided that a quantitative design is best suited for the purpose of this study as the aim is to compare results from the literature to findings from the field work.

3.5 Research strategy

Each research strategy can be used for exploratory, descriptive and explanatory research (Yin 2003). Saunders et al (2007) emphasise that no research strategy is inherently superior or inferior to any other. The authors state that what is most important is not the label that is attached to a particular strategy, but whether it will enable you to answer your particular research question(s) and meet your objectives. Saunders et al (2007) state that the choice of research strategy will be guided by research questions and objectives, the extent of knowledge, the amount of time and other resources available, as well as the authors own philosophical underpinnings. Taken into consideration the above statements as well as reviewing the other available options the author has chosen to use a quantitative data collection method using questionnaires. This choice was guided by firstly the research question under study which lends itself to a quantitative approach. Furthermore, the choice of a quantitative approach was guided by the literature whereby similar studies by XX and XX also undertook a deductive- quantitative led approach. Finally the choice of a quantitative research design fit within the positivist research approach which underlines the research. The next section describes the quantitative research tool (questionnaire) and data collection methodology adopted.

3.5.1 Data collection methods and instruments

This stage of the research process incorporates choosing a data collection method and relevant data collection instruments, in light of the problem and research design at hand. Data can be collected from primary and secondary resources.

3.5.2 Secondary research

The literature review of this report involved secondary research, secondary research are statistics that already exist; the drawback of this is that the information that has been gathered for a previous purpose not for the immediate study at hand (Churchill et al pg196). For this dissertation the author undertook research on the topic of consumer behaviour. In order to address the research question the first stage of data collection involved a comprehensive critical review of relevant contemporary literature. Churchill et al (2002) states the most significant advantages of secondary research are the time and cost economies they offer the researcher. The added advantage of secondary research is the deeper understanding into the area the author receives before undertaking primary research. The next stage undertaken in the research process was in the collection of primary research

3.5.3 Primary Research

Primary data is defined by Domegan and Flemming (2007) as data or information collected first-hand by the researcher to solve the specific problem/opportunity on hand.   It is important for the researcher to ensure that no similar research exists to the primary research being undertaken. By reviewing the information available in current literature the researcher was able to identify gaps for further research in which he aimed to undertake in the form of primary research. Malhotra & Birks (2006) state that the choice of primary data collection method is closely tied to the type of research design that is being pursued the tools that could be used are: focus groups, in-depth interviews, surveys, observation and experiments. As previously mentioned for this study the chosen research tool being used are questionnaires. The rationale for such a choice is set out in the following section.

3.5.4 Questionnaire

A questionnaire is described by DeVaus (2002) as all techniques of data collection in which each person is asked to respond to the same set of questions in a predetermined order. When questionnaires are used the researcher is employing a strategy in which participants use self-report to express their attitudes, beliefs, and feelings toward a topic of interest (Teddie &Tashakkori 2009:232). Saunders et al (2009) note that the design of a questionnaire will affect the response rates, validity and reliability and can be maximised by:

- Careful design of individual questions
- Clear and pleasing layout of questionnaires
- Lucid explanation of the purpose of the questionnaire
- Pilot testing
- Carefully planned and executed administration

Advantages of using a questionnaire include convenience for the researcher as questionnaires were administered to a convenience sample of respondents where in some cases questionnaires were completed and returned to the researcher post distribution date. In other situations the questionnaire was emailed to respondents and in turn returned through email, completed. Time saving was a major factor of using questionnaires as the researcher tried to balance a work/study lifestyle and had little time available to conduct a time consuming study. Questionnaires were also a lot cheaper to administer than other methods. Another reason for choosing self-completion questionnaires was that the researcher does not have to be present to complete the study

benefitting the researcher and respondent. Disadvantages of questionnaires include the inability to prompt or probe respondents if they are having difficulty answering a question, or if they could elaborate an answer more. Questions must be universal to all respondents and additional data cannot be gathered as all questionnaires are predetermined. Therefore some questions may not be appropriate for some kinds of respondents. This involves greater risk of missing data through poorly constructed questionnaires as well as incomplete answers due to lack of prompting and supervision.

3.5.5 Developing the questionnaire survey

The design of the questionnaire was based on closed-ended responses in order to meet the goals of the study. The questionnaire was based on previous studies in the literature (Littleton, 2005, Fitzsimmons-Craft, Bardone-Cone & Harney 2012, Lindberg, Hyde & McKinley 2006) one of which included a body satisfaction scale. Some aspects of the questionnaire were modified to match the goals and objectives set by the researcher. The modifications included sections of the previous questionnaires as well as altering certain questions to meet the goals of this study. Fisher & Thompson (1999) used a body comparison scale which is included in this research study.

 The questionnaire was piloted on a small group of individuals getting a mean time of 10 minutes to complete. Small alterations were made on the questionnaire based on the pilot test. The 10 minute completion time was unappealing to some potential respondents; this time was reduced to 8 minutes by alternating the length of some questions, removing some unnecessary data and displaying the format in a way that is easier and clearer to read. Some individuals' sill refused participation in the study due to the time that it would take to complete. Another aspect that hindered response rates was the somewhat personal nature of the questions. A small number of individuals felt uncomfortable answering personal questions anonymously as they felt that the researcher would in some way discover their identity. Responses were recorded in a number of different ways, the researcher used attitude scales, demographic checklists, personality inventories and Likert scales. Likert scales were based on literature findings, a scale of 1-7 where 1 was strongly disagree and 7 was strongly agree, this is an adaption of the traditional Likert scale which is 1-5, 1=strongly agree and 5=strongly disagree. A copy of the questionnaire is available in the appendix.

3.5.6 Time horizons

Saunders et al (2009) note that researchers must question whether they want their research to be a 'snapshot' taken at a particular time or do they want it to be more 'akin' to a diary or a series of snapshots and be a representation of events over a given period. The answer to this question depends on the research question. The authors describe the 'snapshot' time horizon cross-sectional while the 'diary' perspective is longitudinal. Due to the nature of the study at hand the researcher

notes that this dissertation is a cross-sectional study of men and women due to the limited time-frame available, the nature of the research questions and the topic area.

3.6 Collection of data

Prior to the data collection process being undertaken, the ethical considerations for the study were deliberated upon.

3.6.1 Ethical considerations

According to Malhotra et al (2006) The researcher must respect participants when conducting research involving participants personal opinions, this should include protecting the anonymity of participants, not misleading or deceiving them , conducting research in a way not to embarrass or harm the participants and using the results in an ethical manner. In respect of this the researcher insured that the respondents were informed as much as possible as to the reason for the research and why they were required. Each respondent was given a consent form stating to uphold their protection and anonymity as their names were not used, no contact details were required except for when questionnaires were returned through email.

3.6.2 Sampling frame

Following the ethical considerations for the study being implemented 100 questionnaires were distributed to a convenience sample of respondents in various locations following a number of pilot tests. Some locations included the researchers college premises, place of employment, local shopping centre and the researchers local football ground. The study yielded a very high response rate of 91%. The gender breakdown among participants was skewed towards females however this was considered and taken account of in the data analysis phase.

3.6.3 Demographic Profile of Participants

Participants in this study were chosen using a convenience sample, the below tables show the breakdown of demographics. The demographic categories for which information was collected included: age, gender, employment status and relationship status. Respondents were approached in differing locations and were asked if they would to participate in a 10 minute questionnaire, respondents were offered the opportunity to refuse at time if they did not wish to continue with the study. Some participants took the questionnaire away and arranged with the researcher to complete and return the questionnaire at a later time and date. Other questionnaires were completed and then returned by email.

Table3.1: Gender breakdown of sample

Variable	Amount	Percentage
Male	17	18.7
Female	74	81.3

Table 3.2: Age category breakdown of sample

Variable	Amount	Percentage
18-24	34	37.4
25-30	20	22
31-40	23	25.3
41-50	9	9.9
51-65	5	5.5
66+	0	0

Table 3.3: Employment breakdown of sample

Variable	Amount	Percentage
Full-time employed	43	47.3
Part-Time Employed	28	30.8
Full-time Student	15	16.5
Unemployed	1	1.1
Full-time Parent	2	2.2
Part-time Student	2	2.2

Table 3.4: Relationship status breakdown of sample

Variable	Amount	Percentage
Single	30	33
In a relationship	61	67
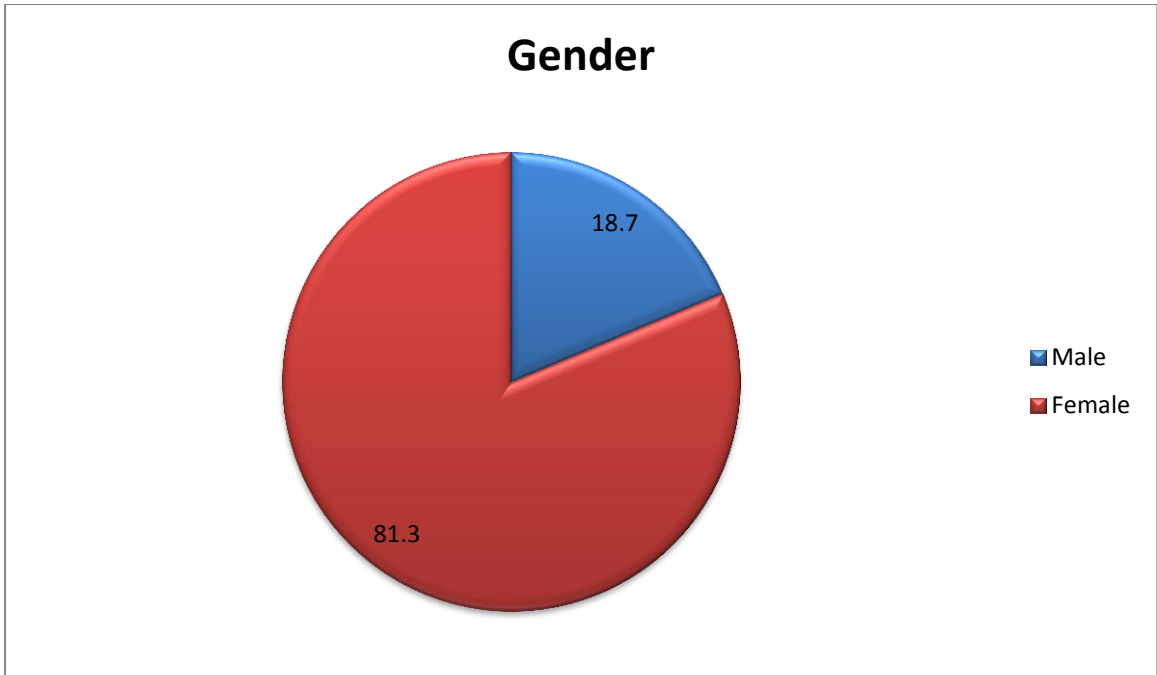
Figure 3.1: Gender

Figure 3.2: Age

Employment status

- Full-time eployed
- Part-time employed
- full-time student
- unemployed
- full-time parent
- Part-time parent

Figure 3.3: Employment

Relationship status

- Single
- In a relationship
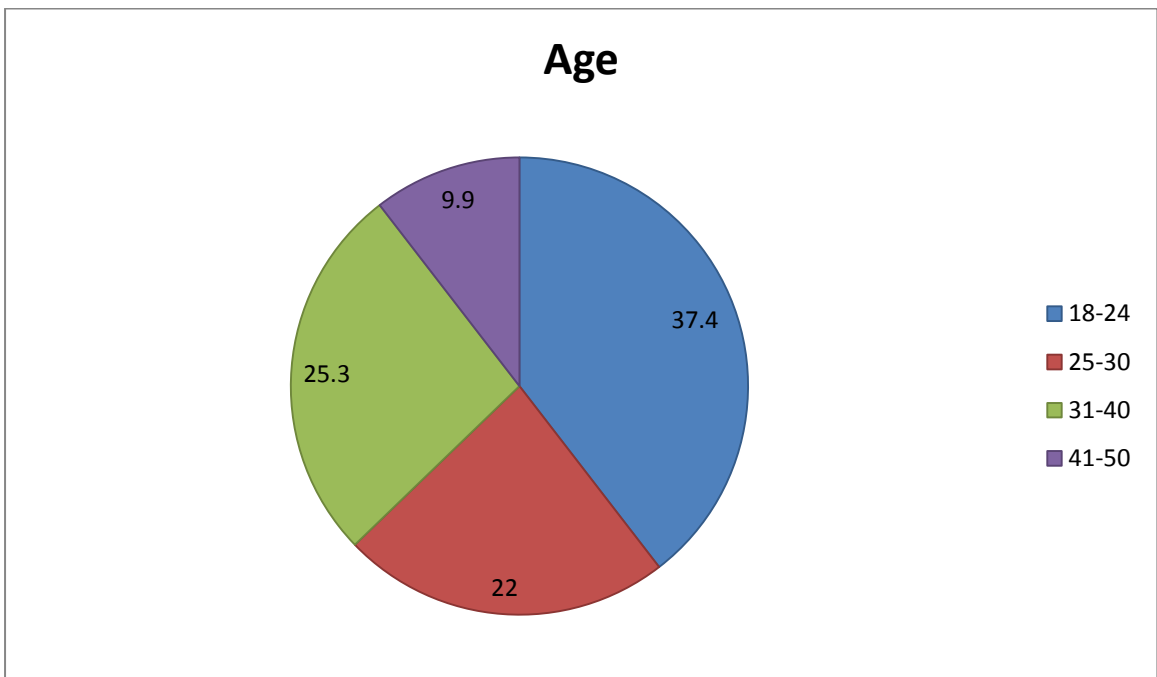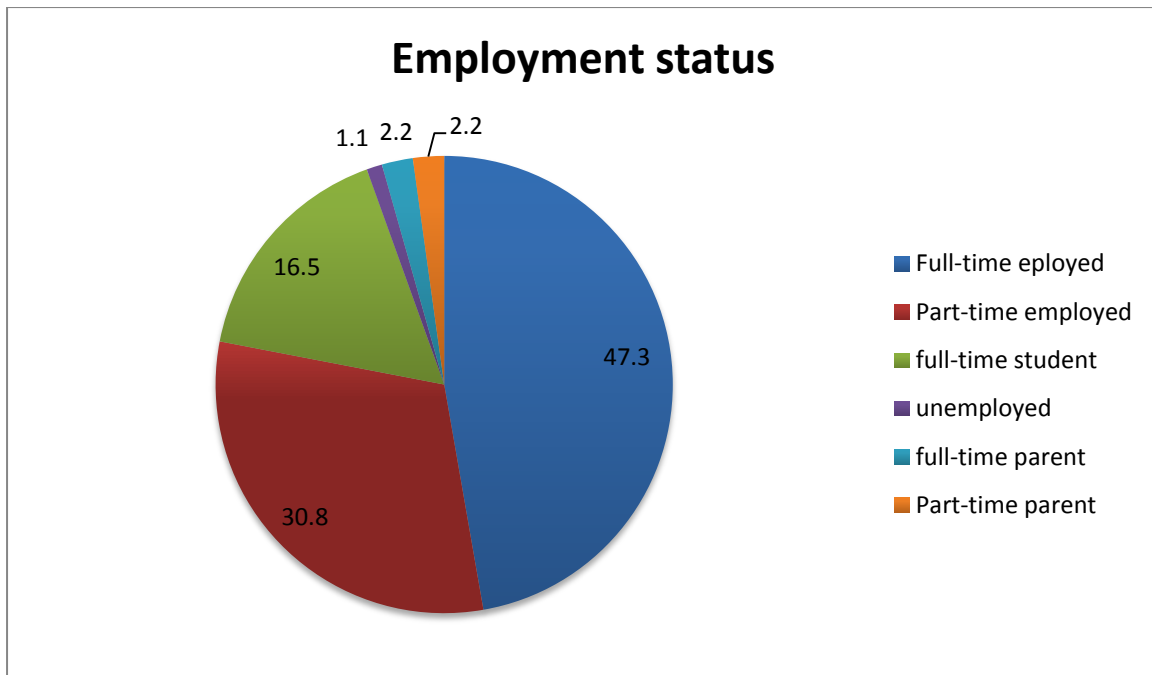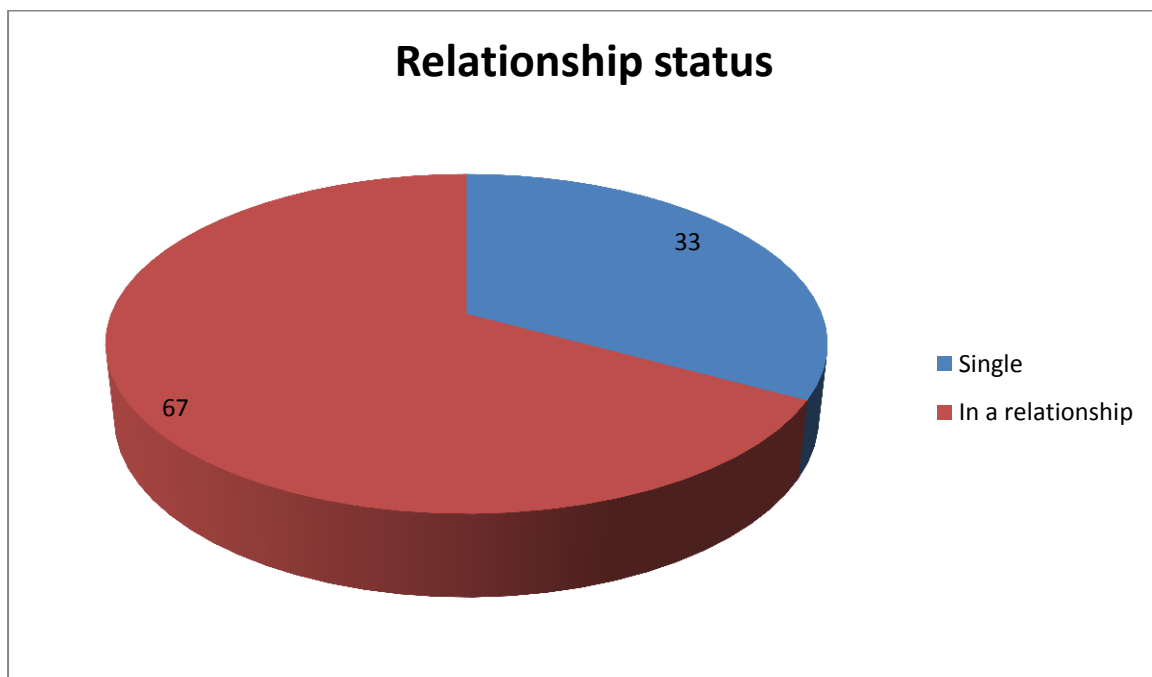
Figure 3.4: Relationship status

As evident from Table 1 and Figure 1, the majority of the sample group (81.3%) were females. Most participants were aged between 18-24 years (37.4%) and in full time employment (47.3). Just over two-thirds of all participants were in a relationship. The collection of demographic information was essential within this study in order to establish if any patterns in behaviour were evident based on age, gender or other demographic.

3.7 Conclusion

Within this chapter the research process was set out. The stages of the research process as described in this chapter follow the approach of the Saunders et al. (2009) 'research onion'. The first stage in the research process was in the selection of the philosophical stance. Within this research positivism was seen as the most appropriate choice. The choice of positivism was led by the nature of the research questions under study as well as the epistemological, ontological and axiological considerations of the researcher. Once a positivist approach was decided upon the research approach was considered with a deductive theory testing stance selected. The research strategy utilised in this study involved the use of a self-administered questionnaire. The questionnaire used in this study was pre-validated and has been used by Lindberg, Shibley Hyde and McKinley (2006) in similar studies. Pilot tests were carried out in order to ensure the questionnaire was fit for purpose in light of the research question under study. The final aspect of the chapter described the data collection process, the sample, associated response rate and basic demographic information of participants. The following chapter will describe the results of the data collection process and develop conclusions based on the data collection phase.

Chapter 4: Results

4.0 Results

4.1 Introduction

As described in the previous chapter questionnaires were used to collect quantitative data regarding the chosen study topic. The questionnaires were distributed to a convenience sample in varying locations. This section relates to the breakdown and presentation of that data obtained through the questionnaires. The questionnaires focused on participant's use, behaviour and preferences towards image enhancing products and services. The primary purpose for choosing a convenience sample was due to ease of access for the researcher. Participant's responses are displayed using charts, tables, means and frequency information. The researcher highlights the main themes and topics of this study which will be discussed in following chapter. SPSS was used to analyse the collected data. A number of tests were conducted using SPSS to evaluate and explore respondent's feedback.

4.2 Descriptive statistics

From the research sample the average use of different products is presented below. Results display the percentage breakdown of products used by males and females, as well as the total use of image products and services. The average responses to some of the other key questions are also presented such as influences on shopping behaviour and purchase of image products. Figure 4.1 highlights gender use of image altering services. Females have a higher usage rate across all services bar the gym, where male usage narrowly outweighs female usage by 7%. Figure 4.2 displays products usage across all respondents. Make-up hair dye and spot removal creams were identified as the most used products whereas hair-loss products were the least used product type across this study sample. Figure 4.3 presents the distribution of male responses in regards to products usage frequency. Anti-spot treatment can be seen as a product of high usage for males, whereas 100% of respondents claim to have never used fat-loss products. Female product usage frequency is displayed in figure 4.4; it is evident from this chart that make-up is a product of high usage for female respondents as 60% use it quite frequently. Hair dye is also noted by females as a product of high usage as over 50% of respondents claim to use hair dye quite or very frequently.

Gender breakdown of services used
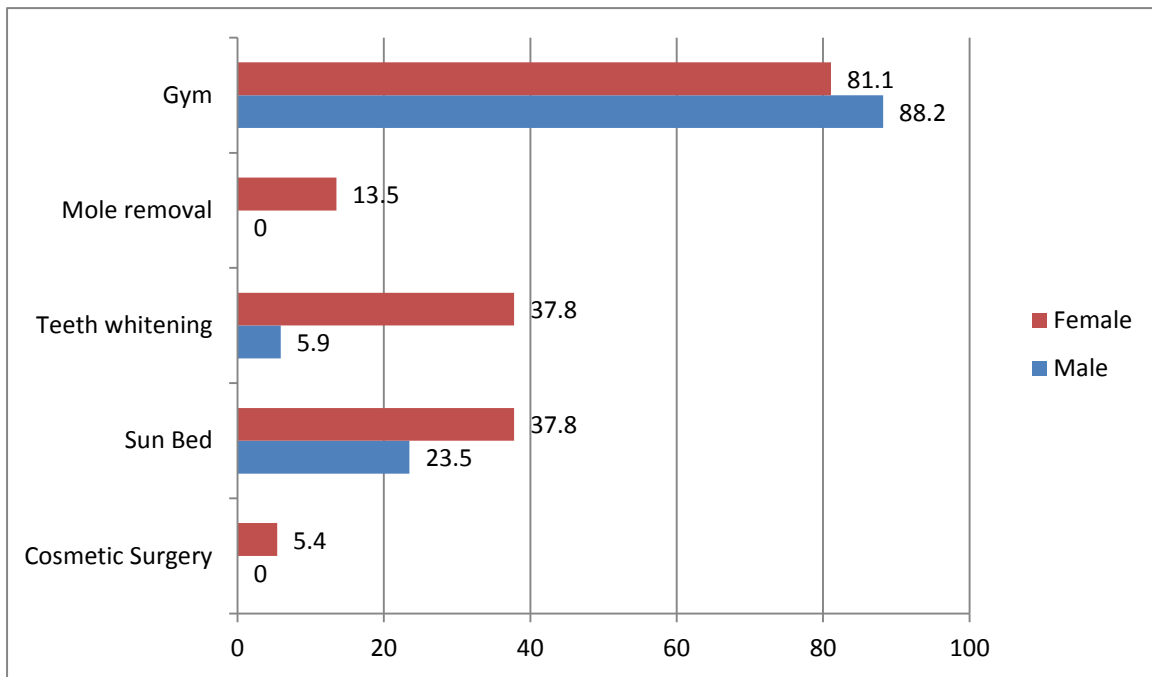
Figure 4.1: Image altering services usage

Total use of image products
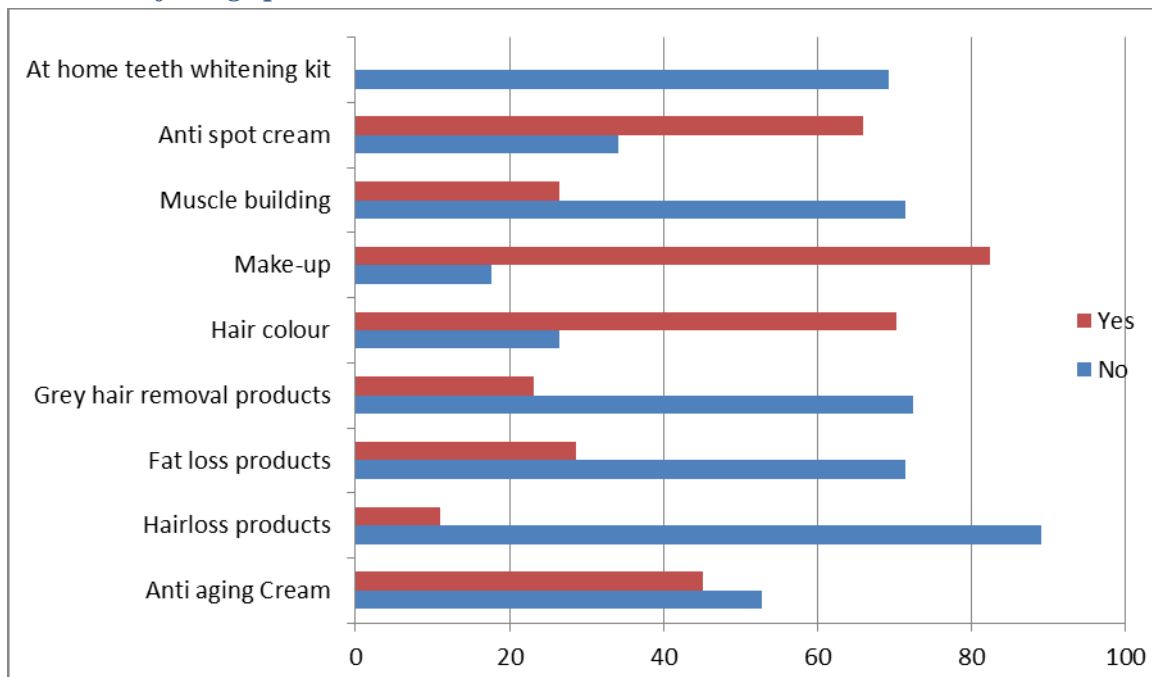
Figure 4.2: Responses in relation to use of image products
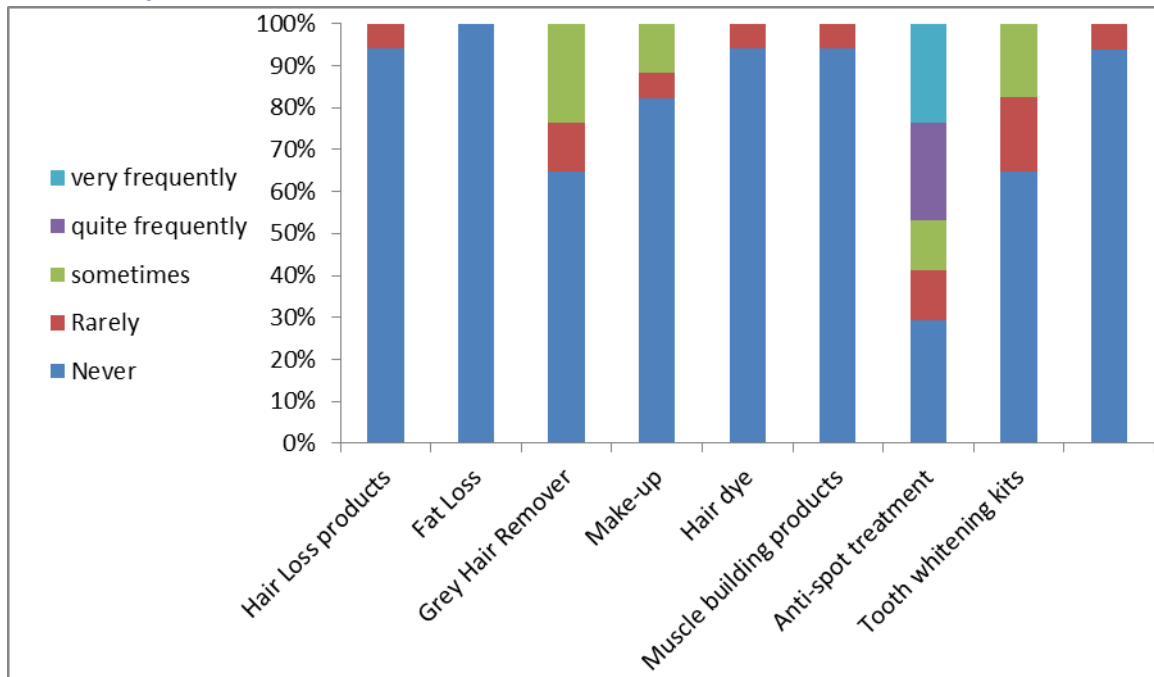
Figure 4.3: Image altering product usage (male responses)

Female use of products
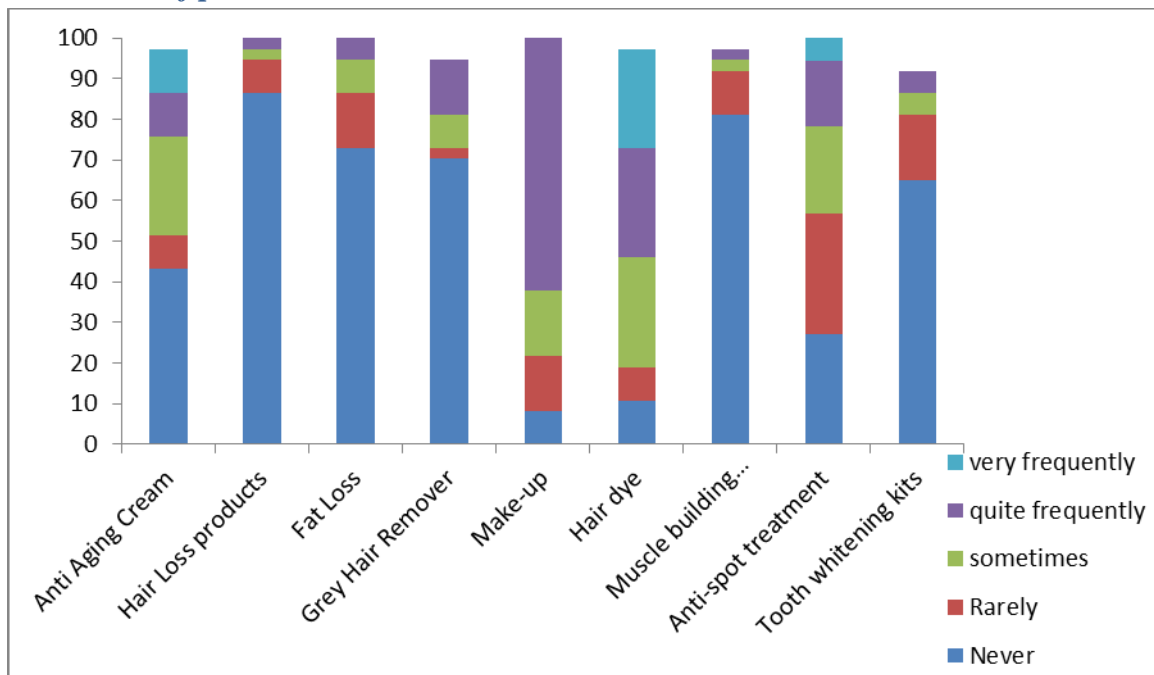
Figure 4.4: Image altering products usage (female responses)

In terms of influencing factors on consumers purchase decision, respondents chose friends as the most influential factor with a mean answer of 4.63 on a response scale of 1-7. The

product brand name had the lowest influencing factor with a mean answer of 2.98 (see table 4.5).

Table 4.5: Decision making influences

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
TV	91	1.00	7.00	3.4286	1.46168
Facebook	91	1.00	7.00	3.7582	1.88762
Celebrity Endorsement	91	1.00	7.00	3.2198	1.73078
Beauty Blog	91	.00	7.00	4.3077	2.30310
Magazine	91	1.00	7.00	4.3077	1.75558
Product Brand Name	91	.00	7.00	2.9890	1.93503
Media	91	1.00	7.00	3.9121	1.76791
Family	91	1.00	7.00	3.4835	1.92274
Friends	91	1.00	7.00	4.6264	1.73621

When shopping for an image product the most influencing factor is noted by respondents to be staff recommendation with a mean response of 4.37. The least influencing factor is shown to be celebrity endorsement with a mean response of 3.21 (see table 4.6).

Table 4.6: Decision making influencing factors when shopping

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Staff	91	.00	7.00	4.3736	1.55384
Contact with the brand	91	.00	7.00	3.3956	1.65918
TV	91	1.00	7.00	3.4286	1.46168
Facebook	91	1.00	7.00	3.7582	1.88762
In Store Promotion	91	1.00	7.00	4.2308	1.47631
Magazine	91	1.00	7.00	4.3077	1.75558
Celebrity Endorsement	91	1.00	7.00	3.2198	1.73078
Beauty Blog	91	.00	7.00	4.3077	2.30310

4.3 Inferential statistics

The descriptive statistics provided a basic identification of the most popular variables. These statistics will now be examined in more detail using SPSS tests such as the Mann-Whitney U test. The Mann-Whitney U test is a non-parametric test used in between-group analysis where there are two groups. It is used as an alternative to independent t-test which is a parametric statistical test that uses the t-distribution to explore differences in mean dependent variable scores across two distinct groups. The following Mann-Whitney U test analyses consumer's influences on their perception of beauty. The first area investigated how male and females develop their perception of beauty.

4.3.1 Influences on purchase decisions

The purpose of this test is to test the hypothesis1: *Consumers base their purchase decision on influences through media, family and friends.* The test is set out to discover consumers purchase process in relation to the buying of image products. A statistically significant association could be identified by the influence of media and the use of make-up r=.226, p=.031 as well as the use of hair-dye, r=.330, p=.001. The influence of friends also had a significant impact on the use of hair-dye r=.365, p=.000 and make-up r=.256, p=.014. Family

as an influencing factor was identified to display a significant significance with the use of anti-spot treatments r=.279, p=.007.

4.3.2 Relationship status and impact on consumption

Hypothesis2: Relationship status will have an impact on the consumption of image products.

The following Mann-Whitney U test looks at the relationship status of respondents and the disposable income that is spent on image products. The result of this test show that there is no significant difference between relationship status and the amount of disposable income spent on image products/services, U =860.500; p=0.320 (see table 4.7). The second table refers to respondents who spare no expense in the purchase of image altering products. The result of this test was that no significant relationship exists between relationship status and holding a high regard for the purchase of image products, U=726.500, p=.052 (see table 4.8).

Table 4.7 Relationship and disposable income

	Majority of disposable Income Goes On my Image
Mann-Whitney U	860.500
Wilcoxon W	2751.500
Z	-.467
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.640

Table 4.8 Relationship and expense

	Spare No Expense in the purchase of image altering products
Mann-Whitney U	726.500
Wilcoxon W	1191.500
Z	-1.626
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.104

Hypotheses3: There will be a difference between males and females in their use of image enhancing products and services

From the data it is evident that there is a significant difference between gender and the use of image products (see table 4.11). A strong statistically significant difference is evident in the use of make-up, U=11.000, p=.000 with a mean rank of 54.35 for females compared to 9.65 to males. Hair colour also presented a significant difference, U= 97.000, p= .000 with a mean rank of 53.19 for females to 14.71 for males. Other significant differences exist between gender and the use of anti-wrinkle cream, U=325.000, p= .001, teeth whitening kits, U=447, p=.01, spot-removal cream, U=353.000, p=.002 and muscle building products, U=236.000, p=.000 with higher use by females than males except muscle building products which had a mean rank of 69.12 for males to 40.69 to females.

Table 4.11: Gender and image altering products

	Anti-wrinkle cream	At home teeth whitening kit	Anti-Spot Cream	Muscle Building products	Make-Up	Hair Colour For image purposes
Mann-Whitney U	325.000	447.000	353.000	236.000	11.000	97.000
Wilcoxon W	478.000	600.000	506.000	3011.000	164.000	250.000
Z	-3.370	-2.272	-2.917	-5.026	-6.781	-5.551
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.001	.023	.004	.000	.000	.000

Another Mann-Whitney U test was conducted to analyse gender and image enhancing service consumption (see table 4.12). From the data displayed in table 4.12 it is evident that no significant relationship exists between gender and image altering service consumption.

Table 4.12: Gender and image altering services

	Cosmetic Surgery	Hair Transplant	Sun Bed	Use Gym	Mole Removal	Teeth whitening
Mann-Whitney U	595.000	629.000	539.000	584.000	544.000	538.000
Wilcoxon W	748.000	3404.000	692.000	3359.000	697.000	691.000
Z	-.975	.000	-1.108	-.695	-1.598	-1.371
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.330	1.000	.268	.487	.110	.170

A Spearman's rank test is a type of correlation used on non-parametric data, where the outcomes are based on ranked scores in variables. The following tests analyse age and product consumption, body satisfaction and products consumption and self-esteem and influencing factors.

Age and product consumption

Hypothesis 4: ***Age will impact upon the consumption of image altering products.***

The data identifies a number of significant relationships between the use of image services and age. The age categories used in the questionnaire spanned from 18-24, 25-30, 31-40, 41-50, 51-65 and 66+. The data shows a significant correlation between age and the use of anti-wrinkle cream, rho=.270, p=.010 and grey hair products, rho=.430, p=.000. The data was then split and inspected separately for male and female respondents. Looking at males first a significant correlation was evident between age and the use of grey hair products, rho=.581, p=.014. Females were then examined, the data shows a statistically significant correlation between age and anti-wrinkle cream, rho=.259, p=.026, fat-loss products, rho=.233, p=.045 and grey hair removal products, rho=.413, p=.000. A negative statistically significant correlation was also shown between female's age and the use of make-up, rho=-.350, p=.002.

Body satisfaction

A number of Spearman's rank correlations were carried out to investigate the relationship between crucial variables, such as a respondent's body-satisfaction and the use of image altering products. Spearman's rank correlation is a type of correlation used on non-parametric data, where outcomes are based on ranked scores in the variables. The first correlation examined the ***hypothesis5***: ***Individuals with low body satisfaction will have a higher use of image products and services***.

From the data it was identified that a significant statistical relationship exists between those who often compare how they look to others and the use of anti-wrinkle creams, rho=.244, p=.033, hair-loss products, rho= .284, p= .000, hair-dye, rho= 393, p=.000, make-up, rho= .463, p=.000 and spot-removal cream rho=.243, p= .020.

A number of significant correlations existed between those who often worry if they don't look their best and the use of anti-wrinkle cream, rho=.266, p=.011, hair-loss products, rho= .276, p=.008, hair-dye, rho=342, p=.001, make-up, rho=.509, p=.000, anti-spot cream, rho=.343, p=.001 and at home teeth whitening kits, rho=.248, p=.018.

Two significant correlations were shown between those who would change how they looked if they had the option and the use of hair dye, rho=.322, p=.002 as well as spot removal cream, rho=.211, p=.045.

Finally the test identified significant statistical correlations between those who feel they are stuck with the looks they have and the use of anti-wrinkle cream rho=.227, p=.030, fat-loss products, rho=.304, p=.003, hair-dye, rho=.258, p=.014, muscle building products, rho=.217, p=.039, spot-removal creams, rho=.373, p=.000 and teeth whitening kits, rho=.282, p=.007.

Self-esteem
A number of spearman rho correlations were carried out to analyse whether an individual displays signs of low self-esteem through the influence of media

Hypotheses6: Individuals influenced by media (including social media) and television will have a lower self-esteem level.

Media
The test first looked at media as an influencing factor, significant correlations were associated with the influence of media and those who feel uneasy and self-conscious in large groups, rho=.234, p=.025, those who are envious of others that look good naturally, rho=.366, p=.000, those who feel uncomfortable around others that are in better physical shape, rho=.284, p=.000 and those who worry what others think about them, rho=.445, p=.000.

Facebook
A spearman test then analysed the influence of Facebook on self-esteem. A number of significant correlations were evident between those who feel uneasy and self-conscious about how they look in large groups, rho=.270, p= .010, those who feel uncomfortable around others that are in better physical shape, rho=.270, p=.010 and those who worry what people think about how they look, rho=.572, p=.000.

Television

A Spearman's test then finally analysed the influence of television on self-esteem. No significant correlations resulted from this test which will propose further discussion in the interpretation of findings chapter.

4.5 Conclusion

Within this chapter the findings were displayed and highlighted. SPSS was used to conduct correlations and relationships such as Mann-Whitney U tests and Spearman rho correlations. The chapter first brought attention to a number of important descriptive statistics, these descriptive statistics highlighted important data relevant to the study sample. The significant results were then noted for each hypothesis/research aim. Tables were also included containing necessary data from these tests that was relevant for the study. The main areas of interest were investigated through the guidance of the pre-determined hypotheses and research objectives. These hypotheses led the testing of the data as the aim was to support each hypothesis. The research objectives were used to highlight other areas that would support the cause of this study. The following chapter will look at the interpretation of findings; this will involve a discussion of all the findings presented in this chapter and whether or not the hypothesis could be supported.

Chapter 5: Interpretation of findings

5.0 Interpretation of findings

5.1 Introduction

This chapter involves the discussion of findings as highlighted in the previous results chapter. The aim of this chapter is to identify and discuss key themes and areas of interest. The data will be used to identify whether or not the hypotheses can be supported as well as noting any other important knowledge gained from this study. The first area of focus is the research objectives.

5.2.1 Research objectives

As set out in the literature review the research objectives included:

1. Evaluate the influencing factors that lead to the consumption of image altering products/services and whether there is a difference in male and females influence. (TV, Staff, Family etc.)

2. Discover the consumers purchase process in relation to the buying of image products and highlight if consumers are susceptible to certain marketing techniques when it comes to image alteration (e.g. impulse buying)

3. Highlight the types of products/services used by gender category.

5.2.2 Objective 1

The data noted "friends" as the most influencing factor in regards to a purchase decision and noted staff recommendation" as the most influencing factor while shopping. These results had the highest mean response by participants. This shows signs that respondents regards other individuals highly in terms of influencing their decision. Mussweiler (2003) and Bolkan and Anderson (2009) discuss the concept of social comparison, this involves behaving in a way that conforms to the behaviour of a desirable self. The data suggests that respondents desire to be like their friends and therefore are easily influenced to think like their friends in term of product purchasing. Similarly with staff recommendations, staff members are usually portrayed as "something of an inspirational figure when working in a make-up counter, gym or cosmetic centre" (O'Callaghan 2013). Through self-comparison it is discussed by Mussweiler (2003) that individuals who desire to achieve a self-image are easily influenced by that's who poses an inspirational image. This suggests that staff have the power to influence individuals to strive to look like them and in turn sway purchase decisions. Considering that the respondent sample consisted of a majority of 'young' respondents this may have impacted the results. As noted by Soloman et al (2010) when individuals age "decisions are based more on experience than perception". This suggests that as a person

ages and gains more life experience then they may become less likely to be influenced by media and other sources.

5.2.3 Objective 2

In terms of buying image products again respondents are most susceptible to staff recommendations rather than in-store promotions (sales) or contact with the brand. This again suggests that the theory of social comparison is high within this sample of respondents and when it comes to self-image they are more likely to take advice of a respected source rather than a promotion that offers discounted products. Thompson et al., 2004; Wilksch et al., 2006 noted in the literature that when individuals look to change their appearance they search for approval from a regarded source. In this situation respondents regard staff more highly than celebrity endorsements which was the least influential factor highlighted in the data. In terms of the purchase process little in store activity affected respondents behaviour, the data shows no susceptibility to impulse buying or in-store promotions. This coincides with the thoughts of Souiden & Diagne (2009) who note that males are more focussed on the function of the product where a women's behaviour is generally thought as being more emotionally and psychologically rooted than men. This means that men are less susceptible than women to impulse purchasing. This theory was not supported in the research findings as with a high majority of female respondents this could not be proven.

5.2.4 Objective 3

In the results chapter we can see that the most used service by respondents for image alteration is the gym while the least used service is cosmetic surgery. Obviously these two services involve a massive divide in terms of cost, effort and outcome. O'Callaghan (2012) noted a demand in Ireland for cheap cosmetic surgery, and that services are getting cheaper due to recession. The author further noted that "cosmetic surgery offers an alternative to the gym, minus the effort plus the cost" (O'Callaghan, 2012). The data shows a high use of gym users but a noticeable amount of respondents out of a small sample (5 out of 91 respondents) have had some form of image altering cosmetic surgery. Sturrock & Pioch (1998) noted that in many cultures, image is highly regarded a sign of health and wealth, which has sparked a massive influx in the use of cosmetic services to achieve a desired self-concept. The research data highlights that make-up and hair colour are the top two most used products with spot-removal cream as the third highest used. The reason for this being such a high volume of female respondents compared to males. With gender separated it was found that once again that make-up and hair dye were the top two products used by females, with ant-aging cream

43

the third highest used. In reference to males anti-spot treatments and grey hair colour were the top two most used products.

It is evident from the findings that a theme social comparison is evident within this sample group. The most influencing factors in regards to purchase behaviour come from non-promotional sources (staff and friends). Noting that respondents class these sources of influence as desirable-selves, therefore the respondents behave in a way that helps them to achieve this desirable state.

5.3 Hypotheses

The research hypotheses will now be examined. Each hypothesis was created in reference to the literature findings. The aim was to discover whether an Irish consumer possess the same traits, habits and thoughts in relation to the consumption of image altering products and services as that is found in the literature. The data gathered will support, fail to support or reject the hypotheses. First examined is Hypothesis 1.

5.3.1 Hypothesis 1:

Consumers base their purchase decision on influences through media, family and friends

Figure 5.1: Consumer influence

44

Findings from the questionnaire support this hypothesis as positive statistically significant relationships existed between media influence and the use of make-up and hair-dye. Friends also presented a positive influence on the use of make-up and hair dye whereas family had a strong influence on the use of spot-removal creams. This suggests that respondents behave to conform towards their chosen reference group. Solomon et al (2009) note in the literature that individuals behave subconsciously to conform to those they regards as being a form of influence. Respondents show signs to conform by using products influenced by friends and family. It is displayed in figure 5.1 the influence that media, family and friends have on the products used. Wright (2006) noted in the literature that starting at a young age a person is influenced by the world around them; this is initially the child's family and as they grow more factors changes the child's perceptions and thoughts such as friends, life experience and the media. Media and friend's influence the same product use suggesting that respondents what to look like ideals in the media or look like their friends, this relays back to the social comparison theory. Smeesters et al (2009) noted in the literature that if an individual notices dissimilar behaviour between themselves and a desired-self they will then begin to act in a similar way to the desired self in order to close the gap of difference. As the respondents notice a gap between themselves and their desired-selves they begin to consume products to close the dissimilar gap.

5.3.2 Hypothesis 2
Relationship status will have an impact on the consumption of image products

The data failed to support the hypothesis as no significant differences occurred between those who were single and those who were in a relationship. Reasons for this could be down to the sample group involved in the research and that this particular sample group had no notable behavioural differences in relation to consumption and relationship-status. Other reasons could involve the seriousness and length of time the respondents are in a relationship as someone who is married for 10 years may have a different behaviour than someone who is in a non-marriage relationship for 10 days. This hypothesis would involve a more in-depth study. It is discussed in the literature that a relationship can impact a person's self-concept and purchase behaviour. Firat (1993) discussed how the use of cosmetics increased by males in the desire to attract a sexual partner. This provoked the above hypothesis as Featherstone, (1991) and Coley and Burgess (2003) also discussed the impacts relationships can have on the consumption of image altering products. Featherstone (1991) mentions that the consumption of those in a relationship decreases from when they were single, whereas Coley

and Burgess (2003) mention the opposite, claiming that consumption rates are higher with those in a relationship.

5.3.3 Hypothesis 3
There will be a difference between males and females in their use of image enhancing products and services
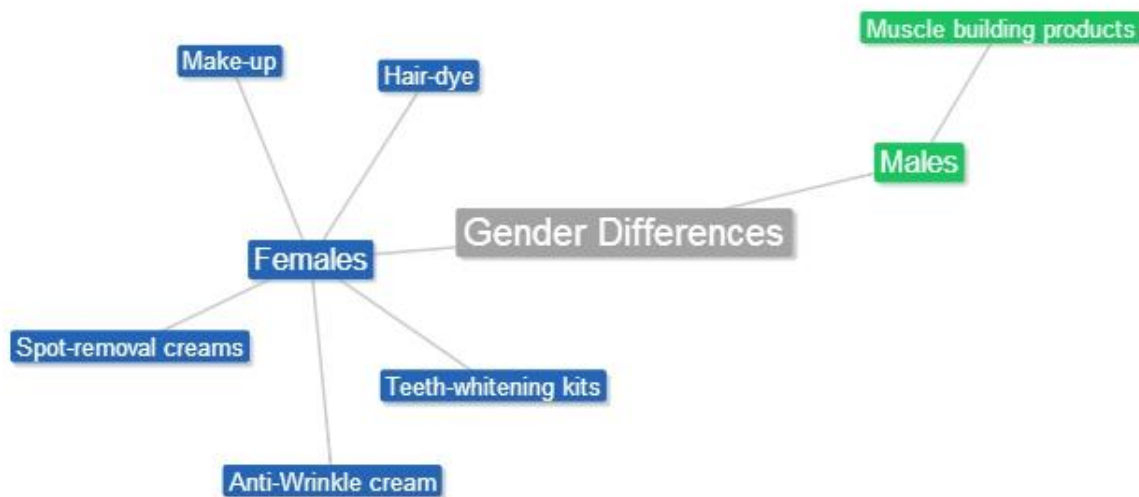

Figure 5.2: Gender differences in consumption

The findings partially-support this hypothesis as a number of positive statistically significant relationships occurred between gender use and product consumption but not service consumption. As expected prior to the research the use of make-up would be higher by females than males and the use of muscle building products would be higher with males than females as these are stereotypical gender products. Souiden & Diagne, 2009 noted that the cosmetic industry is traditionally associated with women. The results show that females have a significant higher use for hair-dye, spot-removal creams, teeth whitening kits and anti-wrinkle creams. This suggests that females are higher consumers of image altering products than males. This coincides with the literature as Souiden & Diagne (2009) note in the literature that the cosmetic market is dominated by females consumers, Botta (2003) note that that the male market is constantly growing but never expects that male consumption of image altering products will match that of females. Hyman (2004) affirms that traditional masculinity has collapsed and this has impacted the changes in society due to revolutionizing social and cultural acceptance. The data showed no significant difference in the consumption of image altering services this is down to the fact that the two most used services (the gym

and sunbeds) have similar usage percentages. There is evidence of high male use of image products, this provoked thought of further study.

5.3.4 Hypothesis 4
Age will impact upon the consumption of image altering products
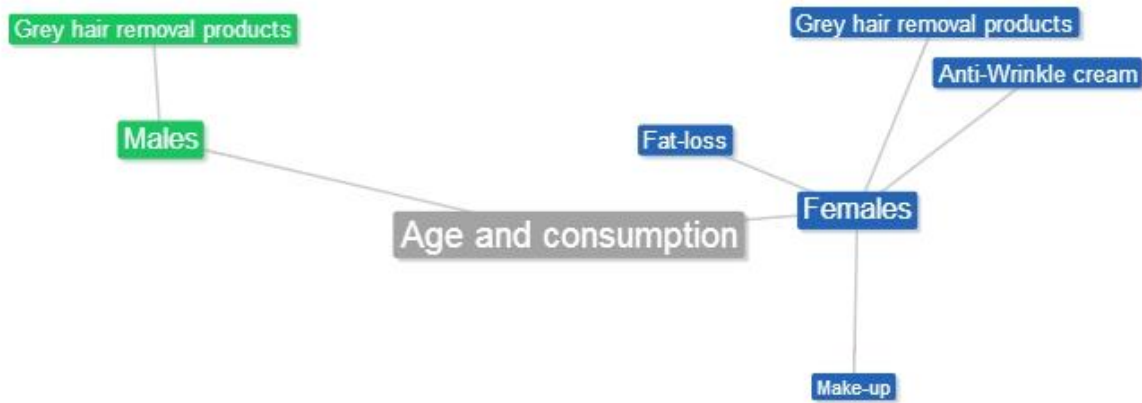
Figure 5.3: Age and consumption

The result from the data obtained supports this hypothesis. The data shows that a statistically significant correlation exists between age and the use of anti-wrinkle creams and grey hair products which was as expected. As participants age they are more likely to use anti-aging products. The data was then split and each gender was then analysed, the data noted again a significant correlation was identified with the use of grey-hair products in males. Females were then analysed and again as expected a significant correlation existed with the use of anti-wrinkle cream and grey hair removal products. An interesting finding was a negative correlation resulted between the use of make-up and age, which suggests the use of make-up decreases as women age. Another interesting note that appeared in the data was that fat-loss product use increased as females aged. This data shows similarities to that of Soloman et al (2010) who state that individuals decide to non-conform with image-ideals as they age.

5.3.5 Hypothesis 5
Individuals with low body satisfaction will have a higher use of image products and services

Figure 5.4: Body satisfaction and consumption

The research findings provide data to support this hypothesis. Wetzel (2007) noted in the literature that those who display traits of body dissatisfaction are more likely to behave in a way that tries to counteract this dissatisfaction. Body dissatisfaction traits include negative views on how an individual rates themself. It is noted in the data that strong relationships exist between those who often compare how they look to others and a high use of image altering products (see figure 5.4). The same goes for those who feel they are pretty much stuck with the looks they are born with. Those who often worry that they don't look their best and those who would change how they look if they had the chance also display high use of image altering products. This data therefore coincides with that of findings in the literature review. Dwyer (1993) explains how an individual's opinions and views about themselves are undermined by the media where Wetzel (2007) stated that television and media raise viewers expectations to an unrealistic level and at the same time encourage and influence them to behave in a way that they would have not normally considered. As shown from the research data, those who display traits of low body satisfaction high a high percentage of product usage.

5.3.6 Hypothesis 6

Individuals influenced by media (including social media) and television will have a lower self-esteem level
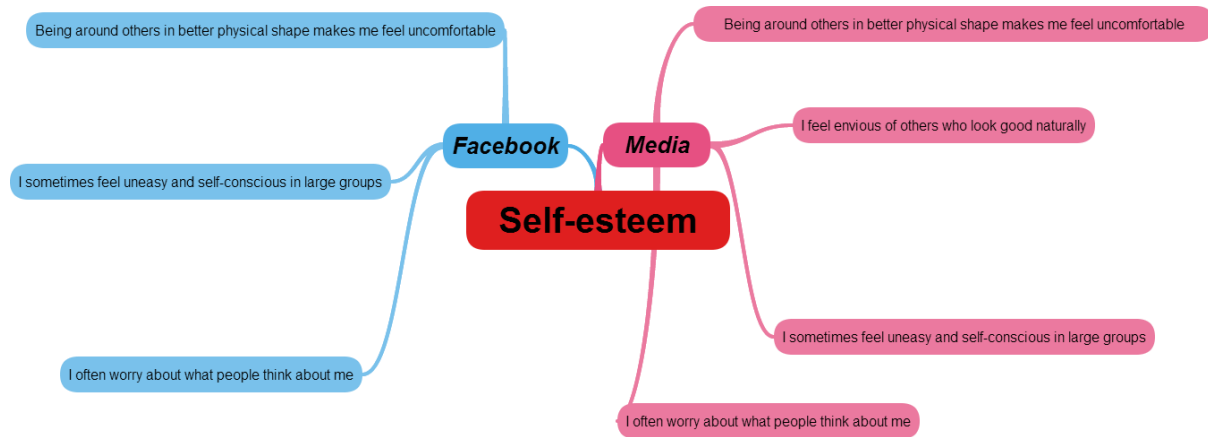

Figure 5.5: Self-esteem influences

Grabe and Hyde (2006) state in the literature that consumer's may develop low self-esteem and feelings such as anger and depression as a result of exposure to images of thin models in the media. The research data partially supports the hypothesis as significant correlations are evident by those influenced by Facebook and the media (see figure 5.5) but no significant correlations could be found in relation to TV as an influencing factor. This could be due to the fact that respondents class TV as media and therefore misinterpreted the question being asked. This will prompt further discussion in the limitations section of the following chapter. As Dwyer (1993) notes in the literature an individual's opinions and views about themselves are undermined by the media, this is evident in the data as exposure to media and social media clearly has an effect on respondent's self-esteem levels.

5.4 Conclusion

Within this chapter the key findings were highlighted and the reasons for and against supporting the hypotheses were identified. The data successfully supported the majority of the chosen hypotheses, and where this was not possible, the reason was identified which will be discussed in the following chapter. The research aims were met in this chapter, the researcher successfully identified the key themes and findings. It can be seen that Irish consumers do in fact portray similar behaviour to that of international examples shown in the literature. It is shown that Irish consumers are impacted and influenced by the media as explained by Baker (2012), and develop levels of low self-esteem as a result of such exposure. It is also identified that gender and age have an impact on consumer behaviour as

noted by Fallon & Rozin, (1985) and Eisend & Moller (2006). Respondents displayed some expected forms of behaviour such as the use of grey-hair products and anti-wrinkle creams as they age. Unexpected results were also shown such as the decrease in the use of make-up by females as they age. The gender divide did not show any unexpected results and the data obtained from the questionnaires coincided with the findings in the literature review. The following chapter involves the conclusion of this study; limitations will be highlighted as well as areas for further study.

Chapter 6 Conclusion

6.0 Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

This study focussed on consumer behaviour and the consumption of image altering products and services in Ireland. The aim was to identify whether or not consumers in Ireland behave differently to that of international examples. The aim was to identify differences in consumption on the basis of gender, age and relationship status. The research findings highlight that Irish consumers in fact behave accordingly to the findings of the literature. It is identified that Irish consumers base their perception of beauty on the same factors as noted by Warrington & Gourgova (2002). A persons desire to achieve an ideal-self can be influenced by a number of different mediums; age gender, family, peers and media all play an important role in the development of an ideal-self. Understanding how and why consumers develop an ideal-self is based on the variables they are influenced by or exposed to. As noted by Soloman, Bamossy, Askegaard & Hogg (2010) a person's physical appearance is a large part of their self-concept and that body image refers to a consumer's subjective evaluation of their physical self. Therefore a person pursues an ideal that they wish to be perceived as, such as wealthy, attractive or healthy. Individuals use social comparison to gather perception of this ideal self. Smeesters et al (2009) state that "individuals are driven by a desire for self-evaluation, by which they compare their own attributes and abilities to others". As seen in the research findings respondents rate 'friends' and 'media' as the most influencing factors in their perception of beauty, and ultimately behave according to these factors. Social comparison can be shown to inspire an individual to act or behave in a way that draws them closer or furthers them from a standard. This means that individuals use a standard as something they aim to look like or something they aim to look nothing like and therefore their behaviour will depend on whether the strive towards or against the standard. Comparisons with others occur spontaneously, even when not explicitly requested or induced Mussweiler (2003). The research findings cover a small area of a large research topic. Limitations to the study will be evaluated and areas of further research will also be noted.

6.2 Limitations

A numbers of limitations were identified throughout the duration of this study. The first area identified was that the majority of the respondent samples were females, this provides and unbalanced study sample especially when looking to compare results based on gender. This restricted the type of comparisons that were made but alternatives were conducted instead through the use of SPSS. The decision to use quantitative data was based on the aim to compare results to other studies in which quantitative data was used. Although this data

collection method was best suited for the research topic, it is felt that qualitative methods such as in-depth interviews could have provided an additional insight into respondent's choice of answers. A qualitative view would have provided a greater insight into why consumers behave in the way they do, and through the use of interviews the researcher could prompt further answers from respondents. The misinterpretation by participants for hypothesis 6 highlights a limitation of using questionnaires, as respondents may have misinterpreted media as including TV. The failure to fully support hypothesis 2 and 6 may have been avoided through an enhanced questionnaire design. Although no errors or causes for concern were highlighted during the pilot tests, the researcher feels that the questionnaires could have been altered slightly to improve the data that was needed to support these hypotheses. As part of the learning process for the researcher these notes have been absorbed and will be noted for a future research project. The researcher based this study on previous findings, therefore the questionnaire design followed a pre-existing questionnaire. Alterations were made by the researcher which were driven by the research. This limited the exploration of the study as certain topics such as emotion and addiction as influencing factors could not be explored. Throughout the duration of this study the researcher has noted a number of areas for further research.

6.3 Further study

As highlighted by Souiden & Diagne (2009) there has been a massive growth in the male cosmetic market. The emergence of the metrosexual male as well as the high level of male consumption of image altering products and services found in this study highlights the fact that the cosmetic industry is no more exclusive to women. An area of further study could investigate the growth of the male marketing evaluating male consumption levels now to that of year previous. As part of this study, reasons for the growth consumption could also be investigated as well as motivational and influencing factors that lead to consumption.

Another area of suggested research could involve an in-depth look at whether or not life situations such as bullying impact individual's consumption rate. It was not noted in the literature review that this is an issue, but conducting this research project prompted the thought that this may be an issue. Wright (2006) stated that there are many factors that will influence human behaviour beginning from early childhood through the teen years and into adult life. The researcher felt that throughout a person's life experiences such as bullying or the influence of playing with a Barbie doll may have had a subconscious impact on the individual's perception of beauty.

It was reported in the literature by Baker (2012) and Case (2007) how cosmetic companies spend billions of dollars on media and advertising for primetime spots on television. With the new digital age that exists now, TV is on demand, on mobile and in more control by the viewer, is there such thing as prime time viewing? An area of particular interest to study would be how viewers interpret commercials and whether they skip them if the option is available. And where the option is unavailable, does this frustrate the user resulting in a negative view of what they are forced to watch.

Chapter 7 References

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Chapter 8 Appendix

Questionnaire

The following questionnaire is in relation to a dissertation being conducted as part of the MSc in Marketing course at the National College of Ireland. The aim of the study is investigate consumer behaviour in relation to the purchasing of beauty products. Participants are asked to provide their honest opinion in regards to buying behaviour and shopping habits. Some questions may be of a personal nature and participants have the right to refusal at any point of participation. Full anonymity is guaranteed as participant's identity is not required. The questionnaire will take on average of 5 minutes to complete.

Part 1: Background information

Please tick the boxes that correspond to you

Gender:

Male ☐   Female ☐

Age:

18-24 ☐   25-30 ☐   31-40 ☐   41-50 ☐   51-65 ☐   66+ ☐

Current employment status: Please tick all that apply

Full-time employed ☐   Part-time employed ☐   Full-time student ☐

Unemployed ☐   Full-time parent ☐   Part-time student ☐

Other ☐ (please specify) _____

Relationship status: Single ☐   In a relationship ☐

Part 2: Use of image products and services

Please indicate how frequently you use the following products on a scale of 1-5, where 1 indicates you never use the product and 5 indicates you use the product frequently (circle appropriate response)

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Quite frequently	Very frequently
Anti-aging cream	1	2	3	4	5
Anti-hair loss products	1	2	3	4	5
Fat loss/Slimming aids (e.g. such as fat burners or CLA tablets etc.)	1	2	3	4	5
Hair colour/ dye (for grey hair only)	1	2	3	4	5
Hair colour/dye (for image purposes)	1	2	3	4	5
Make-up	1	2	3	4	5
Muscle Building products (for image purposes only)	1	2	3	4	5
Spot/Blemish Removal	1	2	3	4	5
Teeth Whitening Kits (at home kit)	1	2	3	4	5

Do you use any other image altering products not covered above? If so please specify _____

Have you or do you use any of the following services?

- Cosmetic Surgery   Yes☐   No ☐
- Hair growth treatment/transplant   Yes☐   No ☐
- Tanning Beds/ Tan injections/Tanning pills   Yes☐   No ☐
- Teeth whitening procedure   Yes☐   No ☐
- Mole removal   Yes☐   No ☐
- Other (please specify) _____

Do you use the gym?

Yes ☐

Never ☐

If yes please answer the following, if you answered never please skip to part 3.

Please circle the relevant answer:

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Quite Frequently	Very frequently
Do you exercise to lose weight?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you exercise for health benefits?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you use the gym to improve your appearance?	1	2	3	4	5
Do you like using the gym?	1	2	3	4	5

Part 3

The following questions relate to your personal views of your image. Please rate on a scale of 1-7 your agreement with the below statements, where 1 means that you strongly disagree with the statement and 7 means you strongly agree with the statement.

	Strongly disagree → Strongly agree
• I often compare how I look with how other people look	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
• I often worry If I feel I don't look my best	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
• I often worry about what people think about how I look	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
• If I had the option I would change how I look	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
• I feel I am pretty much stuck with the looks I was born with	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
• I think I could look as good as I wanted to if I worked at it	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
• I really don't think I have much control over how my body looks	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
• I feel uneasy and self-conscious about how I look in large groups	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
• I respect people more when they change how they look for the better	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
• I feel envious of people who look good naturally	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
• I would rather stay at home than go out as my natural self	1 2 3 4 5 6 7
• Being around people in a better physical shape than me makes me feel uncomfortable	1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Part 4:

The following questions are related to your Influences involved in your perception of beauty please answer on a scale of 1-7 where 1 is not at all important and 7 is extremely important.

Which of the following factors have an influence on your appearance (circle your response from 1 meaning no influence, to 7 a large influence)

	Not at all important → extremely important						
Family	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Friends	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Media	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Age	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Current life situation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Time restraints	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part 5: Consumer preference and situational influences

The following questions aim to analyse preference and situational influences involved when purchasing products. Please rate on the scale of 1-7 where 1 is completely disagree and 7 is completely agree with the following statement.

	Completely Disagree	Slightly Disagree	Disagree	Neither/Nor	Agree	Strongly Agree	Completely agree
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When I buy an image product I buy it in private or alone or online because I'm slightly embarrassed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I only buy a product with a strong brand name or reputation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I research and plan a product carefully before I make a purchase.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
If a product is more expensive I see it as being of a higher quality	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I have previously bought an image product out of impulse and	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

regretted it

I am more likely to buy a fresh new product on the market rather than a one that has been around for a long time.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I find it difficult to pass up a bargain	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
When it comes to my image I spare no expense.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
A high majority of my disposable income goes on image related products.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I am more likely to buy things at the spur of the moment when I shop with my friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I often buy products that I know little about but seem to be	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

useful.

I find it satisfying and therapeutic to shop.	**1**	**2**	**3**	**4**	**5**	**6**	**7**

Part 6: Shopping behaviour

This section aims to evaluate how your decision is influenced by outside sources. Please indicate on a scale of 1-7 (where 1 is not at all important and 7 are extremely influential) how influential the following factors are when deciding to purchase a product.

Staff recommendation	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Direct contact from a brand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Television advertisement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Facebook recommendations	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
In store promotion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Magazine articles	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Celebrity review/endorsement	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Beauty blog or other online discussion	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Other: _____

I would like to thank you for completing this survey. If you have any questions in regards to the research please email xxxxx@me.com or call 085xxxxxxx.