

The Millennial Buying Behaviour towards healthy food products in Ireland

Dissertation

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ABSTRACT

Nowadays understanding the needs and desires of Generation Y has been considered a key element for companies. This generation also called “ millennials” were born between 1981 and 2000 has significant participation in the economy. The millennials are always connected and they believe they can make the world a better place to live. Studies have shown that millennials have a higher level of education than previous generations and are constantly aware of what is happening in the world. Accordingly, generation Y presents different patterns of behaviour regards buying decisions. Thus, this paper discusses how this generation behaves and which factors influence their purchases. The article also is focused on understanding the healthy eating habits of the millennials in Ireland. Additionnally , the research aims to present pertinent results which possibly will enable companies to develop strategies to satisfy the demands of this group. The project has a mix of quantitative and qualitative approach and involves the application of a questionnaire for 107 people from this group in the country. The sample is composed of mostly for Irish millennials, however, Europeans in general and non-Europeans also take part in the research. The results carefully analysed conclude that millennials are aware of the importance of having a healthier lifestyle and have also been changing their eating habits. However, other factors such as, smoking and drinking habtis, lack of time and price of products have negatively influenced their behaviour.

DECLARATION

I, Nathalia Campos Nogueira, declare that this thesis is my original project, has not been submitted for any previous degree. The material consulted is according to the requirements of the National College of Ireland and the credit has been given within this project where reference has been made to the work of other authors.

Signed:

Date:

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Finally, I would like to acknowledge with much appreciation of the 107 millennials which expressed significant interest in responding to my survey.

THESIS DECLARATION PAGE

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Consumer behaviour is an essential area of marketing, once it is fundamental to understand which factors influence the buying decision of consumers. This field is also relevant because companies need to develop strategies to satisfy the needs of a market segment. Kotler (2003) explains that marketing aims to please customers need so that consumer behaviour involves the study of how individuals of society select, buy and dispose of products and services. Moreover, companies also have to be aware that generations are likely to have different patterns of behaviour, which consequently influences their buying decision.

Generation can be defined as a group of individuals who are passing through a specific period and is sharing similarities in concern habits and lifestyle (Turner, 1998, as cited in Chaney at al. 2017). This concept also involves sharing experiences and similar events at a similar age (Willians and Page, 2014). Thus, influences affect how companies will market to each group, developing products and services positioned on these elements.

The Millennial generation has been playing a major role in term of participation in the economy. This generation, also named generation Y; has been increasing its participation in the economy, once it has become the most powerful consumer sector in history (Bucuta, 2015). Due to its significance in the society, companies have been struggling to try to identify the Millennial Generation desires towards consumption. This generation were born in the digital age, as a result, people from this group have different mindset comparing to its older generation (Bucuta, 2015). In 2015, the Millennials represented 23% of the population in Europe (Stokes, 2015).

Millennials are likely to have a valuable influence on the family buying decisions, especially towards food consumption. Studies have shown that not only the millennials are highly interested in any topic related to food (Gerdes, 2017), but also, they spend more money on food than the generation X.

Furthermore, it is also true that the Millennials have been changing their tastes concerning food. According to Gapper (2018), this generation is giving preference for buying healthier products, instead of processed food. This new trend is due to an increase in the interest for eating healthy. As a result, the demand for organic products, with few ingredients have been increasing every year. Another study concludes that 9 of 10 Millennials consider having a healthy diet as an essential factor of wellness; as a result, food considered harmful are likely to be excluded from their diet (Nielsen, 2015). The same research showed that 32% of the Millennials are willing to pay more for sustainably sourced ingredients and 31% would pay a premium for food with gluten-free.

Innumerable studies considering the relevance of analyzing Millennials behaviour were made, however, there is little knowledge of how this generation behaves in Ireland concerning food. Besides, there is also a lack of information about their buying preferences regarding healthy food in the country.

Hence, this paper aims to investigate: *What are the Millennials Consumers Preferences towards Healthy Food in Ireland and how it influences their buying decision?* The author of this research had no success finding pieces of evidence of previous academic studies similar to this in Ireland, which makes the topic extremely relevant to the study. There is also a need for understanding if the Irish millennials are health conscious and how it influences in their buying decision.

This research also aims to identify possible lacks of information pertinent to the topic which can lead to the conclusion that this project is valid once the findings of this research can be useful to companies.

For the purpose of achieving the objectives of this project and also answer the research question, the next five chapters are organised in: firstly, in the **literature review**, it is discussed the results of other researches related to the topic. In this case, it is fundamental to explain who the millennials are, their buying behaviour and how they purchase food and healthy food in Ireland. After exploring and analysing the current information referent to the topic, it is given the main **objectives** of this project. In the **methodology** section, it is illustrated the reasons for conducting the research with a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods; the main aspects related the data

collection, survey design and its application. Once the methodology is explained, the following chapter presents the **findings** and **discussion** which explore in details the results of the research, analyses the importance of the findings to the research objectives also linking the topics to information presented in the literature review. Finally, the **conclusion** summarises the findings and gives suggestions for future researches.

2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

In this chapter, it is discussed previous studies, which might contribute to answering the research question. It is approached concepts of consumer behaviour and factors which influences their buying decision. It also describes and compares past studies related to understanding the main characteristics of millennials, the trends raised by other authors concerning how they purchase food, especially healthy food; and the information collected regarding their behaviour in Ireland.

2.1 Consumer Behaviour

Consumer behaviour is the “Art of knowing customers”, by analysing their consciousness and attitudes, and how the environment influences on their buying decision. Fahy and Jobber (2012) complement that there are many factors which influence on the purchase’s habits, consequently a successful marketing demands significant sensitivity to understand those drivers of behaviour. Consumers refer to groups which are usually assumed to present similar attitudes and behaviour. Additionally, it is assumed that people who have common geodemographic influences belong to the same market segment (Johns and Pines, 2002). Moreover, the role of marketing is to understand the how consumers behave and anticipate their demands.

Baker and Hart (2008) mention that in order to facilitate the comprehension of factors which influence the consumer behaviour, is necessary to analyze three key components: **The Individual** (physiological aspects, how they process information, communication elements, attitudes and beliefs), **The Environment** (influence of family and other individuals, marketing activities, rules and suppliers) and **The Physical environment** (How the consumers actually behave).

In addition, Kotler (2003) explains that the buying behaviour is influenced by **Cultural, Social, Personal and Psychological factors**. Culture has an essential influence on the individual buying decision only for the fact that people who have the

same culture tend to have similar patterns of behaviour. Therefore, marketers have to understand that the culture varies from groups, region and countries. Social aspects also have an important influence on consumer behaviour. People are likely to have references from groups such as family, friends or even from those whom they admire. Equally to social factors, the buying decision is affected by the characteristics of each individual. Thus, personal factors include aspects such as economic situation, lifestyle, personality, occupation and self-concept (Rani, 2014). Psychological factors are those related to the way that consumers select, classify and interpret the information in order to have a picture of a specific situation. Additionally, these elements also include the changes in individuals behaviour based on their experiences (Małgorzata et al. 2012).

Therefore, understanding how these factors influence the customer's behaviour is vital for companies, simply for the fact it allows the classification of consumers into markets. Thus, enable marketers to develop strategies to target a market, creating brands and advertising campaigns in order to meet the needs of consumers.

2.2 The Millennials Buying Behaviour

In this section, it is reviewed the characteristics of the millennials and the importance of comprehending how they have their buying decision, always supporting the arguments with theories and previous studies. First of all, it is essential to explain the main concepts related to this project. In the next sections, it is discussed the concept of generations and some characteristics of the Millennials. After approaching these definitions, it is examined the concerns of the millennials about health and how it influences their buying decision.

2.2.1 Who are the Millennials?

Generation can be defined as a group of individuals which were born in a specific period. This group presents similarities regarding values, lifestyle and preferences.

Generations are influenced by many factors such as national events, trends, culture, language, consequently affecting how these groups interact with business (Armstrong, 2017). According to Novak (2012) it is possible to classify individuals who are alive into six groups: People born between 1901 and 1926 belong to GI Generation, from 1927 to 1945 are the Great Depression Generation, after that came the Baby Boomers who were born between 1946-1964. Generation Z are those born in 1965-1980, the Millennials came after generation X (1981-2000) and individuals born after 2000 are the generation Z.

Figure 1:

Generation	Context	Characteristics
Pre-Depression Gen. (1901-1926)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Went through a hard economic period - Had traumatic experiences - High unemployment rates 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Focus on personal security and financial stability. - Traditional, altruistic and concern about health
Great Depression Gen. (1927-1945)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experienced the Great Depression - Social tranquillity and family togetherness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Concern about reputation, ethics and moral. - Aimed financial stability
Baby Boomers (1946-1964)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Increase in birth rates - Living in a community leads to progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Optimism, independence and expressed their own opinions
Generation Z (1965-1980)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficult economic times - Experienced the expansion of the use computers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Balance between personal life and work - Less traditional than previous generations - Multiculturalism
Millennials (1981- 2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Born in the Digital Age - Increase female workforce - Families with dual income 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Independent and self-reliant - Very concern about appearance - Believe can make a difference in the world
Generation Z (from 2000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Social Media - Digital Communication 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Multitask - Realistic - Individuality

Note: Own elaboration based on Novak (2012).

Regarding generations, the Millennials are those relevant to this research. In 2016 this generation consisted of about 83.1 million, which represents about 25 percent of the population in the USA. (The Hartman Group, 2016). Another research (KMPG, 2017) showed that this the millennials have higher level education comparing to previous generations, and are considered the most-influential consumer segment of history.

Despite the importance of Millennials, there is a considerable variation regarding classifying individuals into this segment. In order to simplify this concept, it is going to be considered people born in the 1980s to 2000 (Bowman, 2015).

The Millennials are also the first generation which has grown up with the presence of the internet, which consequently influenced in the way they interact with others. They are always virtually connected and online in social media. Social sites such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter and Whatsapp play a significant role concerning millennials connectivity. Studies have shown that 96% of generation Y has at least one social media (Childs et al. 2010). Another survey realised by Global Web Index called Social Media by Generation (2018) shows the average time that millennials spend on social media is 2:18. In Europe, this number decreases to 1:50.

Due to the high level of connectivity, continually looking for immediate answers to their problems. This generation does not pay attention in spans and can present a lack in punctuality (Huntley, 2006). Despite being in different life stages; once some are studying in College, others living at home or have moved out to live on their own; they share the same beliefs, have strong values, and are aware of what is happening around the world. They also more ethnically diverse; consequently, they are also more culturally diverse than the previous generations (The Hartman Group 2016). Several studies have shown that the Millennials are willing to contribute to the society in order to make a difference in the world. According to Mobolade (2016) in a research named ‘‘How to Market Effectively to Millennials’’, 85% of consumers from this segment are aware of companies’ attitudes towards Corporate Social Responsibility which influences the purchase decisions

2.2.2 Millennials and Health

A brief discussion about health issues

Not only is important to explain the buying trends for the millennials but also understand what a healthy diet involves. In fact, healthy food refers to a balanced diet, composed for proteins, carbohydrates and certain quantity of fat. A healthy diet also

involves having moderation and controlling the nutrients of each meal (Guenther et al., 2013; cited in Ferrao, 2017).

According to Fedusiv and Caifeng (2016), healthy eating behavior consists in these habits: avoid to eat fried meals, have the preference for baked and stewed meals, and food with low quantity of additives. A survey realised with 30,000 adults in 60 different countries (AC Nielsen, 2016 - Global Health Survey) concluded that 49% of the respondents said they consider to be overweight and 50% have been trying to lose weight.

In 2017 in Ireland, the Department of Health published a survey with people of different ages around the country. The results have shown that around 30% of the Irish younger generations are overweight and about 52% are not happy with their bodies.

As well as the concern about weight alcohol and smoking habits are also an issue regards this generation. This research (Department of Health, 2017) also concluded that 55% of the respondents have been drinking at least once a week. From this group, 37% declared that they drink six or more drinks on a typical occasion and 54% also smoke in a typical drink occasion. Around 75% of people from different age groups consumed alcohol in 2017.

Although some researches have shown that overweight, smoking and alcohol consumption are common issues in the country, the Independent Newspaper (2019), published recently an article called: "Ireland in the bottom third of 187 countries for healthy eating." mentioning that the population in Ireland have increased the consumption of healthy food between 1990 and 2010. Another research (Bord Bia website, 2019) also explains that in 2017 around 91% of the Irish population have a preference for organic products, once they consider them better than the non-organics.

In all, it is possible to understand that according to these statistics there the healthy topic food has become more relevant around the world. As a result, the demand for those products is likely to increase in the next few years, so that companies must be conscious of the expansion of this movement and develop strategies to supply this need.

2.3 Millennials Buying Behaviour

As it was mentioned before, millennials have different beliefs and attitudes, which affect in their buying decision. Consequently, this paper aims to investigate how the above elements influence on the way this generation purchases healthy food.

Several studies have shown that the Millennials are becoming the most influential generation. As a result, it is crucial for companies to understand their consumer behaviour, to analyse their needs, and develop strategies which aim to satisfy the necessities of these individuals (Kotler, 2003).

Generation Y have different perspectives and motivations compared to other generations. Thus, refer to the fact that this generation is likely to have a significant contribution to the economy to their income and high expenditures (O' Donnel, 2006, cited in Bucic at al. 2012).

Millennials are likely to be influenced by mouth-to-mouth recommendations. They prefer to buy products which were recommended by friends, family specialists, instead of advertising (Duffy et al. 2017). Mobolade (2016) explains that Millennials are likely to be influenced by social media regarding trying new products; however, brands must be candid and authentic.

Sharing opinions and demonstrating dissatisfaction towards a product or a service are also common habits among millennials. They tend to go online and express their perceptions through social networks, blogs, and forums (Bucuta, 2015). Millennials use social media not only to connect with people who have the same beliefs and commons interest as them but also to search for information about a specific product or a company.

Therefore, social media plays an essential role in millennials buying behaviour and realizing the importance of social media to millennials, companies now are changing from their traditional approach to virtual channels (Bucic at al. 2012).

2.3.1 Buying Behaviour: Food

Comprehending the Millennials trends concerning food is crucial for companies to become successful in the long term. The reason for that is once they understand the millennials desires and attitudes, businesses can create products and services which meet what they are looking to buy.

Among millennials, food is considered a “New Fashion”. Millennials use food to express themselves and as a way of sharing with the society their ideas and opinions. The millennials diet tells a lot about their lifestyle and personality. For this reason, a healthy diet a concern in the millennial’s life (Ram, 2017). In fact, food for this generation is a complex topic due to the wide range of products presented in the market. Nowadays it is possible to have access to cuisines from different regions and countries. As a result, millennials tend to buy food which allows them to have new experiences and sensations. (The Caterer, 2016).

Furthermore, the food industry must pay attention to Millennials due to its influence on the economy. According to a study made by RBC Capital Markets (cited by The Culinary Institute of America, 2019), showed that millennials are looking to buy food with high quality, better food value and also the ones which provide different experiences.

Gordon (2014), explains in his article some trends regarding this generation in terms of food consumption. According to him, around 70% of millennials go online to search for information about anything, especially food. It is also true that the demand for food rich in proteins have increased 54% and people from this generation are looking to buy products which are considered by them as “real food”. They also tend to use less the microwave, which has been replaced by ovens and grills.

Another point of attention is that the female earning income is expected to rise significantly by 2020 and women are considered the primary decision-makers when the topic is food (“The Future of Food: Exploring Food Innovations of Tomorrow”, 2018). They differ from men in the way they do their food shopping once they tend to spend more time on their buying decision, as they seek and compare products. While women are doing their shopping, they are seeking to have an enjoyable experience, if

it happens, they are also likely to spend more time and money during this activity. Additionally, women are also those who prefer to prepare the meals at home in most of the cases which do the grocery list (Stegelin, 2002).

2.3.2 Buying Behaviour: Healthy Food

Millennials have a distinct attitude towards buying decisions, and also are considered a generation healthy conscious. Furthermore, millennials tend to have different views about food comparing to the baby boomers. Moreover, millennials are the largest demographic group in the world, who currently hold 17 percent of the purchase power, also likely to increase 30 percent by 2020 (Covino, 2017).

Generally speaking, the economies of developed countries have been driven essentially for the changing tastes of this generation (Daneshkhu, 2018). Considering that the Millennials are more engaged on a healthier lifestyle, it is possible to suppose that they are also seeking to eat healthy.

According to Covino (2017), the trends for the Millennials are: They are always connected, they also tend to snack more than previous generations, are seeking for transparency regarding food, and they have a strong attention for health and Wellness. Additionally, this generation has the highest consumption of vegetables and fruits. As well as the increase in consumption of fruits and vegetables, the millennials are buying more healthy snacks. Adopting this idea, the International Food Information Council 2016 research showed that Millennials are willing to buy food with few ingredients and which are more natural or organic. There is also an increase for the consumption of oil and fat. Another survey (Gerdes 2017), explained that younger adults shop more organic food than older adults (61% vs. 45%). This same researched indicated that women are more aware than men regarding the topic of genetically modified foods.

In summary, the millennial generation presents different attitudes concerning their eating habits. This generation not only is seeking a healthier lifestyle but also tend to buy food, which is according to their value. Ultimately, the generation Y behaviour is highly influenced by social aspects as well as by the internet, especially social media.

2.3.3 Millennials and Environmental concerns

Moreover people have become more concerned about the environment and as consequence, businesses are responding to this trend by developing products and services which are environmentally friendly (Smith, 2010). According to a report made by the California Green Solution (2007) 47% of millennials demonstrated significant interest on paying more for a product which is considered environmentally friendly and 77% are willing to spend more in a product just for to be seen as someone who cares about the environment. The same survey also shows that millennials tend to respond positively to green messages sent by marketers.

As a result of the interest about environment, the vegan and vegetarian movements have become gradually part of the lifestyle of the population. According to the Vegetarian Resource Group (VRG), 0.8% of adults around the world, which corresponds to 1.8 million people are considered vegan because they do not eat dairy, honey or any other product with animal ingredients. The institution also explains that around 7.5 million of the population is vegetarian. Part of these vegetarians has also avoided the consumption of dairy and egg products, who in 2004 were around 2.9 million people. The research also explains that vegans are heavy users of products which correspond to their needs. Vegans are more likely to be loyal and enthusiastic customers, and they tend to recommend products and brands which they like to friends and acquaintances.

Similarly, to vegans, vegetarians and semi-vegetarians adopt these types of lifestyle mainly for health reasons. The semi-vegetarians tend to reduce meat consumption in order to have a healthier diet, to lose weight and reduce the level of cholesterol and fat. As a result, 73% of people from this group are willing to improve their health conditions (Ginsberg, 2017).

Millennials and Generation Z are the ones particularly optimistic about the new trend. A survey in the UK showed that 66% of people under 44 years old believe that the number of vegan people in the UK are likely to increase (Marketing Research Blog, 2019).

It is also true that between the years of 2001 and 2011 there was a significant decrease in meat consumption which falls from 93kg per year to 77.5kg. However, the demand for products high protein made the numbers increase again in 2016 to 90kg a year (CSO Meat Supply Report, 2017). Other products have also become a trend such as avocado and eggs. The avocado price increased drastically from €5.6 million a year to €18 million in 2018. In the same year, supermarkets and food stores in the same year sold 14.2 million packs of vegetal milk, in contrast, the consumption of buttermilk and drinking milk fell from 153 litres in 2001 to 135 litres in 2011(CSO Report Milk Statistics, 2018).

2.4 Findings and Considerations

Based on the information above presented, previous studies mentioned and current statistics, it is possible to suppose that the millennial generation has significant participation in the economy. This research also showed that this group has a high influence in the decision making of the other generations, which consequently leads the author to aim to investigate further information about this generation.

Besides the importance of millennials, it is also relevant to study how they purchase food, especially healthy food. As it was mentioned, they have different patterns of food consumption, and new trends have emerged; such as the preference for fresh products, increase of consumption of fruit and vegetables, fewer ingredients and organic food. Therefore, more studies concerning this topic have to be done to have a better understanding of how this generation behaves and how companies can develop strategies to attend to the needs of millennials.

Despite the pieces of evidence of the relevance of the topic, the author found a lack of information about how this group behaves in Ireland and how they are buying food. Anterior academic studies regarding the consumption of healthy food from this generation were found, however, the author of this thesis did not find a more in-depth analysis of the topic in this Country, which makes this project extremely relevant.

As a result, it is a fact that the topic is considered pertinent to be studied. The information acquired allows Irish companies to recognise the necessities of this group, and create or improve products and services to meet the demand.

3.0 RESEARCH QUESTION AND OBJECTIVES

Due to the relevance of exploring this topic, as well as comprehending the main aspects related to the Irish millennials and their buying behaviour, it is essential to define what this dissertation mainly intend to discover. In addition to this, there is also a need for defining the principal objectives of this thesis and how these objectives lead the author to acquire knowledge relevant to understand this topic.

After all, this research mainly aims to identify:

What are the Millennials Consumers Preferences towards Healthy Food in Ireland and how it influences their buying decision?

The main objectives of this study are:

- **To analyze consumers attitude towards a healthy lifestyle:** in order to understand the millennials buying behaviour, firstly, it is necessary to comprehend how external factors in society influence this generation. Thus, this project aims to explain the millennials beliefs regards their health.
- **Identify different patterns of behaviour regarding healthy food:** not only this paper the millennials perceptions about health, but also intends to discover if this topic influences their buying behaviour.
- **Understand their behaviour toward the purchase of healthy foods, high protein, low sugar and low-fat products:** comprehend their buying preferences towards these products and identify the reasons for buying them or not.
- **Examine the gap between “Intention to buy” and what they buy:** identify if millennials are in fact purchasing healthy food products and recognize which elements have influenced negatively on this decision.
- **Briefly explain how businesses have been performing in Ireland to satisfy the needs of the millennial:** are the Irish industry creating and adapting their products due to new millennials buying behaviour?

4.0 METHODOLOGY

According to Saunders et al. (2009), the methodology is a theory which involves the decision of how the research will be conducted in order to achieve the objectives of a study. It is also true that methodology is correlated to methods and techniques. Thus, enable the researcher to find the most appropriate way to conduct the project and obtain the analysis and findings. Methods can be the nature qualitative or quantitative, or the combination of both. Additionally, methods are associated with questionnaires, interviews and observations.

Therefore, this section explains how the research has been realized and limitations related to the topic. In the chapter, the author explains her decisions concerning the type of methodology and methods adopted in order to answer the research question and the objectives.

Due to the necessity for exploring data from a large group, the project has mainly a quantitative approach. Newman and Ridenour (1998) explain that a quantitative method involves research in social science and it is usually done through empirical or statistical studies. A quantitative research is also based on measurements usually expressed through quantities. Despite this research having most of aspects revealed to a quantitative method, it also has a qualitative approach. A qualitative research aims to investigate aspects to the human behaviour, exploring aspects related to their desires and motivations (Kothari, 2004).

As well as defining the method, it is also important to consider which statistics analysis are pertinent to research. In the case of the project, it is first used the descriptive statistics to describes the characteristics of the respondents, such as gender, nationality, age (Kothari, 2004). Based on the features acquired, it is possible to summarise and organise the main characteristics of the sample. However, these features need to be analysed in order to understand the relationship between the sample selected and the rest of the population (Trotter II, 2012). As a result, it is applied an inferential approached once the sample is observed in order to determine patterns of behaviour and inferred that the population.

Furthermore, a representative sample of the population has been examined. For a population, Ramsey and Hewitt (2005) define as ‘‘Decision Unit’’ because it refers to the material necessary for the decision. The authors also explain that the selection of population has a relevant role to decide where the sample will be acquired.

Data Collection

The population of this paper are the Irish Millennials from different genders, ages, and nationalities. In order to acquire the information required to answer the research question, the data collected origins from a primary and secondary source. According to Kothari (2004), the data collection must be planned in advance and the questionnaire should preferably be considering a pilot study.

Primary data has been accessed through a survey realized in the country. Groves et al. (2009) define survey as a systematic method used by a researcher in order to gather information from a sample. The survey also intends to extract quantitative information about a specific population.

Therefore, this project involved the application of a questionnaire with closed questions to 107 millennials living in Ireland. At the beginning of each questionnaire the author mentioned the reasons for the survey and explained aspects such as anonymousness and confidentiality.

The author of this research demonstrated significant efforts concerning the validity of this survey as the data collection has been mostly based on the Central Statistics Office report from 2016. However, a certain level of convenience has been also applied because in some cases some of the respondents were easier accessed by the researcher. Convenience sampling was necessary due to the short deadline to conclude this research. According to Saunders at al. (2009, p.241) the convenience sample enables the researcher to gather the data required and also can be considered more cost-efficient.

This approach aimed to obtain more accurate and objective information concerning the buying decision of Millennials in the country. The questionnaire involved a

combination of application two methods: on line questionnaire and face-to-face interviews. It is also important that the questionnaire is concise, objective and preferably adopted by other researches in their dissertation.

The online survey was realized through the platform SurveyMonkey, which respondents had to complete 18 closed questions about their eating habits and lifestyle. Most of the questions also had an option for comments which effectively contributed to improving the quality of the data collected. The survey had been sent through various channels such as social networks, online communities, social medias (WhatsApp, Instagram, Facebook) and Emails.

Each respondent took from 3-5min to complete the survey, and 95 people completed the questionnaire. The online poll facilitated the data collection by enabling the researcher simultaneous analysis. Therefore, the author was continually monitoring the quality of the information acquired.

In complement to the online survey, the author of this research also realised face-to-face interviews with 12 random millennials. The respondents were found in universities campuses, workplaces, shops and approached on the street.

This other method enabled a more appropriate balance in terms of gender, age and nationalities in the overall data collection. As well as the online survey, the questionnaire was composed of 18 questions about their eating habits and lifestyle in general. Adopting this strategy, the researcher also was capable of acquiring superior qualitative data, as it was possible to ask the respondent to justify their answers to each question.

The primary data has been securely stored in the cloud (SurveyMonkey platform) and also on an Excel file encrypted and saved on Google Cloud in the author's Gmail account. The results have been only sent to the supervisor of this project.

In complement to the primary data, secondary data has been accessed not only because the author identified a certain lack of information in some aspects which are essential to respond to the research question.

5.0 FINDING AND RESULTS

This chapter presents the findings and results collected in primary research. One hundred seven millennials living in Ireland had completed the online questionnaire and face-to-face forms. The respondents had to answer closed questions related to their eating habits in the country. Most of the questions had a field for comments, which allowed gathering not only quantitative data but also enable the author of this project to collect additional information, thoughts, ideas and opinions which considerably relevant for concluding this project.

Despite the short deadline to collect the data, the online survey and face-to-face questionnaire awarded the researcher the possibility to approach in numerous aspects regards eating habits of millennials and the factors which influences their buying decision.

Firstly, this section presents the results collected from the online and face-to-face survey.

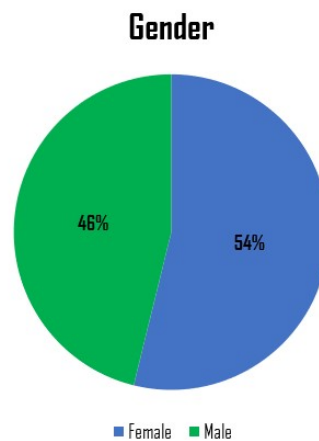
Secondly, it is linked the information acquired from primary data to current secondary data, which allows the author to make assumptions of how the millennials behave in Ireland and what influences their buying decisions.

Thirdly, the author explores how these new trends have influenced the business strategies mentioning examples of companies which have developed products to meet the necessities of millennials in the country.

5.1 Respondents Demographics and Characteristics

The online survey was completed by 51 women and 44 men from different age groups and nationalities. The questionnaire was primarily sent through email and social media channels such as Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. This approach provided a report with analysis of the data collected which were updated once a new respondent completed the survey. The balance of genders and coherence in terms of nationalities and gender was a critical aspect of the project, and for this reason a complementary method was also used to achieve these criteria. As a result, the face-to-face interviews was applied to 12 respondents and it enable the balance required.

Figure 2:



Source: SurveyMonkey (2019).

Figure 3:

Age Group	Number of Respondents	%
20-24	35	33%
25-29	32	30%
30-34	25	24%
35-39	13	12%
Others	2	2%
Grand Total	105	100%

Note: Own elaboration based on SurveyMonkey (2019).

As above illustrated two respondents do not belong to the age group selected. Therefore, the following analysis exclude those 2 % which are not considered millennials according to this research.

The study revealed that the annual income of millennials varies according to their age group. Millennials at their age 20 to 29 mostly have a yearly income of €0 to €20,000 a year, and millennials who are at least 30 years old are likely to raise over €26,000 yearly. Conversely, the differences in income had not interfered the behaviour of the millennials, according to the sample. The survey identified similar patterns among millennials which had different annual incomes so that income did not play an important role in regards to millennials buying decisions.

Figure 4:

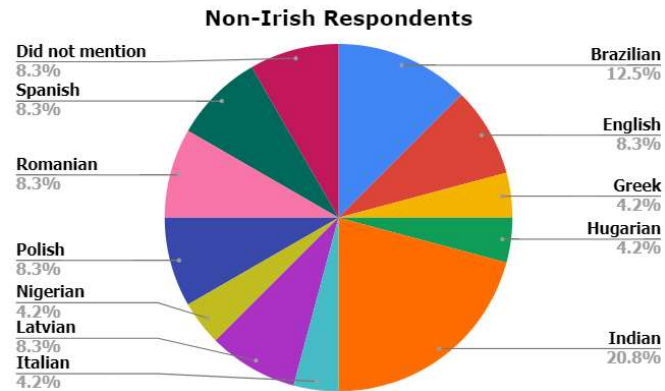
Annual Income	Number of Respondents	%
€0 - €12,500*	21	20%
€12,501 - €20,000	19	18%
€21,000 - €25,000	12	11%
€26,000 - €30,000	10	10%
€31,000 - €35,000	19	18%
€36,000 - €40,000	7	7%
Over € 41,000	16	15%
Did not mention	1	1%
Grand Total	105	100%

Note: Own elaboration based on SurveyMonkey (2019).

The sample selected is based on the Central Statistics Office report from 2016. According to the report 82,346 immigrants moved to Ireland in 2016 representing 11.6% of the total population in the country. Thus, mostly came from countries such as Poland (2.6%), UK (2.2%), Lithuania (0.8%), Romania (0.6%), Latvia (0.4%), Brazil (0.3%). Seventy-nine respondents have identified themselves as Irish while 28 declared to be non-Irish citizens. The group of non-Irish presents a variety of nationalities also from different continents (see figure 5).

Figure 5:

Nationality	Number of Respondents
Irish	79
Non-Irish	28

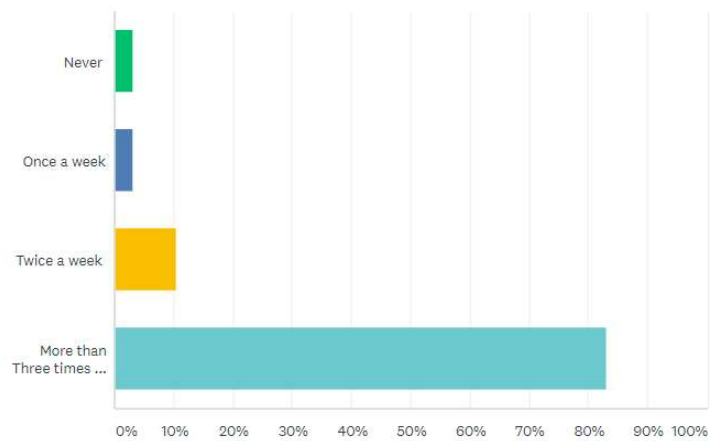


Source: SurveyMonkey (2019)

Figure 6:

How often do you cook your own meals?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0



Source: SurveyMonkey (2019)

Likewise, the report published by the CSO (2016), the sample collected presents a diversity of nationalities who seventy-nine are from Ireland and twenty-eight from different countries and continents. Those who came from a foreign country are originally from Romania (two millennials), Brazil (three), Poland (two), Spain (two), Latvia (two), England (two), India (five), one is from Nigeria, one from Italy, one from Greece and one from Hungary. Also, from this group, two respondents declared to be non-Irish; however, the country from origin was not mentioned.

Hence the sample selected allowed the researcher to understand some aspects related to their lifestyle in Ireland, their eating habits. The perception obtained during and after the application of the questionnaire was that the respondents were comfortable answering the survey and also demonstrated interest on the topic.

The results collected through this survey also facilitated the comprehension of many aspects about the millennials, such as the patterns of behaviour of this generation and beliefs, as well as the comprehension of what influences their buying decision when they are purchasing healthy food. Therefore, the next sections of this project it is explore the main findings regard the millennials living in the country.

5.2 Millennials are concerned about their Health

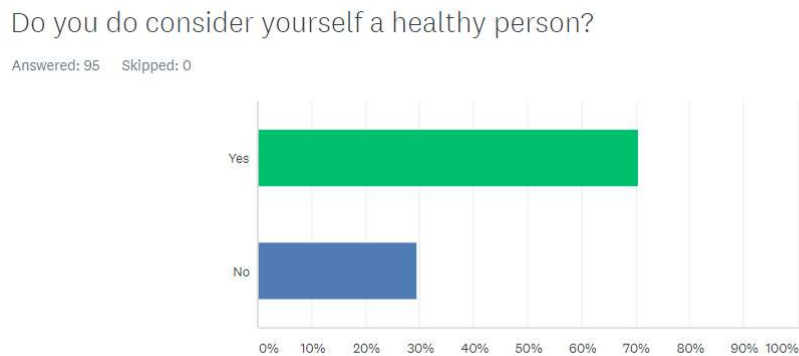
The studies previously mentioned in this project revealed that millennials have been willing to have a healthy lifestyle and are very concerned about their health conditions.

As it has been illustrated in *Section 2.3.2 (Buying Behaviour: Healthy Food)*, Millennials are willing to have a healthier lifestyle and consequently are looking for products which are according to their values (Covino, 2017). This generation has also been more conscious that healthy eating habits and exercises effectively contribute to a better quality of life.

Moreover, the online survey and face-to-face interviews revealed that the majority of respondents believe in having healthy habits. The online survey demonstrated that

70.53% of millennials consider themselves healthy (see figure 7), while 83.33% of those who completed the face-to-face questionnaire affirmed to have healthy habits.

Figure 7:



Source: SurveyMonkey (2019)

When the respondents were asked the reasons for alleging to be healthy, most of the millennials explained that they include in their routine regular exercises and a balanced diet. The report showed that 99.8% includes in their diet fruits and vegetables on their daily meals.

The respondents who declared that they don't have a healthy lifestyle explained that the most common reasons for that are: they do not exercise enough, consumption of food with high levels of sugar and fat, smoking and drinking habits. From this group only 0.2% affirmed not to eat any fruit and vegetables in a daily basis.

Not only most of millennials declared to have a healthy lifestyle, they also mentioned that while they are shopping, they tend to give preferences for buying low fat/sugar products and high protein aliments. They were asked to justify their answer and those who respondent "Yes" explained that they will purchase these products because:

- High protein products are believed to be healthy;
- High sugar intake can cause health problems, such as obesity and diabetes;
- They give preferences for buying these products only if it is clearly explained on the packaging the composition of the products;

However, a significant number of millennials (45.26% online survey and 33.33% face-to-face questionnaire) will not buy these products because they believe these products are simply a marketing strategy to increase sales of these type of food. Others explained that those products come with the promise of being a healthier option, however when you check the nutritional information on the packaging it is not true.

In all, millennials will avoid the consumption of these aliments if:

- They are considerably more expensive than the conventional options;
- On the packaging is not clearly explained the nutritional value of the product;
- It is processed food and contains many artificial components in its composition.

5.3 Millennials have a preference for Homemade Meals

This healthy attitude has also been reflected on their concerning about preparing their own meals. Seventy-seven respondents from the online survey mentioned that they cook they make their meals at home more than three times a week. The face-to-face also showed that 91.6% of participants affirmed to have this similar habit as the online survey. Among this group, people are likely to cook meals if they do not have to cook only for themselves. Others explained that they do not adopt this attitude because it is less practical than buying a ready meal and to avoid waste of food.

The respondents also explained that the main reasons for opting for homemade food are basically because they want to ensure that the food prepared has no much chemicals in their composition. Additionally, millennials are likely to cook their meals because the habit is considered less expensive than dining out.

5.4 Millennials have adopted a new lifestyle: The Vegans and Vegetarians

Another important factor about the millennials eating habits in Ireland is that one of 10 respondents are vegan or vegetarian. From the sample selected, 7 people declared to have a vegetarian diet and 3 millennials not only do not eat meat, but also do not consume any food with animal ingredients in its composition. When the participants were asked the reasons for adopting this lifestyle some of them declared they do not like meat, most of them are concerned about the environmental issues and others believe these diets are beneficial for their health.

The survey also demonstrated that vegans and vegetarians have the preferences for buying their food in supermarkets and healthy stores. Other patterns of behaviour such as preparing their own meals most of day at the week and looking for healthy options when they are eating out were also identified on the survey.

On the contrary, the 93 participants who do not have a vegetarian or vegan diet explained that their choices are related to the fact of these people are not willing to give up eating meat because they like it, and believe meat is part of a balanced diet.

5.5 Controversial Factors: Millennials have also unhealthy habits

Despite most of the millennials who completed the questionnaire affirmed to be very concerned about their health, another part of the questions answered revealed factors which contradicts these declarations.

It is a fact that 58.09% of millennials demonstrated dissatisfaction with their body weight. From this group, 34 respondents were women from different age groups and 27 men. However, when they were asked if they are adopting any habit to reduce this concern, only 18 people mentioned being on a diet.

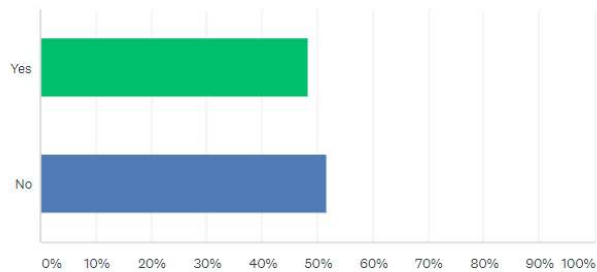
The survey also showed that millennials are not likely to eat healthy when they are eating out. Only 14 people affirmed that they always look for healthy options in restaurants, the others mostly consider eating out as a ‘treat’ to themselves.

Another curious factor regards eating out is that this generation is not likely to do any research about the nutritional value of foods, foods brands and restaurant menus.

Figure 8:

Do you do any research on your own (magazines, internet), on the nutritional value of foods, foods brands and restaurant menus?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES
Yes	48.42% 46
No	51.58% 49
TOTAL	95

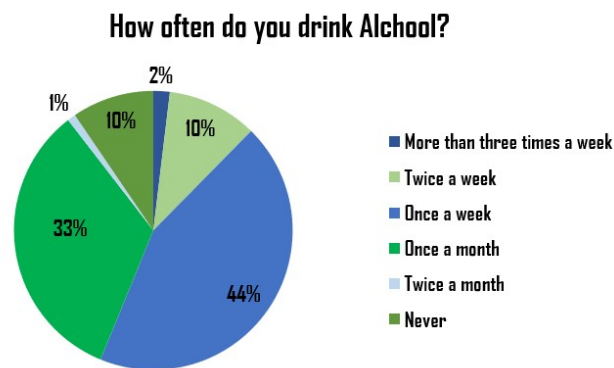
Source: SurveyMonkey (2019).

5.5.1 Drinking and Smoking habits

Surprisingly enough the figures also revealed that millennials who are living in Ireland have been consuming high quantities of alcohol and are also smoking more than previous generations. More than 65% of those who completed the face-to-face questionnaire are likely to drink more than once a week. The online survey also showed that 49 millennials have been drinking once or twice a week.

The number of millennials who smoking also can be considered high. Almost 27% of people from this generation are smokers. The survey illustrates that part of this group a tends to smoke only at the weekends while they are drinking; and 3 people chose an alternative option, the vape.

Figure 9:



Note: Own elaboration based on SurveyMonkey (2019).

After all, and according to the results of this research, it is possible to understand that there is a difference between the viewpoint of the millennials about their lifestyle and how this generation has behaved in Ireland. Thus, the first session of the questionnaire aimed to observe what the self-perceptions of these individuals were and as a result, millennials not only consider themselves healthy but also, they affirmed to have a balanced diet.

Conversely, during the completion of the questionnaire, respondents tended to contradict themselves. Unhealthy habits such as smoking and alcohol consumption, are also part of a significant number of millennials who responded to this survey. In all, millennials are likely to purchase healthy products on a daily basis, prepare homemade meals and have a high protein diet with moderate consumption of sugar and fat.

However, outside of this routine, they are likely to behave contrary to what they had stated previously. Unhealthy food at this period is mostly part of millennials diet as well as they are looking to satisfy their cravings. Takeaways, crisps, products with high quantities of sugar and fat at the weekends are part of most millennials' lives.

6.0 DISCUSSION

The results illustrated at the "Findings Session" allowed to this project to answer the following research question: *What are the Millennials consumers preferences towards Healthy Food in Ireland and how it influences their buying decision?*

Furthermore, the construction of a questionnaire with a combination of closed questions and comments field in most of the questions has proved to be useful to the gather information necessary to answer the research question of this dissertation.

Considered the largest living generation, millennials have the highest purchasing power in the current market. Thus, it involves many aspects of the behaviour of this generation, such as lifestyle, income, and what influences them in their buying decision.

It is a fact that millennials have a different mindset from previous generations; however, this group can also be considered organized in terms of expenditures and sticking to their budget. Studies have shown millennials are focused on maximizing the budget but leaving a “room” for a little adventure (Board Bia, 2014). They also tend to be more impulsive while they are purchasing if the product due to emotional reasons or simply because a product excites them.

Other elements which influence their buying decision are high-quality products and brands. Millennials tend to opt for more expensive products if they believe that those have higher add value than cheaper products (Daneshkhu, 2018). Thus, are related to avoiding frustration on buying a product which has not the same benefits as the ones with better brands. The choice for brands also has a nostalgic factor once millennials are likely to buy brands which reminds them a memory from childhood and mother’s food for example (Board Bia, 2014).

The survey showed that millennials are likely to maintain a routine from Monday to Friday and consequently makes them have better control of their expenditures, buying only what is according to their budget. They also tend to cook their meals at home in order to minimize the consumption of snacks and save money. However, due to long hours working and the stressing routine, this generation feels the necessity for

rewarding themselves; as a result, they spend more money in most cases eating out or drinking.

6.1 How the Millennials see Food

One of the main characteristics of this generation is that millennials are very concerned about their health and consequently it affects the way they purchase food. This generation is seeking products which are according to their beliefs and which supports their eating habits.

The change has been noticed for the food industry, and the word customization is a crucial element for industries as there is a demand for adapting products to meet the needs of millennials. The customization involves not only improve the range of products available in the market but also offer products which are gluten-free, vegan and vegetarian.

Correspondingly to the results obtained with this project, it is observed two main factors which influence the buying behaviour of millennials in the country: **Social** and **Personal factors** (*concepts explained at Section 2.1 of this research*). The Social factors such as the concern about their reputation and the feeling of belonging to a group and the Personal factors such as the preference for buying products which are according to their personality and beliefs are the main drivers of the millennials purchasing decision in Ireland.

Therefore, and according to Keogh (2014), millennials choose foods and drinks which have green and ethical values, visual culture, social standing and also agree with their adventurous spirit. This aspect can be associated to the fact that millennials are concerned about how the society sees them. As a result, they are looking for products which allow them to show who they are and what they believe. As result, the Environment (Baker and Hart, 2008) is also component which plays an important role regarding the millennials behaviour.

Moreover, it is evident in the analysis that the Millennials in Ireland are worried about their health and for this generation a balanced diet and a routine of exercise's crucial for having quality of life. Accordingly, the millennials have been trying to have a balanced diet and eat and drink healthy at least during the week (Board Bia, 2014). They are also continually looking for learning about nutrition and search the products precedence, and nutritional values are part of their day-to-day buying decision.

As it was illustrated in the finding's session most of millennials consider themselves healthy. The first question of the survey (*Do you consider yourself a healthy person?*) was placed strategically placed in the survey with the intuit to make the participants of the survey to reflect about their healthy habits.

Hence, most of millennials who completed the survey affirmed to be healthy mainly because they do exercises and have a balance diet with high consumption of protein, fruit and vegetables. Another important fact observed at the face-to-face interviews was that the respondents who affirmed to be healthy demonstrated to be proud of themselves for adopting this type of lifestyle, which again can be associated to the Social and Personal factors (Kotler 2003) explained in this research.

6.2 Millennials and the reasons for a routine of exercises

As well as Millennials are willing to eat healthier, they also have been trying to have a routine of exercises. This fact was clearly observed in the survey as twenty-four millennials mentioned as the main reasons to consider themselves healthy the practice of sports, as swimming and football; and also, gym exercises.

Equally, a research realized by Bord Bia (2014) called "Understanding Millennials for Better Connections", millennials also see exercises as "trendy" and a way of showing to the society that they are active and healthy (*more details in Section 2.3 of this project*). Another critical aspect that the survey concluded is that they are looking for new ways to meet people. Thus, have considered sports and outdoor activities an alternative for socializing with others. Additionally, an element that motivates

millennials to do exercises is also related to their concern about their appearance (Board Bia, 2014). This generation is continuously attentive to body weight so that exercises are part of their routine.

It is true that millennials are apprehensive about their appearance, especially about their body weight. However, Irish aged between 18-34 believe that the way they feel about their body weight says more than what a scale might reveal (Irish Independent Website, 2019). As a result, millennials are not worried about being obsessed with their weight as well as they don't believe they can develop unhealthy behaviour due to this concern with appearance. Another survey (King, 2018) showed that middle-aged millennials are considered the most overweight generation. Seventy per cent of millennials born between the 1980s and 1990s are likely to be obese or overweight by the age 35 to 45.

Furthermore, exercises can be considered part of the routine of most millennials, due to several reasons which are beyond their concern about health. People from this generation tend to have an active life also for social aspects and for the fact that exercises give them a sense of well-being.

6.3 High Protein products and Meat consumption

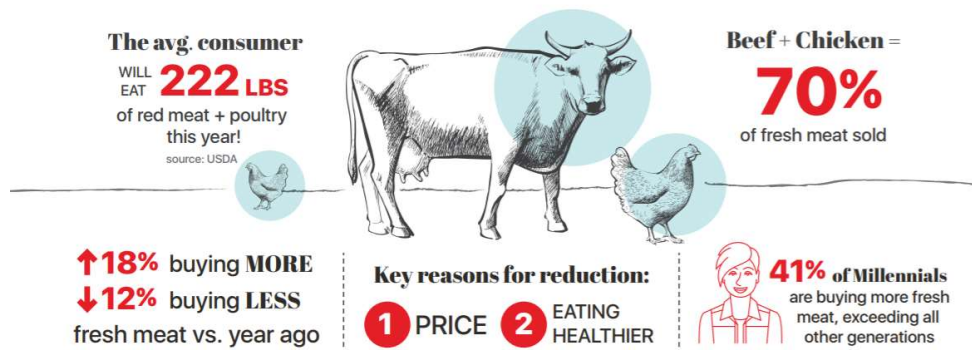
As well as including exercises in their routine, the survey showed that millennials are willing to buy high protein food because they believe those products benefit to their health. The reasons for choosing these products have already been explained in the findings section, but to summarize it, this generation has some beliefs concerning this type of product which can influence their buying decision. The reasons are mainly related to the quality of the food and its price.

Supporting this argument another study showed that Millennials have the desire for eating more protein (37%); however, they consider the protein foods expensive. 21% believe that products with protein will spoil quickly and one of five millennials think that food high in protein have many unhealthy ingredients (Board Bia, 2018).

The respondents of the online survey explained that this type of products does not contain the benefits mentioned, and they believe it is purely a marketing strategy to sell the products. There is an assumption that high protein products have non-identified artificial ingredients, which clearly is contrary to the demand for fresh food.

Nevertheless, this opinion is applicable only for industrialized products. Another survey explained that Millennials are keen on purchasing fresh products of animal origin and plant-based meat alternatives which can be considered all-natural and hormone/antibiotic free. According to the study 41% of the respondents of the survey have been buying more fresh meat than all the other groups combined compared to last year (Acosta, 2018).

Figure 10:



Source: Acosta (2018).

This same report mentioned that at least 40% of Millennials give preference for purchasing fresh meat, simply because meat consumption combine to exercises imply in better health conditions and appearance.

Therefore, millennials are including in their diet high protein products, specially meat due to the practice of exercises and the belief that those contribute for improvements in their health.

6.4 Veganism and Vegetarianism

It is also true that Millennials are likely to be environmentally conscious and concerned about their impact in the environment. As it was examined at the *Section 2.3.3* of this study, millennials tend to prefer products which agree to their moral and ethical values, regardless the prices of these products (Smith, 2010). In response to that, some trends have increased their influences towards the millennials eating habits. Which is the case of Vegetarianism and Veganism.

Since 2015, in Ireland, a global campaign has been gaining influence power in the country. The “Go Vegan World Campaign” is a campaign which has been acting around the world to promote the veganism. In the country, the banners, articles in magazines and radio talks have been spread in order to educate the Irish population about animal rights, and inspire them to adopt this lifestyle (Go Vegan World, 2019).

The Go Vegan World (2019) explained that, in Ireland each month people have been considering veganism as a diet option. A poll realised in the country concluded that around 2% of people living in the country are vegan and around 8% vegetarian. The article also explains that the number of vegans in the world increased by 400% in the last four years.

In spite of the fact that millennials are likely to consume meat, a small portion of the respondents of the survey consider a vegan or vegetarian diet. This change can be related to the fact that these people are more concerned about having a more sustainable food system. 26% of the respondents of the survey declared to be vegan or vegetarian, and some of those who do not consider themselves part of the movement said that they give preference for having at least four vegetarian meals a week (Acosta, 2018). Additionally, this generation understands that not only food with animal ingredients presents a high level of protein but also plants contain it.

Furthermore, the consumption of vegan or vegetarian food has overcome the preferences of people who adopted these diets. These products are also purchased for Millennials who are willing to reduce the meat consumption, therefore, opting for including vegan and vegetarian meals in their diet (Acosta, 2018).

6.4.1 Vegan and Vegetarian Market

According to the factors before mentioned, it is a fact that this market segment has been more in evidence. In response to that new products have been developed in order to attend this demand. Belvita is an example of products which had been adapted to achieve the needs of this market. The company segment has replaced the cow milk to oat-based milk in their biscuit recipes (Keogh, 2014).

Recently the Journal The Guardian (2019), published an article about how a startup called “Beyond Meat “has gained part the meat industry. According to the article, the company was the first to implement in the market the production of plant-based meat. The Beyond Meat is now on Wall Street and has been evaluated of about 1.2 billion dollars. The company offers a range of plant-based protein products, using mainly yellow peas in the production of vegan burgers. Thus also have been impressing the public because it bleeds due to beet juice in its recipe. The company aims to offer a product which is an alternative for people who do not want to eat meat but maintaining a taste closer to the traditional meat. The article also mentions the name of two other companies: Impossible Foods, which recently launched to the market a meatless Whopper at Burger King and the fast-food company Del Taco which is selling now a meatless taco. In all the article defends that the meat industry cannot be drastically affected by these new competitors; however, there is a possibility of this segment take a small part of the meat market similarly to non-dairy milk industry which has taken over 13% of the dairy milk industry.

In Ireland, a restaurant in Galway realised that at least 5 of its customers every day were vegan. To make these customers satisfied, the restaurant adapted traditional recipes, such as using vegetal milk instead of cow milk, vegan ice creams. Dairy products were also cut out of the recipes, and as a result, the sales increased, and not only vegans were the main customers, but also non-vegans were also opting for having a vegan meal (Clearly, 2017).

Another article explains that in Ireland the veganism counts with powerful adversaries such as the beef and dairy industries, thus are the largest industries in the country. Despite the power of these two industries, supermarkets such as Dunnes and Tesco

have been changing their range of products including products with no animal ingredients. In those places, it is possible to find a stock of vegan and vegetarian products which available price. Tesco also has launched recently a new plant-based steak which presents similar texture, taste and smell to traditional meat. The alternative steak is manufactured by Vivera and it will be exposed at the typical fresh meat session. The price is also competitive, and it will cost €4 for a pack with two units of the veggie steak. Guinness has also become vegan after stopping the practice of using dried fish bladders and isinglass to refine yeast. (Kennedy, 2018).

Sprout Sprout's is also an example of a company which is strategically focused on having a range of organic and fresh products presented in their seven restaurants. The chain of restaurants in 2018 decided to invest in growing organic products in a piece of land in Kildare (100 – 120kg of greens) which are brought to the restaurants and served as alternative proteins (Board Bia, 2018). The menu includes vegan and gluten-free products, such as falafels made with sweet potatoes and beetroot, and also a vegan porridge which is promised been 'Free from everything' with no sugar or cow milk.

6.5 Cooking habits and Eating out

Despite some surveys showing that millennials have been eating out more than other generation, they are also giving preferences for preparing their meals at home.

This tendency can be associated with the concern of eating healthy. In Ireland, more than 50% declared that they prefer to cook their meals from scratch using mostly fresh ingredients. 41% said that they prepare their meals using a combination of packets/jars of ingredients and fresh ingredient. Over half (54%) indicate that they mostly eat homemade meals cooked from scratch using fresh ingredients, and an additional 41% eat meals prepared using a combination of fresh ingredients and packets/jars of ingredients (Healthy Ireland Survey, 2016).

This important factor is also illustrated in the survey, which over 70% of millennials explained that they their own meals at least three times a week. According to the

answers acquired with the questionnaire, most of millennials tend to cook their meals mainly because they believe it is healthier than eating out. It can also be associated to the principle that homemade meals are relatively cheaper than then take aways or restaurant meals.

At the same time that millennials are preparing most of their meals, some studies realised around the world also showed that this generation have demonstrated a significant interest in frequenting restaurants and coffee shops. Almost 50% of millennials spend more on eating out than saving for future plans. From this group, 27% prefer to spend more money on coffee than saving for retirement. Only 6% of this generation declared not to spend money on dining out (Martin, 2018).

In Ireland, millennials have also been spending money on takeaways and deliveries. According to a report made by DKM Economic Consultants (2016), the takeaway sector corresponds to 57% of the total restaurants presented in the country. This generation is the one who most contributes to the growth of this sector. People from the age group of 25-34 spend €56 if their monthly income in takeaways, people from the age group 35-44 spends €48 whereas the overall average is €39.

This evidence is noticed in the survey when repondents explained that as well as buying food at supermarkets they also purchase at convenience stores and take aways. The survey also showed that millennials tend to eat out if they do not have time to cook due to long hours working or if they have to prepare their meals only for themselves.

This increase in expenditures on eating out can be related to the fact that people from this group prefer the practicality of buying a meal which is ready to eat than making their food at home (Board Bia Report, 2018). As a response, the food service industry have started to supply new solutions to meet the demand for these ready meals. Other food sectors such as pubs and convenience stores and retailers have also improved the service provided to satisfy the necessities of these consumers.

6.6 Alcohol and Tobacco consumptions

According to the information presented at *Section 2.2.2* of this project, in Ireland, the Alcohol and Tobacco consumptions are considerably high (Department of Health, 2017). This issue is also part of the reality of most Millennials, according to the online and face-to-face survey.

At least 65% of the millennials who participated in this research are likely to drink at least once a week. There is also a tendency for drinking significant quantities of alcoholic drinks. Some participants declared that they drink from five to ten pints when they are drinking. Two people mentioned that they consume from four glasses to four bottles of wine. Others explained that they can drink between five to twenty units of alcohol every time they drink (the definition of unit varies from respondent to respondent).

Under no circumstances, this attitude is directly related to Cultural Factors (*concept explained in Section 2.1*) once in Ireland, there is a strong presence of drinking culture (Ramstedt and Hope, 2002). In the country, the most popular drink is beer, and it had its sales increased by 2.7 %. The average of adult alcohol consumption was 11.094 litres of pure alcohol in 2018 (Harford, 2018). The respondents also explained that they tend to drink alcoholic drinks in order to minimize day-to-day stress.

Although, the majority of the population have been consuming alcohol, it is possible to see a decrease of 1.4% compared to 2016 and also a decline of 23% in the last ten years (Harford, 2018). Another report made by the Drinks Industry Group of Ireland in 2018 revealed the alcohol consumption went down by 25% in the last two decades. According to the research in 2018 the average of adult alcohol consumption kept the same as in 2016.

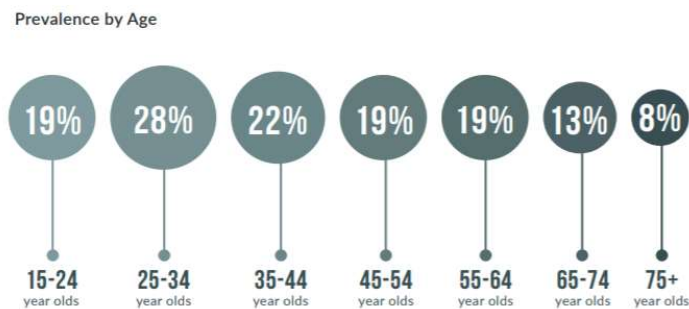
As a consequence of this decrease, the alcohol industry has been creating new solutions to attend this demand for non-alcoholic products. Recently Guinness launched its first non-alcoholic larger called Open Gate Pure Brew. Heineken also followed the same trend and created two months later a non-alcoholic variant. Those two companies intend to supply non-alcoholic beer to the market due to an increase in sales of these products in Western Europe. The sales of non-alcoholic beers have increased in the

last five years and worth more than €4 billion in 2017. The increase is related to the rise of health concerns, especially among millennials (Beesley, 2019).

Tobacco Statistics

Moreover, unhealthy habits among millennials are beyond the alcohol consumption. Another critical issue raised in this research refers to the number of millennials who smoke (at least a quarter of millennials living in Ireland).

Figure 11:



Source : Department of Health in Ireland (2018)

A report made by the Health Department in Ireland (2017) supported the numbers showed in the survey as people aged 25 to 34 are the ones who most smoke in the country (see above picture). Millennials living in Ireland are currently smoking an average of 13 products with tobacco daily.

Conversely this scenario is likely to change in the next few years, as supp illustrates the smoking statistics for the year, and according to it, the number of smokers decreased from 23% in 2015 to 20% last year. From those who have smoked in 2017 44% have tried to quit at that period. At least 57% of smokers are also thinking about quitting.

Thus, are in their majority worried about their health (65%), 10% trying to quit due to high costs of smoking and 6% for health problems. At least 22% of men are current smokers, and 17% are women.

In response to the desire of quitting smoking, a new procedure was implemented in 2018 in Ireland, and it involves the standardization of packaging of tobacco products. This standardization consists of removing all alternatives of branding such as logos, colours, graphics. The variant name and brand have been kept; however, all brands are presented with the same typeface. The campaign aims to make tobacco products less attractive to customers and emphasize how these products can be harmful to consumers. Ireland is the first country in Europe to establish this new policy for all tobacco products. The campaign is part of the strategy Tobacco Free Ireland, which aims to reduce the number of smokers in the country to less than 5% by 2025 (Department of Health, 2017).

6.7 Research Limitations

Some limitations can surge during the execution of the project. Kothari (2004) mentions that the researchers must be aware of some eventualities which can compromise the results of the studies. In addition, limitations are commonly found in researches, and they can affect the results of a study negatively. Since limitations are a common issue presented in academic studies, this project also presents a few limitations which in the end did not have a significant impact on the quality of this paper.

The main limitations of this project are mainly related to the survey process. It had started when the sample size was defined. The author of this project aimed to apply the survey to a broader number of millennials living in the country; however, due to convenience and the deadline, a smaller sample had been selected. Also regards the sample, two respondents of the survey were not classified as millennials (according to the criteria established by the author); as a result, the total of millennials who completed the survey was 105.

Another challenge faced refers to the questionnaire design. Thus, it had to be constructed carefully and aiming to help the author to answer the research question and achieve the objectives of the project. During the survey execution, it had been noticed that the question about alcohol consumption (Question 7 of the questionnaire), did not present a definition for “units of alcohol”. As a result, respondents had different opinions about what the standard unit was (a pint, a glass, etc.).

Limitations such as gathering secondary data of quality have also been an issue for the execution of this dissertation. The main reason for that is basically for the fact that there are no academic researches about millennials and healthy food in Ireland; as a result, a significant amount of time was spent in selecting data from government and companies reports and renamed newspapers and magazines. Difficulties in writing in a second idiom (English) was also a challenge faced by the student.

Overall, these limitations did not have a significant influence on the results obtained in this dissertation. The main objectives of this paper were mostly achieved, and the research can be a useful source of information to future researches.

7. CONCLUSION

Generations present unique characteristics based on aspects related to life experiences, social and political factors and the context where the individuals live. Furthermore, these elements play a significant role in regards how people act in society and consequently, how they make their buying decisions (Armstrong, 2017). The study of consumer behaviour not only involves the comprehension of those external factors (Baker and Hart, 2008) but also embraces the understanding of how psychological elements and beliefs influences the way people behave. Moreover, this paper aimed to study how a specific generation has behaved in Ireland in the last few years.

As shown in the literature review (*section 2.2.1*), millennials are considered the largest group living in the world at the moment. This generation, who was born when the digital era started, is aware of political and social issues. They are also highly educated; e represents a significative part of the workforce of the world (Bucuta, 2015). Consequently, and as it has been mentioned in this article, millennials have a significative purchasing power.

Given these points, companies are aware of the necessity to understand the millennials and also are developing strategies which are according to this market segment. Into this context, it is fundamental to the current industry to explore the concepts mentioned in this project.

In all, this dissertation aimed to discover further information about this generation eating habits and the purchase of healthy food. For the purpose of responding the research question (*What are the Millennials Consumers Preferences towards Healthy Food in Ireland and how it influences their buying decision?*), the author of this thesis spent a significative amount of time reading and search information about millennials and healthy food around the world and specifically for Ireland. Equally important to gather existing data, the student found the necessity of acquiring data from a primary source. Therefore, this method aimed to gain more specific information which consequently contributed to the findings of this study. In addition to that, this research has been driven by the student's proud of acquiring her own information about the millennials in the country. Thus, it led to a feeling of contributing to useful information

which can be used for improvements in Irish society, companies and also for future studies.

Additionally, the considerable amount of data collected and carefully examined allowed the author to identify vital information of millennials, which is believed to be a strategic resource for companies which are currently acting in Ireland.

As a result of the survey realised in the country; with 107 respondents Irish and non-Irish; revealed essential aspects of the attitudes of the millennial towards healthy food. To summarise the main findings of the quantitative survey (*more details are found in section 5 of this project*), it is possible to identify common patterns of behaviour among this group. Therefore, these elements can be divided into two perspectives: millennials are concern about health and consequently are buying healthy products; and, millennials are struggling to stick to these choices due to unhealthy habits.

Moreover, the majority of millennials living in Ireland declared in the survey that they consider themselves health because they accredit to have a balanced diet and include exercises in their routine. These affirmations can be supported by information provided in the literature review (*section 2.3*) and data analysis (*section 5, page 32-34*). As a consequence, millennials are likely to give preferences for high protein, low fat and low sugar products. This generation combines these aliments to daily portions of fruits and vegetables.

As well as having the willingness for a balanced diet, millennials are also worried about the composition and precedence of aliments. According to this paper, organic food and products with fewer chemicals in their ingredients are the most desired by millennials. As a consequence of that, millennials also give preference for homemade meals, specially made from the “scratch”.

This study also revealed that there had been a significative increase of the numbers of vegetarians and vegans in the country. Millennials have adopted these diets not only for environmental issues but also because they believe these diets bring benefits for their health. In contrary to this concept, but also regards health concerns, millennials have also been consuming more proteins than previous generations, so that the meat consumption has also increased.

This assessment also concludes that if it is in one hand, millennials have been trying to eat healthily and consequently buying products which are according to that, in the other hand they are also likely to purchase food with high-level sugar and fat, due unhealthy habits. Conversely, of what has been previously highlighted in this chapter, the millennials present unhealthy attitudes which go beyond the topic of food. This article showed that people from this group have been consuming a significant amount of alcoholic drinks and tobacco products (*See Section 6.6*). The study also revealed that millennials do not worry about their health when they are eating out or purchasing take away.

Ultimately this paper also explained that large and small businesses had perceived these aspects in Ireland, specially towards high protein food, vegan and vegetarian products. As well as companies have been adapting their products such as including more vegan options in restaurants menus, they are also creating new options to satisfy the needs of millennials living in Ireland. Supermarkets such as Tesco and Dunnes have amplified the range of organic and vegan aliments in their establishments and Guinness has created a non-alcoholic drink due to market demand. The Irish government has also been acting against unhealthy habits, creating policies to control alcohol and tobacco consumption.

7.1 Future research possibilities

As a recommendation for future studies, it is suggested to consider the limitations above mentioned. Other aspects of millennials buying behaviour toward healthy food should also be explored. Thus, it could be related to broader research about psychological and social factors and their influence in this generation purchasing decision.

It also would be interesting to compare millennials attitudes to other groups living in the country and identify what their main particularities are. A more in-depth market analysis, as well as using a third method for the data collection, would aggregate for findings of this generation. An interview with representants of companies could be

executed in order to understand the business point of view about these changes made by millennials in the country.

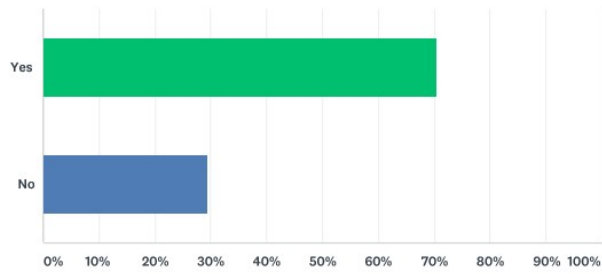
APPENDIX

1. Online Questionnaire

Question 1:

Q1 Do you do consider yourself a healthy person?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

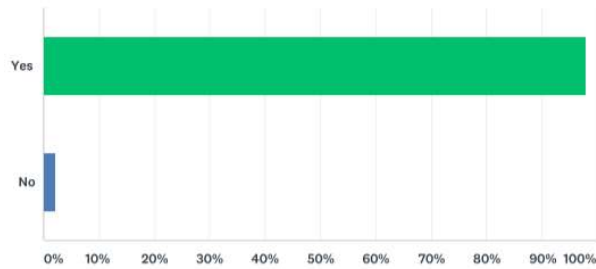


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	70.53%	67
No	29.47%	28
TOTAL		95

Question 2:

Q2 Do you eat fruit and vegetables?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

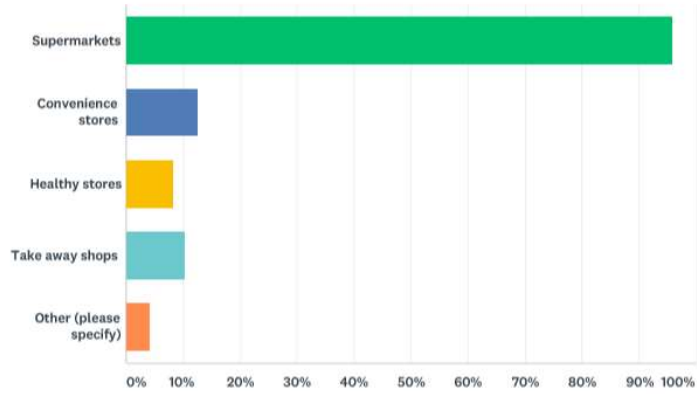


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	97.89%	93
No	2.11%	2
TOTAL		95

Question 3:

Q3 Where do you usually buy your food?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

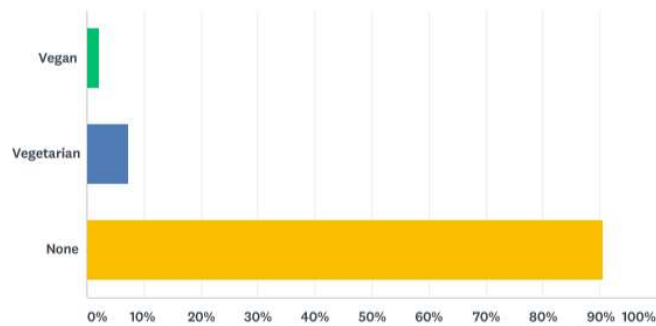


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Supermarkets	95.79%	91
Convenience stores	12.63%	12
Healthy stores	8.42%	8
Take away shops	10.53%	10
Other (please specify)	4.21%	4
Total Respondents: 95		

Question 4:

Q4 Are you vegan or vegetarian?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

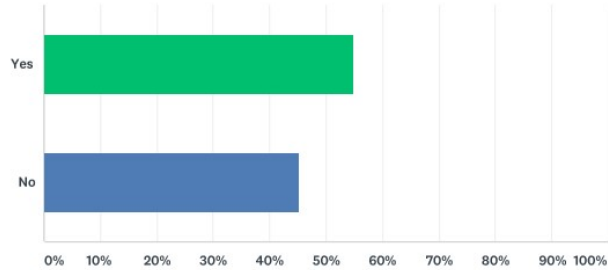


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Vegan	2.11%	2
Vegetarian	7.37%	7
None	90.53%	86
TOTAL		95

Question 5:

Q5 Do you give preferences for low fat/ sugar and high protein products when available?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

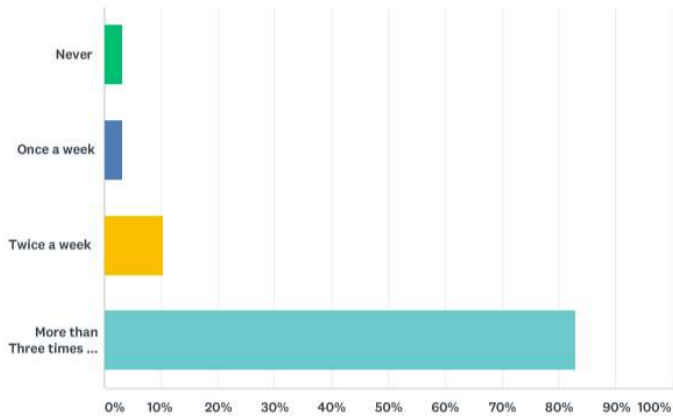


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	54.74%	52
No	45.26%	43
TOTAL		95

Question 6:

Q6 How often do you cook your own meals?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

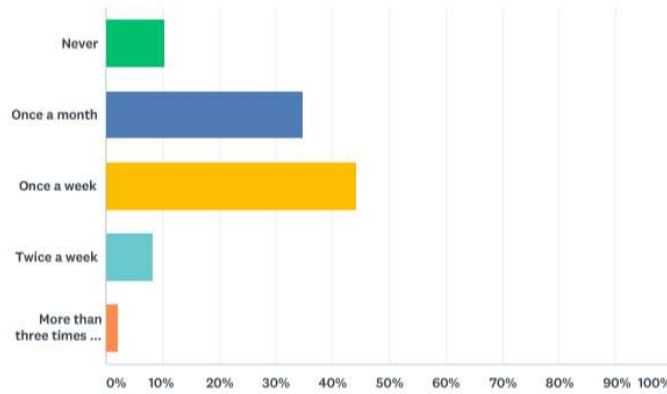


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never	3.16%	3
Once a week	3.16%	3
Twice a week	10.53%	10

Question 7:

Q7 How often do you drink alcohol?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

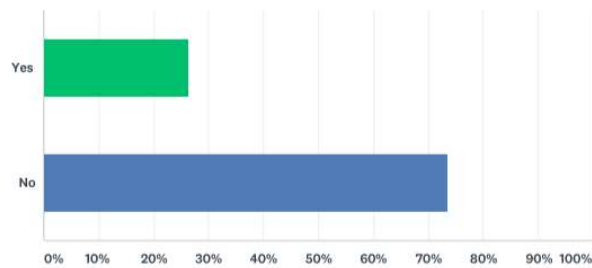


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never	10.53%	10
Once a month	34.74%	33
Once a week	44.21%	42
Twice a week	8.42%	8
More than three times a week	2.11%	2
TOTAL		95

Question 8:

Q8 Do you smoke?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

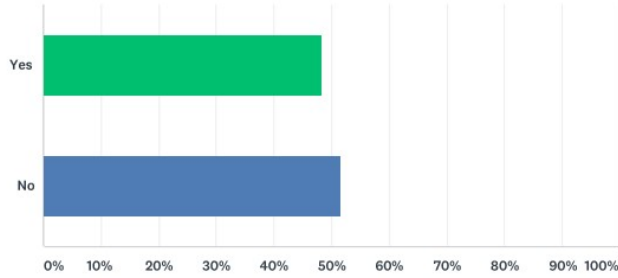


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	26.32%	25
No	73.68%	70
TOTAL		95

Question 9:

Q9 Do you do any research on your own (magazines, internet), on the nutritional value of foods, foods brands and restaurant menus?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

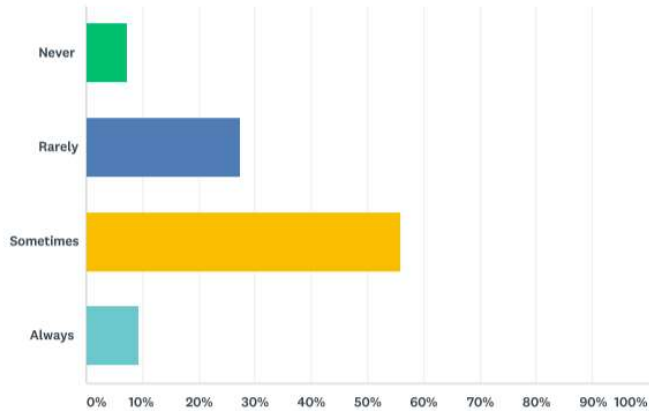


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	48.42%	46
No	51.58%	49
TOTAL		95

Question 10:

Q10 Do you try to eat healthy when you are eating out?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

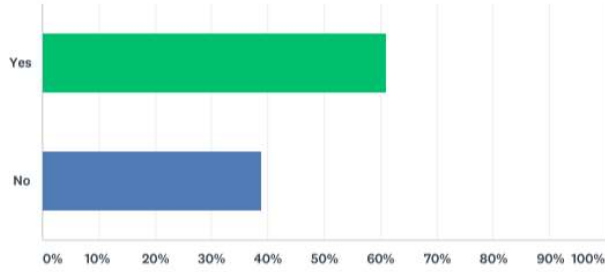


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Never	7.37%	7
Rarely	27.37%	26
Sometimes	55.79%	53
Always	9.47%	9
TOTAL		95

Question 11:

Q11 Are you concerned about your body weight?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

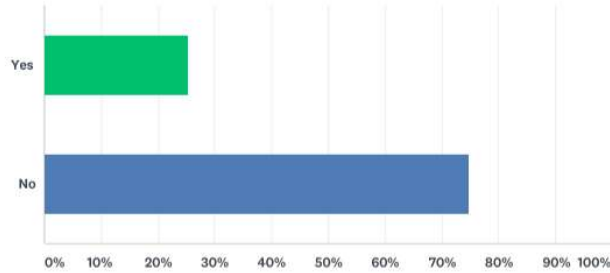


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	61.05%	58
No	38.95%	37
TOTAL		95

Question 12:

Q12 Are you on a diet at the moment?

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

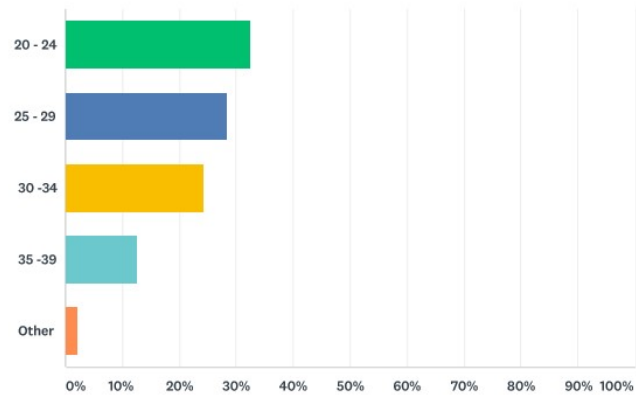


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	25.26%	24
No	74.74%	71
TOTAL		95

Question 13

Q13 Your Age

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

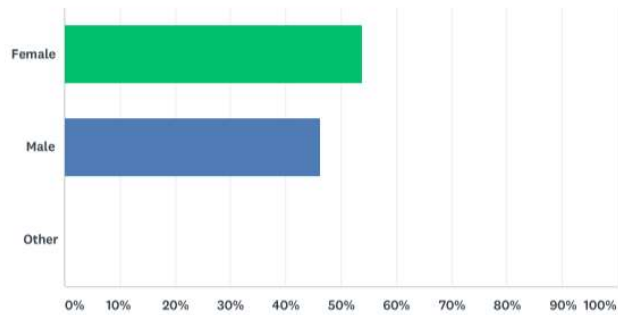


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
20 - 24	32.63%	31
25 - 29	28.42%	27
30 - 34	24.21%	23
35 - 39	12.63%	12
Other	2.11%	2
TOTAL		95

Question 14

Q14 Your Gender

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

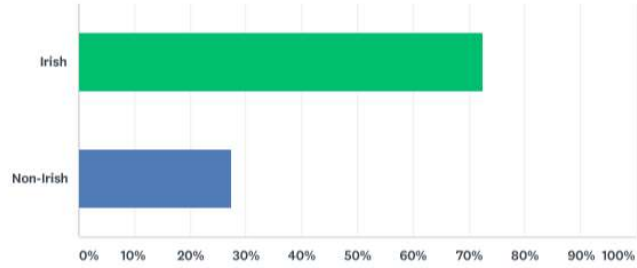


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Female	53.68%	51
Male	46.32%	44
Other	0.00%	0
TOTAL		95

Question 15:

Q15 Your Nationality

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

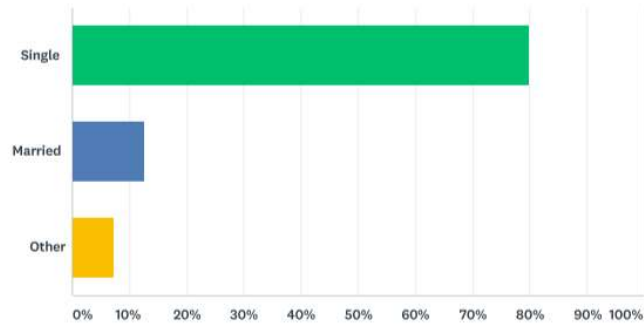


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Irish	72.63%	69
Non-Irish	27.37%	26
TOTAL		95

Question 16:

Q16 Marital Status

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

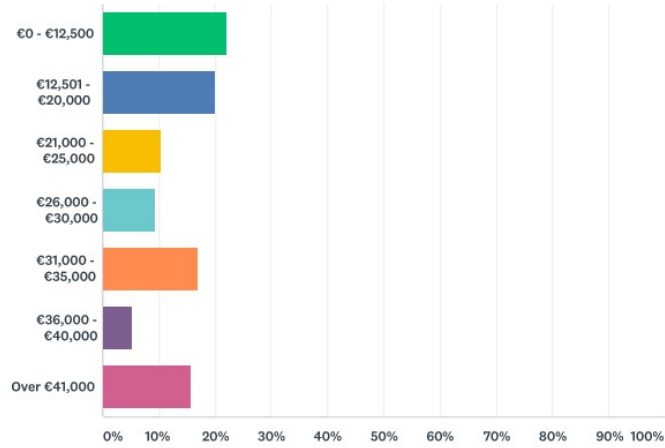


ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Single	80.00%	76
Married	12.63%	12
Other	7.37%	7
TOTAL		95

Question 17:

Q17 Your Annual Income

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0



ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
€0 - €12,500	22.11%	21
€12,501 - €20,000	20.00%	19
€21,000 - €25,000	10.53%	10
€26,000 - €30,000	9.47%	9
€31,000 - €35,000	16.84%	16
€36,000 - €40,000	5.26%	5
Over €41,000	15.79%	15
TOTAL		95

Question 18:

Q18 Additional information :

Answered: 95 Skipped: 0

2. FACE TO FACE QUESTIONNAIRE

Survey: Millennials buying behaviour towards healthy food products in Ireland.

Instructions

This survey is conducted by a Master student at National College of Ireland. The objective of this research is to understand the millennials buying behavior towards Healthy Food in Ireland.

The survey also seeks to explore what forms of support can best ensure that integrity is maintained. We would like to stress that all responses are completely confidential; we do not ask for, nor can we collect, your name or any specific personally identifiable information.

Answer questions as they relate to you. For most answers, check the box(es) most applicable to you or fill in the blanks.

This survey should take you between 3-5 minutes.

About your eating habits

1. Do you do consider yourself a healthy person?

(Select only one.)

- Yes
- No

Please explain: _____

2. Do you eat fruit and vegetables?

(Select only one.)

- Yes
- No

If Yes, how many units per day? _____

3. Where do you usually buy your food?

- Supermarkets
- Convenience stores
- Healthy stores
- Take away shops

Other

Please specify: _____

4. *Are you vegan or vegetarian?*

(Select only one.)

- Vegan
- Vegetarian
- None

Please explain your choice:

5. *Do you give preferences for low fat/ sugar and high protein products when available?*

(Select only one.)

- Yes
- No

Explain why:

6. *How often do you cook your own meals?*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Always

Explain why:

7. *Do you try to eat healthy when you are eating out?*

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Always

Explain why:

8. *How often do you drink alcohol?*

- Never
- Once a month
- Once a week
- Twice a week
- More than three times a week

How many units do you drink every time you drink? _____

9. *Do you smoke?*

- Yes
- No

How often? _____

10. Do you do any research on your own (magazines, internet), on the nutritional value of foods, foods brands and restaurant menus?

(Select only one.)

- Yes
- No

11. Are you concerned about your body weight?

12. Are you on a diet at the moment?

(Select only one.)

- Yes
- No

12. Additional comments:

About You

Your Age

(Select only one.)

- 20 - 24
- 25 - 29
- 30 -34
- 35 -39

Your Gender

(Select only one.)

- Female
- Male
- Other

Your Nationality

(Select only one.)

- Irish
- Non-Irish:

Please specify: _____

Your Annual Income

(Select only one.)

- €0 - €12,500
- €12,501 - €20,000

- €21,000 - €25,000
- €26,000 - €30,000
- €31,000 - €35,000
- €36,000 - €40,000
- Over €41,000

Marital Status

(Select only one.)

- Single
- Married
- Other

Please specify: _____

THANK YOU!

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