An Investigation of the Factors Driving Users to Engage with the Social Networking Site Facebook

MSc. in Marketing

Marisabel De Castro

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Abstract

Purpose – Facebook is the most used Social Networking Site in the world. In this study, the researcher investigates the factors that motivate individuals to keep using Facebook throughout the years and compare if any of these drivers indicate different levels of commitment: brand engagement, brand loyalty and brand love towards the SNS.

Design / Methodology / Approach – The approach to this research was qualitative and the results were the product of in-depth interviews with Facebook users who provided the information needed to achieve the research objectives.

Findings – The findings of this study indicates that Facebook usage is motivated by the needs of: Social interaction, the need to belong and utility value. The indicators of brand commitment revealed were: time spent, brand trust, good perceptions of brand image and emotional attachment by the participants to Facebook.

Originality / Value – This paper is the first of its kind that evaluates three concepts in the area of brand commitment, using a qualitative approach in order to propose a link between Facebook usage and the concepts of engagement, brand loyalty and brand love. The results of this research may provide important information on what motives can be considered when measuring loyalty towards SNS.

Key words – Facebook, Social Networking Sites, Brand Engagement, Brand Love, Brand Loyalty.

Declaration

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In memory of my father Hector De Castro Escobar.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Study Background.

The invention of internet–based social media made it possible for an individual to communicate with hundreds (Mangold and Faulds 2009) and transformed the way people interacted on the web. Consumers started to become the creators of content rather than just receiving messages from marketers or web bloggers. This change motivated the development of hundreds of different social media platforms (Hanna et al. 2011) with Facebook today positioned as the most popular (CNN, 2017).

Social Networking Sites (SNS) have changed how people socially interact (Perez and Gomez, 2011), this has motivated many scholars to study the variety of factors that drive people to use SNS, but the investigation of these drivers are still under development (Oliveira and Huertas, 2015).

Today, Facebook is the preferred social media in Ireland with 68% of the population having a Facebook account (Shaw Consulting, 2016) this represents over three million people that have access to the platform. As this number grows the researcher believes that continued study of the drivers that motivate people to use SNS like Facebook and the reasons that have encouraged people to engage with the platform throughout the years is of great importance.

In this research the researcher aims to contribute to the literature by identifying the main motives people have to keep using Facebook throughout the years and to identify how some of these drivers can indicate different levels of commitment, specifically, brand engagement, brand loyalty or brand love towards the site.

After reviewing the literature, the researcher found that there are few studies focused on the development of loyalty towards SNS. Most of the theory concentrates on how organisations can build brand engagement or brand loyalty using social media

platforms but the researcher did not find a study that clearly recognises the indicators of brand engagement, brand love and brand loyalty among the drivers and motivations that compels people to use Facebook, leaving a gap in the literature that needs to be studied.

This thesis uses previous academic literature foundations upon which have discussed relevant areas of SNS use and levels of commitment in the online context. The following texts influenced the focus given on this dissertation.

Yu-lin and Lu, (2011) study attempted to explain why people use social media applying the theory of networks externalities and motivations. They stated that previous research had investigated the motivation theory to explain individual's behaviours accepting technologies and the variety of factors that drive people to use SNS. The authors studied the correlations between users and network externalities, perceived benefit and continued intention to use SNS. The results of this study concluded that, enjoyment, perceived quantity of friends or "peers" using the SNS, the perceptions of usefulness and efficiency to share comment and connect, are the fundamental reasons for people to use SNS. This work is mainly focused on the networks externalities theory and motivation. The author of this dissertation considered the findings of this study as important theory to partially support this research.

Another study considered important in this area was Tsiotsou, (2015) who explains how the different aspects of social and parasocial relationships developed on SNS influence consumers' loyalty. This study represents one of the few existing in this specific area. The findings of the study reflect that social and parasocial relationships in SNS, can increase consumer's intentions of using and recommending SNS and can increase loyalty towards the SNS itself. The authors argue that social and parasocial; relationships should be considered as one of the predictors of SNS loyalty. This study while relevant for this dissertation, focused solely on social and parasocial relationships and does not explain fully all the drivers that cause people to use and develop commitment in SNS.

Belk, (2013) updated the theory of the extended-self and applied it in the digital context. He explained that the use of online platforms allowed users a new level of self-extension. Users usually have a believed core-self (who people think they are) but

in the online world users can show multiple versions of themselves. The theory of the extended-self in the digital world could explain some of the motives that cause people use SNS and it if could be related to why the majority of the adult population maintain a Facebook profile.

1.2 Purpose of the Research

In this study the researcher aims to contribute to the literature by identifying the main reasons individuals use Facebook and to recognise which of these drivers can enhance engagement, brand loyalty or brand love, towards the SNS Facebook.

1.2.1 Research Objectives

•To identify the primary reasons individuals use the social networking site Facebook

This objective aims to discover what motivates the users of the platform. The analysis of the data will define if the theory cited in this work matches the findings of the research.

•To analyse what perceptions Facebook users have towards the platform

This specific goal is to generate a better understanding on what people's perceptions and attitudes are towards Facebook as an organisation and as a SNS.

•To identify what the attitudes and behaviours of the users are and if any indicators confirm brand engagement, brand loyalty or brand love towards Facebook

To recognise the principles that can motivate different levels of commitment towards Facebook, taking into account the theories of brand loyalty, brand engagement and brand love. This objective aims to analyse the connections between the drivers that explain why people use Facebook and which of these drivers can indicate commitment.

1.3 Organisation of the study

The thesis is organised into six chapter. The first chapter is an introduction of the study that explains the research background, research questions and objectives. Followed by reviewing the most relevant literature in the second chapter. The third chapter provides a detailed description of the methodology applied in this research and the research design. Chapter four presents the main findings obtained by the analysis of the primary data collected for this dissertation. Followed by the discussion of the findings in chapter five. Finally, chapter six provides a summary of the findings and recommendations for future research

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

This section is a review of the literature that aims to explain the theoretical basis of this study. The purpose of this dissertation is to discover what drives individuals to use the SNS like Facebook and their attitudes and behaviours of commitment towards it.

The review of the literature states that the value of social media platforms takes its place in co-creation, where content is created by a large percentage of its users through their interaction combining wed-based or mobile applications to facilitate content generation and social activity (Kietzmann et al. 2011; Ozok and Zaphiris, 2009). Social media allows users to build communities, share content and engage with social activities (Przepiorka, Blachnio and Diaz, 2016). Studies in this section agree the reasons why people use SNS are plenty. Some of the main reasons for social media usage highlighted are, identity seeking, social influence, perceived usefulness and benefits, social presence and entertainment values.

Scholars discuss different levels of commitment: brand engagement, brand loyalty and brand love. These concepts are widely explained in this section, emphasising that the three constructs are fundamental for user retention and user relationship building.

2.2 Facebook: The World's Leader

There are over 5.1 billion adults over the age of 18 in the world (USA Census Bureau,2017), out of this specific demographic, 2 billion of them are active Facebook users which represents 40% of the adult population, placing Facebook as the most popular social media site in the world (Statista, 2017).

Reports from last year (Business insider, 2016), argues that the estimated time people spend using the social networking sites: Facebook, Instagram and Facebook

Messenger, is 50 minutes or over. For this reason, there is no doubt why SNS are gaining huge interest for research.

2.3 Social Media: In the Digital Context

In order to understand what Facebook and any other Social Networking Sites are, a clear definition of social media is needed, it is also important to highlight what is valuable about them because these factors somewhat explain why SNS are so attractive for users and businesses.

The definition of social media can be synthesised as services used in web-based sites or mobile applications, where the content is generated by the user and this content is the lifeblood of the whole process. Social media is where users create profiles, for a site or app, that are organized by a social media service which facilitates the development of social networks online, by connecting individuals with each other and groups, (Obar and Wildman, 2015).

Kietzmann et al, (2011) states that social media combine mobile and web-based technologies to allow people to create communities, discuss, share, co-create and modify content within sites designated for different functions: the use of general masses (E.g. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter), focused use networks (E.g. LinkedIn), and media sharing networks (E.g. YouTube).

The value of Social Media lays on the creation of a new form of narrative, the "Networking Narratives", enhanced and stimulated by technological affordances represented by the number of likes, shares and comments (Wang et al., 2017). Social networking sites, have also facilitated the maintaining and developing of new human relationships online (Hew, 2011) such as socialising, information seeking, building relations, and content co-creation (Ozok and Zaphiris 2009).

2.4 Social Networking Sites (SNS)

Social Networking Sites have grown in a fast pace throughout the years becoming the favourite method for people to develop their social networks online (Kaplan and Heinlein, 2010).

Social interaction has been enabled from the beginning with the use of the internet and the World Wide Web. At the first decade of the 2000's there was a notable progress in the social element of the web's use, caused by the drop of the cost of online data storage and the development of the Web 2.0 which facilitated the creation and exchange of user generated content. This permitted people to access an array of user-centric spaces, giving users the opportunity to customise and massively generate content (Obar and Wildman, 2015).

SNS such as Facebook are of great importance for its users providing them with a platform for communication and information sharing, where users can generate the content they like: share photos, videos, maintain and create new relationships and shape their social networks online (Przepiorka, Blachnio and Diaz, 2016).

2.5 Why do Individuals use SNS?

Plenty of research has been conducted to determine what drives people to use SNS. The following are some of the main motives that the majority of the literature highlights as important and that the student considered relevant for the subject studied:

2.5.1 Self-Identity and Self-Presentation
SNS users, can express their identities and reveal versions of their selves in a social media setting (Kietzman, et al. 2011). According to the theory of the "extended self in the digital world" by Belk, (2013), SNS such as Facebook, are a key part of self-expression for a vast percentage of humanity. SNS are where they can manage their ideal self-image. The image that they create and share with society is managed by,

sharing content selectively and interacting within the platforms with groups, individuals or organisations. Similar to self-identity, Seidman (2013) stated that self-presentation is one on the major reasons people use Facebook, users disclosure personal information on Facebook strategically, in order to present the most desirable version of themselves, they do this by posting photographs, statuses and sharing information they identify with.

2.5.2 Social Identity

Social identity theory can be defined as the role or categories individuals assume within a social group. Each of these individuals evaluate their position in the group and determine what are the appropriate behaviours that need to be adopted to belong to the group. This peer cluster have influence over all the individuals that are apart of the group, as result, social influence can drive individuals to use SNS and impact the way they will use and interact within the platform (Baker and White, 2010).

2.5.3 Social Capital

People can acquire different types of benefits from their social networks. Bourdieu & Wacquant, (1992) named these benefits as "Social Capital", this refers to all the resources or benefits derived from each kind of connection (Financial support, information exchange and emotional support). They divided these benefits into two categories, bonding social capital and bridging social capital. Bonding social capital is related with strong relationships such as family or close friends and can have benefits associated with bonding, including emotional support, satisfaction or trust. On the other hand, bridging social capital emerges from weak relationships, its benefits can include non-redundant information, diverse points of view and job opportunities. It's common that people with a high emotional connection to their online networks and people that find it very useful for developing social capital, integrate the use of SNS in their daily activities (Yuan and Fussell, 2017).

2.5.4 Perceived Benefits

SNS are designed to facilitate users communication processes and building of relationships, but these are not their only functions, they can provide complementary services for users to engage with such as; social games, photo sharing, message sharing, video sharing, etc. All these features can have a positive influence on the user's intentions to use a social network. An example of this is, when some users believe that there are upgrades or functions that can increase the efficiency of sharing, connecting with others or expanding their network, their use of the SNS increases (Yu Lin and Peng Lu, 2011).

2.5.5 Life Satisfaction

Users also engage with SNS because they believe it increases life satisfaction. This can be reflected as social presence and subjective happiness or personal satisfaction. Gratification actions and social influence can be key for online communities' participation. In this sense, part of the population consider that SNS are more than a social site but a place where they can build relationships and maintain already existent ones (Oliveira and Huertas, 2015).

2.5.6 Network Externalities

The network externalities refer to the number of people who use SNS. The more friends a person has using the social site, the more intentions the individual may have of spending time on it (Baker and White, 2010). In many circumstances, when the users perceive that more friends are joining a SNS, their intentions to keep using the platform increases. Research suggests that, the number of people using and joining a SNS is taken as a predictor to anticipate that more people will join the platform in the future (Yu Lin and Peng Lu, 2011).

2.5.7 SNS relationships development

SNS such as Facebook can contribute with the creation of social and parasocial relationships (Tsiotsou, 2015), defining parasocial relationships, as a one-sided relationships where users can create emotions, interests and invest time towards other

people or organisations that are not necessarily aware of the user's existence (Bennett et al., 2014), this type of relationship is most common with celebrities, bloggers and some organisations directed to the masses (Horton and Wohl, 1956).

The development of social and parasocial relationships can motivate identification and motivation within SNS groups or personalities. This simultaneously can motivate engagement with the online group, which can lead to increase behavioural intentions to use the SNS and can increase SNS loyalty (Tsiotsou, 2015).

2.6 Theoretical Perspectives of Commitment: SNS

There are different levels of commitment that users can dedicate and devote towards brands including SNS such as Facebook. In this section the researcher will explain three of the different theoretical perspectives on the subject of brand commitment: Brand Engagement, Brand Loyalty and Brand Love.

2.6.1 Brand Engagement

The definition of engagement has its origins in diverse disciplines such as, psychology, sociology and organisational behaviour. The definition of engagement can vary depending what area is been studied. In the marketing context, engagement is defined as behaviours and attitudes towards organisations or social activities, where individuals usually demonstrate a high sense of initiative, involvement and a sense of well-being and positivity (Hollebeek, 2011).

Brand engagement has been receiving more attention from scholars in the las few decades sup porting the more traditional studies of the relationships between customers and their brands. Academics agree that brand engagement from a marketing perspective can draw positive attention and create emotional attachment towards brands (Kapoor and Kulshrestha, 2012).

In marketing, engagement can be separated into different concepts: consumer engagement, customer engagement, brand engagement, advertisement engagement

and media engagement. Consumer engagement, denotes the participation and connection with an institution's offerings and activities (Brand advocates, positive WOM, interactive consumers) (Hollebeek, 2011; Vivek, 2009). Customer engagement, refers to the intensity of the relationship between customer-organisation and the customer's cognitive and emotional connection with a service organisation (Dedication, Vigour and Interaction) (Hollebeek, 2011; Patterson et al., 2006). Customer brand engagement is defined as the level of motivation an individual has towards a brand's activities at all levels: emotional, cognitive and behavioural (Hollebeek, 2011).

2.6.1.1 Brand Engagement Online

In the digital context, brand engagement is the motivational state that leads a user to interact and get involved with online brand activities; expressing cognitive responses such as liking and commenting on a specific brand post, or co-creating content with the organisation. An example of this is when Instagram users enter a photo competition and inserting a specific hashtag with their photo. Users can get involved with the activities of an organisation, connecting with individuals that represent the institution, or communities of people that share the same interests. Consumer engagement can be very powerful in digital marketing because it can inspire actions that can be translated into favourable brand outcomes (repeated purchases) and can create affective, cognitive and behavioural manifestations, which represents a superior interaction to merely exchange contacts (Wondwesen, 2016).

2.6.1.2 Brand Engagement and Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty uses the term engagement in different ways but it shares the same core concept, "a conscious emotional and cognitive reaction to marketing stimuli" (Kapoor and Kulshrestha, 2012. P. 122). Engagement can be used as a way of measuring the strength of a company's relationships with its customers and a predictor of brand loyalty (Hollebeek, et al. 2014).

When a new customer is satisfied by a product or service, they might consider the brand for future purchases/uses, when customers are satisfied every time they use the brand they start building trust, familiarity and more knowledge towards the brand.

Sometimes during this process, customers can experience as well delight. All these elements: familiarity, trust, knowledge and delight, can generate customer's attachment and engagement witch can finally drive to brand Loyalty (Bowden, 2014).

2.6.2 Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty is defined as a held commitment to repetitively buy, visit, use, a favourite product or service in the present time and the future, motivating repetitive purchases or interactions of the same brand or brand-set, despite of their competitors marketing efforts to influence customer's behaviours and motivate them to switch brands, (Oliver, 1999, pp. 34-35).

Brand loyalty might show repeated purchases or interaction from consumers, but they are not one and the same, (for example, people can use Facebook repetitively everyday but also use Instagram with the same frequency), organisations must understand that customers can be loyal to more than one brand. Brand loyalty must fulfil six different necessary and collectively sufficient conditions: the bias, behavioural response to marketing stimuli, it needs to be expressed over time, it has to be the top option of the decision making unit, respect to one or more alternative brands and physiological decision making. Brand loyalty involves selecting one brand over others representing a relational behaviour where individuals show preferences toward one of the alternatives (Jacob and Kyner, 1973).

Oliver (1999) states that, repeated purchases can be the consequence of feelings of satisfaction generated by the use of a product or service. Satisfaction creates pleasure to the consumer, and pleasure or personal enjoyment can be one of the integrated factors to create brand loyalty, this sense of satisfaction must be transcendental enough to acquire a devoted customer.

2.6.2.1 Brand Loyalty: Categories and Characteristics.

There can be different levels of brand loyalty. A review of the literature has shown that the categories of brand loyalty can vary depending on different factors. Rundle-Thiele and Benett (2006) suggest that brand loyalty can be classified into three groups based on market type; consumable goods market, durable goods markets and service

markets (SNS). They state, that the approach to the creation of brand loyalty is different depending on each category. Moreover, understanding these classifications can help marketers use the most appropriate methods for their business.

Customer's relationships with brands can be very complex. Sometimes brands have to make enormous efforts to motivate loyalty among its users. Like social relationships, brands and customer's relationships are at times difficult to create, some companies in order to engage with customers and build a relationship with them, have to align their activities and processes with their customer's interests and demands, this can mean radical changes for a company's regular operations and corporate image (Piercy, 2009).

Literature in brand loyalty often mentions brand quality, brand trust and brand personality as main characteristics for brand loyalty building.

2.6.2.2 Brand Quality
Brand quality can be defined as brand characteristics of superiority or excellence compared to other offerings. When consumers create judgements about a product or services overall performance of excellency and superiority, it can be defined as brand quality. There can be objective qualities; measurable and verifiable superiority compared to other brands on predetermined standards and perceived qualities which refers to the subjective reaction of users to products or services that differs between person to person representing a highly relativistic phenomenon (Zeithaml, 1988).

People constantly categorise and value products, attaching to them cues that permit them to generate an overall judgement of the brand. When people have their own evaluation of a brand through the use or experience of a product or service they usually confer the same attributes to other products of the same brand, using their previous experience as predictors of the performance of the new product. For this reason, it is crucial for brands to deliver high standards of quality so customers will choose their offerings over and over again (Janiszewski and Osselaer, 2000).

2.6.2.3 Brand Trust

Brand trust can be defined as the willingness of customers to rely on the capability of a brand to perform as stated by the company. When businesses honesty advertise the benefits of the safety and reliability of their offerings, brand trust can be generated as consequence of its effective delivery of their promises (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001).

Trust in a person is defined as a feeling of security, (Ballester and Aleman, 2012). In the digital context, brand trust can be affected by different factors such as, security, privacy, brand name, good word of mouth, good online experience and quality of information. These factors can't generate brand trust on their own but by the interrelation of all the components (Hong-Youl Ha 2004).

2.6.2.4 Brand Personality

The 21st century is a branded world, people are bombarded with thousands of messages everyday making it very difficult for companies get noticed. Experts say that individuals can be exposed to hundreds of advertisements, above and below the line, every day. (Marshall, 2015).

To be noticed, brands must understand that delivering satisfaction and engaging with customers, while important, is not enough to motivate loyalty. It's very important that brands develop a consistent personality, so customer can identify with brands that they think represent them or they feel are similar to them, and make easier a purchasing decision (Lada, 2014).

Brand personality represents, "the set of human characteristics associated with a brand" for example, Vodka Absolut tends to be described as a cool, young and hipster 25 years old. Brand personality can be separated into five dimensions: sincerity (Domestic, honest, cheerful. E.g. Hallmark, Kodak) excitement (Daring, spirited, imaginative. E.g. Porsche, Absolut. Benetton), competence (Reliable, responsible efficient. E.g. BOI, CNN, IBM), sophistication (Glamorous, charming, pretentious E.g. Luxury brands: Louis Vuitton, Channel) and ruggedness (Tough, strong outdoorsy, rugged E.g. Red Bull, Nike) helping the brands to identify with their audiences and people to understand the brand (Aaker, 1997).

2.6.2.5 Branded World: Importance of Brand Loyalty.

Brand loyalty causes customer retention, which is one of the most important goals for companies. Customer's loyalty creates customer retention in the sense that they are happy to purchase or use the product or service and not forced to do so. Loyalty can be very profitable but more important, generate long-lasting customers and relationships. (Lada, 2014).

Companies are constantly looking for sustainability. Most of them have realised how important integrating with technology to reach their audiences is. Facebook is one of the most used digital platforms for companies to promote and advertise their brands; Facebook offers segmentation that allows companies to easily reach their target markets cheaper than traditional mass media, and reaching millions of users. (Behele, 2017).

Some brands, have positioned successfully through loyalty efforts, an example of this is Apple, a company that has one of the most loyal users in the world. Apple loyal customers are happy to use all the apple products they can afford and most of them do so by proudly showing their products to the rest of the world. When customers use Apple they don't think only of a product they think on the personality of the product and how much they identify with it. (Goodson, 2011)

Glance, (2014) said that Apple owe its success to its different approach to the market, in contrast with its competition, through fulfilling three key factors: self- identity; when consumers buy products that have an aesthetic appeal because it can help them to build people's sense of self, for example the slogan "think different", which allows people to identify with a perceived philosophy or way of being. Brand drivers, refers to those factors that are attached to a brand when a product is purchased or used, such as perceived value of the product, quality, level of service and overall trust placed on the product and the company. Social identity, helps users to define themselves through the groups they belong to which can influence individual's attitudes and behaviours to the point of dictating attitudes towards other outside groups, for example, when Apple and Android users argue about which technology is better, neither think the other is right and can be effected personally by such arguments

because being part of a group plays an important role in everything we do including brand groups.

However, some brands have obtained "accidental" followers or loyal customers such as Lego, when in 2014, faced an unexpected twist in their business; the Lego Adults users. Lego was created and marketed for children but for a series for reasons, their product started to be consumed by adults. Nowadays through these Lego's brand communities and the loyal adults market, Lego is the most powerful brand in the toys sector. (Kornberger, 2010).

2.6.3 Brand Love

Carroll and Ahuvia, (2006) express that while it is true there are different categories of brand loyalty (emotional and behavioural), the bond created by passionate and emotional attachment to a particular brand is considered the strongest of all characteristic and it's what they call "Brand Love". They defined it as the levels of passion and emotional attachment that a satisfied customer has for a specific brand.

Brand love is usually greater for brands with a more hedonic approach (compared with utilitarian) that often offer symbolic benefits. Brand love is linked to higher levels of brand loyalty and can generate greater word of mouth (Carrol and Ahuvia, 2006; Batra et al. 2012), it can increase people's willingness to pay a higher price, can set greater levels of tolerance to brand failure and resistance to negative information.

Batra, Ahuvia and Bagozz (2012) explain that the love that people can feel towards a brand while not the exact same, is still very similar as human to human love but the researchers highlight, each concept must be studied separately: for example, comparing romantic love (sexuality, attraction), to parental love (attachment, self-identity) wouldn't be appropriate, the same rational applies for human love and brand love, while similar they must be studied differently, taking into account the way each person experiences love in different circumstances.

Brand love is one of the core elements of the complex phenomena of consumer's relationships with brands, this association is the component that separates the whole process from an isolated transaction to a brand-customer connection (Fournier, 1998). Kottler et al. (2012) suggests that sometimes customers are expecting to bond with

brands through loyalty not through perfection, brands can often "betray" customers but they are willing to forgive, only if they still fell appreciated and respected. Brand loyalty is about emotions but companies have also to deliver on their promises.

2.6.3.1 Lovemarks

Lovemarks can explain in other words the meaning of brand love. Kevin Roberts (2005) developed the "Lovemarks" definition that refer to the way some brands generate brand love beyond any: reasons, price, attributes and benefits. Robert explains that the Lovemarks is the explanation of why some brands enjoy long-lasting relationships with their customers.

Lovemarks begin with the purpose of improving their customer's lives, by understanding how customers feel about their lives, what is important to them, their truths and passions. Brands that inspire love make an emphasis on adding experience and excitement to their products instead of merely selling them. Lovemarks build brands, experiences and events that people can love, always respecting the solid foundations of the product's performance, reputation and sustainability (Roberts, 2005).

According to Roberts, the key qualities that matter the most to Lovemarks are: mystery, sensuality and intimacy, because these allow them to connect with consumers at a higher and more meaningful level. Mystery refers to sketching along with customers; stories, metaphors, dreams and symbols, giving the audiences little hints of information and allowing the consumer to create rumours. People are usually drawn to what they don't know and usually brands share too much information reducing the factors of surprise or delight. Apple is a good example of this, they give hints of their products before they launch it and people create stories and build excitement around the product because they don't have all the information. Sensuality can be considered as a direct entry to the emotions and it refers to the use of the five senses (sound, smell, touch, sound and taste), the use of the senses can create outstanding experiences. Adidas used a 3D screen to create a lasting impact on customers allowing them to preview, touch and find the perfect runners form a touch screen. Finally, intimacy can generate an intimate connection that remains even after

features or benefits weaken or disappear. It is the ability to come close to customers through empathy but without invading their space.

2.7 Chapter Summary

SNS are the preferred location for individuals to generate and share content. Social media in the digital context, combines web-based and online applications to offer users a site where they can generate their content, social media would not exist without the combined efforts of all its users co-creating content. Some of the key explanations why people use SNS are: the development of social identity, perceived benefits, life satisfaction, external influences and development of social and parasocial relationships.

Brands can motivate different levels of commitment through three key concepts, brand engagement, referring to the customer's levels of motivations towards a brand. Brand loyalty as customer's commitment to repetitively buy, visit, use, a favourite product or service. Brand Love as the levels of passion and emotional attachment that customers can have for some brands.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a description of the methodological process applied to obtain this research. This section includes an overview of the research philosophy, the research design, the reasoning behind all the decision making process, the data analysis, method applied to answering the research question, the ethical implications of this study and the limitations and strengths of each approach.

3.2 Research Definition

The problem definition is the result of a process of reasoning conducted by the researcher in order to explain or understand a question that aims to be answered through the applications of relevant research methods methodology, (Jonker and Pennink, 2010).

This study aims to discover why people use Facebook and what their attitudes and behaviours are towards loyalty, distinguishing and comparing different levels of commitment such as people's engagement, brand loyalty and brand love.

The specific objectives of this research are:

•To identify the primary reasons individuals use the social networking site Facebook

•To analyse what perceptions Facebook users have towards the platform

•To identify what the attitudes and behaviours of the users are and if any indicators confirm brand engagement, brand loyalty or brand love towards Facebook

3.3 Research Methodology

Only understanding the research philosophy the researcher is able to set a clear method for the study and then gather effectively the information required in a systematic process to answer successfully the research question (Easterby-Smith, et al. 2002).

Research methodology is commonly referred as the search of knowledge through a scientific and systematic process, to find the undiscovered and the hidden truth (Kothary, 2004). The research philosophy reflects the way the researcher relates knowledge in the process of developing answers to the unknown, it provides a perspective on the view that each researcher has about the world (Saunders, 2009).

3.3.1 Research Design

The research design is the roadmap that a researcher will draw to follow in order to answer the research question, it contains the objectives of the research questions, the specific sources of data collection, explanation on how the data will be gathered, analysed and the ethical issues that the research involves, (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2012)

Saunders (2008) explains the research design using "the research onion" that visually portrays the research process in six different layers that can help the researcher to decide the approach most suitable for its work, each section illustrate: research philosophies, approaches, strategies, choices of methods, time horizons, techniques and procedures.
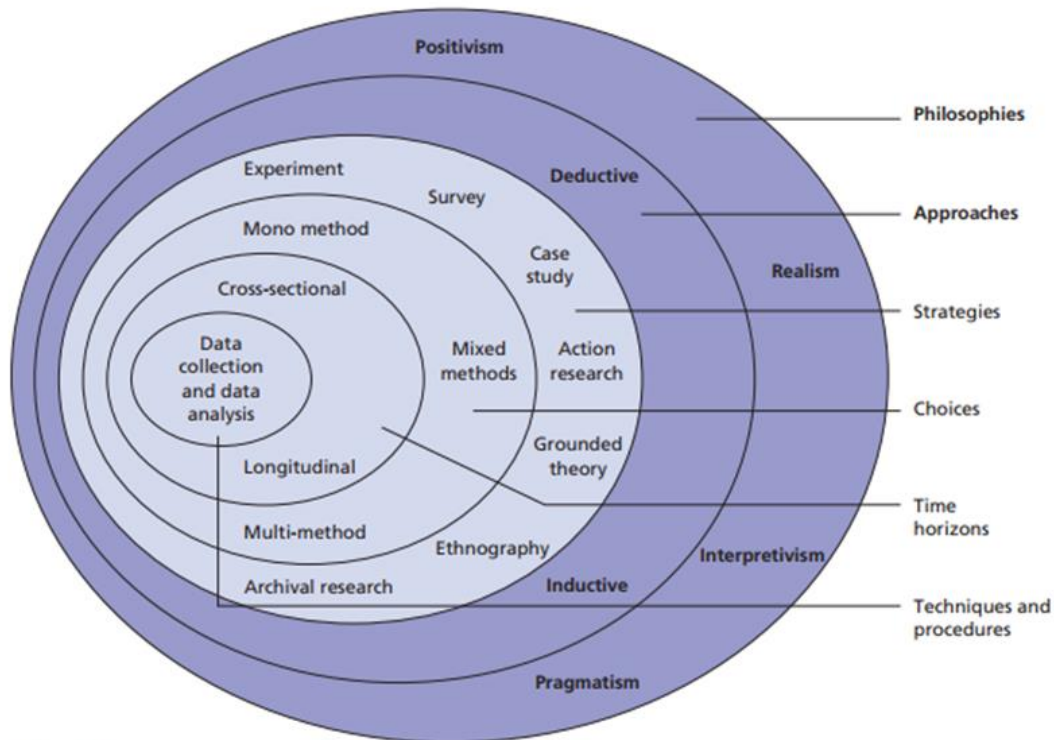
Figure 4.1
The research 'onion'
Source: © Mark Saunders, Philip Lewis and Adrian Thornhill 2008

3.3.2 Research Ontology

Another important concept in methodology is the research ontology, known as people's perceived ways of how the world functions. Ontology is related to the nature of the researcher's own reality and view of the world. It looks at the nature of reality. There are two sides of ontology, objectivism and subjectivism. Objectivism is the position of looking at the nature of realities by its facts and the researcher describes reality. Subjectivism looks for individual meaning and evidence. When using this approach, the researcher describes subjective perceptions, (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2012)

This research's view of reality is based on the subjectivist aspect of ontology. The researcher did not have an objectivist approach because the author believes that this study does not represent a strict pattern or phenomena of an external reality not subjected to change and that its nature is not visible or unbiased (Perikoff, 1989), on the contrary, the orientation for this study involves a subjective approach to social

21

science aiming to understand this social phenomenon and find meaning attached to human perception, (Briman, 2012).

3.3.3 Research Approach

Knowing the research approach is important because it has an impact on how the research should be designed. There are two approaches constructed on the reasoning the research is applied: Deductive and Inductive. Deductive approach is based on the derived logical reasoning of a set of premises, or hypothesis, the premises or hypothesis will be true of false when the findings or conclusions prove or dismiss the initial hypothesis, and this approach starts with theory basis from academic reading and literature. Inductive approach, starts the research from the data collection to explore a phenomenon or generate and build theory identifying themes and patterns to explain a phenomenon. There is the possibility to combine the two types of reasoning in one research (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2012).

This study applied a combination of deductive and inductive reasoning. Deductive reasoning by getting a previous understanding of the theory before the research was designed and putting forward a tentative idea. Inductive reasoning using the data collected to explore, identify themes and patterns about the use of the SNS as a social phenomenon.

3.3.4 Research Epistemology

The research paradigms denote the start of any research process, there are two main philosophies which a researcher can select: Positivism and Interpretivism. Positivism adopts the methods used of natural science to explain social reality, its purpose is to generate a testable hypothesis and gather facts that can provide the basis for theories and laws. Interpretivism in contrast to positivism, respects the difference between individuals and understands the subjective meaning of social actions (Bryman and Bell, 2015).

While positivism can provide testable data and prove the hypotheses, this work is based on the Interpretivist approach. The Interpretivist approach allowed the researcher to gather qualitative data and analyse the results by understanding the

differences of each individual and the phenomenon being studied. Saunders, et al. (2012), explained that the application of the Interpretivism epistemology is recommended for the study and interpretation of human action.

3.3.5 Qualitative VS Quantitative Research

Quantitative research is an approach used for testing theories by examining the relationships between measurable variables. The outcome of this research generates data consisting of numbers and can be analysed by using statistical systems. The researchers that use this approach create theories in a deductive way, trying to eliminate bias control alternative explanations and try to produce generalizable and replicable findings.

Qualitative research on the other side, is used to understand meaning of human interactions, problems or phenomenon, opposite to quantitative analysis the data is usually collected non-numerically, but in words (interviews, field observation). The qualitative report have a flexible structure and the research aims is to interpret the meaning of the data (Creswell, 2014).

The researcher engaged with qualitative research because this work is focused on the individual meaning of the information gathered and aims to understand the "Why and How" of a small part of human interaction. The researcher considered that a quantitative approach was not suitable for the study because the core information collected was about people's feelings, attitudes behaviours and their interpretation of their own reality.

3.3.6 Research Strategy

Adams, Raeside & Khan, (2014) described research as, a diligent search, studious inquiry, investigation or experimentation aimed at the discovery of new facts and findings. Collins & Hussey, 2009 believe that research is a systematic and methodical process of enquiry and investigation with the view to increasing knowledge.

In order to develop this study, the researcher studied the different methodological strategies and finally choose the one that would yield the greatest results.

Research strategy is divided into several fields, some of the main methodologies that can be applied are Ethnography, Grounded Theory and Case Study. Ethnography can be defined as a long term methodology were the researcher observes human interaction, Collis and Hussey, (2009) state that the aim is to interpret the social world in the same way as the members of that particular world do. Yin, (2014) also emphasises that detailed observation and interview evidence are required. While there are positives, such as first hand experiences of activities or interactions that would not occur with other research the student felt that the disadvantages outweighed the advantages, some of these were outlined by Collis and Hussey, (2009) such as the long time frame required and how the subjects need to be monitored in their natural settings, both of these were not feasible within the constraints of this research and subject topic.

Grounded Theory uses a "systematic set of procedures to develop an inductively derived grounded theory about a phenomenon" (Collis and Hussey, 2009, p.157). Swanson (2013), states that grounded theory uses data to generate suggestions and does not actually require them to be formally tasted. While this methodology has the benefit that there is no bias to a particular theory prior to researching the chosen subject, the researcher dismissed this methodology due to the difficulties in defining a theory at the conclusion of the research. Collis and Hussey (2009), state that themes and patterns can be observed, one should be hesitant to refer to it as a theory.

Case Study methodology is essentially investigating a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context. Woodside et al, (2012) outlined the importance of the ''four horsemen'' for doing case study research. These four horsemen are, "accuracy, generality, complexity/coverage, and value/impact" (Yin, 2014. P.16). The researcher used this as the primary methodology as there is no strict formula/rule set that is required to conduct this research. Another reason that this method was used was that the ability to get qualitative information over a shorter period of time compared to Ethnography.

Case Study was also chosen because it permitted the researcher to allow the subject's freedom to express their opinions by simply asking them, "how" or "why". There are disadvantages to this method like any, Yin mentions that the main concern with case studies are they are not rigorous enough or that the researcher has been sloppy. As

outlined earlier the student minimised this concern by referring back to the "four horsemen". Yin, (2014) also states that there may be an unmanageable level of effort required in completing case studies, again the student was able to reduce this concern by limiting interviews to 40 minutes and seven participants.

After comparing the positives and negatives with the three interpretivist methods outlined above, the researcher felt that the case study methodology had additional benefits than the others and that the negatives of the case study method could be easily managed. The negatives were managed through an increased focus on the quality of sources, subjects and inputs. Ensuring that interviews did not run pass the allotted time allowed and most importantly the researcher felt that the required information for the investigation would be easily obtained using this method.

3.4 Data Collection

3.4.1 Primary and Secondary Data

When a researcher considers undertaking research and attempts to answer a research question, it is expected of them to consider in their analysis, data that has been gathered by other researchers about the topic but with another purposes, this can include raw data, peer reviewed information and published works; these sources of information are known as secondary data. On the other hand, depending on the research, collecting primary data can also be an important source of information for the creation of knowledge and drawing conclusions, the main reason researchers collect primary data is because they cannot find the information or an answer to their research question from secondary sources of information (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2012). This research was built on both, primary and secondary sources of data.

Secondary data was collected from research papers, books obtained from online data base and from the National College of Ireland Library, the researcher spent an average of 50 hours, reading, investigating and analysing secondary sources of data for the

creation of this dissertation. Primary data was collected using qualitative method by conducting in-depth interviews.

3.4.2 Focus Groups vs Interviews

Some of the challenges for researchers that apply an interpretative paradigm is to find methods that will retain the integrity of the primary data. Some of these methods are focus groups and interviews. Focus groups are used to generate data about feelings opinions and perceptions from a group of people that are at the same time in a common space discussing the same topic. The advantages of this method are that the researcher can compare people's opinions, have a general idea of individual's perceptions and behaviours when in a group and have a significant number of people at the same time discussing about a same phenomenon. On the other hand, some of the disadvantages of focus groups are that can be difficult to manage and to obtain insights and meaningful information, as well the interaction of each member can vary, some of the participants might provide most of the information and others very little, focus groups can be difficult to replicate because of the diversity of the participants, and their opinions (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

Another method for gathering qualitative information are interviews which can be divided in three main styles: Unstructured, structured and semi-structured. Unstructured interviews are those that might not have a specific narrative or questions and start with the interviewee narrative, its used to gain deep insight and understanding of a subject, this type of interview can be very difficult to analyse because of the variety of the information that can be gatherer and it can be very time consuming. Structured interviews are good for describing and explaining but not to explore a topic, this type has a very detailed guideline, very similar to a questionnaire used in quantitative studies. Semi-structured interviews allow the researcher to discover a topic and provide some insights, the researcher can turn the interview in different directions and generate sub-topics that were not thought initially but came up in the process (Blumberg et al. 2008).

After studying the advantages and disadvantages of various methods, the researcher decided that semi-structured interviews were the most suitable method to gather the primary data due to the freedom to follow up important information, to generate better

insights from the interviewee and because it was a method that could be applied within the time frame, sample size and sample characteristics.

The semi structured interviews were conducted in a period of 10 days from the 7th to the 27th of July 2017. The seven participants were interviewed in public spaces, restaurants and coffee shops. The interviews lasted between 28 to 40 minutes and were recorded with an application on the researcher's cell phone. The recordings where saved and kept in an encrypted folder which could be accessed only by the researcher. All these precautionary measures were taken by the researcher in order to protect the data and the participant's privacy.

A short five question form was provided at the beginning of each interview for collecting answers to simple topics, such as: demographics, (e.g. age, gender), and questions that would motivate short answers, this action was applied after the recommendation of an experimented researcher, in order to avoid placing people into a short answers mind-set at the beginning of the interview. Providing a short questionnaire before starting with the interviews helped to introduce the interviewee to the subject and subsequently with the disposition for answering more complex and open questions during the interview.

3.4.3 Sampling Overview

Research studies need to question whether the use of samples is needed. Sometimes it can be possible to collect data of an entire population in a process called census, but for most of the research questions it is impractical to use this approach due to limitations of time, money and very often access. For this reason, the selection of a sample group is necessary during the research process, this group must be representative of the full set of elements being studied and meaningful for the study.

There are two sample techniques that can be applied for the study, probability sampling, where each individual of the population has equal possibilities to be selected and non-probability sampling, where the probability of each individual to be selected is not equal. The results obtained by non-probability might not be generalizable to the whole population, (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2012). In this approach the researcher did not pursue to gather participants through a random selection method

but applying a strategical selection of individuals relevant to the study (Brymand and Bell, 2015).

Probability and non-probability sampling techniques have a wide range of types of sampling. For probability sampling some of the different types are: stratified, takes account of each strata of the population: Quota sampling, cluster sampling, random selection and multi-stage (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

Some of the non-probability sampling types are: quota sampling, sample that reflects the population in relative portions of individual for each category like gender, age, ethnicity, etc. Convenience sampling is the one most available for the researcher, this type of sampling is usually not representative of the population and might not provide generalizable results. This type of sampling is very commonly used in areas of marketing, such as consumer behaviour research (Brymand and Bell, 2015).

The sampling technique, considered as the most appropriate by the researcher, for collecting qualitative data about individual's perceptions and motivations was a non-probability method of sampling. In the same means, the type of sampling selected was convenience sampling, since the researcher didn't have a strict discrimination of participants or any limiting demographic parameters.

Sample size selection depend on a number of considerations. For non-probability sampling techniques there are no rules. What is considered important is that the relationship between the sampling selection technique and the focus on the research is applied logically. For semi structures in-depth interviews, the minimum sample suggested is from 5 to 25 participants (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2012).

The sample size for this research was 7 participants who volunteered to offer insights about the topic. This research can be considered a small scale study, not representative of the whole population and not generalizable. The sample demographics characteristics were four females and three males between 18 to 35 years old. The participants considered for this study only had to fulfil the following two characteristics: to be active Facebook users and to live in Ireland. There were no other limiting criteria, such as nationality, ethnicity, gender, age or religion.

3.5 Data Interpretation

The data analysis stage for qualitative research can be more difficult than quantitative because the amount of information collected with this approach is usually higher. Another challenge is to know how the researcher that used qualitative data analysis addressed the interpretation of the information to obtain their results, (Collis and Hussey, 2009).

There are different methods that can be used to interpret qualitative data, some of them are: grounded theory, phenomenology, content analysis and thematic analysis (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill 2012; Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012). Grounded theory systematically compares data to find themes and create codes within the text, it is good for small sets of data and can be used to study topics other than individual experiences. The drawbacks of grounded analysis are that it is very time consuming and is not practical for large data sets (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012.).

Phenomenology the participant's perception, feelings and experiences are the predominant object, looks at the subjective meaning and human experience. The advantages of phenomenology are that it can explore data more deeply and explore beyond the text, the limitations are that it focusses only on human experience and it is not necessarily systematic. Thematic analysis, requires the researcher's interpretation and moves beyond word counting, focusing on identifying explicit ideas within the data also called "themes" it is a mix of "grounded theory, interpretivism and phenomenology" (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012).

Thematic analysis could be considered a form of content analysis that concentrates on generating themes from the data instead of counting on the frequency of the information, as it happens in content analysis, (Vaismoradi, et al. 2013). Thematic analysis aims to identify the key themes in the text, these themes are transformed into codes. It can be used for, building theoretical models or finding solutions to real world problems, it is usually interpretative meaning that can generate qualitative analysis but sometimes it can generate quantitative data. The main limitation for this method is that during the analysis, the researcher can miss some of the more nuanced or similar data (Guest, MacQueen and Namey, 2012).

After considering some of the methods for data analysis, the researcher decided on thematic analysis because it offers the most complete set of tools and principles for analysing the data reflected in this work.

First, the researcher coded the data using the thematic analysis principles, recognising similarities, repeated metaphors and material related to the theory. Subsequently, the researcher grouped the appropriate ideas relevant to the research's objectives. Finally, the researcher presented findings and drew the conclusion as result of the application of this method. The data was initially audio recorded and later transcribed into text to allow the application of thematic coding.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

Bryman and Bell, (2015) expressed that it is the responsibility of each researcher to evaluate the possible physical or mental harm that they can induce to participants. This research's ethical goal was not to generate any harm to any contributors as result of their participation in this work.

The researcher kept the participant's names and data in confidentiality as recommended by Bryman and Bell, (2015). One of the ethical issues that Collis and Hussey, (2009), highlight is that coercion should not be used to force people to take part in a research, neither payment or rewards are advisable to persuade people to participate. All the participants in this study volunteered to take part and did not gain any rewards for doing it so, apart from the experience of participating in a research process.

All the participants filled a consent form where they were informed about the subject being studied and the aim of the research, the form also informed the interviewee about the anonymity and protection of the data that they provided. The participants were informed that they could withdraw from the research at any point if that was their will. The consent forms were signed by each participant, keeping a copy of the document. The consent form template can be found in (Appendix 4).

3.7 Chapter Summary

This chapter showed a detailed explanation of all the research methods and principles applied in this dissertation process. This section can serve as a roadmap for anyone planning to replicate this work or conduct further research about this subject. In order to summarise this chapter, the following are the most important highlights: This research is an Interpretivist, qualitative research that used a case study as research design, the data interpretation method applied was thematic analysis to study the material contained within seven semi-structured interviews that were gathered by the researcher as first sources of information.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

The research findings are the result of the application of a thematic analysis strategy. The themes where organised in three main topics from which emerged sub-themes. Findings (4.2) showed the reasons why active Facebook users visit the platform, some of the themes that arose were: use of Facebook for social interaction, benefits regarding communication and entertainment activities. Findings (4.3) described user's positive and negative perceptions about Facebook, themes in this section highlighted user's perceptions about brand trust, utility, site usage and marketing activities in the platform. The last topic (4.4) described the indicators that were identified as motives of brand engagement, brand loyalty and brand love.

4.2 Drivers and People's Motivations to Use Facebook

4.2.1 Participants Motivations to Join Facebook

Facebook users joined the platform because of social reference and its perceived benefits. The totality of participants joined Facebook because people they knew were using the platform. The majority of the reference groups that recommended Facebook to the participants were friends and family.

"All my friends had joined Facebook; I remember being 13 when I joined Facebook. I had just got in to secondary school and everybody in my class was on Facebook, my family was on Facebook. My family in America was on Facebook" Participant 2

"The girls were chatting about Facebook when it came out and I was excited about Facebook because I never had Bebo. It was in school, because everyone else was joining it" Participant 4

Some participants expressed that Facebook was a trend and popular among their friends and that was the main reason they joined. They expressed that did not accept their relatives when they were teenagers, they thought it wasn't a platform to share with family.

"I didn't accept my mum and dad until I turned 18, they weren't allowed to see my life. I have all my family on Facebook now, it was just back then when I was too cool for having them on Facebook" Participant 2.

4.2.2 Perceived Benefits as Drivers for Using Facebook

One of the main reasons participants expressed they use Facebook are the benefits that Facebook and other SNS provide to their everyday life such as free communication and interaction with friends.

"I think my friend made me a profile to talk to a boy, I think it was in secondary school so I was 14 years or something, 14 or 15, so we were trying to organise a date and I didn't have credit on my phone so it was the easiest option just to talk for free online, that was it". Participant 1.

"We were planning something in college and all my friends were posting pictures there I always had been hesitant about social media, but because they would share the pictures there and I wanted to see the pictures I made my profile and joined" Participant 5.

Entertainment was shown to be an important element that drives individuals to use Facebook. Most participants expressed that they spend long periods of time scrolling through their Facebook feed, watching videos, reading articles and blogs

"I think a gratification of entertainment, you don't have to watch a movie, so you immediately scroll and you find something that you are interested in. so I'd say entertainment purposes whether they are news you want to read or a cat doing some funny stuff, just entertainment" Participant 5

"I can spend hours without knowing just watching videos and looking at things I just see and check my notifications" Participant 2

4.2.3 Social Relationships as Driver to Use Facebook

Keeping communication channels with others was found to be very important. Some participants prefer Facebook over any other form of database to keep their contact's information.

"I use it for communicating with my friends, me and my friends we have a big group chat so we talk in that all the time, or contact somebody else". Participant 2

"I have family that moved to America and Facebook is how I connect with them" Participant 3

"I would never get people's phone numbers anymore, so it seems more of an effort to go and add them on WhatsApp!" Participant 1

Observing other people, was an important driver for participants to use Facebook. Some like to see friends and family interactions and some others like as well to follow celebrities or famous personalities. They expressed that Facebook was a way to know what other people were doing.

"It's nice to see what your friends are up to, like knowing when someone is going away or where they are going if they are going on holidays or if they are leaving the country for a long time and I haven't seen them in ages" Participant 1

"It's quite addicting, seeing other people's lives" Participant 2

"I usually see international news, any major events and also pop news. I follow a lot of celebrity blogs so a mixture of pop culture and international news" Participant 3

4.2.4 Social Expression and Self-Identity as Drives to Use Facebook

Users find Facebook as a good place to discover what is trendy among their social circles. They expressed that they use Facebook to know about events, news and stay informed on what their friends are doing.

"To stay involved, see what other people are doing, fear of missing out" Participant 6

"I go into a lot of event pages, what's going on around the place, like what was Loving Dublin saying, I really like a lot of bloggy pages about subject topics that I like" Participant 4

Sharing information that participants thought was important was another compelling reason for using the platform. Many expressed that they shared photos, videos or information they like quotes often to show what they do every day.

"I would post things that I do in a daily basis, if I have things to post, for my family to see" Participant 5

In contrast, some of the participants voiced that they do not share much content in the platform because they consider themselves private people. They said they would share pictures and information that they consider relevant to put in social media.

"I never really post statuses of photographs that much. I used to but I'm quite a private person so I don't really want everyone to know what I'm doing all the time, sometimes if I was on a trip I would post pictures of it but now I don't really" Participant 1

"I don't share much, I usually use Facebook to scroll through the newsfeed and see what I like" Participant 7

4.3 Perceptions about Facebook

Every person has different ways to understand and interpret the world and all that surrounds them. People's observations about Facebook are diverse but this study found that participant's overall perceptions about the platform are positive. Whereas there was some perceptions and situations that participants expressed they did not like.

4.3.1 Perceptions of Utility of Facebook

The first theme that emerged about people's perceptions was that they consider Facebook as a valuable tool. All participants find Facebook to be useful in their everyday lives. Some participants find beneficial its capacity as easy to use and rapid access to social interaction.

"It's easy to use, keeps people connected I like how I can just pick up my phone, text my friend and I can get them straight away" participant 2

"I think it's easy to use and get people together very quickly, connects people very quickly you can put a group together and chat people all on one page at your fingertips" Participant 4.

One of the participants expressed that Facebook is useful because of the diversity of its content and the fast access to communication

"I like the variety that is available in it and I like the way you can create events easily and quite successfully, it's just not hard" Participant 4.

4.3.2 Perceptions of Trust Towards Facebook

The majority of the participants said they trust Facebook as an organisation and trust the service they provide, they justified their answers based on their positive previous experiences with the platform and they believe that their information is safe on the social site.

"I think they are pretty solid, they have been around for ten or 15 years and its grown a lot so I think they have made a good company and a good system and they keep improving and making new things to be in the market and competitive" Participant 6

"Because there is certain regulations and European laws that they can't use certain information without your consent. They are such a huge company that they have to be regulated whereas would be find out quite easy, so I do feel quite safe that they have my information" Participant 3.

While participants said they trust Facebook some of them were concerned about their privacy while using the platform. One participant articulated that she felt she could be located if someone else knew how to and wanted to.

"I don't like how little private your life can be, how someone if really wanted to they can find out where you are at that very moment just by location" Participant 2.

Other users recognised that there are risks of some people braking their privacy but that is not a significant reason for them to delete their profile.

"I know there is a risk. I'm happy enough to not take it down or not to remove it, but that said I do have everything all backed up but I do trust, is not maybe a 100% but I would be happy enough" Participant 4.

Just one of the seven participants said they do not trust Facebook because of their belief that all the information that Facebook gather from its members it's being used for monetary purposes.

"They provide their service but they use our personal data for their own purposes, I think that's a problem, not only for Facebook I think all the big companies they have so much information about us and they are monetizing it" Participant 5

4.3.3 Perceptions of Marketing in Facebook

Another theme that emerged was interviewees perceptions about advertisement on Facebook, in general there was some aversion towards advertisement, some feel adverts can invade their privacy while others don't like the frequency of the marketing frequency. Some participant's dislike that Facebook shares information about them for marketing purposes.

"Makes me uncomfortable that somebody knows much more about me than me, and the fact I can just be targeted, I become a target of all the company's media. The fact I could be targeted makes me little uncomfortable" Participant 5.

One of the participants perceived the use of algorithms in the news feed as a problem. The participant expressed that while he does not like some of content, he likes to know different angles for each situation.

"I've noticed that I always get the same feeds form sources that I always like, so think sometimes I closes the feed I want to see, it's not very open, it always goes to thinks that Facebook know I like that bad because if I'm trying to learn something about US elections, I like to see both side of the coin, but because I always get one feed even though I like the other pages don't get the content, I think is really filtered, too much and I think that's a problem" Participant 5

Another user do not like the frequency the same advertisement is shown on their newsfeed and that Facebook can follow their shopping behaviours to target them repeatedly as consumers.

"I don't like how if you go on a certain news page and you click onto it and then you go back onto your news feed and it seems like that news thing comes up again and again in your news feed because I don't know it must have seen that you click in to that and it will show me again and again the same page" Participant 1

One more participant expressed that they would prefer to be shown relevant advertisement in its newsfeed than marketing messages that were not relevant, but did not like the advertisement in Facebook

"I get loads of adds in my newsfeed, usually about things I could be interested but in don't usually click, I would rather not have ads at all but if I have to choose I prefer they to be relevant" Participant 7

4.3.4 Perceptions about Facebook Use

Excess of use of the platform was the theme that emerged causing negative perceptions about Facebook, most participants are not happy with the time they spend using the platform.

"I would just be seating at home scrolling through your newsfeed for hours and then I can catch myself and then I would realise that I've been doing this for maybe two hours and its sunny outside, so I kind of cut myself off for a while, like I deactivate my Facebook a lot because I get really frustrated" Participant 1.

"Sometimes I feel it makes you procrastinate a lot so I would lose a lot of time that I could use learning something new or any of the other things I really have to do instead of spending time watching a news feed so do think it takes a lot of your time"
Participant 5.

A second theme that emerged was the perception of excessive sharing on Facebook. Some participants find excessive or irrelevant the information that other people share occasionally. Some participants expressed they didn't like when people share too much personal information about delicate subjects or posted things they consider insignificant

"A lot of the time people post the most irrelevant and silly things on Facebook like pictures of your coffee". Participant 2

"I don't like when they over share that really frustrates me and I think it's not what it is for. People over share things that are personal and that are attention seeking, when people put things up that they wouldn't tell you face to face and you wouldn't talk about" Participant 4

4.4 Attitudes and Behaviours that can Indicate Brand Engagement, Brand Loyalty and Brand Love Towards Facebook

4.4.1 Behaviours and Attitudes that Indicated Brand Engagement
The first theme that emerged was about the frequency Facebook users check the site every day and the time participants spend using Facebook. One of the methods to measure engagement is considering the time people invest using a service. There was no clear relationship between the number of times people visit Facebook every day and the time they speed using the platform. Some participants that said them visit Facebook ten times or more a day, said they spend less than an hour using Facebook.

"I can check Facebook a lot of times but in don't spend too much time on it. I check it just because I have a notifications or because I'm used to, I guess, but when I see is

nothing important I just put the phone away and check later what's going on when I'm not busy" Participant 7.

"I see there is a notification and I open it, I see what happened, I see I have a picture or a comment, then I start looking at the news feed and then I get tired of looking at the videos and then I log off" Participant 6

In contrast other participants expressed that they visit Facebook less times a day but they spend more time using it when they do.

"I think is a tool that people can actually be addicted to it and sometimes I wonder if I'm addicted to Facebook myself" Participant 5.

4.4.2 Behaviour and Attitudes that Indicate Brand Loyalty

Brand loyalty was subjected to social influence. Most participants said they would follow what the majority do. Some participants would not change to another platform that offer the same functions as Facebook because they did not see any benefits unless their personal circle changed as well.

"I would if everyone is doing it, I'm such a sheep but if all my friends moved over I probably would. I find I would go with the majority and whatever all my friends are up to" participant 1.

"Let someone else try it and see how they got on and if my friends all moved maybe I would just move as well but I think I wouldn't be the first jumping on it, not broken don't fix it, why leaving if I'm happy with what I'm getting" Participant 4.

Some participants would not change to another platform that offer the same functions as Facebook because they do not see any benefits of changing, unless the features offered were extremely competitive

"I probably would try it but it makes no sense if it does the same job, but I probably would try it". Participant 2

"I would stick to Facebook because I've been on it for about 5 years and it's such a global presence, so I think people would be just loyal to it. Probably because it has been such a sensation, it kind of has changed how we live so I think that's why people would stay loyal to it unless this new social media site have completely new benefits or added more customer and consumer value, then I probably might but Facebook feels like they meet with its users so I don't think would really change"
Participant 3

On the other hand, some participants think Facebook can be replaced by other SNS and that it would not have a great impact if Facebook stopped offering their services.

I think we would just find something different. We would adapt, maybe WhatsApp would become bigger in groups and we would transfer our stuff, I think we would just find a different form, a similar one" Participant 7

"I think it's just a habit and maybe it might affect my social groups or when different things are on, I don't think it would have a massive impact". Participant 4

A second theme that arose was trust towards Facebook. Most participants expressed that they trust Facebook and that they felt their information was safe on the platform

"I've read so many things, people posting articles to boycott Facebook they are using all your information for whatever they want and don't put all your profile details into Facebook, but I would trust them" Participant 1

Some participants use other social networking sites apart from Facebook which could mean that people can be loyal to different brands. Some of the participants expressed they use Instagram, Snapchat and Twitter as well as Facebook because they like different features on the other platforms.

"I use Facebook for the pictures and Instagram as well, sometimes I don't use Facebook because I spent 5 to 10 minutes looking at pictures in Instagram so I don't use Facebook maybe that day" Participant 6.

Enthusiasm towards new features offered by Facebook emerged as another theme that can be categorised as an indicator of brand loyalty. Some users find it very exciting the new functions that Facebook offer periodically.

"I'm excited, I'm like wow! They also released the VR view and I loved it do every time they do something new I'm like yeah keep it up" Participant 5

Most participants described Facebook's brand personality similar to its creator. Nerdy, intelligent and friendly. General perceptions about Facebook's personality were positive and amicable, positive perceptions about brands can be considered indicators of brand loyalty.

"I would see it as Mark Zuckerberg. One of those people that has to know what everyone is up to outgoing, gets along with everyone, really smart guy". Participant 1

"Chatty out going, knows something about everything and tries to be friends with everybody and would try to make you feel you are their best friend" Participant 7

4.4.3 Attitudes and Behaviours that Indicated Brand Love Towards Facebook
Some of the participant's attitudes of brand Love towards Facebook were not conclusive. Most of the participants, while they expressed they like using Facebook, they said they do not know if they feel love towards Facebook, highlighting instead its functional attributes.

"I don't know if I love it. It is hard to describe a relationship, I don't want to say I need it but I would use it a lot, I think if Facebook disappear I would be really sad but if Zara disappeared I wouldn't be as sad". Participant 1

On the other hand, some participants feel deeply associated to Facebook and think Facebook is part of what they are and their lives.

"I feel Facebook is nearly a part of me because I've been on it since I was 15, I have grown up on it so it's probably part of my adolescent years". Participant 3

Some users said to not love Facebook when compared to their favourite brand.

"Facebook it's just a social media, it's different for apple devices, the phone it's used for many other things not just for Facebook so I don't know how to compare them but I don't feel the same admiration for Facebook than for apple" Participant 6.

"No, I think Leones del Caracas is more like my family whereas Facebook is just a tool if it goes tomorrow is gone that's it" Participant 5

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This chapter presents an interpretation of the findings and discusses the significance of the study comparing and analysing the results with the existing literature. The results of this research proved some areas of the literature to be true and applicable in the research problem investigated. Themes that emerged in the findings section reflect what theory purposed in the areas of SNS usage, brand loyalty, brand engagement and brand love.

5.2 Drivers that motivate people to use Facebook.

The theory explains that a high number of people using SNS can predict that more people will join the platform in the future, this is defined by YuLin and Peng Lu (2011) as "Network Externalities". This study matches the theory due to all participants joining the platform Facebook because people in their social circles were using it.

Alongside with network externalities, Yu Lin and Pen lu (2011) also stated that another reason people use SNS are the perceived benefits to users, where people choose the SNS that they think offer the best benefits. This statement was proved to be true, once all participants expressed that they recognised from the beginning of using Facebook all the instant benefits the platform would offer such as, rapid and easy communication with other people, a source of information users are interested in and entertainment features.

Similar to perceived benefits, Bourdieu and Wacquant, (1992) say that people can also perceive benefits from interacting with their connections on SNS, these benefits can be financial, informational and emotional, this they phrased social capital. Yuan and Fussell, (2017) claim that the existence of these type of interactions can motivate people to participate more actively on SNS. Some participants expressed that they

like to acquire and exchange information about subjects they are interested in like social events. They also find SNS a way to bond and receive information about people they value, for some these were reasons to spend more time using Facebook, proving this concepts in the literature true when applied in this study.

Participants in this study said they use Facebook to communicate with their friends, family and people they know and they like to socially interact with them through Facebook. Some contributors expressed that they use Facebook as well to follow bloggers and personalities that they admire and that they spend time looking at the content these influencers produce. Some academics, such as Tsiotsou (2015) describe this type of behaviour in the literature, explaining that people usually develop social and parasocial relationships on SNS; socialise with friends, family and other contacts. Parasocial relationships occurs when users identify and create emotions towards personalities and brands, developing a one-sided relationship that can stimulate users to engage more with the use of SNS.

Content sharing was important for those participants that like to express what they do with their contacts. On the other hand, for other participants sharing content was not an important reason for using Facebook, these participants preferred most of the time to use the SNS to gather information instead of producing. Bakes and White (2010) explain in the literature that people adopt behaviours and attitudes when interacting in social groups, and this has an impact on how individuals use SNS. This theory could explain why some people are content creators and why some are not. This shows that each individual decides how to participate depending on the role they believe they have within their social groups on Facebook, another part of the literature that supports this finding is the need of self-presentation were people share photographs, statuses and information in order to present the best version of themselves through Facebook.

5.3 Perceptions that people have towards Facebook

Participants defined Facebook as a valuable tool that facilitates social interaction on a daily basis and appreciate the easy access to communication with others and the

sources of information and entertainment. The theory supports this perception when defining social media as a service that facilitates the development of social networks through social interaction (Obar and Wildman, (2015). Kietzman supports theoretically this statement expressing that social media are places to discuss, share, seek for information and co-create content.

Brand trust is defined in the literature as the capability of a customer to rely on a brand to perform as promised, Chaudhuri and Holbroor, (2001) consequently trust can be only generated when a business performs as stated. Ballester and Aleman, (2012) say that some factors to build trust are: good word on mouth, security, privacy and brand name. All the participants said they trust Facebook, they believe their information is safe on the platform and that they perceive Facebook as a reliable organisation. On the other hand, some participants said not to trust the way Facebook use their information for advertising purposes. This finding shows that users can trust a brand and at the same time not trust some of the brands activities

The use of Facebook by some people is a perceived problem by some participants that believe that some individuals over share personal issues on SNS and that they think it is not appropriate. Another theme that emerged was the excessive time spent using Facebook. The participants acknowledge that Facebook is distractive and a tool that facilitates procrastination. Ryan, et al. (2014) argue that Facebook can create addiction in some people when its use becomes habitual or excessive. They suggest that the more common motives to use Facebook are "relationship maintenance, passing time, entertainment, and companionship" and that Facebook addiction can be related with gratification feelings.

5.4 Behaviours and Attitudes that Indicate Brand Engagement, Loyalty and Brand Love towards Facebook

Attfield et al. (2009) state that one on the ways to measure engagement is the length of time people spend using the platform and the perception of the time by the individual when using it, saying that when a person in more engaged they are more likely to

underestimate time. Based on this theory, the long-time participants said to spend using Facebook and sometimes without noticing can be an indicator of engagement towards Facebook.

The commitment to repetitively use a service despite competitors and marketing messages is defined by Oliver, 1999 as brand loyalty. There are some key indicators that are determinants of loyalty: trust towards the brand, quality in service and brand identity this last also called, brand personality (Lada, 2014).

Participants provided different indicators of brand loyalty towards Facebook. One indicator is the trust most participants have towards Facebook, stating that they feel their information is safe on the site and that they believe Facebook is a reliable company. Another indicator that matched the literature is in respect to the quality offered by the service, all participants agree that Facebook offer great quality and that they never had problems when using the platform. Facebook was described by many participants positively by using adjectives that are positive , showing signs for brand loyalty creation.

The literature states that the bond created by passionate and emotional attachment towards a brand is the strongest level of commitment an individual can have towards a brand (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). One participant proved this theory by stating Facebook is part of them and to feel love towards the brand.

Chapter 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 Introduction

This study had the purpose to investigate the reasons why people use Facebook, their perception towards the platform and finally to identify which of these responses were indicators of brand engagement, brand loyalty and brand love.

In order to accomplish the objectives in this research, the researcher had to gain a broad understanding of the existing literature related to the subject. As well the researcher was required to gather a large amount of information about how participants use Facebook and what they think about the site, subsequently critically analyse the findings and relate to the literature to prove the validity of the results. The researcher adopted a qualitative approach to collect first source information through in-depth interviews. Data collected was presented in the form of themes that emerged from the interviews in the findings section and from which the following conclusions and recommendations have been made.

6.2 Conclusions

The findings of this research allowed the author to draw the following conclusions.

1.   Participants use SNS to create and develop their social networks, allowing them to socially interact with friends and other people. The pieces they like most about Facebook are: easy communication with other people, photos and video content from their friends, entertainment purposes and having a database of personal contacts and information.

2.   One of the main reasons people joined Facebook was through social reference, most of the participants joined Facebook because friends or family recommended it to them.

3.   Participants perceive high utility value from Facebook expressing the application simplifies many activities that they perform from day to day: communication benefits (calls, messages, video calls) and information sourcing and exchange (News, blogs, celebrities, and events)

4.   Self-presentation is an important reason to use Facebook. Posting photos, videos, statuses and information are the channels for people to express their personalities and believes.

5.   People have an overall positive perception of Facebook regarding to brand trust and brand personality. Facebook was described as a reliable, safe and friendly organisation by most participants.

6.   Participants showed different degrees of adversity to advertisement on Facebook, expressing discomfort on how their data can be used for advertisement purposes and annoyance for repetitive advertisement on their newsfeed.

7.   Facebook is a platform that allows the development of parasocial relationships, where participants can receive constant updates about personalities and brands they admire and feel identified with.

8.   The time and frequency participants said to spend using Facebook reflects high indicators of brand engagement.

9.   Brand loyalty was demonstrated by most participants expressing they repetitively use Facebook because they trust the brand, think it offers a good quality service and have good perceptions about its brand image and reputation.

10.   Indicators of brand love were showed by a participant voicing an emotional attachment and a deep bond towards Facebook, considering its services irreplaceable and extremely valuable.

6.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations have been made for Facebook as the central organisation of this case study in order to highlight the areas to be improved based on the findings in this research. Recommendations for further study has also been made.

6.3.1 Recommendations to Facebook

1.   Perceptions about Facebook, while positive, they are mainly focused on the utility value and little about the brand itself. In order to develop more positive perceptions about the brand, Facebook needs to be more explicit about their brand personality so people can identify with the brand and relating some human characteristics to the product so they can understand what Facebook stands for.

2.   Marketing on Facebook and privacy invasion generated discomfort for some of the participants because of the use of their data for marketing purposes and the possibilities of being hacked. One way to tackle this problem would be Facebook informing more explicitly about their privacy settings and explain that they have the option to block Facebook from apply targeted advertisement on their profiles.

3.   The application of algorithms on Facebook profiles was expressed as a limitation by one participant who expressed they liked to obtain information showing different points of views and information that might differ to their believes or perceptions. The recommendation to Facebook is to provide a setting where users can choose to apply the algorithms to their profile.

4.   Time spent using Facebook is another point of worry among the participants that express not liking the quantity of time they spend using the platform causing procrastination and limiting them to perform other activities, they expressed this is one reason they would stop using the platform. Facebook can help with this concern by informing people they can change their settings to stop receiving notification of activity, they should also conduct further research on how to help people to use the platform the correct amount of time and avoid people's frustration which can result in users abandoning the platform. One solution to this could be a timeout out feature which

only allows the user access to the site for a giving period of time and then prohibits them from logging back onto the site for a set time. An example of this would be a 30 minute usage window, followed by a 2 hour exclusion period. The user would have the ability to increase/decrease these periods as they see appropriate.

6.3.2 Recommendation for Further Research

1.   This study was conducted with participants of different age and culture; it would be interesting to design a study that compares different generations and nationalities with the attitudes and behaviours towards Facebook and determine if considerable differences emerge.

2.   Facebook was the case study for this research but it could be applied to other SNS such as Instagram, Twitter and Snapchat and evaluate if the findings in this work vary when applied in a different social network.

3.   This study aimed to recognise indicators of brand loyalty, brand engagement and brand love. Research can be conducted to expand this study from recognising indicators to how to develop the three concepts: engagement, loyalty and love in SNS.

6.4 Significance of the Study

This study aimed to determine what motives drive people to use Facebook and recognise the key indicators of commitment towards the platform. The study has revealed that people have positive attitudes and perceptions towards Facebook and that they evaluate the platform as useful and safe. Time spent using Facebook, trust to the brand, perceptions of good quality and emotional attachment were the indicators of brand commitment revealed in this research. This research is one of the few made in this area and represents a small input to the literature. Furthermore, it can be taken as a guide for future research.

The results were generated in a specific period of time and in a specific place with a small representation of the population, this study is not generalizable and not

representative of the whole population. This study embodies perceptions and attitudes of specific individuals and represent a small impute to the literature in the areas of SNS brand engagement, brand loyalty, brand love and behaviours and attitudes towards Facebook.

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Glossary

Appendix 1: Questionnaire Sample

1. **What is your Gender?**
o Male
o Female

2. **What is your age?**
   o Under 18
   o 18 to 25
   o 26 to 35
   o 36 to 45
   o 46 to 55
   o 56 to 65
   o Over 65

3. **Do you have a Facebook Profile?**
   o Yes
   o No

4. **How long have you been using Facebook?** (If your answer is less than a year, write (1) Year)
   _____ Year(s)

   a. **How many times do you check Facebook per day?**
      o I don't check Facebook every day
      o 1 to 4 times a day
      o 5 to 10 times a day
      o More than 10 times a day

   b. **How much time do you think you spend looking at Facebook every day?**
      o I only check Facebook less than 4 times per week
      o I spend less than an hour using Facebook everyday
      o I spend 1 to 2 hours per day using Facebook
      o I spend more than 2 hours using Facebook everyday

5. **When you visit Facebook from what device or devices do you usually use?** (More than one option can be selected)

   o Mobile
   o Computer
   o Tablet
   o Other _____

Appendix 2: Interview Questions (Guide)

1. Do you have a favourite brand, or a brand you love? Why?
2. Do you remember why you joined Facebook?
3. Did you ever recommend Facebook to other people, either when you just had joined or after? Why?
4. Describe in detail what you usually do when you visit Facebook?
5. Why do you think you use Facebook?
6. What do you like about the platform?
7. What do you dislike about the platform?
8. What is the most recent new function that you can remember Facebook introducing?
   a. If any, do you usually use the new functions that Facebook offers?
   b. How do you feel every time there is a new function offered by Facebook?
9. Would you miss Facebook if it was gone tomorrow?
   a. How do you think this would affect your personal life?
10. Do you know any alternatives to Facebook that would offer the same service?
    a. If yes: Why do you not use these?
11. If tomorrow someone creates a social media site that does the same as Facebook, and allows you to transfer all your Facebook information to the new digital platform, would you try it?
    a. Explain.
12. At the beginning of this interview, when you talked about that brand that you said you love. Do you feel the same "love" towards Facebook?
13. Do you trust Facebook as a company?
    a. Explain.
14. Do you think your information is safe in Facebook?
15. If Facebook was a person, how would you describe it?

Appendix 3: Transcription Sample

Transcript 1

1. Do you have a favourite brand of a brand you love?

E: like a shop isn't a brand isn't it?

M: anything a shop can be a brand

E: I really like Zara

M: why do you like Zara?

E: I like their clothes (giggles) I don't know, I like shopping there. I got there a lot, whenever I go to town I got there, I don't know why I like it. I would just say it's nice clothes, I like the style of the clothes, I like the colours that they have and the materials they use and they always fit me really well because same shops the clothes doesn't fit me properly and in Zara all seems to be pretty good.

M: What do you know about the company? Zara as a company?

E: It's not just Zara they own Bershka and Stradivarius and lots of other clothing brands and they also have a home sections that they don't have in Ireland but that's it. It is all over Europe there is shops everywhere.

M: What do you know about the company regarding social responsibility, the way they produce and do anything? And would that be important for you to keep buying in Zara?

E: like where how they make their clothes and stuff?

M: yes

E: I never think about it when im shopping and I always see people post stuff being like don't like this company they have child slave labour making all their clothes but I haven't seen anything about Zara so maybe they are ok so I don't know, but it wouldn't come to mind when I'm buying

2. Do you remember when you joined Facebook?

E: I think my friend made me a profile to talk to boy, I think it was in secondary school so I was 14 years or something, 14 or 15 so we were trying to organise an I didn't have credit on my phone so it was the easiest option just to talk for free online, that was it.

M: and then some of you friends were already on Facebook?

E: yes, all of my friends were on Facebook so I was. My parents were kind of against all the social media thing. Do you remember Bebo? I was never let a Bibo account and then when I joined to Bebo it actually sent to all my email contacts and email saying that I joined to bebo and my dad got an email saying, Ellie has joined vevo, would you like to join? So they were always kind of against it and then I made a profile and I used to have it secret all the time, but then after was ok.

3. Did you ever recommend Facebook to other people, either when you just had joined or after? Why?

I think everyone kind of had Facebook, suddenly everyone kind of had it no one was really, you should go on Facebook!

M: So it was more the opposite?

E: yeah, they were more kind of telling me to go on. Maybe if I meet a friend on holidays and they didn't have Facebook I would be like ohh how are we going to keep in touch kind of a way, but a part from that no, not really.

M: do your parents have Facebook?

E: My dad does, he uses it for modelling, and he is a contractor so he do a lot of modelling from Facebook. My mum is not on Facebook at all, she is not great with the internet

M: is she still against social media?

E: No she is not against it but she finds the whole idea of people uploading pictures all the time, she finds that kind of strange as my aunty would be really active on Facebook and she puts some pictures three times a day of just everything she is doing and she thinks that's excessive, so yes she wouldn't use Facebook. She likes Instagram though, she likes liking all my pictures and my sister's ones.

Why do you think she likes more Instagram than Facebook?

E: I think she just gets the pictures, on Facebook there is a lot more, there is a lot of other things out there, she just likes that she only follows me, my sister, my brother, her sister, so she only follows like 12 people I think, so she only sees the pictures that she wants to see of her family and stuff, I think Facebook is too much for her, she just like seeing what we are doing.

4. Describe in detail what you usually do when you visit Facebook?

E: I check my notifications, I check my messages, messenger is kind of different now, I have messenger in my phone witch I check a lot more than I would check Facebook. Do you know the way it is separated in different apps on your phone, so I check messenger all the time because I always get group messages and stuff. When I go into Facebook I check my notifications, I scroll through my news feed for a while and it is all like dog videos, cat videos and then I night look at events that might be coming up, like my friends photos and stuff see (7:30 to 7:32 min), that's kind of it, I wouldn't spend hours but I used to, I had to cut myself of for a while but yeah I just go to see what people are up to.

M: Why did you feel you had to cut yourself off for a while?

E: I got through faces of going out a lot so I would just be seating at home scrolling to your newsfeed for hours and then I can catch myself and then I would realise that I've been doing this for maybe two hours and its sunny outside, so I kind of cleaned myself cut myself off for a while, like I deactivate my Facebook a lot because I get really frustrated.

M: It got my attention that you said you use a lot messenger, do you use it even more than WhatsApp?

E: Yeah, none of my friends uses WhatsApp really

Appendix 4: Consent Form

CONSENT FORM FOR RESEARCH PARTICIPATION

Study Title: Brand loyalty or brand love? Digital social media user's behaviours and attitudes of loyalty towards Facebook.

Principal Investigator: Marisabel De Castro

I am a student at the National College of Ireland, in the School of Marketing. I am planning to conduct a research study, which I invite you to take part in. This form has important information about the reason for doing this study, what we will ask you to do if you decide to be in this study, and the way we would like to use information about you if you choose to be in the study.

You are being asked to participate in a research study about brand loyalty specifically brand loyalty towards digital social media, focusing in the Facebook platform.

The purpose of the study is to discover people's attitudes and behaviours of loyalty towards Facebook, to gain a clear understanding about the subject and complete my dissertation as final requirement to obtain my Master's degree in Marketing.

Study time: Study participation will take approximately 30 to 60 minutes of one interview session with each participant.

Study location: All study procedures will take place at different locations depending on the participant's availability.

I would like to audio-record this interview to make sure that I remember accurately all the information you provide. I will keep these tapes in a safe digital folder in my phone and they will only be accessed and used by me.

I may quote your remarks in presentations or articles resulting from this work. A pseudonym will be used to protect your identity, unless you specifically request that you be identified by your true name.

What are the possible risks or discomforts?
Your participation in this study does not involve any physical or emotional risk to you beyond that of everyday life

What are the possible benefits for you or others?
Taking part in this research study may not benefit you personally, but we may learn new things that will help others.

How will you protect the information you collect about me, and how will that information be shared?
Results of this study may be used in publications and presentations. Your study data will be handled as confidentially as possible.

We may share the data we collect from you for use in future research studies or with other researchers – if we share the data that we collect about you, we will remove any information that could identify you before we share it.

Financial Information
Participation in this study will involve no cost to you. You will not be paid for participating in this study.

What are my rights as a research participant?

Participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to answer any question you do not want to answer. If at any time and for any reason, you would prefer not to participate in this study, please feel free not to. If at any time you would like to stop participating, please tell me. We can take a break, stop and continue at a later date, or stop altogether. You may withdraw from this study at any time, and you will not be penalized in any way for deciding to stop participation.
If you decide to withdraw from this study, the researchers will ask you if the information already collected from you can be used.

Who can I contact if I have questions or concerns about this research study?
If you have questions, you are free to ask them now. If you have questions later, you may contact the researcher at:

+353 (83) 1674263
Marisabel De Castro
marisabeldecastro@gmail.com

Consent

I have read this form and the research study has been explained to me. I have been given the opportunity to ask questions and my questions have been answered. If I have additional questions, I have been told whom to contact. I agree to participate in the research study described above and will receive a copy of this consent form.

_____
Participant's Name

_____
Participant's Signature   Date