

**An exploratory study into generation Y males with a view to
deciphering the reasons why they exude less brand loyalty than their
previous generation counterparts in Ireland**

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Abstract:

In recent years the level of competition has intensified with businesses all over the world looking for ways to gain a competitive advantage. One way businesses have sought to achieve this is through establishing brand loyalty among their customers. However, a major problem that big businesses and brands are facing is that generation Y individuals are much less brand loyal than generation X and as a result they do not hesitate to switch to competing brands. This is becoming very problematic for brands as generation Y are becoming an ever more important cohort to capture and entice into being loyal thanks to their ever increasing size and levels of disposable income but brands are struggling to find ways of retaining them as customers for a sustained period of time.

The overall purpose of this research was therefore concerned with investigating generation Y males with a view to deciphering the reasons why they exude less brand loyalty than their previous generation counterparts in Ireland. The method that the researcher used to conduct research for this study was qualitative research. Interviews were conducted on members of generation Y with the aim of exploring individual's personal thoughts and opinions about the subject at hand and to gain an insight into their mind-set. The interviews were structured to an extent with questions devised beforehand however many of the questions were open-ended with probing taking place to allow for personal opinions to be expressed and the data collected to be rich. With all the data collected a thematic analysis was conducted to arrive at findings. The two key pertinent findings from this research are that generation Y are a research generation meaning they conduct a significant amount of research before purchasing a product or service. The second pertinent finding was that generation Y individuals display loyalty to certain categories of brands such as technology but not to others such as food and clothes brands. The practical implications of this piece of research are it will provide guidance to businesses and brands in relation to how to better understanding generation Y individuals.

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Contents

Abstract:.....	2
Declaration:.....	3
Acknowledgements:	5
Chapter 1 - Introduction:	8
Chapter 2 - Literature review:.....	11
2.1 Introduction to the literature:	11
2.2 Brand loyalty:	11
2.3 Generation Y:	13
2.4 Concluding discussion:	16
Chapter 3 - Research questions:	18
3.1 Objectives:	18
3.2 Sub-Objectives:	19
Chapter 4 - Methodology:.....	20
4.1 Introduction:	20
4.2 Research Design:.....	21
4.3 Sample profile:	22
4.4 Data analysis:	23
4.5 Research instrument:.....	24
4.6 Interview questions:	25
4.7 Pilot study:	26
4.8 Ethical considerations:	26
4.9 Limitations:	27
Chapter 5 - Analysis and findings:.....	28
5.1 Objective 1 findings:	29
5.1.1 Research Generation:	29
5.1.2 Category loyalty:	30
5.1.3 Habitual change:	32
5.1.4 Customer service and interaction:.....	33
5.2 Objective 2 findings:	34
5.2.1 Reward current customers for being loyal:	34
5.2.2 Stay grounded following success:	35
5.2.3 Forced loyalty:.....	36
5.3 Sub-objective findings.....	37
Chapter 6 - Discussion:.....	39
6.1 Limitations and future research direction	44

Chapter 7 - Conclusion:.....	45
Appendices:.....	47
Interview 1:	47
Interview 2:	50
Interview 3:	52
Interview 4:	53
Interview 5:	55
Interview 6:	57
Interview 7:	59
Interview 8:	61
References:	63

Chapter 1 - Introduction:

The academic area to which this research relates is brand loyalty or to be more specific to decipher the reasons as to why Generation y males exude less brand loyalty than their previous generation counterparts in Ireland.

Brand loyalty continues to be on the decline in the world today with research revealing that “80% of millennials look for the lowest price possible when shopping and that 60% are more inclined to bypass their favourite brand if a cheaper alternative is available” (Olenski, 2013). Recent worldwide events such as the ever increasing level of competition among businesses all over the globe as well as factors such as the global financial crises of 2008, increased levels of globalisation, and ever improving technology and advancements in the way things are produced have done little to alleviate the pressure brands are experiencing today. This increased level of competition has made the need for establishing a competitive advantage over rival business more important than ever for organisations who want to survive and prosper in the world today. A competitive advantage occurs when businesses either “provide comparable buyer value more efficiently than competitors (low cost), or performing activities at comparable cost but in unique ways that create more buyer value than competitors and, hence, command a premium price (differentiation)” (Porter, 1985). One such way businesses have sought to achieve this advantage over their rivals is by establishing brand loyalty among generation Y customers. There is great debate found in the literature in relation to brand loyalty but from a business’s perspective there is general agreement that it will be crucial moving forward with Reichfield arguing that it is “an important construct of the long-term financial performance of business firms” (Reichheld, 1996). This view is echoed by Esmailpour who describes brand loyalty as the “holy grail” (Esmailpour, 2015) when it comes to how much additional value is perceived by customers when purchasing a well-known brand. Ultimately, by obtaining a relatively large loyal customer base, businesses can establish a competitive advantage which if sustainable, can help safeguard an organisations long term future. This view is supported in the literature by Aydin and Özer who state “Brand loyalty

and loyal customers are very important for the future of the business and should be studied carefully” (Aydin, and Özer, 2005).

“The term generation Y was created in the USA to describe a generation entering the market that is characterised by a certain consumer behaviour and certain style of living” (Cambal and Zibrinova, 2011). A major obstacle that businesses are facing in today’s competitive climate is the fact that generation y customers are much less loyal than previous generations and as such routinely switch to alternative brands and products. Generation Y consumers can be described as “self-centred, techno-savvy, environmentally-conscious individuals, who spend more than previous generations and display low levels of brand loyalty” (Greenberg, 2011). Moreover, according to Oliver and Tanguy one of the key characteristic of generation Y is that they are brand switchers and aren’t afraid to try new products (Olivier, and Tanguy, 2008). “From a demographic perspective, Generation Y is a large market (in size) with large current and future buying power” (Knittle, Beurer, and Berndt, 2016). It is evident to see that heading into the future being able to attract and retain generation Y customers will be crucial for businesses success all over the world. Over the next decade the generation known as generation X will be replaced by Generation Y customers as the largest segment with the most disposable income in many parts of the world and hence “Choosing to ignore this segment could be risky for companies” (Neuborne, and Kerwin, 1999). In fact, in the United States of America this has already occurred with generation Y now being the largest segment at 75.4 million people (Fry, 2016). Ultimately However, in order for businesses to significantly benefit, an essential component of being able to capture and maintain generation Y and thus reap the rewards of their large spending power will be understanding why they are less loyal and learning what businesses can do differently to evoke more loyalty amongst generation Y as a whole.

The overall aim of this research was to seek and achieve a greater understanding of generation Y’s lack of brand loyalty. There have been numerous studies conducted in the past into both brand loyalty and generation Y such as those conducted by Gurau and Lazarevic but the rationale for conducting this research was to fill a gap in the

literature in relation to a specifically focused study into why generation Y display a lack of brand loyalty, with the hope being that this research fills the void and adds insight to an area that little has been done and as such required further investigation. This research will aim to gain a greater understanding of this phenomena by conducting interviews on a representative sample of generation Y customers and thus the findings can be used to give businesses insights into how to better capture younger customers. The methodology chapter of this dissertation will contain much more detail regarding the process of how this was done. Following the conclusion of this chapter there will be 6 subsequent chapters in this dissertation. Firstly, there will be a literature review in which key contemporary and relevant literature in relation to the research question will be investigated, reviewed, and critically appraised in a logical manner with potential shortcomings in the literature clearly identified and articulated. Secondly there will be a Research questions chapter in which the objectives and sub-objectives of this study will be outlined and linked to previous literature. Following the conclusion of the research questions chapter as aforementioned there will be a Methodology chapter in which the choice of methodology which in this study was qualitative research via in-depth interviews will be justified as to why it is the most appropriate having considered all alternatives thoroughly. Stemming on from this chapter of the dissertation will be the analysis and findings chapter which having conducted in-depth interviews revealed the pertinent findings of generation Y being a research generation and displaying category loyalty along with other peripheral findings which are discussed in greater detail in the chapter. In addition to this the chapter will link the findings back to the literature and demonstrate a clear appreciation as to the overall implications and limitations of the research. The penultimate discussion chapter of this dissertation will entail a reflective and thorough look at the findings of the study along with providing a call to action for potential future research conducted in the area of brand loyalty. Finally, the concluding chapter of this dissertation will aim to conclude the research at hand in a satisfactory manner with the most pertinent and noteworthy points of the study being abundantly clear to fellow researchers.

Chapter 2 - Literature review:

2.1 Introduction to the literature:

Throughout the literature there has been numerous theories proposed along with a significant amount of debate with converging and contrasting opinions on different sides of the argument in relation to both brand loyalty and generation Y. This can be evidenced for example by Foscht, Schloffer, Maloles, and Chia who state “Young people are generally considered to be particularly attractive customers” (Foscht, Schloffer, Maloles, and Chia, 2009) while Gurau echoes this view by suggesting that generation Y as an overall market segment are extremely attractive for businesses today (Gurau, 2012). On the other hand, for example they’re contrasting opinions found in the literature about the exact period of time in which generation Y begins and ends with different authors expressing different opinions as to the exact timeframe and duration that generation Y spans. According to Lafayette the period in which generation Y belongs to is 1981-1995 (Lafayette, 2011), while (rich, 2008) argues that the period is 1982-2000. Interestingly (Howe and Strauss, 2007) express the opinion that the timeframe is longer by stating that it is from 1982-2005. This interpretation of the timeframe interestingly includes people born post 2000 which makes it somewhat of an anomaly as most literature in the area believe that individuals born post 2000 belong to Generation Z and as such shouldn’t be included. It is clear to see that there has been much discussion and debate in regards to this in the literature but there is no overall mutual agreement that is accepted by all authors. For the purpose of this research the period which is considered generation Y will be individuals born between the years 1985-2000 as this lies within the general vicinity of what most authors considered to be correct.

2.2 Brand loyalty:

In relation to brand loyalty it can be defined as “a biased (non-random) behavioural response (purchase), expressed over time from a decision making unit, considering one or more alternative brands and is a function of psychological processes” (Jacoby, and Chesnut, 1978). A more contemporary definition is presented by Kotler who states “brand loyalty occurs when a customer chooses to repeatedly purchase a product

produced by the same company instead of a substitute product produced by a competitor” (Kotler, 2009). While Grimsley states that brand loyalty is “choosing to repeatedly purchase a product produced by the same company instead of a substitute product produced by a competitor” (Grimsley, 2016). As aforementioned loyalty among generation Y individuals is declining with stats indicating that “80% of millennials look for the lowest price possible when shopping and that 60% are more inclined to bypass their favourite brand if a cheaper alternative is available” (Olenski, 2013). Brands and brand loyalty have not always been at the forefront of a business strategy however over the past 20-30 years’ businesses and researchers alike have started to recognise that by establishing brand loyalty among their customers can give a business a competitive advantage in areas such as being able to respond quickly to threats from competitors, putting substantial entry barrier for competitors in place, and even over time making their loyal customer base less sensitive to the marketing efforts of rival businesses (Sancharan, 2012). To Cite Aaker for several decades now “researchers and practitioners have recognized the importance of brand loyalty” (Aaker, 1996). The ability to establish loyalty among your customers towards your brand is an extremely valuable asset for every brand to have (Nguyen, Barrett, Miller, 2011) and “should be at the heart of every business” (Schieffer, 2005).

From a financial point of view, according to Katz “Millennials have a spending power of \$2.45 trillion worldwide” (Katz, 2016). Although it may be difficult to ascertain exactly how valuable brand loyalty is to organisations, it is very clear that establishing or failing to establish brand loyalty can have a very positive or negative impact on businesses and the products they sell. This can be evidence by Foscht, Schloffer, Maloles, and Chia, (2009) who state that brand loyalty “results in increased business profits”. In addition to this to further highlight the financial implications that establishing or failing to establish brand loyalty among customers can engender, it can prove to be extremely costly for businesses to replace customers that decide to switch to one of their competitors. In fact, gaining new customers is significantly more expensive than retaining the customers in which the business currently serves with Mao stating “it can be as much as four times more expensive” (Mao, 2010). As a result,

businesses should put more of a focus on maintaining loyalty from their existing customer base. As such brand and brand loyalty need to be examined assiduously on various distinct sections and portions of the economy (Tabaku, Elvira, and Zerelarrri, 2015) by companies in order to gain a greater understanding of loyalty and how a business can improve in this area to help increase overall business profits.

2.3 Generation Y:

Generational theory points to the fact that “generational cohorts share life experiences which cause them to develop similar attitudes and beliefs” (Meriac et al, 2010). In addition to this, it also hypothesizes the avocation that young people’s juvenescence leaves unmistakable impressions in moulding their stances and general demeanours (Yang, Lau, 2015). One particular cohort that businesses need to pay particular attention to going forward is generation Y. The main rationale for this is the fact that they are an essential segment in which to target and achieve a greater understanding of moving forward (Viswanathan, and Jain, 2013). This view is further supported in the literature by Wolburg and Pokrywczynski, (2001) who state that “Generation Y consumers are becoming a very important segment in today's market because of their large size, their current significant amount of spending power and their potential for huge amounts of future spending power”. In addition to this, generation Y customers are deemed by many to have a large enough influence to alter the marketplace and have significant amounts of capital at their disposal (Noble, Haytko, and Phillips, 2009). In Relation to their importance from an Irish perspective, generation Y “comprise over 1.3 million people, or 28 per cent of the population of Ireland” (Ruane, Wallace, 2013). It is abundantly clear to see that generation Y is a segment that the majority of businesses need to focus on heading into the future if they wish to survive as they make up more than a 1 in 4 people living in Ireland today (Ruane, Wallace, 2013). A major problem that businesses are facing and one in which many businesses are struggling to achieve however is establishing said brand loyalty among generation Y customers. Although generation Y do have very high levels of awareness when it comes to brands they “are generally not brand loyal” (Noble et al, 2009). It has come as a surprise to businesses that generation Y don’t exude the same

level of loyalty as their parents' generation otherwise known as generation X with Giang noting that generation Y's tendency to "switch and try new opportunities was not anticipated" (Giang, 2012). Generation X customers are also more likely to stick with brands and purchase them on a regular basis than generation Y customers are. In addition to this, generation X customers are more likely to forgive a business when they have a bad experience and give the business some leeway as "they are loyal to relationships" (Alexander, Sysko, 2013) while generation Y in contrast to this are much less forgiving and have no problem switching to other brands and businesses.

Throughout the literature various authors suggest reasons as to why generation Y are different to their parents' generation when it comes to loyalty towards brands. One notable reason frequently cited is that "generation Y are less brand loyal than previous generations, due to their constant exposure to price promotions" (Ritchie, 1995). Generation Y have grown up in a digital world which is far different from that in which their parents' generation grew up in with Leelakulthanit, (2014) noting that generation Y can't envisage living without it in their lives. Moreover, generation Y are bombarded by promotions, sales, and price reductions every day of their lives from smartphones, tablets, laptops, PC's, TV's etc. to the point where generation Y are very selective in what they choose to pay attention to. In fact, research suggests that today people are subjected to over 5000 advertisements on average per day which is a 60% increase on the 2000 advertisements people were subjected to on average a mere 30 years ago (Johnson, 2014). This has resulted in the "Generation Y consumer segment responding to brands in ways that have been previously unseen" (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003). In addition to this, a large volume of research suggests generation Y have significantly different characteristics to that of generation X. To cite Múčka "Members of generation Y are significantly different from the generation of their parents, they long for success and realize that there is no social institution to take care of their future" (Múčka, 2007) while Cambal and Zibrinova state that generation Y have ever increasing expectations that they strive towards and live for, and display a larger appreciation of their individual self-worth (Cambal, and Zibrinova, 2011). Another characteristic that generation Y exhibit that is in stark contrast to generation X is the

fact that they feel entitled and deserving (Alexander, Sysko, 2013). In the literature research also points to the fact that “generation Y consumers tend to be a much more educated generation than generation X as a whole” (Wolburg and Pokrywczynski, 2001). However, this difference can largely be attributed to the fact that the cost associated with attending third level education has declined over the years and that there is much greater access to courses both offline and online today which has led to record numbers attending third level education (Donnelly, 2009). Finally, in relation to characteristics generation Y tend to be always on the lookout for bargains (Heaney, 2007) when shopping which has been greatly supported by the ability to compare prices online. These different characteristics that generation Y possess have made them a more difficult generation for marketers to understand and thus a more difficult generation for business to gain profits from as they are well informed and cannot easily be deceived (Wolburg and Pokrywczynski, 2001).

Overall the general consensus among the majority of authors such as (Knittle, Beurer, and Berndt, 2016) and (Foscht, Schloffer, Maloles, and Chia, 2009) is that generation Y is less brand loyal than generation X and more difficult to market brands towards. This is evidenced by the fact generation Y consumers “as a target market present a particular challenge as they are resistant to traditional marketing efforts and difficult to capture and retain as loyal consumers” (Bush et al., 2004). Moreover, generation Y don’t believe in traditional promotion and are less loyal to individual big name trademarks preferring instead to invest in a variety of brands (Giovannini, Xu, Thomas, 2015) despite however being “willing to pay more for brand name products” (Parker, Simmers, Schaefer, 2014) when they do decide to make a purchase. As a result of this generation Y pose a significant challenge to marketers as they are very “difficult to capture and retain as loyal consumers (Lazarevic, 2012). In contrast to the majority of authors (Howe and Strauss, 2000) indicate that the characteristics and behaviour of generation Y might be difficult to distinguish in comparison with older cohorts, because of their young age. This view suggests more time is needed to investigate whether generation Y’s greater flexibility in relation to brands is just down to being younger or whether it is a generational shift as a whole with factors such as income

levels and levels of disposable income needing to be taking into consideration. A more balanced view is presented by Lodes and Buff who hypothesize “that generation Y will demonstrate brand loyalty towards high-priced items, such as laptop computers, but will adopt a low loyalty attitude towards low-price commodity goods, such as gum or candy bars” (Lodes, and Buff, 2009). This view suggests generation Y customers are only willing to switch to alternative brands when there is low risk of doing so and that when making more expensive purchases such as a phone or laptop that they will stick and be loyal to brands they have prior experience of using.

2.4 Concluding discussion:

This literature review has sought to showcase that this research is solidly grounded in past work, and has endeavoured to provide a broad detailed overview of the previous research that has been done in this area in order to set the context for this study moving forward. Brand loyalty is a major factor in businesses success all over the world with it “translating into customer willingness to pay 20-25% more for a brand” (Kotler, 2009) in which they are loyal to and have a rapport with. In addition to this, the recent global recession (Soros, 2008) has only further increased the need to understand how to keep customers loyal in light of many customers tightening their belts and being more captious when it comes to the products and brands in which they purchase. The largest and most important segment of the market heading into the future will be generation Y evidenced by aforementioned factors such as their overall large size and their considerable levels of cash they have at their disposal (Wolburg and Pokrywczynski, 2001) (Ruane, Wallace, 2013) so it will be essential for business to develop and learn ways in which they can retain loyal generation Y customers. In order to do this however business need to better understand generation Y as a whole. As aforementioned there have been numerous studies conducted in the past into both brand loyalty and generation Y but the rational for conducting this research is to fill a gap in the literature in relation to a specifically focused study into generation Y males with a view to deciphering the reasons why they exude less brand loyalty than their previous generation counterparts in Ireland. The hope of this research being that by investigation young generation Y males in Ireland that insights into their mind-set and

their psyche will emerge as to why they are less loyal which will be advantageous to many individuals and businesses moving forward in Ireland as males are beginning to shop more and “shop more like women” (Smith, 2016) every day and despite this little has been done in this area academically and as such requires more delving into and further investigation.

Chapter 3 - Research questions:

“An exploratory study into generation Y males with a view to deciphering the reasons why they exude less brand loyalty than their previous generation counterparts in Ireland”

The main objective of this research is to decipher the reasons as to why generation y males living in Ireland today exude less brand loyalty than their previous generation counterparts. This research aims to understand how these different life experiences, beliefs, and attitudes that young males have grown up with and developed in Ireland make them different to previous generations X males in Ireland when it comes to being loyal towards a brand. The predominate focus of past research into generation Y's brand loyalty as seen in the aforementioned literature review chapter of this paper has focussed on generation Y's characteristics, attitudes, beliefs etc. as a generation in general. This study will aim to elicit, pinpoint, and nail the exact reasons why young males specifically in Ireland are less loyal than older generation X males living in Ireland. In addition to this main objective, there will also be a number of other objectives and sub-objectives that this research will endeavour to answer. All the main objectives of this research can be seen below.

3.1 Objectives:

Why are generation Y males living in Ireland less brand loyal than their previous generation counterparts?

What can businesses do differently to better capture male generation Y individuals in Ireland?

These questions will be the foremost focus of this piece of research. In the literature Gurau advocates additional studies to “provide additional evidence about the factors determining loyalty” (Gurau, 2012). In addition to this, Foscht, Schloffer, Maloles, and Chia suggest further assessment of generation Y's customer loyalty is needed as there

“may be deviations in different markets” (Foscht, Schloffer, Maloles, and Chia, 2009). By conducting an extensive piece of investigation and research into these two questions this study could conceivably add to the existing body of knowledge of what is known about generation Y. Moreover, it could fill a gap in the literature about why generation Y males living in Ireland are less loyal than in the past, and what businesses can do differently in the future to better understand and be able to capture generation Y customers. In addition to these main objectives this research will also aim to answer a number of sub-objectives as well. These sub-objectives are outlined and can be seen below.

3.2 Sub-Objectives:

Do differences exist between 20-24-year-old generation Y individuals and 25-29-year-old generation Y individuals?

In relation to the main sub-objectives of this piece this research the focal point will be around establishing are there differences between the two different age ranges of generation Y which are stated above. According to Bartlett “the youth market is not homogenous” (Bartlett, 2004) and as such it should not be studied or tarnished with the same brush when it comes to the levels of loyalty they exude. Aforementioned there are over 1.3 million generation Y individuals living in Ireland (Ruane, Wallace, 2013) so it is important to try and grasp and comprehend different people’s distinct attributes. This research will seek to establish what the differences and similarities are between these two different age groups with the focus being on how 20-24-year-old members of generation Y differ from 25-29-year-old generation Y members when it comes to brand loyalty in Ireland.

Chapter 4 - Methodology:

“An exploratory study into generation Y males with a view to deciphering the reasons why they exude less brand loyalty than their previous generation counterparts in Ireland”

4.1 Introduction:

This study essentially proposed to investigate and decipher the reasons as to why generation Y males living in Ireland today are less brand loyal than their previous generation counterparts in Ireland. In addition to this, this study also intended to answer a number of other objectives and sub-objectives as outlined in the proceeding research questions chapter of this study. In order to answer these questions to the highest possible standard it was essential that the procedure adopted was appropriate to the study under investigation as failing to choose the correct procedure would lead to errors and greatly prohibit the aims of this research being achieved. To Cite McGovern “Research is only of value if it achieves its purpose” (McGivern, 2013) thus making the choice of procedure essential when carrying out any piece of research. Indeed, according to Mauch and Park the choice of procedure is essential as it “guides how the data will be collected, how it will be analysed and interpreted, and it is a major influence upon the outcomes of the study” (Mauch, and Park 2003). In the subsequent sections of this methodology the research design for this piece of research will be made abundantly clear and will be justified as to why it is the most appropriate method of analysis having considered all possible other options. Furthermore, there will also be sections in this methodology that outline clearly the sample set of participants that took part in this piece of research. Moreover, there will be a section in this methodology that explicitly states the research instrument that was used which will entail the questions that were asked and the rationale as to why the questions were asked. Finally, in this methodology there will be a limitations section which will highlight the potential shortcomings associated with the procedure selected to collect the required data. This section will also accentuate the deficiency’s that occurred in

the data collection and any other factors that may have negatively influenced to some extent the final culmination of results.

4.2 Research Design:

The research design that was deemed most appropriate in order to answer this type of research question to the requisite standard was qualitative analysis. This was established by way of investigating prior studies into similar pieces of research relating to both generation Y and brand loyalty and by gauging what was adjudged most apt and befitting for this piece of work. Qualitative research can be defined as “any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification” (Strauss, Corbin, 1998). For the purpose of this research quantitative analysis techniques such as surveys and questionnaires were not considered suitable. Although these methods of data collection can prove advantageous by the fact that a large volumes of data can be collected and analysed the focus of this study is to get to the heart of why brand loyalty among generation Y males in Ireland is lower than in past generations along with a range of other research questions which require a more social, inductivist, and interpretivist approach of data collection. With quantitative analysis techniques there is a distinct lack of said interaction with the participants on a personal level along with the strong possibility that participants in the study will not engage fully in answering surveys and questionnaires resulting in unreliable data. As such qualitative analysis was the logical choice in seeking the most reliable data as “Qualitative methods have the major strength of incorporating richness, depth nuances, multi-dimensionality as well as complexity” (Mason, 2002) while also endeavouring to seek insider views and outlooks on the research topic being scrutinised (Deshpande, 1983). Much of this is made possible by the fact that qualitative methods allow for more open ended questions to be asked resulting in a larger array of different opinions being expressed which provides a more comprehensive picture of why people behave the way they do as opposed to the predominately close ended style approach to questions that quantitative approaches often facilitate.

In relation to the specific qualitative procedure adopted this study conducted interviews to gather all the required data. While both focus groups and interviews were realistic and feasible options the one to one nature of interviews was deemed most suitable to the research aims. By interviewing individual participants on a one to one basis it enabled every single participant that took part in the research to have their say and voice their opinion. This was very beneficial in the case of more introverted participants who may not have spoken up in a focus group scenario where a few very extroverted participants may have taken over the discussion leaving other people's views and opinions left unspoken. It was important in this piece of research that all participant's voices were heard and that all members of generation Y that took part expressed their views as hearing from everyone gives the answers provided a more comprehensive feel and hopefully provides a more accurate reflection of how generation Y individuals in Ireland as a whole feel about brand loyalty.

4.3 Sample profile:

In studies that were similar in nature to this piece of research in the literature such as the study by (Schembri, Merrilees, and Kristiansen, 2010) the general consensus is that anywhere between 5 and 10 interviews is an acceptable amount of interviews to conduct in order to reach saturation and possess the required level of data to answer the research questions under investigation. To cite Ruane and Wallace "Similar studies advocate between six to ten interviews" (Ruane, Wallace, 2013) while other research points to the fact that 12 interviews should be strived towards but that it all ultimately depends on the quality of the interviews conducted (Baker, Edwards, 2012). In relation to the sample that was used in this piece of research firstly all participants were members of generation Y living in Ireland. In total interviews were conducted on 8 participants. All of these participants were male which was necessary to answer the main research objectives and sub objectives of this study. As Aforementioned all members interviewed were members of generation Y which for the purpose of this study is anyone born between 1985-2000 which aligns with the views of various researchers in the literature as mentioned already in the preceding literature review chapter of this paper. The ages of the participants involved in the study varied with

the youngest participant being aged 20 while the oldest participant interviewed was aged 28. Regarding interview length this also varied on an individual basis with interviews lasting anywhere from 15 minutes to 40 minutes in total. The interviewees who took part in the research were at different life stages and comprised of both individuals who were still students themselves as well as individual who had a professional career which reduced the chances of a college campus or workplace bias occurring in the data. All participants who were interviewed were living in either County Kildare, County Wicklow, or County Dublin in the Leinster province of Ireland at the time of interview. Furthermore, all participants were from a convenience sample available to the researcher at the time of this study and as such may not be fully representative of the views of all of Ireland or the world as a whole when it comes to brand loyalty.

4.4 Data analysis:

In relation to how the data was analysed, having collected, stored and transcribed all of the data from the interviews undertaken all of the data was gathered in one place in order for it to be examined. The method by which the data was investigated and analysed was thematic analysis. Thematic analysis can be defined as “A qualitative analytic method for identifying, analysing and reporting patterns (themes) within data” (Braun, and Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is a great way of analysing a qualitative piece of research as it offers greater amounts of flexibility and allows researchers to interpret large volumes of data and make conclusions about the phenomena under investigation. The approach that was used in the thematic analysis was an inductive approach as “in this approach, the observations are the starting point for the researcher, and patterns are looked for in the data” (Beiske, 2007). Moreover, in an inductive approach the themes that are recognised in the data powerfully relate to the actual data itself (Braun, and Clarke, 2006) which is what occurred when analysing the data collected from interviewing participants in this study. Having organised all the data that was collected the next step that was undertaken was to read through the organised data numerous times to become familiar with the data and rigorously go through and identify a broad range of potential themes in the data.

Themes can be identified by “bringing together components or fragments of ideas or experiences, which often are meaningless when viewed alone” (Leininger, 1985). Having successfully identified a broad range of potential themes the next stage was to code the data. Coding the data involved going even more in depth and being even more robust when dissecting the data. At this stage any ideas, insights, or thoughts that sprung to mind were jotted down on a piece of paper in the search for key rubrics and classifications that could be used to group and organise all important data under. In total 2 key rubrics emerged along with 2 peripheral rubrics from this process which are presented in the subsequent results chapter of this paper. The findings that generation Y conduct a significant amount of research prior to purchasing along with the finding that they display category loyalty were the most prevalent themes to emerge from the data while the findings of habitual change and customer service and interaction were also unravelled from the data collected. These findings were either placed in the context of an existing theory already found in the literature or alternatively a new theory was constructed that was not previously to this study found in any pre-existing literature.

4.5 Research instrument:

In relation to the research instrument as already pointed out interviews were used in order to gather all the required data needed to answer the main objective and sub-objectives of this piece of research. “Interviews, are believed to provide a 'deeper' understanding of social phenomena” (Gill, Steward, Treasure, Chadwhick, 2008) which was at the heart of this research. All participants who agreed to take part in the research were notified in advance of when their interview would take place. An elected time slot was arranged that was convenient to the interviewee at a venue that best suited their needs in order to hopefully increase their overall contributions in the interview and reduce the chances of poor engagement in the interviews conducted. The majority of interviews were conducted at the residence of the participants involved while some were conducted on campus at the National college of Ireland. In all cases interviews were done in a quiet room on a one to one basis with no interference during the duration of the interviews. Following the initial

greeting and exchange of pleasantries the interview process commenced. Best practice was followed in all cases where the purpose of the study was outlined to the interviewees and explained clearly in order to make the participants more relaxed and put their minds at ease. The interviewees were then made aware of a number of factors such as their right to anonymity, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw from the research at any time. The interview questions were structured in the sense that they were pre-determined before the interview however the questions for the most part were open ended to give participants the freedom and scope to express their own thoughts and opinions. Moreover, participants were probed and encouraged to elaborate on replies given to delve deeper into and fully enlarge the opinions that they were expressing. In some instances, clarification was also sought on the viewpoints being conveyed. In relation to the questions asked specifically following a few initial get to know the participant questions such as stating their age and gender a total of 12 core questions were asked. These questions were selected in order to “address the aims and objectives of the research” (Gill, Steward, Treasure, Chadwick, 2008). These questions can be seen below

4.6 Interview questions:

Q 1 What do you think of when you hear the term brand loyalty?

Q 2 Would you describe yourself as being loyal to brands?

Q 3 Do you make a conscious effort to buy certain brands that you have used before?

Q 4 What factors make you feel the need to switch brands?

Q 5 What factors make you feel like staying loyal to a brand?

Q 6 Have you ever had a terrible experience when buying a brand?

Q 7 How did you react?

Q 8 Would you buy from this brand again?

Q 9 Does the cost of brands impact on your level of loyalty?

Q 10 Do you think this generation differs to your parent's generation when it comes to brand loyalty?

Q 11 Do you think technology has played a role in brand loyalty? If so what role?

Q 12 What could businesses do differently in your opinion to keep customers loyal?

4.7 Pilot study:

In order for the interview questions to be as adequate as possible and for the interview process to run smoothly, two pilot interviews were undertaken in order to mimic how the actual interviews conducted would go. These interviews were conducted on generation Y members in order to gather preliminary data in relation to the research objectives and sub-objectives under investigating as well as to identify any potential problems that needed to be ironed out in advance of the real interviews taking place. Factors such as making sure the recording equipment stayed on was a particularly important problem identified as during one of the pilot interviews the recording stopped unknowingly half way through the interviews only to be discovered at the end resulting in both the researchers and the interviewees time and energy being wasted. This process in the end greatly helped improve the actual data collection undertaken as without it there would have been more bumps encountered along the way during the process which might have had an impact on the quality of the results.

4.8 Ethical considerations:

In relation to ethical considerations this research involved human participants but focused on adult generation Y males and as such did not involve the research or the questioning of any vulnerable people in society. Each participant was made aware of the purpose of the research they were participating in and asked to give consent about being involved. In addition, individuals were asked if they wanted their identities to remain confidential throughout the research and participants were made aware that they can request to be removed from the research at any time with no prior warning

if they so wished. Data protection laws were also adhered to with the data collected being handled carefully and not being held onto for longer than was required.

4.9 Limitations:

Although perfection was strived towards in this methodology it is simple not feasible for everything to be flawless and as such some limitations do exist in relation to the data. Firstly, the sample of participants who were involved in this piece of research all resided from one region of Ireland and as such some deviations may be present in different countries and regions. A second limitation of this methodology may be the fact that a convenience sample was used as opposed to a sample that may have been more representative of Ireland as a whole. Finally, although everything possible was done to limit and negate this from happening prior perceptions, expectations, and personnel biases may to some small extent have influenced the collection of data and cannot be ruled out completely despite the researcher doing his utmost to be fully impartial during the data collection and analysis.

Chapter 5 - Analysis and findings:

This chapter will contain an overview of the findings. Section 5.1 will look at the main findings derived from the data in relation to the primary objectives of this study, while section 5.2 will focus on the main findings in relation to the what businesses can do better to capture generation Y individuals. Finally, section 5.3 will look at the finding in relation to the main sub-objective of this study. As aforementioned in the previous chapter the sample chosen was a convenience sample available to the researcher at the time of study. The method of analysis used to analyse the data was thematic analysis. When using thematic analysis “It is important that the analysis provides a concise, coherent, logical, non-repetitive, and interesting account of the story of the data” (Braun, and Clarke, 2006) Having completed all necessary interviews and having collected the required data, the analyses of the data began with key themes emerging over time as a result of coding. The first thing that became abundantly clear straight away was the fact that generation Y individuals are less loyal than previous generations which has already been established already in the literature by various studies such as the study conducted by Ritchie (1995) and as such this was an underlying assumption prior to the commencement of this research. None the less in all cases all participants who were interview suggested that they felt this generation was less loyal than their parent’s generations with Iain and Gavin saying

I find that my generation is less loyal. There are more product offering these days with plenty of opportunities to switch brands. Brands are accessible from all over the world. In my parent’s day, you were stuck with mostly local brands (Iain).

I think our generation are less loyal. It is quite often to see young people with Nike shoes, Adidas trousers and Puma tops, which means that the brand they wear doesn’t mean that much to them. Similarly, with electronics, people have iPhones but have Windows PCs (Gavin).

The views expressed by all the respondents were in line with that of past research which solidified the fact that young people are indeed less loyal towards brands. The

heart of this research was however to decipher why this was the case and having studied the data themes began to emerge. The two most pertinent and noteworthy themes that emerged from the raw data that the respondents had provided in relation to why they are less loyal were the fact that they consider themselves to be a research generation and the fact they do in fact display some loyalty towards brands in the same way their parent's generation did but only in relation to certain categories of brands as opposed to a broad spectrum of different brands generation X showed loyalty towards.

5.1 Objective 1 findings:

5.1.1 Research Generation:

Participants who were interviewed either directly eluded to the fact that they do a significant amount of research before committing to a purchase or implied that they undertake research in some shape or form before doing so. While past research such as the study conducted by Heaney (2007) touched upon this when he suggested that generation Y individuals are always on the lookout for bargains which would entail to a certain extent a degree of research into the price of different products and services offered by brands, this research however indicates that generation Y individuals research goes much deeper than just a constant search for a bargain. Described by many as the Igeneration having grown up with technology at their fingertips, generation Y use technology to research into what products are the best available on the market and what offer the most value for their money. This view is expressed by respondents Gavin and Sammy who when questioned about what factors make them feel like switching brands responded with the following

If a product made by a certain brand didn't do what I expected or feel how I wanted, I would look elsewhere (Gavin)

People that use it and reactions online (Sammy)

These replies are just a small illustration of this underlying theme appearing in the data collected with both obvious and subtle suggestions of research being undertaken prior to purchase appearing in many of the interviews conducted for example in Lorcan's interview, the suggestion that he gets very disappointed when a brand doesn't meet his requirements indicates that he had clear expectations and knowledge of what the product should be capable of doing which is a subtle nod to him having undertaken his own research into the product. This all suggests that young generation Y males living in Ireland conduct more research than their previous generational counterparts ever did. Therefore, this could be a key reason why Generation Y are less loyal as members of generation Y before making a purchase would likely consult an online comparison site, or YouTube to see what their peer's thoughts are about the brand in question. In contrast to this, while generation X males may consult a friend who has experience with a certain brand before making a purchase, they will not gather the vast array of opinions or go to the lengths generation Y will go to, with the results of this being that generation Y males won't make as many irrational impulse buys as generation X males because Generation Y individuals only want the best. In addition to this, Generation Y individuals are also more likely to discover reasons that result in them opting out of making a purchase which both result in the level of loyalty being exuded by generation Y declining. While to some the concept of generation Y individuals using the technology they have grown up with to validate brand claims and gauge peer opinions about brands may appear obvious it is a frequently cited reason suggested by respondents and as such is a key reason why they are in fact less loyal.

5.1.2 Category loyalty:

Category loyalty is another key finding that emerged from analysing the data provided by respondents of generation Y males living in Ireland. Evidence quickly pointed to the fact that the levels of loyalty displayed by generation Y may depend on the category to which a brand belongs to. This is alluded to by respondents Conor and Gavin who stated during interviews that when purchasing a brand that it

Depends what I'm buying. If it's electronics or clothes then yes, but if it's food or drink, then no (Conor).

It depends on the product, for clothes I don't really mind what brand it is once I like how it looks. For phones, I tend to prefer Apple (Gavin).

This underlining theme is present in many of the respondent's interviews. In past research conducted by Lodes and Buff (2009) it has been suggested that generation Y show low level of loyalty when it comes to cheaper everyday brand purchases but will display brand loyalty when it comes to highly priced items. This view while touching on to some extent that loyalty may be shown to expensive brand categories suggests that the reason for this is down to price and past experience in using the brand. This research hypothesises that it is not the cost that is the major factor in loyalty exclusively but the specific category that a product is being purchased from. As evidenced by the aforementioned respondent's replies along with other replies which can be seen in the appendices section of this paper below respondent's indicate that they are not really loyal to brand categories such as clothes and food but that they are loyal to technology brands such as Apple. This sense of loyalty to categories such as technology as opposed to categories such as clothes may stem from the fact that generation Y are the first generation where technology is a prominent category in their lives. Indeed, it may have its roots to a certain degree in nostalgia which has been discussed in the literature by authors such as Toledo and Lopez 2016 who suggest nostalgia "evokes memories of the past, occurs in all individuals, and influences how we relate to other people, objects, and services" (Toledo, Lopez. 2016). Generation Y are the first generation who will have memories from their childhoods of using their first computer, their first mobile phone, and their first gaming console etc. which may explain why they still show loyalty towards this product category. By only displaying loyalty to certain categories and not others it is giving the overall impression that they are a less loyal generation and in the cases of brands who offer products that don't fall into one of these loyal categories it means experiencing a severe drop in loyalty in comparison to generation X.

While the fact that generation Y are a research focussed generation prior to making purchases and the fact that they display loyalty towards different categories of brands are two of the main findings found from the data collected a number of other peripheral findings also emerged in the data collected. The findings indicated that generation Y individuals may not even be aware of the concept that they are being less loyal and that they just enjoy changing and having new experiences. Furthermore, in relation to why they are less loyal than previous generations the research points to the fact that generation Y want greater customer experiences and interactions when purchasing a brand than previous generations.

5.1.3 Habitual change:

The respondents in this piece of research also eluded to the fact that they enjoy changing and experiencing new brands as a possible explanation as to why they are less brand loyal while also stating that today generation Y individuals have more options open to them than generation X individuals had years ago. This viewpoint is illustrated by Iain and Lorcan when they stated that

I find that my generation is less loyal. There are more product offering these days with plenty of opportunities to switch brands. Brands are accessible from all over the world. In my parent's day, you were stuck with mostly local brands (Iain).

Yes, as there is more people who have smaller brand operations providing more superior quality today (Lorcan).

This finding suggests that generation Y individuals like changing and exploring new brands. Interestingly it points to the fact that generation Y individuals don't always switch because they think some other brand is of superior quality or that it offers a better price but that they do it simply to try something new in. As pointed out by the respondents the amount of brands competing for people's custom has increased immensely over the years be it large brands from around the world expanding into

new markets or the ever increasing number of start-ups trying to be the next big thing. This increase in choice along with the fact that generation Y's members continuously showcase a willingness to explore and change the brands they purchase may provide a good explanation as to why many brands feel generation Y are less loyal than their predecessors. Interestingly the previous finding from this piece of research of generation Y being a research generation may possibly influence this fondness for change and new experiences that this finding is proposing as the impact of researching into new brands makes changing much less daunting and thus facilitates more and more switching by generation Y. Overall this finding suggests that generation Y have an inherent need to try new things and that they have developed a habit of switching which is in stark contrast to generation X who developed a habit of being loyal. As a result of this, a lack of loyalty being exuded by generation Y in comparison to generation X towards brands is the obvious outcome which is unfortunate for many brands on the market today.

5.1.4 Customer service and interaction:

The final finding that arose from the detailed analysis of the raw data was the fact that generation Y individuals enjoy and expect high levels of customer service and after sale interaction with brands. This finding immediately became obvious from looking at the data as numerous replies given by participants in the study hinted at the overall importance it played in the purchasing experience. This viewpoint is highlight by the following respondents

I would say keeping a high level of customer service is essential and just the general avoidance of any hassle would keep the majority of customers happy (Darren).

The businesses should follow Customer relationship management to keep a positive impact on customers (Atul).

Take better care of their customers and do more to reward customers who are loyal (Conor).

These views clearly support the finding that generation Y males living in Ireland want an increased and improved level of customer service and after sale interaction with the brand in question. As discussed by Atul above customer relationship management could play a big role in keeping young customers loyal as by implementing this successfully and developing improved relationships with generation Y brands could potentially reduce the level of disloyalty from young people. Furthermore, as suggested by Conor and Darren above taking care and maintaining very high standards of customer service is essential especially towards generation Y who as evidenced in the literature are known to “switch and try new opportunities” (Giang, 2012). This finding suggests that brands need to do everything in their power to reduce and limit giving generation Y individuals a reason to switch brands as they are more than willing to change without reason so giving them any additional incentive will likely result in customer switching.

5.2 Objective 2 findings:

In relation to the question what could businesses do differently in order to better capture generation Y males living in Ireland today the interviews conducted and the responses accumulated yielded a number of interesting findings. These findings are presented below.

5.2.1 Reward current customers for being loyal:

The first finding that emerged from the data was the theme of rewarding your current customer base. This was frequently cited by the interviewees with many expressing that they felt brands focus too much time, energy and funds on trying to recruit new customers without taking a step back and rewarding customers who have in fact displayed loyalty to a brand over a period of time. These views are conveyed by the following participants when they stated that

**Brands should be loyal rather than always focussing on getting new customers
(Conor).**

Reward brand loyalty, keep prices consistent or perhaps cheaper (Iain).

As is pointed out above these respondents felt that in order to increase brand loyalty among generation Y brands themselves need to display some customer loyalty towards them. This views suggest that far more is needed to be done in relation to rewarding existing customers and that by doing so less individuals from generation Y will switch brands as they will not feel as much of an urge do to so. This data appears to indicate that by offering existing customers loyalty bonuses and rewards that it will greatly increase the odds of capturing customers and maintaining them in the future.

5.2.2 Stay grounded following success:

In addition to this another finding that emerged from analysing the data collected was the theme of staying grounded following a period of initial success. According to respondents they felt that when brands experience success when they are starting up or when established brands introduce a new popular product that it is evident that the product in question soon experiences price hikes. While to some extent this can be explained by the fact that many new market offerings come with an initial price promotion to encourage people to try their product and built a fan base for the new product, many feel that brands increase the cost unnecessarily to benefit and try and squeeze more out of customers that have already displayed loyalty for the brand. Some examples of this from the data collected include

I find that brands that taste success early tend to hike up their prices and in doing so lose the customer base they built up (Iain).

Stay at price ranges they have already set. (Paul)

This finding suggests that in order to better capture and maintain generation Y males living in Ireland that businesses need to consider their prices more carefully and not try to milk the customers when they know that people like their product. By not hiking prices up substantially and by rewarding customers who have shown initial loyalty

towards your brand this research suggests generation Y individuals are attracted to brands that behave in this manner.

5.2.3 Forced loyalty:

The final finding to emerge in relation to what businesses can do differently to capture generation Y males living in Ireland was the theme of forced loyalty. The data collected strongly indicated that generation Y males hate any form of commitments such as contracts and that the mere suggestion of them was negatively perceived. This can be illustrated by the following response from the interviews in which the respondent stated that

Hmm maybe having the freedom to switch if you want to and not being forced to stay, I hate commitments (Atul)

This direct response along with the underlying theme of liking to switch and try new things as already brought up in this analysis section highly suggests that members of generation Y hate to be tied down anywhere and forced to stay. While it might make sense to a degree for businesses where possible to try and get customers to sign contracts in order to ensure their custom for the agreed period of time and to safeguard against them leaving by including certain terms in the contract such as cancellation fees, this research actually indicates that it will increase brands ability to attract and capture young customers by giving young customers freedom and by letting them be with you out of choice because they really want to, and not because they are still required to be. Evidence of this model working in practice can already be seen in brands such as Netflix, Spotify, and Now TV who attract a very strong audience from generation Y individuals. This research finding suggests many brands who presently require contracts should opt for a new strategy if they wish to be attractive to generation Y.

5.3 Sub-objective findings

In relation to the sub-objective this research aimed to identify what the differences are between the different age ranges within generation Y males living in Ireland. The ages ranges investigated were the 20-24 age range and the 25-29 age range. Having analysed the data an interesting result soon emerged which was unique to the 25-29 age range and was absent from the younger members of generation Y who participated in this piece of research. The finding that was unique to the 25-29 age range was in relation to what role they felt technology had played a role in brand loyalty. In all cases individuals who were interviewed who were aged 25-29 brought up the fact that social media played a huge role in brand loyalty. This can be evidenced by the following responses that interviewees gave during their interviews when they stated that

Well, you can like certain brands pages on social media accounts now, there is no inherent need to do so besides brand loyalty to an extent (Paul).

Eh maybe that social media lets brands interact with people and in some cases entertain people which might stick in people's minds when buying in the future (Darren).

As can be seen from these replies older members of generation Y minds were immediately drawn to social media when asked to give their thoughts on brands and technology. In contrast to this, no member of the younger generation Y members brought up social media when asked the same question. This finding indicates that perhaps brands who advertise on social media are targeting the older segment of generation Y more frequently than they are the younger generation as social media was in the forefront of the older individual minds when asked the question. Although this may make sense from a brands point of view when you consider disposable income between the two segments and the fact that older generation Y individuals will likely be young professionals while younger generation Y individuals will possibly still be in college or only starting their careers, this result suggests that that maybe

brands need to target younger generation individuals more often on social media and interact with them more on social media. By doing this brands may subconsciously get into their heads more often while also establishing more loyalty and a better relationship over time with 20-24-year-old males so that when their income grows in the future they will have preferences as to where to spent it.

Chapter 6 - Discussion:

This aim of this chapter of this dissertation will entail a reflective and thorough look at the findings of the study showcasing the areas in which the literature has been advanced while simultaneously highlighting potential limitations of this piece of research with the hope being that it will inspire and give rise to potential future direction for research conducted in the area of brand loyalty. The primary research question and the predominant focus of this piece of research was to decipher the reasons as to why young generation Y individuals living in Ireland are less brand loyal than their previous generational counterparts in Ireland. As already stated in the preceding findings and analysis chapter of this paper a number of findings and potential explanations were unravelled following extensive analysis of the raw data collected with the results ultimately being very insightful.

The most pertinent findings in relation to the main research objective of this paper was the fact that generation Y males living in Ireland are a research generation and that they display category loyalty despite not being loyal overall. In relation to the finding that young generation Y males are a research generation this finding could have potential been anticipated to an extent as it is well known fact that young people love technology and this is made evident in the literature by Leelakulthanit, (2014) who states young people can't live without technology. Despite this being somewhat expected the finding clearly points to the fact that young people living in Ireland like to conduct a significant amount of their own research prior to committing to a purchase of a brand. This finding indicates that generation Y males do not take the word of brands at face value and do not believe hype or claims until they validate them claims either themselves or through their peer's opinions online. The possible implications of this finding for brands are firstly it may not be wise for brands to exaggerated how useful their product actually is especially brands hoping to attract younger people. This research suggests that in all likelihood generation Y individuals will discover the brands shortcomings when investigating online and seeing other individual's views about it. Therefore, it may be wise for brands when marketing to generation Y to under promise and over deliver so that when generation Y are doing

their research they find that the product can in fact do more than they anticipated making them feel they are getting a bargain which “Generation Y are always on the lookout for” (Heaney, 2007). In addition to this, this finding will mean brands will have to more clearly articulate what they offer and why they are worth the money they charge for their brand. By researching generation Y will inevitably come across cheaper alternatives so the value the brand offers needs to be made abundantly clear.

The second very pertinent finding that this research yielded was the fact that generation Y males in Ireland display loyalty towards certain categories of brands. This finding was unanticipated as throughout the literature it has been well established that generation Y display less loyalty than generation X used to with an excellent example of this being Noble et al, (2009) which states that generation Y individuals “are generally not brand loyal”. This finding indicates that generation Y do in fact display loyalty to certain categories of brands such as technology brands but that they would not be loyal to other categories such as clothes or food brands. As aforementioned in the previous analysis and findings chapter of this research, in past research Lodes and Buff (2009) suggested that generation Y show low level of loyalty when it comes to cheaper everyday brand purchases but will display brand loyalty when it comes to highly priced items. This view while touching on to some extent that loyalty may be shown to expensive brand categories suggests that the reason for this is down to price and past experience in using the brand. This research hypothesises that it is not the cost that is the major factor in loyalty exclusively but the specific category that a product is being purchased from. The theory of nostalgia presented in the literature by authors such as Toledo and Lopez 2016 who suggest nostalgia “evokes memories of the past, occurs in all individuals, and influences how we relate to other people, objects, and services” (Toledo, Lopez. 2016) may also provide some explanation as to why generation Y show loyalty to technology brands as they were the first generation who grew up in a digital world with technology all around them and available at their fingertips. Despite this however this was an unusual finding and one where potential future research could investigate to see if there are other categories that generation Y display loyal towards. The implications of this finding are

that it sheds new light and advances the literature on brand loyalty in terms of suggesting that generation Y's brand loyalty could be category specific which has not been suggested in the literature prior to this research. In addition to this, another implication of this research could be that brands who sell technology products could potentially use generation Y's loyalty to their advantage knowing that for example a price increase won't be as damaging to them as it would be to a food brand for example who generation Y individuals would have no problem switching from.

In relation to the more peripheral findings of the main research objective of why generation Y male individuals are less loyal than their previous generation counterparts the two findings that emerged were habitual loyalty and customer service and interaction. The finding of habitual loyalty found that generation Y individuals like constantly changing and have developed a habit of doing so which is in direct contrast to generation X who developed a habit of staying loyal to brands. The finding indicates that it may not just be down to price and quality that motivates generation Y to display a lack of loyalty, and that it may be related to generation Y individuals simply wanting to try new things and to explore and experience new products. The implications of this finding for brands is very negative with the ramifications suggesting that brands have very little power to stop generation Y males switching even if they are great value for money and high quality. The finding suggests that even if brands do everything right that there will still be individuals who will switch and try new things. In relation to the other peripheral finding of customer service and interaction this research found that generation Y individuals want increased customer service when buying something and an increased level of interaction after buying a brand. This finding as discussed in the findings and analysis chapter indicates that brands need to do everything in their power to reduce and limit giving generation Y individuals a reason to switch brands as they are more than willing to change without a reason so giving them any sort of additional incentive will likely end badly for the brand with the customer switching. In the literature this is highlighted by Giang who states generation Y "are known to switch and try new opportunities" (Giang, 2012). The implications of this finding suggest that in order to

increase loyalty and thus reduce the number of customers switching to rival's, brands need to interact with generation Y males more often post sale and improve the overall purchasing experience as much as possible because generation Y individuals care about more than just purchasing the brand and that being the end of the relationship.

In relation to the second objective of this piece of research which was what can business do to better capture generation Y individuals in Ireland, 3 key findings emerged from the data which were reward current customers for being loyal, staying grounded following initial success, and forced loyalty. The first finding of rewarding current customers for being loyal suggests that business focus too much on trying to capture new customers and not enough on trying to keep the customers that they already have happy. This finding indicates that far too often business lose track of the success that they have already had in capturing customers and building up a loyal customer base that they forget those who got them to where they currently are in the first place. The implications of this finding are that often current customers feel forgotten about which frequently results in people switching or wanting to switch brands. As generation Y have a "larger appreciation of their individual self-worth" (Cambal, and Zibrinova, 2011) as has been noted in the literature, when they are ignored by brands and don't feel appreciated they will likely leave and not stick around and show loyalty. Brands should focus on rewarding current customers more often and offer them deals that new customers are frequently offered for example if they want to better capture young generation Y males in Ireland.

The second finding of staying grounded following initial success suggests that brands shouldn't get carried away when they experience some level of success. This research found that generation Y individuals feel that often when a brand tastes success that soon after the brand tries to cash in and increase the price. The findings indicated that generation Y males react really negatively to this and thus the practice should be avoided by brands if they hope to better capture young individuals. The implications of this finding suggest that in the future brands should consider strongly whether to

increase the cost of their products with perhaps a strategy of rewarding loyal initial customers by freezing prices for them while increasing prices for new customers being a suitable solution. The final finding in relation to the second research objective of this study was the finding of forced loyalty. This finding points to the fact that generation Y males living in Ireland hate being forced to stay loyal to brands by being committed to contracts and like to have the freedom to choose what brands to go with at all times. This finding indicates that in order to better capture younger individual's brands that currently use contracts to force people to stay and possibly fight against the lack of loyalty found in generation Y individuals need to change their approach. The implications of this finding mean that although it may make business sense to try and keep generation Y individuals loyal by holding them to contracts and forcing them to stay, in the long term attracting new customers from generation Y will prove difficult as they will try avoid the brand and once contracts end current customers will likely want to leave as well.

Finally, in relation to the main sub-objective of this piece of research which was to try and establish if there were differences between the different age ranges within generation Y males in Ireland or more specifically the 20-24 age range and the 25-29 age range the analysis yielded an interesting finding. In all cases individuals from the 25-29 age range brought up the fact that social media played a huge role in brand loyalty a suggestion that was absent from the younger members of generation Y which was somewhat unanticipated. This finding indicates that the older cohort of generation Y from the sample interviewed are being targeted more frequently on social media with advertisements as it is the first thing they elude to when asked about how technology has influenced brand loyalty. The implications of this finding are that brands need to target younger members of generation Y more and interact with them more on social media as it appears they are focussing their current efforts on the older cohort and ignoring the younger cohort who will inevitably become more important consumers in the future.

6.1 Limitations and future research direction

The limitations of this study provide numerous credible areas in which an extensive piece of research could be undertaken in the future. This piece of research focused on why males are less loyal so therefore the sample collected comprised of males only. It is frequently cited in the literature that “gender differences are very important” (Bakewell, Mitchell, Rothwell, 2006) so there is clear scope for a female focussed study to decipher why they are less loyal and deduce whether differences exist between the genders. In addition to this, the data collected in this piece of research originated from the Leinster region of Ireland alone so therefore there is an opportunity to conduct a similar piece of research in other regions of Ireland and further afield in countries around the world. As this study was cohort specific focussing on generation Y a potential fruitful area of future research could be into generation Z in order to test if they are likely to follow in generation Y’s footsteps or whether they have a completely different set of characteristics and attitudes towards brands which they may develop “through having different shared life experiences” (Meriac et al, 2010). One of the focusses of this study was also to see if there were differences between two age ranges within generation Y. Therefore, it may be worthwhile for extensive research to be conducted into all the different cohorts within generation Y to gain a further understanding of how they differ. Finally, this research yielded the finding that generation Y show loyalty towards certain categories of brands. As a result of this, a study delving deeper into this and unravelling all the categories generation Y show loyalty towards would prove highly valuable and would advance the literature further.

Chapter 7 - Conclusion:

This research sought to fill a gap in the literature in relation to a specifically focussed study into male generation Y individuals living in Ireland in order to establish why they are less loyal than previous generations. This research adds additional value to existing literature as although it has been well established in previous research (Noble et al, 2009) (Giang, 2012) that generation Y are less loyal than previous generations the reasoning behind why they exude less loyal had not been investigated substantially prior to this study. As such this research endeavoured to ascertain exactly why generation Y male individuals are less loyal. A number of salient points soon emerged from data which was collected from a sample set of males who participated in this research that proved particularly noteworthy and quite insightful. This research found that generation Y males living in Ireland are less loyal due to them being a research generation meaning that they conduct an extensive amount of research into brands before committing to purchasing them. Moreover, this research found that generation Y individuals display category loyalty which is a very pertinent finding as it suggests that generation Y are in fact loyal to certain categories of brands such as technology and not loyal to others such as clothes and food. Other noteworthy findings that emerged from this research were that generation Y male individuals like to change simply to experience new brands and have new experiences meaning some generation Y individuals switching may be out of brands control. In addition to this, it also discovered that generation Y males value customer service and after sale interaction significantly and as such consider it a key component in whether to stay loyal or switch to alternative brands. The implications of the findings deciphered from this piece of research are that they provide a glimpse into the minds of young generation Y males and their way of thinking. By better understanding generation Y who as pointed out by Bakewell and Mitchell in the literature “respond to brands in ways that have been previously unseen” (Bakewell and Mitchell, 2003) brands can target and keep hold of generation Y individuals whose importance continues to grow with every passing year and as such need to be better understood as a matter of urgency. These findings have provided new knowledge about generation Y, and a new understanding into generation Y which has shed light on the reasons why they exude less loyalty than their previous generation counterparts otherwise known as

generation X. This research has also given rise to potential future research opportunities in the area of brand loyalty which have been outline in the prior discussion chapter of this study. Overall it is likely nothing will change the fact generation Y are naturally inclined to be less loyal than generation X but by implementing and taking the findings of this research on board brands can alleviate the damage caused from lack of loyalty and even reap the fruitful rewards that derive from having a greater understanding of the largest generation of consumers on the market today.

Appendices:

(I) = Interviewer

(P) = Participant

In all cases interviews began with the researcher reading the following greeting and explanation as to the purpose of the study along with making candidates aware of their right to anonymity, confidentiality, and their right to withdraw from the research at any time

(I) Hi, thanks for agreeing to meet with me and to agreeing to be a participant in this piece of research. The main purpose of this piece of research is to deciphering the reasons why generation y males living in Ireland today exude less brand loyalty than their previous generation counterparts in Ireland. As you meet these criteria it makes you an ideal participant for this study. Before we get started I just want to make you aware of your right to anonymity, confidentiality, and your right to withdraw from the research at any time should you so wish. With that out of the way to start off with could you state your..... (Interviews then proceeded as follows)

Interview 1:

(I) Name?

(P) Darren McNulty

(I) Your age?

(P) 28

(I) Gender?

(P) Male

(I) And can you confirm you are living in Ireland

(P) Yes

(I) Thanks for that now to get into the main questions

(I) What do you think of when you hear the term brand loyalty?

(P) I think of people repeatedly repurchasing a brand that they like and not changing to others

(I) hmm very interesting and

(I) Would you describe yourself as being loyal to brands?

(P) I don't think so well I'd be loyal to 1 or 2 brands but I wouldn't consider myself loyal in general.

(I) Well do you make a conscious effort to buy certain brands that you have used before?

(P) No not at all really

(I) But what about the 1 or 2 brands you mentioned before?

(P) hmm well I use my phone a lot so I usually stick with what I know works when it comes to them

(I) That actually leads nicely into my next 2 question which are firstly what factors make you feel the need to switch brands? And what makes you feel the need to stay?

(P) I generally go with the cheapest option so cost would be a big factor in me switching

(I) Any other factors?

(P) Eh maybe being lied to about how good something is like I get that ads are exaggerated but I do expect products to do what they state they do

(I) And what makes you want to stay?

(P) Oh sorry

(I) Its fine take your time

(P) Eh I suppose things like great quality, good value for money, and being loyal back

(I) Have you ever had a terrible experience when buying a brand?

(P) Yeah, I once tried to switch to a different TV provider and it was a huge hassle

(I) How did you react?

(P) I was very angry I'd think twice before going with them again

(I) You've actually sort of answered my next question there as well so to clarify would you buy from them again?

(P) Probably not although things could change in the future I suppose

(I) In what way?

(P) Well if they had a great offer or I heard great things about them from someone I might look into them again

(I) Interesting

(I) Would you say the cost of brands impact on your level of loyalty?

(P) No I don't think so. I tend to look into purchases more the more expensive things get but I'd still go with whatever seems to be the best regardless of brand or price

(I) Okay and next

(I) Do you think this generation differs to your parent's generation when it comes to brand loyalty?

(P) From what I've seen yes. Just by looking at the weekly shop that my Mam does she buys the same breads, Milk, Biscuits, Cereal, Washing up liquid etc. every week almost out of habit

(I) Do you think technology has played a role in brand loyalty? If so what role?

(P) Hmm not sure on that to be honest.

(I) Anything that springs to mind at all?

(P) Eh maybe that social media lets brands interact with people and in some cases entertain people which might stick in people's minds when buying in the future

(I) And finally what could businesses do differently in your opinion to keep customers loyal?

(P) I would say keeping a high level of customer service is essential and just the general avoidance of any hassle would keep the majority of customers happy.

(I) Well that's all my questions thanks very much for doing the interview and being a participant in this piece of research

(P) No bother at all it was actually quite interesting. Anyway best of luck with the research I hope it turns out well

(I) Thanks a lot and once again thanks for letting me interview you

Interview 2:

(I) Name?

(P) Lorcan Burke

(I) Age?

(P) I'm 22

(I) Your Gender?

(P) Male

(I) And can you confirm you are living in Ireland?

(P) Yes I am

(I) Now to get into the main questions

(I) What do you think of when you hear the term brand loyalty?

(P) In my opinion brand loyalty is about being committed to the same brands that one is used to and not going for any other brands.

(I) Would you describe yourself as being loyal to brands?

(P) Yes I would indeed especially brand that I still remember from a young age, which have never really changed over the years because of this I'm more likely to pick these brands rather than the ones, which are competing with them.

(I) Very interesting

(I) Do you make a conscious effort to buy certain brands that you have used before?

(P) I would usually make the best effort to buy something that I know is going to be something that I'm familiar with before buying something else that I wouldn't be knowledgeable about.

(I) What factors make you feel the need to switch brands?

(P) If the brand was taken off the market or if the quality of the brands product or service was becoming substandard then these factors would be the main drivers to switch brands.

(I) And in contrast to this what factors make you feel like staying loyal to a brand?

(P) Quality of the products or service, the right customer experience provided and also the justified price on what is being sold.

(I) Have you ever had a terrible experience when buying a brand?

(P) Yes

(I) Can you elaborate?

(P) It was due to the brand providing a product that did not do what it was meant to do. It meant then I never bought into the brand again.

(I) How did you react?

(P) Very negatively towards the brand I even told a lot of my friends to stay away from them.

(I) The answer to this question has kind of been established already but I'll ask again anyway. Would you buy from this brand again?

(P) Not at all I even put other products from the brand in the same category as the product I had bought.

(I) So you mean you stopped buying all products from a brand because of a bad experience with one product?

(P) Correct

(I) That's very interesting

(I) Does the cost of brands impact on your level of loyalty?

(P) Yes when they rise I would buy into brands less frequently.

(I) So you are cost sensitive then?

(P) Yeah I would be

(I) Do you think this generation differs to your parent's generation when it comes to brand loyalty?

(P) Yes as there is more people who have smaller brand operations providing more superior quality and customer satisfaction in comparison to the past

(I) Do you think technology has played a role in brand loyalty? If so what role?

(P) It is playing a big part in brand loyalty and is beginning to be a bigger influence more and more. It is providing information and offers to people in relation to updates with the brand and its products to customers, in order to retain customers.

(I) Lastly what could businesses do differently in your opinion to keep customers loyal?

(P) To provide a higher quality product while also providing it at a cheaper price.

(I) That's all the questions answered thanks very much for being a participant

(P) No worries glad I could help you with it

Interview 3:

(I) Name?

(P) Conor Kavanagh

(I) Age?

(P) 23

(I) Gender?

(P) Male

(I) And are you currently living in Ireland?

(P) Yes

(I) Now for the main questions

(I) What do you think of when you hear the term brand loyalty?

(P) It's a term that equates to some things and not others. Not too sure if everyone goes by it or not

(I) Would you describe yourself as being loyal to brands?

(P) I would say I'm loyal to some and not others

(I) Do you make a conscious effort to buy certain brands that you have used before?

(P) Depends what I'm buying. If it's electronics or clothes then yes, but if it's food or drink, then no

(I) What factors make you feel the need to switch brands?

(P) I would say quality, reliability, operation, looks, feel, taste etc.

(I) What factors make you feel like staying loyal to a brand?

(P) Same factors as the last question

(I) Okay

(I) Have you ever had a terrible experience when buying a brand?

(P) Yes with a headphone brand

(I) How did you react?

(P) It was very annoying. Felt like I was wasting my time.

(I) Would you buy from this brand again?

(P) No

(I) Why not?

(P) They were expensive but were poor quality. I was very disappointed by them

(I) Does the cost of brands impact on your level of loyalty?

(P) Yes if I purchase something expensive and I have a good experience with it I would be more loyal and trusting to the brand in the future

(I) Do you think this generation differs to your parent's generation when it comes to brand loyalty?

(P) Yes I think that young people are a lot less brand loyal

(I) Can you expand that point?

(P) In the sense that young people like change and trying new things more often than older people

(I) Do you think technology has played a role in brand loyalty? If so what role?

(P) Yes, in Marketing a brand. Companies can now target people online on loads of devices

(P) What could businesses do differently in your opinion to keep customers loyal?

(I) Take better care of their customers and do more to reward customers who are loyal rather than always focussing on getting new customers

(I) That's all the questions done thanks very much for being a participant in this study

(P) That actually flew by glad I could help

Interview 4:

(I) Name please?

(P) Samuel Oke

(I) Age

(P) 20

(I) Gender

(P) Male

(I) And are you currently living in Ireland

(P) Yes I am currently

(I) Thanks for that now for the main questions

- (I)** What do you think of when you hear the term brand loyalty?
- (P)** Commitment to a brand and constantly purchasing a certain brand you like.
- (I)** Would you describe yourself as being loyal to brands?
- (P)** No
- (I)** Not at all?
- (P)** No not at all
- (I)** Okay
- (I)** Do you make a conscious effort to buy certain brands that you have used before?
- (P)** Sometimes
- (I)** Can you expand on that?
- (P)** If I have a connection I might deliberately buy things like I'm an arsenal fan so love buying arsenal stuff.
- (I)** What factors make you feel the need to switch brands?
- (P)** People that use it and reactions online.
- (I)** So like famous people?
- (P)** Yeah celebrities and sports stars
- (I)** What factors would you say make you feel like staying loyal to a brand?
- (P)** Maybe recognition or pressure from others in the world when you have a brand
- (I)** hmm Interesting
- (I)** Have you ever had a terrible experience when buying a brand?
- (P)** No Never
- (I)** Not at all?
- (P)** No I guess I'm lucky that way
- (I)** How would you have reacted?
- (P)** Not sure since it's never happened to me but I'd probably make a complaint and expect things to be made right
- (I)** Would you buy from a brand again if something did go wrong?
- (P)** It depends on how they reacted to the problem so maybe
- (I)** Does the cost of brands impact on your level of loyalty?

(P) It does to a certain point but at the same time you can accept paying for the quality and name once price is respectable enough.

(I) Do you think this generation differs to your parent's generation when it comes to brand loyalty?

(P) Yes I do, I think that people my age do more research before buying than people use to before buying something

(I) Do you think technology has played a role in brand loyalty? If so what role?

(P) Seeing David Beckham on TV and Thierry Henry pictured using certain brands can encourage you to use brands but also like I said before people research more and a lot of this is done thanks to the internet.

(I) And finally What could businesses do differently in your opinion to keep customers loyal?

(P) Following them up like certain shops do with emails after purchasing a brand.

(I) Well that concludes this interview thanks for being part of this piece of research

(P) That's fine I'm happy to help with it

Interview 5:

(I) Name please?

(P) Gavin Cormack

(I) Age

(P) 21

(I) Gender

(P) Male

(I) And are you currently living in Ireland

(P) Yes

(I) Now for the main questions

(I) What do you think of when you hear the term brand loyalty?

(P) I think of people sticking to the same brand because they are familiar with it, even though it may not be the best choice.

(I) Would you describe yourself as being loyal to brands?

(P) Not really, I tend to choose things because of their look, feel or quality rather than their logo.

(I) Do you make a conscious effort to buy certain brands that you have used before?

(P) It depends on the product, for clothes I don't really mind what brand it is once I like how it looks. For phones, I tend to prefer Apple but for other electronics I don't find brands to be important, for example, we have a Sony, Samsung and LG TV's at home

(I) That's very interesting

(I) What factors make you feel the need to switch brands?

(P) If a product made by a certain brand didn't do what I expected or feel how I wanted I would look elsewhere

(I) And in contrast what factors make you feel like staying loyal to a brand?

(P) If the products do what I expect or if they are the best choice out there.

(I) How would you determine if it was the best choice?

(P) Usually through friends or by doing my own research

(I) Okay

(I) And next have you ever had a terrible experience when buying a brand?

(P) I had a Sony laptop myself and I bought one for my brother too, his was very slow and couldn't run many programs at once.

(I) How did you react?

(P) I reacted fine. It was a cheap enough laptop so it couldn't handle too much happening at once.

(I) Would you buy from Sony again?

(P) Yes, actually since then I have bought a Sony TV, which works perfectly

(I) Does the cost of brands impact on your level of loyalty?

(P) Eh Not really, as I said before I like iPhones and they are the most expensive phones there are.

(I) Do you think this generation differs to your parent's generation when it comes to brand loyalty?

(P) I think our generation are less loyal. It is quite often to see young people with Nike shoes, Adidas trousers and Puma tops, which means that the brand they wear doesn't mean that much to them. Similarly, with electronics, people have iPhones but have Windows PCs.

(I) Do you think technology has played a role in brand loyalty? If so what role?

(P) Yes, with the Android phones for example, there are lots of different brands but they all run the same Operating System, so no matter which phone you pick you still get the same thing. The only differences are the quality of the camera and the phone size

(I) Okay but what about other non tech products?

(P) The internet has probably made buying brands easier for a lot of people so that could increase loyalty I suppose

(I) Okay and last but not least what could businesses do differently in your opinion to keep customers loyal?

(P) It is very difficult to say. You see brands all the time in adverts and online. McDonalds TV adverts are on every channel but that doesn't change the fact that I might want a KFC. The best thing would probably be to broaden their range of products but obviously that is not easy or cheap.

(I) All done thanks a lot for being a participant I really appreciate it

(P) No bother at all always happy to help

Interview 6:

(I) Name please?

(P) Iain Collins

(I) Age

(P) 22

(I) Gender

(P) Male

(I) And can you confirm you are currently living in Ireland?

(P) Yeah I do

(I) Now for all the main questions

(I) What do you think of when you hear the term brand loyalty?

(P) Somebody who religiously follows a brand no matter what other brands are offering.

(I) Would you describe yourself as being loyal to brands?

(P) Yes very loyal

(I) Care to elaborate a small bit?

(P) I like getting quality brands so when I find something I really like such as Polo clothes or an Apple iPad etc. I stick with them

(I) Do you make a conscious effort to buy certain brands that you have used before?

(P) Yes, like I said already if I find something I think is great I would make an effort to buy them in the future

(I) What factors make you feel the need to switch brands?

(P) If I get a bad product from a certain brand or when another player on the market creates a fantastic new product

(I) Interesting and what about factors that make you feel like staying loyal to a particular brand?

(P) If a product from that particular brand has performed well for me or brand image

(I) Have you ever had a terrible experience when buying a brand?

(P) Yes plenty

(I) How did you react to this?

(P) I felt Cheated, as I had put all my faith in the particular brand and it let me down.

(I) Would you buy from this brand again?

(P) No, once a cheater always a cheater in my eyes

(I) Does the cost of brands impact on your level of loyalty?

(P) Yes, my loyalty with a certain brand may change if the cost became too high and there was a decent substitute product from a different brand

(I) Okay and do you think this generation differs to your parent's generation when it comes to brand loyalty?

(P) I find that my generation is less loyal. There are more product offering these days with plenty of opportunities to switch brands. Brands are accessible from all over the world. In my parent's day, you were stuck with mostly local brands.

(I) Do you think technology has played a role in brand loyalty? If so what role?

(P) Oh a huge role.

(I) Such as?

(P) Off the top of my head things like online purchases, online comparison sites etc. would play a big role

(I) And the final question is what could businesses do differently in your opinion to keep customers loyal?

(P) Reward brand loyalty, keep prices consistent or perhaps cheaper. I find that brands that taste success early tend to hike up their prices and in doing so lose the customer base they built up.

(I) That's everything thanks for doing the interview

(P) Great happy to have helped

Interview 7:

(I) Name please?

(P) Atul Kale

(I) Age

(P) 21

(I) Gender

(P) Male

(I) And are you currently living in Ireland

(P) Yes I am currently

(I) Okay and now to get into the main questions

(I) What do you think of when you hear the term brand loyalty?

(P) The term brand loyalty is to continue buying the same brand of goods rather than competing brands.

(I) Would you describe yourself as being loyal to brands?

(P) Yes, I put my trust in brands that they will satisfy my needs. If they don't satisfy my needs, I lose the positive feelings I have towards that brand

(I) Do you ever make a conscious effort to buy certain brands that you have used before?

(P) Yes, I make an effort to buy brands that are good in quality, pricing and have a known good relationship with customers.

(I) That's interesting and in your opinion what factors make you feel the need to switch brands?

(P) There are factors such as better value for money that make me want to switch

(I) Anything else?

(P) Hmm maybe having the freedom to switch if you want to and not being forced to stay, I hate commitments

(I) And now what factors make you feel like staying loyal to a brand?

(P) The main factor that makes me stay loyal is attachment, if I feel emotionally attached to a brand it makes me want to repeat purchase

(I) Have you ever had a terrible experience when buying a brand?

(P) Yes, I had a terrible experience when choosing a brand that my friends were talking about, it was very expensive and I didn't think it was value for money

(I) How did you react?

(P) I felt awful like I had wasted money

(I) Would you buy from this brand again?

(P) Yes, but I will be more careful in the future and do more research before doing so

(I) Does the cost of brands impact on your level of loyalty?

(P) Yes, if there is a sudden increase in price I would have no problem switching to alternatives

(I) Do you think this generation differs to your parent's generation when it comes to brand loyalty?

(P) Eh there are some brands where my parents repeatedly buy such as Raymond brand of clothing, which has been established on my parent's generation and they are still loyal because of the brand loyalty they have but in the new generation there are new brands which have been taking over the old brands. The increased competition is high for brands in new generation so switching happens more often.

(I) Okay and would you say technology has played a role in brand loyalty? If so what role?

(P) Yes, because of these new technologies brands are marketed in more places and there is more competition from all over the world

(I) And finally what could businesses do differently in your opinion to keep customers loyal?

(P) The businesses should follow Customer relationship management to keep a positive impact on customers.

(I) That concludes the interview thanks very much for doing the interview

(P) That's it?

(I) Yeah that's it finished

(P) Oh Okay that was fast happy to have helped

(I) Yeah you've been very helpful thanks again

Interview 8:

(I) Name please?

(P) Paul Tougher

(I) Age

(P) 26

(I) Your Gender

(P) I'm Male

(I) And are you currently living in Ireland

(P) Yes

(I) Thanks and now to start the main questions

(I) What do you think of when you hear the term brand loyalty?

(P) A marketing term

(I) Why's that?

(P) Well, because nobody really ever uses the term otherwise.

(I) Would you describe yourself as being loyal to brands?

(P) Not particularly

(I) Any reason?

(P) Haven't been buying products for a long time really. Haven't really taken a liking to any brand I know of.

(I) Okay and do you make a conscious effort to buy certain brands that you have used before?

(P) Yes, when I know the brand is of a high quality and of good value but only then.

(I) They gained your trust?

(P) In some sense but more so a brand can do the job I need at the price I need.

(I) What factors make you feel the need to switch brands?

(P) Price increases, significant terms and conditions changes, drop in quality or poor customer service

(I) Then what factors make you feel like staying loyal to a brand?

(P) Again once a brand is cheap enough and of a high enough quality I'd stay loyal. But after that I don't really care about brands.

(I) Have you ever had a terrible experience when buying a brand?

(P) Yes. Microsoft, my Xbox was faulty.

(I) How did you react to this?

(P) I rang customer care to resolve the problem. They sent me a new Xbox.

(I) Would you buy from this brand again?

(P) If they were good value and more reliable then yes I would.

(I) Does the cost of brands impact on your level of loyalty?

(P) It's the most important thing, Realistically I've to look after my own budget paying too much for anything won't help. I've no real attachment or desire to stick with brands because of loyalty only price and quality in my mind.

(I) Do you reckon this generation differs to your parent's generation when it comes to brand loyalty?

(P) Yes, personally my brand loyalty consists of what's 'on offer' while for example my Father always buys Barry's tea with the Irish independent

(I) Any reason for this do you think?

(P) Well, I think he just has tried more brands and decided on favourites. Plus, he has more expendable income so prices for products like these don't really matter.

(I) Do you think technology has played a role in brand loyalty? If so what role?

(P) Well, you can like certain brands pages on social media accounts now, there is no inherent need to do so besides brand loyalty to an extent.

(I) Hmm interesting and finally

(I) What could businesses do differently in your opinion to keep customers loyal?

(P) Not lower brand quality significantly ever and stay at price ranges they have already set.

(I) That's all the questions thank you for doing the interview

(P) That's grand happy to help

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Personal learning statement

As I reflect on the journey I have gone through in compiling and completing this dissertation I realise that I have learned numerous skills that will prove useful to me both now and in the future. Through conducting a literature review I have learned to appreciate the work of others and to recognise the importance and the value of people's contributions to their respective fields. I have developed my communication skills through carrying out in depth interviews and analytical skills through handling and coding a large array of data. I have learned to critique and search for deeper meaning in statements made and have made significant improvements in regards to my attention to detail. Finally, I have learned to significantly improved my time management skills and the importance it plays in carrying out a large scale project or piece of research.