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**The acculturation effects on immigrants' engagement with a brand:
An exploratory study of cultural transition, associated with
geographic location change, and its influences on consumer
purchase decision towards a branded alcoholic drink**

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Master of Science in Marketing

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Abstract

The lack of consideration of cultural influences on a consumer purchase decision can lead to loss of sales for companies which are omni-present in different cultural backgrounds. Although global convergences in consumer behaviour are seen on certain levels across particular product categories, a cultural homogenization should not be taken by brands as the general ultimate dimension for successful global brand positioning.

This dissertation aims to shed light on cultural influences on consumers' purchase decision of a brand. The research will investigate consumers engagement with a branded alcoholic drink which they used to purchase regularly and consume in their native country, keeping in consideration their cultural transition experience to Ireland, in order to explore if changes in their consumption behaviour have occurred or not and the justification factors. The research considers brands which were available in both market spaces, thus avoiding the lack of availability as justification for not buying the product, therefore narrowing the spectrum of investigation to the cultural impact on the immigrants' purchase decisions.

Acculturation is commonly seen as a bi-directional flow where individuals' heritage and host culture are constantly interacting, and this occurrence leads to changes in the original patterns of cultural behaviour of either or both groups (Kottak, 2007). However, although commonly understood as a bi-dimensional process (Berry, 1997), the current study will mainly focus on the host culture influences as they impact the acculturating individual and their purchase decision.

Through semi-structured interviews, the study addressed 9 participants from 3 different countries (Brazil, China and Mexico), who have engaged in the consumption of Budweiser, Tsingtao and Corona, respectively. The examination of the gathered data, through an interpretative philosophy and an inductive approach allowed for the generation of findings which highlighted a significant interaction between host cultural and its influence on immigrants' consumer behaviour, highlighting product quality, price and trustworthiness evaluation, post-purchase dissonance, brand association and changes on rates of alcohol consumption as managerial research outcomes with significant relevance for the field of cross-cultural studies and consumer behaviour.

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

National College of Ireland

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(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

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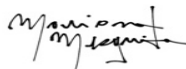
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Research Background

Culture strongly influences people's behavior, preferences and choices, bringing particular meaning for possessions and shaping individuals' attitudes, thoughts, identities and decisions (McCracken, 1986; Steenkamp et al., 2003). It embraces a person's values and norms, guiding decisions which are "cultural rooted" throughout day-to-day actions, thus, highly influencing a person's consumption behavior (Luna and Gupta, 2001; Mooji, 2011, (Strizhakova, Coulter and Price, 2012).

Daily, a huge number of people move across borders and establish themselves in a new cultural context, where the motivations for moving abroad are diverse, often including better work, study, travel opportunities and so on, with "immigration" being used as the most common denomination for the phenomena by the majority of researchers (Berry 1997; Penaloza 1989).

In this scenario, the immigrant's heritage and host culture interact in an acculturation process, where dynamics of assimilation, maintenance and resistance between acculturating and dominant groups emerge (Berry, 1992, 1997; Penaloza and Gilly, 1999; Moore, Weinberg and Berger, 2012). Within the various possible behavior dynamics brought on by cultural transition, deep changes in patterns of consumption are seen (Laroche, 1998).

In a society where brands increasingly have a presence across international boundaries, customers are privileged to cross borders and experience cultural transitions while still finding the brands which they used to consume in their own countries in a new cultural space. However, the behavioral loyalty, which is here expressed as brand preference leading to repurchase sequence (Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978; Bloemer and Kasper, 1995; Oliver, 1999) can be influenced by cultural elements and aspects, inducing changes in a purchase decision which were once held by a consumer. Although acculturation is commonly understood as a two-way process (Berry, 1997), this dissertation will mainly focus on the host culture as an element of influences to the acculturating individual consumer behaviour.

Therefore, this study aims to explore the cultural transition and its influence on immigrants' purchase decisions towards a branded alcoholic beer which they used to consume in their native country. The participants will be interviewed considering Ireland as their new cultural context, and to achieve the comparative aspect of the study, the research considered brands which were available in both market spaces, thus avoiding the lack of availability as justification for not buying the product, thus narrowing the spectrum of investigation to the cultural impact on the immigrants' decisions.

1.1.1 The alcoholic drinks industry

For a significant number of people, drinking is part of an enjoyable routine and social moments. In this context, the alcoholic drinks industry operates aiming to provide its goods in a market for which the generated revenue figures are estimated to be around US\$ 1.371,385 million for the year of 2020 (Statista.com, 2020). The beer segment is to be considered the category with the most reach in the alcohol beverage industry and is the worldwide strongest generator of revenue (Figure 1) in this sector, therefore, being the segment chosen for this study.

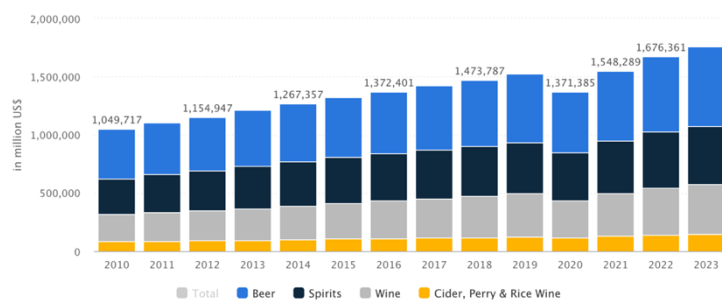


Figure 1 Alcoholic Drink Industry's Worldwide Revenue

Source: Statista.com (2020)

1.1.2 Alcoholic industry in the participants' country

According to the website Statista.com (2020), the top five countries in generating revenue towards the alcoholic drinks market are the United States, China, Japan, Brazil and the United Kingdom respectively. However, for this research, the chosen participants are from Brazil, China and Mexico, where the yearly rates of alcohol consumption are similar (6-8 litres/year of pure alcohol per person aged 15+) (Our World in Data, 2016; revised in 2019), coupled with the fact that these foreign communities share very similar immigration rates to Ireland (CSO, 2020).

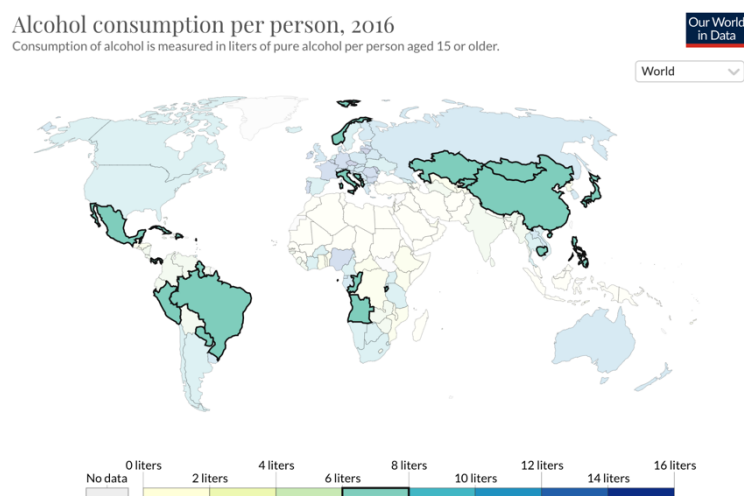


Figure 2 Worldwide Levels of Alcohol Consumption

Source: ourworldindata.org

Suggested by the Statista.com (2020), the annual revenue of alcoholic drinks for 2020 in Brazil, China and Mexico is US\$62,882m, US\$220,085m and US\$26,131m respectively. Moreover, according to the website, the most preferred alcohol segment of Brazilians and Mexicans is presented as beer, and for the Chinese, spirits. According to Alcohol.org (2020) in a list of 25 countries with the highest consumption of beer, China Brazil and Mexico would be placed within the top 5.

In Mexico, the beer industry accounted for 66.5% from the total alcohol consumption in the country, in Brazil, the sector was rated at R\$107 billion in 2018, reflecting 1.6% of Brazil's GDP, in China, the first-largest global beer producer of alcohol beverage drinks, has its beer consumption accounting for 45.7 billion litres per year. (Statista.com, 2020; Alcohol.org, 2020).

1.1.3 The alcohol industry in Ireland

In Ireland, the alcohol industry supplements over €2 billion in the Irish economy, with a consumption rate of 11 litres of pure alcohol per person/year. The alcohol beverage industry generates significant investment in the country, which holds the highest rate of alcohol taxes in the EU, with beer being the most preferable alcohol beverage in the country, with a rate of 46% in market share (Jonathan McDade, 2020)

1.1.4 Participants' brand engagement

As previously mentioned, Brazilian, Chinese and Mexican participants were chosen for this study, given that significant figures relating to beer consumption and/or production within the three countries exist. As the Irish beer market shares similar figures, beer has been chosen as the branded alcohol segment for the study.

Brazilians were interviewed regarding their consumption of Budweiser, an international beer present in the Brazilian market space, the Chinese were interviewed regarding their consumption of Tsingtao, the most popular beer in China, and the Mexican participants regarding their consumption of Corona, the best selling beer in Mexico. All three brands are also available in the Irish market space.

1.2 Literature Gaps

Acculturation and its influence on consumer behaviour has been widely researched over the years, however, although cross-cultural studies have been conducted on consumers of different nationalities and their brand perception and choice (Kim et al., 2002), cross-cultural product evaluation (Wiedmann, Hennings and Siebels, 2014), consumer culture convergence empowered by globalization (Berry, 2008; Mitry and Smith, 2009), brand equity different perception towards cross-cultural and cross-national perspectives (Jung and Sung, 2005; Ioannou and Rusu, 2012), and consumer loyalty to ethnic brands when moving abroad (Wang and Lo, 2007), a gap in the literature is found regarding “cultural adaptation” and its influence on brand engagement, for example (Segev et al., 2013). Moreover, according to Davies

and Fitchett (xxx) the field of study regarding cross-national and cross-cultural studies are mainly developed towards North American and Asian immigrants, with a clear lack of developed research, encompassing similar themes, but focusing on other nationalities.

In relation to brand strategies and their relevance for specific cultural contexts, the glocalization concept and its interconnection with brand management emerge in the field, highlighting theories enforcing the importance of brand adaptation to particular market spaces (Thompson and Arsel, 2004; Kraidy, 2001; Dumitrescu and Vinerean, 2010). However, little exists regarding brands' strategies when considering consumers who cross borders and are also a significant buying force in countries with high levels of immigration (Segev et al., 2013).

1.3 Research Rationale and Justification

In the field of cross-cultural and cross-national studies, research which aims to compare the differences among cultural structures, values, beliefs and norms, connecting them with different perceptions and behaviour towards products, brands and service, are abundant. This research, however, neither aims to investigate the differences within the chosen nationalities, nor compare the particularities of the approached cultures towards their consumption behavior and brand perception.

With a crescent globalization within the consumer market space, a closer understanding of consumer's cultural expressions and its influence on consumption is indeed important for leveraging insightful outcomes for brands which operates in diverse cultural spaces.

This study, therefore, aims to explore and help to fill the gaps in the literature within the studies approaching cultural transition influences on consumer response to a brand. If the consumer used to buy a given brand in their country and the same brand is also available in their new cultural context, it should be expected by the brands to have their consumers holding the same behaviour towards it, however, cultural influences might impact their decision and change their perception about this particular brand. To explore in-depth this rationale, the researcher rather than comparing different consumers in different spaces, approached the same person in two

different cultural contexts, dealing with one brand, which they used to consume in their native environment.

This paper will fill the gaps in the literature while highlighting the importance of cultural dynamics and their influence on consumption. The generated insights should be beneficial to marketers when understanding the role of culture for immigrants, thus bringing meaningful discussions on how to keep brand relevance for those who change cultural contexts.

1.4 Overall Research Aim

Brands go global and expect that their core decisions will encourage consumers to leverage their presence in different market spaces. However, culture and its influences should not be forgotten, as it is such an imperative shaper of behaviour and an influential factor on purchase decisions.

If the same brand is present in two different market spaces, would the consumer behaviour adopted in the heritage country remain the same in the host environment? This paper aims to explore the cultural influences on consumption, investigating if changes have occurred or not, and if so, aims to explore this phenomenon. Therefore:

- Objective 1: To explore the influences of cultural transition, associated with geographical location change, on consumers' purchase decision towards a previously consumed brand.

The research aim will be found by asking the following questions.

1.5 Research Question

- Research question: Does the cultural transition, associated with geographic location change, influence a consumer purchase decision towards a branded alcoholic drink which they used to consume in their own country?

To achieve the comparative aspect of the research, the study considered brands which were available in both market spaces (the heritage and host environments), thus eliminating the lack of availability as a potential problem in the purchase process, and focusing the spectrum of investigation on the cultural impact on the consumer decision.

1.5 Research Methods and Structure

For this research, given that the base of its objective is to understand the how and why of the maintenance/change of customers' perceptions and behavior towards a brand, while taking into consideration their experience abroad, a qualitative approach was used to conduct the research. Nine semi-structured interviews with participants of 3 different nationalities were conducted to deeply and richly explore the phenomena and generate themes which will be presented and discussed throughout Chapter 4. A more detailed explanation of the chosen study methodology will also feature in Chapter 3.

This research will be presented as follows:

- Chapter 1: Introduction, presenting the general idea and background for the study.
- Chapter 2: Literature review, discussing theories of cultural influences on consumer behaviour, and acculturation concepts and its connection with consumption.
- Chapter 3: Methodology, detailing and justifying the chosen procedures to accurately achieve the research objectives.
- Chapter 4: Findings, where the outcomes of the interviews will be presented in detail, aiming to provide an in-depth outline of the participants' decisions.
- Chapter 5: Discussion, where findings will be synthesized and the researcher will develop an understanding of the achieved information, providing a relevant debate achieved from the study.
- Chapter 6: Conclusion, presenting the outcomes of the research, also shedding lights on managerial implications and future research opportunities.

Chapter 2: Literature review

2.1 Introduction

Culture substantially impacts people's needs, attitudes, behavior, and preferences (Steenkamp et al., 2003). Culture influences values and beliefs, also bringing meaning to consumption and possessions (Lysonski, 2014; McCracken, 1986), driving people's activities and habits (Strizhakova & Coulter, 2019). Therefore, the notion of culture as a factor which impacts patterns of consumption decision has been largely discussed in marketing discourse to date, however, a gap in the literature is found regarding "cultural adaptation" and its influence on brand engagement for example (Segev et al., 2013).

This study, neither investigating the differences nor comparing particular cultures with each other, aims to explore and help to fill the gap within the studies of cultural transition and its influences on the customer purchase decision towards a brand. This chapter will be drawn into two sections which will aim to provide the theoretical basis needed for the comprehension of the developed study. The first section will address consumption; discussing the nature of consumer decision and motivation and the cultural aspects which influence this process. The second section will investigate acculturation concepts, finally interconnecting it with consumption dynamics.

2.2 Consumer Behavior and Cultural Influences

2.2.1 Why Do People Consume?

The weight placed on consumption and purchase decision has changed. Since a few decades ago, the idea of consumers buying products not solely for their functional features, but also for what they represent and mean has been discussed (Levy, 1959). From an economic perspective, the act of consumption suggests that benefits are acquired through the acquisition of products, however, from a symbolic point of view the significance of an "object" holds considerable meaning for the consumer (Holt, 1995).

The consumption which occurs as a result of the search for experience, integration, classification or social engagement (Holt, 1995) is, nowadays, increasingly seen as a determinant of the self. According to Solomon et al. (2016) the self-definition which was mainly linked to the developed work-activity within their society, today instead leans heavily on a person's consumption behaviour. In a post-modern society, consumption has become synonymous with symbols and image construction, as well as a "solution" to personal problems, longings, and a sense of existence (Tomasevic, 2007; Schiffman and Kanuk 2010).

According to Moneesha Pachauri (2002, p.319) consumer behavior has two paradigms which characterize the field. Positivism is referred to as the traditional and dominant one, where the focus is mainly on the economic, cognitive, and situational perspectives, highlighting human reason and taking a functional benefits' view regarding consumption. The non-positivism paradigm, brings a more postmodern and interpretive view, which takes into consideration the social and cultural complexity of the consumers' world.

This view emphasizes the importance of the customer's "symbolic and subjective experiences", with culture playing an important role when building meanings and attitudes. As advocated by Blythe (2009), culture influences attitudes, values, religion, art expressions, purchase behavior and consumption of a given group of people, affecting an individuals' preference, taste, and motivations which affect choice of products and services (Muhlbacher et al. 2006). Either related to functional benefits or subjective aims, motivations are the root of consumption decisions and arises for different reasons.

2.2.2 Purchase Motivations

According to Solomon et al. (2016) motivations are suggested to be the reasons which cause people to behave as they do. According to the author, as mentioned before, the feeling of "needing" builds a "want" and "goal" to be satisfied, where it can emerge from a utilitarian or hedonic motivation, from personal (self-gratification, diversion) or social (peer pressure, social experience) needs (Tauber, 1972). Motivation, can therefore, be driven by biological or cognitive strengths, which as per the Expectancy Theory is seen as being led by the wish to achieve

advantageous and positive outcomes (Solomon et al. 2010). Thus, through products, services, or experience consumption, the motivations which emerge from psychological or physiological desires, are somehow gratified (Stanton, Walker & Etzel 2001; Schiffman & Kanuk 2010, Solomon et al., 2010); leading to a shopping decision which happens when money and time are allocated in order to make a purchase (Arnold and Reynolds, 2003).

Certainly, the causes which motivate people to consume are widely diverse. For Antonides and Raaij 1998, some theories of motivation are based on the Freud concept of needs where needs are embraced by human anxiety and unconscious mind stimulus. While for McClelland, 1988 cited in Mooji 2011, motivation is led by needs of power to achieve and affiliate, factors which are embraced by strong cultural influences and interconnected within particular national cultural dimensions (Hofstede, 2001).

Yet, regarding needs, Maslow (1943) has proposed a widely used and well-known theory, where a hierarchy approach is adopted when dealing with human needs, and biological and psychological factors form the basis for its motivations concept (Figure 1). In this theory, commonly utilized by marketers when attempting to identify the possible benefits which people are looking for within products, and to uncover what their consumption reasons are, a person must satisfy basic needs before advancing to the next stage of the Maslow pyramid.

However, the approach has been criticized by various academic authors, due to its limitations suggesting consumers sit a static pattern of desire that follows an unchangeable progressive path from the physiological needs to self-actualization. Although being widely applied for marketers, the hierarchy theory is also questioned as it fails to consider culture as a driving factor which fluctuates. Not alone this, the theory is focused on a bottom-up ladder perception of hierarchy needs seen from a western perspective, showing little consideration for people from different cultural backgrounds who might not follow the same habits. Finally, social interaction and learning are not considered as part of the construction of a set of needs (Trigg, 2004; Solomon et al., 2016; Cherrier and Murray, 2004; Mooji 2011)

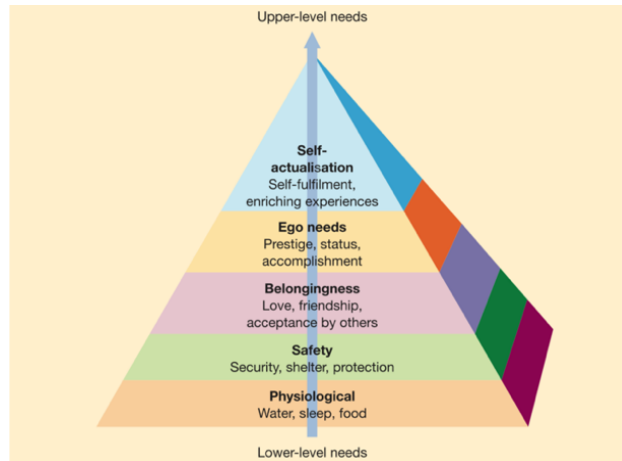


Figure 3 Maslow's Hierarchy Pyramid of Needs

Source: Maslow (1943)

Moreover, regarding motivation, Mooji (2011) suggests three types of drivers which will guide the process: the first, physiological, is based on a process of homeostasis, when a favourable internal biological environment is aimed to be kept; and the second and third, behavioral and psychological, guided by a learning process which is enabled by external drivers and goal-directed behavior sequence and process, being entirely influenced by culture, once learning and self-concern are connected to socio-cultural aspects.

Proposing Cultural Categories and Principles as the ground for meanings that consumers would give to products and services, McCracken (1986) sees both dimensions as simultaneous and interchangeable, generally expressed in the individual consumption of goods/services. A consumer's culture influences all priorities which are given to products and activities, thus, for a deep understanding of motivations, consumptions, and patterns of consumer behavior, culture should not be ignored; as culture is the scope through which people evaluate products and attempt to understand and make reasonable assumptions of their own and other people's consumption and attitudes. (Hofstede, 2001; Solomon, et al. 2016).

In conclusion, it is challenging to comprehend consumption evaluation without bearing in mind the cultural context surrounding the consumer, the discussion above highlights the importance of cultural context consideration to understand patterns of motivation and thus, the purchase decision.

2.2.3 Purchase Decision

According to Hansen (1976), decisions can be seen as a sequence of conflicts which require solving. Where according to (Peter and Oslo, 2008), decisions are always related to a choice between two or more alternative actions and/or behavior. For authors such as Mason and Mitroff (1981), the process of solving a problem is complex and brings the decision-makers through a difficult judgment process involving the evaluation of the best choice to be taken when facing an approach-approach, approach-avoidance or avoidance-avoidance conflict situation (see Solomon et al. 2010).

Regarding consumption behavior, Engel, Blackwell, and Kollat (1978) offers, in its earlier theory, five stages which may guide the process: problem recognition, the search of information, alternative evaluations, product or service choice and the outcomes of the final purchase decision; Solomon et al. (2016, p.33), refer to this process as cognitive, where a more sequential and rational approach is made. The authors also mention the habitual decision-making process and effective decision-making, where the first refers to decisions that are more organic and unconsciously taken; and the second suggests that the emotions play a significant role in the purchase process.

For Oliver 1997, the stages which guide decision-making are suggested to be the pre-decision, post-decision, pre-consumption, and pos-consumption steps, where according to Koller and Salzberger (2007), even though possibly being presented in different ways, uncertainty features in every process, suggesting the complexity of the decision action. For these authors, uncertainty is led by cognitive dissonance and perceived risk. Moreover, contrasting the stable design and proposition of the decision-making process, for authors such as Trigg (2004) and Cherrier and Murray (2004), the practice of consumption cannot be consolidated in a pyramidal or straightforward line regarding either steps or its understanding, as it is hybrid and permeated by personal occurrences and roles, and social-cultural experiences, not following a congruent and static process, but dynamic.

2.2.3.1 Purchase Decision And Behavioural Loyalty

The purchase decision is certainly influenced by many factors, with loyalty and/or patterns of re-purchase behaviour to a brand, product or service, being one of the most important ones (Jacoby and Kiner, 1973; Aaker 1991). The brand engagement, mentioned in this current study, thus, makes reference to the participants re-purchase patterns towards a branded alcoholic beer.

Oliver (1999) suggests that when consumption brings a feeling of fulfilment and when it is gratifying, customer satisfaction is achieved. However only satisfaction is not enough to drive brand loyalty. The author thus makes an argument for a concept of loyalty which is framed by a perception of dedication to consistently repurchase a preferable service or product, causing patterns of rebuying where situational influences are not considered.

However, Peter and Olso (2008) comprehend that the consumer decision-making is an integrative process, suggesting that when different types of knowledge are combined, the consumer is enabled to evaluate two or more options which will lead to a choice. Moreover, Briley, Morris and Simoson (2000) advocates that knowledge is a factor enabled by culture, consequently suggesting that culture influences a decision-making process and appears as an element when the explanation for purchase decision is required.

So far, the discussion highlights the attempt to understand the purchase and consumption decision regarding its process of occurrence as the core of consumer behavior studies (Koller and Salzberger, 2007). However, while understanding the stages and nature of the processes is important, to explore and investigate its antecedents and influences which bring the consumer to start the whole process of consumption decision, also requires consideration. These influences can range from conditional mood factors to complex cultural dimensions.

2.2.4 Purchase Decision and Cultural Influences

It is challenging to isolate one particular influential factor to understand purchase decision, as many different variables are affect the consumer. Therefore, purchase decision cannot be isolated and understood as related to triggers of consumption values (Sheth, Newman and Gross, 1991), consumer's experience,

tastes, aspiration, and character (Foxall, 2014), personality, self-concept, product image (Grubb and Grathwohl, 1967; Mowen, 2000; Majumdar 2010), situational, environmental, temporal factors and physical surroundings (Kotler 2000; Solomon et al. 2016) or even emotional effects (Bechara, Damasio and Damasio, 2000), without taking into consideration the cultural background and context as an important trigger by which the consumer is influenced.

The concept of culture holds dozens of different meanings. A broad, but widely shared definition presents culture as “the man-made part of the human environment” (Herskovits, 1948). In this view, physical and subjective concepts are shown, representing the creation of objective things and subjective beliefs and values. For McCort and Malhotra (1993), the concurrence between both is seen as indispensable. Despite its many suggested theories, Foxal (2014) expresses five elements regarding culture that are highly agreed upon among researchers: cognitive elements, beliefs, values and norms, signs, and non-normative behaviors.

Moreover, Mooji (2011) comprehends that all of these elements influence the manner in which an individual behaves. Thus, suggesting culture as a factor in which the detachment from the individual is not possible; not being an abstract driver of behaviour and decision, but rooted and expressed in every action, so, embracing every person’s thoughts, behaviour and patterns of consumption (Hawkins and Mothersbaugh, 2010; Luna and Gupta, 2001).

2.2.4.1 Hofstede’s Dimensions and Its Consumer Behaviour Influences

An important view to consider regarding purchase decision and cultural influences emerges when looking into the national cultural dimensions and their impact on individual behavior. In a model proposed by Hofstede (2001;2010), the author derived five dimensions of national culture: power distance, individualism-collectivism, masculinity-femininity, uncertainty avoidance, and long-short term orientation. These dimensions are often used within cross-cultural studies and allow insightful information about the differences which affect the dynamic consumer behavior within different cultures (Mooji, 2011).

- Power distance: This refers to the expectation or acceptance by minority groups which are less powerful, that the power in the cultural context is unequally

administered. In a high power distance culture, like Japan, for example, the hierarchy is natural and the dependency between the relationships is high. On the other hand, countries with a low score on power distance, the USA for example, equality is aimed and authority can have a negative image. These factors imply differences among consumers' communication attitudes, the gathering of information to guide the purchase decision and attachment to brands, therefore impacting their consumption motivation (Mooji, 2011).

- Individualism-collectivism: The individualist dimension makes reference to the relationship among the members of a culture and is highly used among cross-cultural comparative studies, seen as imperative for understating the contrast within purchase behaviour among different countries (Jung and Sung, 2008). Individualist culture holds the benefits to the self as the focus in its decision-making process, the individual opinion being expressed, and the desire to differentiate oneself from others as an important behavioral attribute. Self-actualization equates to a sense of independence and autonomy is highly valued. The individual's own needs and preferences guide their motivation, resulting in the purchase behavior being affected directly by a person's self-identity, consequently, consumption involves a more self-expressive approach (Triandis, 1994; Mooji, 2011). For Donth and Yoo (1998) the individualist consumer exhibits a high expectation of quality in the consumed services, as they aim to achieve their satisfaction at a higher level.

On the other hand, collectivism culture bases its individuals' identities on the socio characteristics of the system. The harmony within the members and the brand loyalty and equity perception are considered important, (Yoo, 2009; Mooji 2011). Consumption and brand attachment, however, exist in both societal structures, but with different purchase decision outcome expectations for the members of each respective cultural set (Aaker and Smith, 1997).

Although often utilized within cross-cultural studies, the individualism/collectivism approach is criticized for its conceptual and empirical features, with critics arguing that the theory wrongly assumes that cultural expressions are framed in a static inclination in the mind of the consumers, and that it does not consider the dynamic circumstances referred to as cultural contaminations (Hermans and Kempen 1998; Hong et al. 2000). Hofstede (2001) defends his theory,

acknowledging that the proposed theory considers cultural changes, however, occurring in a slow dynamic.

- Masculinity-femininity: In a masculine social structure, the focus is on showing achievement and performance, success is important and has to be shown, strength is admirable and the main driving motivation for consumption is to show it to others. In a feminine society, caring is the goal, consumption achieves patterns of use, and the small is beautiful (Mooji, 2011; Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, 2010).

- Uncertainty avoidance: According to Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010), uncertainty and management of uncertainty, can be different, but exists across all societies. People's methods of coping with ambiguous situations caused by anxiety and uncertainty are guided by cultural learning processes, influenced by peers, families and other members. In a society with high levels of uncertainty, the need for rules and structure to guide action is commonly sought after. It might influence the desire to keep old behaviors, avoiding innovation, where the interaction with new brands can be compromised (Mooji, 2011; Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, 2010).

- Long-short term orientation: In a long-term orientation, the aim is to gather virtues that will make sense in the future, while in the short-term societal structure spending money immediately is more important than saving it for the future. The dichotomy of both brings differences at how people spend time eating out, shopping, using the internet, and buying and valuing products as cosmetics for example (Mooji, 2011; Hofstede, Hofstede, and Minkov, 2010).

This study has suffered some criticism, regarding its analyses being chosen empirically and not theoretically, the data being collected by one singular organization and the study being outdated. Furthermore, (Schwartz, 1994; Albers-Miller and Gelb, 1996) some researchers do not advise the application of this theory across various countries. On the other hand, Mooji (2011) suggests that the five dimensions have brought insightful and important explanations to cross-cultural studies, and have led to a range of strong information about cultures and their respective consumer behavior.

2.2.4.2 Cultural Values System and its Consumer Behaviour Influences

In studies utilizing an etic perspective about culture dynamics, the research aims to gain insights about consumer behaviour, generally looking through a unidimensional lense, where the comparison of variables and structures of different cultures are made, and the goal is to explore how similar or different one culture is from another. In this view, culture is the programmed mind of the individual, shared in a collective form, thus distinguishing the members from one respective group to another (Hofstede, 1997, cited in Luna and Gupta, 2001).

On the other hand, an emic approach is concerned not with comparing one culture to another, but instead to deeply understand a given dynamic from the insiders' point of view and experience. Culture, from an emic perspective, is the "blueprint" of human activities and determines actions; being the "lenses" from which the person sees and comprehends the world (Geertz, 1973; McCracken, 1988; Luna and Gupta, 2001).

According to Luna and Gupta (2001) the application of both, etic and emic approaches brings a better understanding of culture, presenting it as the lenses which detail reality, while being a blueprint which influences action, and at the same time is unique to a particular category of people. Despite the differing approach of these two perspectives, culture itself and its differences among groups, exhibits unique manifestations which influence cultural behaviour and create cultural value systems. These manifestations are suggested by Hofstede (1997) to occur through values, heroes, symbols and rituals.

- Values: Deeply agreed among researchers as the driving force of behaviors and attitudes. Their conceptualization is found diversely among publications, going from terminal/instrumental values, desirable and desired objects, global values, product value attributes, concept connection with freedom, pleasure, harmony, and much more (Hostede, 1980; Luna and Gupta, 2001). However, independently of its rooted concept and perception, according to Solomon et al. (2016), the values of a person are a relevant factor influencing consumption activities, once service and products are also purchased due to consumer desire to gain a "value-related" outcome. Yet, in an emic approach, values influence consumer behavior when impacting consumption through

an interconnected relationship with the meaning delivered by the objects (Luna and Gupta, 2001).

- Heroes: Highly admired in a culture, a person who is dead or alive, who commonly is seen as an inspiration for people behavior, has a high potential to influence consumers and their decision-process regarding products and/or service options, such as celebrity endorsements for example. (Hofstede, 1997).
- Symbols: In a society, symbols might hold a relevant meaning to certain categories of people. A symbol can characterize accomplishment, achievement, and self-actualization, in the case of the purchase of luxury brands in individualist societies for example. In this context, advertisement is an important communication for highlighting symbols and their addressed product meaning for consumers (Durgee, 1986; Osterwalder, 2014; cited in Luna and Gupta, 2001).
- Rituals: Seen as an opportunity to reaffirm the importance of symbols in a given cultural context, rituals can be related to romance, food, celebration, shopping and more, affecting consumer behavior when particular products or services are used to compound or reinforce expected behaviours associated with a particular occasion. (McCracken, 1998; Solomon and Anand, 1985).

Culture is therefore a fertile ground for the expression of behavior, with its dimensions and values influencing individual or group purchase decisions. However, the notion of culture as a determinant of consumer behavior is viewed differently among authors, appearing in academic discourse as having varying importance in respect to the impact it has on consumers and their decisions.

2.2.5 Three Different Cultural Influences' Perspective

According to Briley, Morris, and Simonson (2000), two main dimensions regarding culture and its influence on consumer behavior exist. A universalist dimension (where culture never influences the purchase decision) and a dispositionalist dimension (where culture always influences the purchase decision). Additionally, it's fair to consider a third view which is published by the three above mentioned authors, which advocates that culture and its influence on consumer behavior is dynamic and impacts the purchase decision when the justification for the

decision requires the buyer to process the purchase via learned culture-specific knowledge.

At one extreme of this “middle-perspective”, are the authors who believe that culture will never influence consumption, as seen in theories by Levitt (1983), Ohmae (1989) and Wilk (1998) or that global culture holds a stronger influence than local culture Usunier (2000). This view is emphasized by theories which advocate the existence of “Universal Marketing”, where even though the understanding of different cultural contexts influencing the different manifestation of behavior exists, the psychological and cognitive process are seen as characterized by a universal nature which underlies the actions taken, highlighting the perspective of cultural-free attitudes (Douglas, Morrin and Craig, 1994; Dawar and Parker, 1994). For authors such as Dawar and Parker (1994) aspects such as brand perception, price, and physical product features are seen to be a universal sign of quality, however, how this desire for quality will be ultimately ratified, is seen as a matter of cultural involvement and evaluation by Foyal (2014).

On the other hand, there are researchers who truly believe that culture places a relevant influence on consumption decision, perception, self-concept, motivation, learning and memories, understanding and practice of habits, communities and social organizations, purchase-decision, post-purchase perception and patterns of consumption (McCracken, 1990; Foyal, 1990; McCort and Malhotra, 1993; Usunier, 1997; Briley and Aaker, 2006; Peter and Olson, 2008; Mooji, 2011; Solomon et al. 2018). Comprehending purchase-decision as a connected attitude towards ethnicity and acculturation as a phenomenon, Laroche (1998) advocates that consumption is culturally bound. Moreover, agreed by Moore (2012), cultural context influences every aspect of the consumers’ lives, also dictating the pattern of consumer behavior; where culture should not be seen just as a social or environmental source of influence, but an aspect which permeates the individual personality and is interiorized by them Mooji (2011).

For this study, an investigation of the studies of consumption from a perspective of cultural influences is relevant and guides the interest of the research. As this paper takes into consideration consumers who have moved across borders, a review of the acculturation concept and its discussion regarding consumption will follow.

2.3 Acculturation and Consumption

2.3.1 Acculturation

Classically introduced by Redfield, Linton, and Herskovits (1936, p.149) from an anthropological view, the term acculturation has been presented as a phenomenon which would happen when individuals, or group of individuals, from different cultures start a continuous first-hand cultural interaction and this occurrence brings changes in the pattern of the original culture of either or both groups. However, Berry (1990, 1997) suggests that normally, one of the groups experiences more changes than the other, with the acculturating group being more affected. For the author, the immigrants' interactions with the host culture leads to circumstances of changes and adaptations which affects their lives on a day to day basis. The term has also been used to describe a process of learning and adaptation to the new culture by Ownbey and Horridge (1997), being also understood by Penalozza & Gilly (1999) as a complex process which might result in an assimilation of the new culture, maintenance of the original, and/or an avoidance regarding the new or the old one.

Graves 1967, mentioned in Berry, 1997, suggests two views within the process of interaction between cultures; the process of acculturation being a phenomenon which occurs on a group-collective level when changes in the collective culture are seen, and the psychological acculturation, when changes in the psychology of the individuals occur, possibly leading to changes in the individuals' attitudes, values, identity and behaviors (Penaloza, 1994).

According to Moore (2012) acculturation is a two-way process of change, however the majority of theories focuses mainly on the adjustment experienced by the minorities when responding to the dominant society, suggesting the process to be a more "one-way" theory. Suggested by Johnston (1963) and reviewed by Segev et al. (2013), this dichotomy regarding ways or processes, leads to uni and bi-dimensional theories, which diverge their ideologies regarding the individuals' adaptation, taking into consideration the behavior and attitude they have in relation to their heritage and host culture, as follows:

- Uni-dimensional: In the uni-dimensional view the individuals adapt themselves to the host culture while also disassociating and losing their heritage culture in a linear process (Burnam et al. 1987; Salgado de Snyder, 1987). This view is criticized by authors such as Cabassa (2003) and Laroche et al. (2005), as for them this approach is oversimplified and ignores the complexity within individuals' co-existence capacity to embrace different cultural expressions, as the world is increasingly evolving into a multi-interchangeable cultural space, and adopting characteristics of the host country, doesn't necessarily lead to losing the roots of the original cultural patterns.

- Bi-dimensional: In the bi-dimensional view, the relationship between the two cultures are independent. The individual maintains the heritage culture (ethnic identification) while simultaneously adapting to the host culture (acculturation), (Berry, 1997; Laroche et al., 1998). According to Berry (1997) when the individual experiences a two-dimensional interaction they can effectively understand, feel, and interpret the challenges which are present within the cultural change process.

Even with these conceptual differences, the recognition of each particular dimension is relevant for understanding the acculturation influences on immigrants' behavior Phinney and Flores (2002). Trying to deal with such differences within acculturation as a process, Berry (1997, p. 331) suggests what he called 'acculturation strategies', representing the dynamic ways in which people acculturate, even though acknowledging that the attitudes and behavior which particular individuals hold, within the same group, might vary. The acculturation strategies are proposed as taking into consideration, on a cultural level, the notion which the cultural group (dominant or non-dominant) pursues regarding how they want to behave towards the other; and on an individual level, how they interact with their own group (education or background context for example) and/or within their families (gender or position).

From this point of view, four dimensions of acculturation strategy emerged, and were subsequently adapted (Berry, 1980). The concept considers two distinctive issues, (i) the choice of maintaining the individuals' heritage culture or not; and (ii) aiming to foster a relationship with the other cultural group and interacting with the

major society or not. With different names, the strategies are denominated considering which ethnocultural category is being examined, as follows:

Non-dominant point of view:

- Assimilation: Individuals don't have the interest to keep their cultural identity and look for daily interaction with the other culture(s).
- Separation: Individuals keep interested to hold their own culture and don't seek interaction with other culture(s).

Dominant point of view:

- Integration: Both groups wish to hold their original cultural aspects while interacting with others and participating in society. This process is seen by Berry & Kalin (1995) as likely to happen in multicultural societies where the level of respect of the diverse ideologies and the level of prejudice is low, allowing positive attitudes among both groups.
- Marginalization: Desire to maintain one's own culture doesn't exist and the wish to create a relationship with the other culture is almost non-existent. Here this process is likely to potentialize a loss in the cultural and psychological set of the non-dominant population, which is affected by a circumstance of exclusion and leads to a lack of engagement with the larger societal group (Berry, 2008).

Another category, Enculturation, has also been documented, where the individuals selectively acquire or retain elements of the cultural heritage and host culture (Weinreich, 2009, cited in Schwartz et al., 2010). The aforementioned acculturation categories have been criticized by authors, who suggest that not all of the categories will exist in a given population or sample, and some categories are likely to have subtypes in diversity and multiplicity (Del Pilar and Udasco, 2004).

2.3.2 Ethnic Identification

Some acculturation concepts have their roots in the belief that cultural influence is a unidirectional flow, however, the majority of researchers advocate that two different cultural interactions usually occur, where values from the native cultural aspect are kept while the new host cultural values are also absorbed (Berry, 2008; Weinreich, 2009, Schwartz 2010; Kipnis, Broderick and Demangeot, 2014). On the other hand, ethnic identification does consider the maintenance of the heritage culture. Firstly, ethnic identification should not be understood to be the same as ethnic origin (Larroche, Kim and Tomiuk, 1998), given that the latter is often utilized to offer insights to develop statistical data sets to inform of participants' places of origin, a static and non-disputable attribute. The prior, on the other hand, is a more dynamic and subjective concept in its construct, not necessarily inherited, but potentially absorbed from an identification with any cultural group (Phinney and Ong, 2007). The stronger the recognition and affiliation with the particular group in question, the better the absorption of its traditions, values, and norms, influencing the patterns of a person's behavior (Hirschman, 1981, cited in Larroche, Kim and Tomiuk, 1998).

An individual's sense of ethnic identity is influenced by various elements (Rosenthal and Feldman, 1992). Venkatesh (1995) suggests that important factors are language group, religion, and race; with Larroche, Kim and Tomiuk (1998, p. 128), advocating that 'language, friendship, food preferences, religion, celebrations and rituals, endogamy, and membership in organizations and clubs' are crucial.

Regarding consumption, ethnic identification has been found to hold strong influence (Wang, 2004; Chattaraman & Lennon, 2006; Venkatesh, 2006; Wang and Lo, 2007), and ethnoconsumerism theories have emerged, studying consumption taking into consideration the values, thoughts, attitudes, etc. of a cultural group. According to this approach, the assumption of the existence of similar values across cultures and their influence on different groups of individuals should be avoided. With (Lowe and Corkindale, 1998) and (Mooji, 2011) advocating that marketing strategies and stimulus should be directed to a specific cultural expression.

When consumers become immigrants, the consumption of ethnic products often represents an opportunity for the immigrant to experience a comfortable "feeling of home", encouraging the consumption of foods and products from ethnic stores which carry heritage association and connection, consequently highlighting the wish to

protect aspects of ethnic identification (Wang, 2004; Wango and Lo, 2007; Bardhi et al., 2010). However, international consumer cultures patterns have been potentialized by globalization, which allows individuals to enjoy different identities, providing a mixed self-construct that is incorporated from varying cultural expressions (Sobol, Clevelande and Laroche, 2018).

2.3.3 Globalization and Plural Societies

Nowadays, contemporary consumer societies seem to embrace international, national, and regional traits of culture, with individuals from different backgrounds, inter-changing their spaces, and rarely leaving/entering a culturally homogeneous environment (Davies and Fitchett, 2004). This is possible as individuals from different cultures bring their patterns of behavior, values, and interest, blending them with the host culture, leading to the blurring of social and cultural boundaries (Andreasen, 1990), and enabling a cultural interpenetration, which is highlighted by Craig and Douglas (2006) to be a factor of difficulty when identifying the ethnic core of a culture.

This view emphasizes the approach taken by Berry (1997; 2008) which explains the plural societies through high rates of immigration resulting from the process of globalization. The interaction between people from different backgrounds brings more than a static and homogenized outcome, generating a flow within cultural elements (ideas, values, perceptions, goods, etc) and allowing high degrees of engagement within different societies, not necessarily leading to a loss of the “rooted” features and aspects of each culture.

This globalization process, which empowers individuals and encourages global movement, is a driving force for the existence of multicultural class, and for Berry (1997, p.8) the variation in the relationship between immigrant groups with the dominant society in questions, is influenced by three factors which made influenced their decision to leave their place of origin: voluntariness, mobility, and permanence:

-Voluntariness: Immigrants who have chosen to experience the acculturation process voluntarily.

- Mobility: When a group interacts with the dominant culture because they have migrated to a new location (immigrants and refugees) or when a new culture is brought to a pre-existing society (process of colonization).

- Permanence: Immigrants who have decided to permanently settle in the new cultural context or the immigrants who have chosen to stay for a while (sojourners, such as international students who aim to stay for a specific period of time).

Acculturation, therefore, considering its sociocultural or psychological aspects, often induces levels of stress and loneliness, demanding economic adaptation, behavioral adaptability, development of emotional coping mechanisms from the individuals. The adaptation, therefore positive or negative in its perception and classification, is seen as a common element shared by every group who experiences this process (Berry & Sam, 1996; Beiser, 1988). According to Berry (1990) the differences which distinguish one adaptation from another are intrinsically connected with three different levels of acculturation strategies; adjustment, withdrawal and reaction. Adjustment being considered the most common and favourably helping to reduce conflicts and increase harmony within new environments.

However, even with the strong influences of globalization and the theories of its influence on global behaviour convergence, Berry (2008) emphasizes that although present in some cases, general homogenization should not be assumed when analysing the process of cultural transition.

2.3.4 Brand Preference and Choice

As previously mentioned, purchase motivation and decision can be influenced by diverse factors. In this context brand preference can be seen as one of the triggers in driving consumption. However, nowadays, with a high variety of brands in the market space, consumers experience a “choice-fatigue” when cognitive efforts and high complexity emerge during the decision process Ballantyne, Warren and Nobbs (2006). Consumers tend to simplify the process, creating a “set of considerations” to help guide their decisions, where a pool of different brands are considered and a screening process leads to brand evaluation and then choice (Bettman, 1979, Shocker et al., 1991). Thus, brands do not solely need to achieve a place in the consideration set, but furthermore, to be the most preferred within the considered options. For Keller (2001), consideration is dependent on if consumers place personal relevance on the

brand, and whether or not the consumers consider the brand to be meaningful and appropriate for their consumption.

For Chernotony, Harris & Christo-doulides (2004) preference of convenience, originality, positive experience and habitual buying behaviour can also emerge as boosters for repetitive purchase behaviour of a particular brand. For Keller (1993), Aaker (1991) and Lassar et al., (1995) elements of brand equity such as awareness, loyalty, brand association, image, perceived quality, trustworthiness, superior performance and knowledge, enable favourable consumer responses towards a brand in the market space, leveraging a positive evaluation when comparing its offers with available competitors.

However, the consumer attitude and purchase decision towards a brand should not only be seen as an outcome of their evaluative cognitive decision, but a broad perception and interpretation of competing brands (Laroche et al. 1994), with possibility of different evaluation relying upon the variety of brands which inhabit the 'consideration options' and are incorporated into the situational contexts Chernotony, Harris & Christo-doulides (2004). In this context, marketers aim to create relevance for their consumers, with personal identification and meaning becoming recurrent themes in brands' offerings (Holt, 2002). Thus, if a brand aims to deliver personal identification and meaning, consumers' values, norms and beliefs should not be forgotten, highlighting culture as an important element for consideration for consumption (Laroche, 1998). Furthermore, brand equity can be distinctively evaluated through the above dimensions when considering consumers from different cultural backgrounds (Yoo, 2008; Ioannou and Rusu, 2012).

2.3.4.1 Brand Evaluation Among Immigrants

To achieve equity and a place in the customer mindset is certainly a goal for most companies. The greater the equity achieved, the higher the consumer confidence in a brand, creating a positive behavior that can be seen via a willingness to pay premium prices, show loyalty, hold positive associations, and demonstrate brand recall, awareness, knowledge, and more. This concept allows customer-based brand equity to occur, making the consumer familiar with the brand and permitting

favourable, unique, and strong association in memory (Aaker, 1991; Keller, 1993; Lassar, Mital, and Sharma, 2005).

However, the cultural transition has its psychological and social influences on immigrants, impacting their behavior and shaping habits such as eating, drinking, taking public transport and consuming, possibly creating disorientation among their expressions, the latter potentially affecting brand preferences and choices (Chataway and Berry, 1989; Ward and Kennedy, 1994; Vijaygopal and Dibb, 2012). Furthermore, two different dimensions appear to impact an individual's perception of a brand: the individual belief and the evaluative process. The first is widely connected to the consumer's own experience with the brand and advertising sources, the latter with the judgment of whether or not a purchase is pertinent, where criteria such as price and emotional benefits might occur (Lee and Ro Um, 1992). In both criteria, culture, as mentioned before, has its influence on values and beliefs, as well as the perception of benefits achieved from the consumption process.

In the literature, mentions of brand loyalty and its definitions are diverse, however, the behavior measures are often seen (Bloemer and Kasper, 1995, mentioned in Segev et al., 2012). These measures consider consumers' preferences and are expressed in purchase sequence, frequency, probability, and proportion, (Ehrenberg, 1988; Jacoby and Chestnut, 1978; mentioned in Segev et al., 2012). However, according to Segev et al. (2012) immigrants have their consumer loyalty blended and shaped through continuous interaction with brands from their heritage culture and the host one, a process which perhaps aids them in better adapting to the host culture, accelerating their integration and adaptation to the new cultural space, and also re-evaluating their consumption and product-service meanings.

2.3.4.2 Acculturation and Its Brand Preference Influences

An immigrant's behavior towards a brand can be easily influenced by two factors: their own culture, or the host cultural space in which they are inserted (Lee and Ro Um, 1992). With the increasing occurrence of immigration around the world, research of acculturation and its impact on consumer behavior and brand preferences is becoming more common (Penaloza, 1994; Rajagopalan and Heitmeyer, 2005; Segev et al. 2014).

When immigrants experience a cultural transition they commonly look for alternatives to connect with their roots, aiming to keep their social and cultural identifications and fill their cultural longing (Paswan Ganesh, 2005; Vijaygopal and Dibb, 2012). Studies have shown particular consumer preferences for ethnic identities when purchasing in another cultural context, such as Chinese preference for Chinese grocery shopping when choosing between mainstream stores or ethnic ones in Canada, for example (Wang and Lo, 2007).

However, this perspective can be challenged, firstly, as globalization brings power and opportunity to interact with different consumer culture backgrounds. The individual becomes allowed to choose which value and identity will be adopted, thus making the framing of ethnic versus global consumer a poor categorization (Arnett et al., 2003). Secondly, consumers from a specific cultural background may favour global brands over the ethnic ones, as the trade-off between keeping their heritage consumptions' expressions can bring unfavourable economic outcomes, as sometimes ethnic brands brought to a new cultural space can result in higher expenditure (due to import and export rates). This may lead to a "cost at a cultural price: a loss of authentic products" (Ittersum and Wong, 2010, p.110). Last but not least, as brands are an expression of consumer behavior, which is influenced by culture, brand preferences can be strongly influenced by the host culture.

This can occur as immigrants attempt to achieve social consent and acceptance, as consumers tend to behave according to the self-perception regarding their place in society (Beery, 1997; Kotler, 2000; Maldonado and Tansuhaj, 2002; Vijaygopal and Dibb, 2012). However, as expressed by Mooji (2011), to embrace the new cultural context does not necessarily result in a loss of the heritage culture, but a matter of adaptation.

As also defended by Moore, Weinberg, and Berger (2012) and Berry (1976;1980), the *level* of acculturation/adaptation is what will most influence an acculturating individual's adoption of the host culture and its consumption patterns. The stronger the adaptation in the new context, the greater the possession of new cultural traits, "...the premise is that people at various acculturation levels use different variables to influence their purchase decisions" (Martin, 2012, p.160)".

In this context, discussions about consumer acculturation emerge, considering it as a multicultural consumer learning process, happening on an individual/group and psycho/physical level. The previous consumer knowledge inherited from the original

culture, evolves, and the assumption of social motivation for consumption becomes evident (Penaloza, 1989). Moreover, uncertainty dimensions experienced by an immigrant appear to dictate behaviors which become similar to the host cultural patterns of expression. As advocated by Solomon (1983), the likelihood of consumption of symbolic goods and services as a pilot of behaviour is higher in scenarios where uncertainty exists around the perceived social role within the host environment.

In conclusion, traits of the host culture can influence new consumption behaviours, bringing brands and products from the host culture to the consumers' new set of considerations, as situational elements can highly influence the group of brands, products and services which will be considered for purchase, Chernotony, Harris & Christo-doulides (2004).

2.4 Chapter Summary

Based on the existing literature, the author has presented and narrowed the discussion from consumer purchase and motivations to acculturation and its influences on the purchase decision of a consumer. Discussion of how culture influences a decision process has been addressed, as well as the concept of behavioural loyalty briefly presented and connected with the importance of consumer knowledge and cultural impact on its re-purchase pattern behaviour. Acculturation process and its influence on brand preferences and purchase decision was also approached. Following, Chapter 3 will address the adopted methodological research to better investigate the phenomena of cultural transition and its influence on consumer purchase decision towards a branded alcoholic drink which used to be consumed in the participants' native cultural space.

Chapter 3: Research methodology

3.0 Introduction

Research can be understood as an activity undertaken by people in order to discover information, drawing on only their own beliefs, but also methods which will help the researcher to achieve a logical connection between “what is being done” in order to achieve “what is needed”. Thus, the paths which are taken to acquire the respective data, the outcomes of the interpretations from the research, and the limitations in its execution have a deep and fundamental importance when developing researches (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016; Ghauri and Grønhaug, 2010).

According to Walshaw, cited in Johntson (2014) people as individuals are actively or passively creating interdependence among their own and external knowledge on a regular basis, not necessarily conscious about this process as a research activity. However, for Matthews and Ross (2010), the majority of research attempts to find a precise relationship among phenomena, consciously considered activities in order to relate different variables.

Although neither a right or wrong method of choice exists, some research approaches are considered to be more suitable when dealing with particular questions and objectives, therefore, a cohesive research design, which plans to give structure to the investigation objectives, is of utmost importance for a study (Silverman, 2013; Kerlinger, cited in Cooper 2014).

This study aims through a phenomenological approach, to explore the cultural transition, associated with geographical location changes, and its influence on consumer purchase decision towards a branded alcoholic drink; considering a brand which the consumer used to purchase in their native country, which also exists in Ireland. In this chapter, the chosen research design will be presented following “The research onion” framework suggested by Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016).

Accordingly, section 3.1 and 3.2 will outline the research objectives and question. Section 3.3, 3.4 and 3.5 will therefore discuss the research philosophy, approach and methodological choice. Section 3.6 will outline the research strategy, followed by 3.7 and 3.8 presenting its sample choice and data collection. Sections 3.9

and 3.10 aim to shed light on the data analyses and ethical considerations, and finally section 3.11 research limitations.

3.1 Research Aims and Objective

It is known that culture is a behaviour shaper and a strong factor which influences attitudes. For this reason, acculturation and its theories are studied in depth, referencing culture as a catalyst for social, psychological or/and economic change (Berry, 1997).

With this context in mind, the objective of this research is to explore the influences of cultural transition, associated with geographical location change, on customers' purchase decision towards a branded alcoholic beer, which they used to consume in their native country.

3.2 Research Question

Aiming to explore the gaps found in the literature, presented in section 1.2, the study aims to answer the following question:

“Does the cultural transition, associated with geographic location change, influence a consumer purchase decision towards a branded alcoholic drink which they use to consume in their own country?”

3.3 Research Philosophy

According to Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016, p. 107) research philosophy is explained by “the development of knowledge and the nature of that knowledge”. For the author, the ways which researchers observe the world has an intrinsic effect on the philosophy which will be chosen, and the implication of such understanding will also support the choice of strategy and methods that will be guiding the studies, having an important influence in the conducted process and its outcomes.

For Crotty (1998), the researchers beliefs would, without exception, influence the questions that are being asked throughout the study, as well as its interpretation

and understanding of the achieved information, as also suggested by Johnson and Clark (2006), it influences research strategy choice directly, and the objective at the aim of the study.

The philosophies which are most commonly utilised to guide business research processes; positivism, realism, pragmatism, and interpretivism stem from the “Research Onion” (Figure 1) which is suggested by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016).

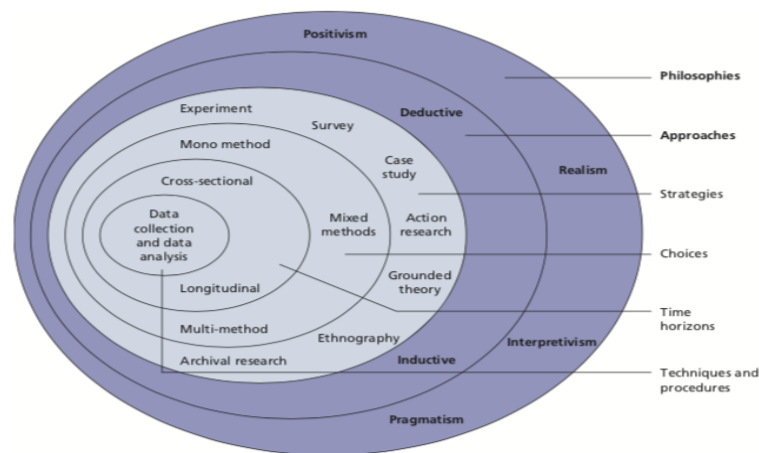


Figure 4 Research Onion Method

Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016)

3.3.1 Positivism

For Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), the researcher who adopts a positivist approach will likely work towards an observative social reality, aiming to generate a statistical outcome and analysis which will be easily replicated in future studies. To achieve the expected outcomes, in the positivist philosophy the data collection is likely to be collected by a well-structured approach (Gill and Johnson 2010). The positivism philosophy adopts the facts as a way of gathering hypotheses which will be the foundation for laws, and is constructed upon a “value-free” point of view, where it is suggested that the researcher neither influences nor is influenced by the research process, with the theory being the basis of the approach (Bryman and Bell, 2011 ; Collis and Hussey, 2014).

As this study neither relies on a well-structured research approach nor in the testing of theories, but aims to explore new grounds and a dynamic outcome regarding customer attitudes, the positivism philosophy wouldn't fit the objective.

3.3.2 Realism

As a philosophy which is also rooted in a scientific approach, realism suggests that the mind doesn't impact the reality and objectives in the world. In this view, reality is determined by how people sense and how knowledge is achieved on a scientific basis, similar to the adopted approach in the positivism view, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016). Realism is seen as having two dimensions: direct and critical realism, where the discussions occur regarding how the real and/or observable world would influence people's experiences, perceptions and interpretations.

For researchers such as Bhaskar (1989), the understanding of the roots of the existent phenomena which the researchers are trying to understand is indispensable when trying to completely comprehend the social world, a vision which is controversial for the direct realism. Yet for Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), realism would consider an objective observation of nature and an explanation of contexts. As this study explores the consumers' contexts rather than explaining them, considering the mind of the human as a social actor impacting the world, the realism approach wouldn't fit the objective.

3.3.3 Pragmatism

The pragmatism philosophy suggests that the research question is the most important antecedent of the ontology, axiology or epistemology, and a variation on those determinants is possible when the research question is not suggesting either an interpretive or positivist adoption as the philosophy for the study, allowing different points of view to be taken (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). According to Morgan (2014), the linkage between pragmatism with mixed-methods has increased among researchers. For a better comprehension of the world, the pragmatism view considers mixed or multiple research designs, applying quantitative and qualitative data. As this study aims to solely develop a qualitative research choice,

aiming to explore a consumer behaviour in depth while making sense of the subjective meanings of their contexts, the pragmatism philosophy wouldn't meet the research objectives.

3.3.4 Interpretivism

In the interpretivism view, the understanding of the world while considering humans as social actors and assimilating the differences within space, avoiding a “law-like” generalization when interpreting information, is crucial (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). Interpretivism is seen to have its roots on the phenomenology and symbolic interactionism, where the first refers how the human-being understands the world around them (Bryman and Bell, 2011) and the second stands for an interruptive cycle of interpretation of the world, where attitudes from others help the adaptation of individual beliefs and behaviour (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). This view considers the world as a complex place and brings in its essence the understanding of the importance and meanings which people can bring to the construction of reality through their experiences (Goldkuh, 2012; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016).

Given the nature of this research, where the aims is to investigate the implications resulting from the cultural transition lived by a consumer towards their pattern of consumption regarding a branded alcoholic drink which they used to consume in their own country, thus, considering their experience as a determinant “block-building” among their perception and engagement with such a brand, interpretivism is seen as the most appropriate philosophy.

3.4 Research Approach

For Easterby-Smith et al. (2012) to bear in mind your research approach has important reasons. Firstly, it can be helpful when adopting a research design and the questions which will be made, the type of information which will be collected, as well as the way the data collected will be interpreted. Secondly, the approach for the research would help the researcher to undertake the methodologies and research strategies which would best fit their way of thinking about the study, and third

knowing the approach which will be taken, the researcher is able to filter the best way to gather the expected information and full-fill the research purpose.

According to Somekh and Lewin (2005) a deductive approach would be understood for a research which uses existent theories as a guide to build or test new hypothesis, moreover, being the inductive approach the one which builds theories from the data which is collected to explore occurrences, developing meanings from corroborations, recognizing themes and developing frameworks. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) suggests also the abductive approach where a mix between deductive and inductive approach is seen, and known data is used to create conclusions and theories that can be tested and modified.

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) mention that the inductive approach consider social factors and human activities as an important factor, as well as the power placed in the context of the phenomena, the adoption of a small sample for investigation, and the use of qualitative data to allow distinct views of a respective phenomenon.

In this research, emergent themes were considered for identifying patterns, findings, conclusion and considerations. The observation of the phenomena guided the study, for which the objective is seen as to explore and investigate the context of cultural transition influences and its impact on consumer engagement with a brand. Therefore, for the purposes of this research, the inductive approach is believed to be the most suitable when answering the research question and achieving its objectives (section 3.1).

3.5 Methodological Research Choice

For Sim & Wright (2002), the research question determines the methodological choice and the data collection approach which will be taken. Furthermore, according to Dawson (2013) to start thinking about the research methodology choice is to have in mind the difference between quantitative and qualitative research. For the author, researchers should not fall into the trap of selecting one over the other, or considering that the first is better than the second, but should make the choice with the strengths and weaknesses of each approach in mind.

- Quantitative research: Is mainly developed by using data collection methods which generate numerical outcomes, usually adopting a questionnaire or procedures involving statistical and graphical data.
- Qualitative research: Mainly developed by using data collection methods that generate non-numerical outcomes, aiming to achieve an investigation about feelings, experiences and behaviour through methods such as focus group and interviews Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill (2016).

As advocated by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), quantitative research is mainly associated with the deductive approach and positivism philosophy; using structured surveys or interviews, therefore going against the previous justifications offered for this study philosophy, approach and method of interview.

According to Walle (2015) the qualitative approach involves the collection of factors as life experience, personal stories and all the artefacts which enable the interpretation of moments and meanings in an individuals' life, while also trying to deeply understand the subject matter. Yet, for (Denzin and Lincoln 2018), the qualitative methodology connects the interpretivism philosophy with the inductive approach, thus, to meet the objectives of this study (section 3.1) which aims to richly explore and investigate the interaction between cultural transition and consumer engagement with a brand, gathering information from the customer's personal experience and point of view, a qualitative approach is seen as the most appropriate to be taken.

Lastly, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016) refer to mono-methods and multiple-methods (Figure 2) within its methodological choice layer, where mono-methods uses only a single technique for data collection and the multiple-methods utilizes more than one, being divided into multimethod research and mixed-methods. This study will be conducted by a mono-method data collection which will use a non-standardized interview.

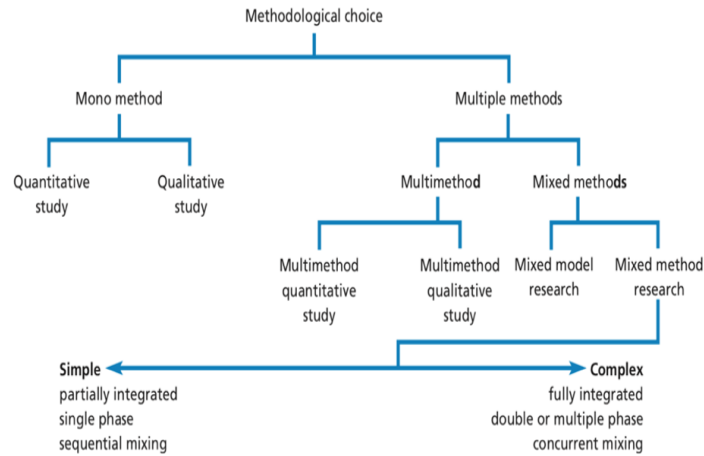


Figure 5 Saunder’s Methodological Choice

Source: Saunder’s, Lewis and Thornhill (2016)

3.6 Research Strategy

Understood as an orientation about how to conduct a social study Bryman (2003) can be a “plan of action” leading to the achievement of a goal (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016). Research strategy is the link that connects a research philosophy to the methods which will be implemented to gather and interpret the data achieved (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018).

As a channel helping to achieve the aimed answers, the strategies are also interlinked with the nature of the research. Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), suggests that how the researcher asks the study’s questions, inevitably leads them to a descriptive, explanatory, or exploratory investigation.

- Descriptive: The clear understanding of the occurrence which is being investigated is necessary. The aim is to achieve an accurate view of events, people, and phenomenon (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016).
- Explanatory: The objective is to understand the relationship between variables. In this nature of research, the qualitative approach is the most suitable to achieve the expected results and knowledge in depth. (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016).

- Exploratory: Its objective is to understand what is occurring within the social space and gather insights from the point of view of the researchers' interest. Flexible and adaptable regarding the way of the research, in-depth and semi-structured interviews are suitable, once the depth of information gathered will deeply contribute to the quality of the study (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016).

The nature of this research is understood to be exploratory, once the objective is to investigate whether or not cultural transition has influenced the consumer engagement with a brand and its why's. Moreover, aiming to capture the consumer's feelings, behaviours, thoughts, attitudes and experiences among the framed circumstances involved, the semi-structured interview as a strategy is seen as the most appropriate one, once the configuration of its open-ended questions gives the researcher the opportunity to explore the subject in depth.

3.7 Sample

3.7.1 Probability X Non-Probability Technique & Sample Selection

When talking about samples, it is important to keep in mind the concept of population. For Bryman and Bell (2003) population, which is normally seen as a reference for a nation's entire population and connected to demographic factors, can be understood as the units' universe which can embrace nations, organizations, places, things, or everything else that the researchers aim to consider. A sample is therefore the selection of a particular set, gathered from the entire population, which is to be investigated (Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016). According to Bryman and Bell (2003) the way of selecting the sample for a study will be based on a probability or non-probability method of choice:

- Probability: A random method of selection is applied and the chance of being selected among the entire population is equal and known, creating a representative outcome that is likely to have minor sampling errors and

statistical readings of the data are possible (Bryman and Bell 2003; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016).

- Non-probability: In this selection, a non-random set of samples is selected and a particular segmentation is more inclined to be chosen. The probability of a known part of the population being selected doesn't exist and presenting the findings statically is impossible (Bryman and Bell 2003; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2016).

According to Cooper and Shindler (2014) because the probability method of selection can be time-consuming and costly, and as a non-probability sampling can lead to sustainable results, researchers may choose the second above the first. For Denscombe (2003) another explanation for choosing non-probability sampling is for those studies which are aiming to "create" a new hypothesis rather than testing an existing one.

Regarding the selection of the participants within a non-probability approach, quota sampling, haphazard, volunteer and purposive techniques are available, where:

- Quota aims to replicate the entire population and is mostly used for structured interviews;
- Haphazard aims to get a sample in the most quickly and easy availability way, with no previous organization of expected features for the participants;
- Volunteer mainly when the participants are available for the research rather than the researcher choosing them; and
- Purposive technique, where the sample is selected towards the judgment of being the best set of the population which will provide meaningful insight's for the study.

For the purpose of this study, the non-probability and purposive technique, based on heterogeneous sampling, was considered the best choice. In this exploratory study, the researcher strictly selected participants from 3 different countries (Brazil, China and Mexico) each of whom have experienced cultural transition from their countries to Ireland, and have engaged in the consumption of Budweiser, Tsingtao and Corona, respectively. This allowed the researcher to gather different, heterogeneous and rich insights from the research.

3.7.2 Sample size

Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2016), advocates that regarding the decision of the sample size in a non-probability technique, the rules are non-determined. Moreover, complementing this concept, Patton (2002, p.470) suggests that the questions that will be asked, the objectives, what is useful for the study and what will provide credibility for it, depends on the researcher's desires and will most influence the sample size selection.

For Patton (2002) the insights on research will be achieved more from the interpretation of the data and its analyses than from the samples' size. However, Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) suggest a guideline regarding the minimum sample size required depending on the nature of the study (figure 3). Small samples are seen as the best option for inductive research, thus aiming to gather meaningful insights from the participant's experience, allowing in-depth investigation. A small sample size of 9 participants was selected.

Nature of study	Minimum sample size
Semi structure/in-depth Interviews	5–25
Ethnographic	35–36
Grounded theory	20–35
Considering a homogeneous population	4–12
Considering a heterogeneous population	12–30

Figure 6 Sample Size Guidelines

Source: Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012)

3.7.3 Participants

As the cultural transition process was taken into consideration, the participants considered for the study were foreign people living in Ireland, who used to consume an alcoholic branded drink which is available in both countries (their own and Ireland), therefore pursuing the pertinent experiences for the research. The chosen countries were Brazil, China, and Mexico, considered for their similar annual levels of average

alcohol consumption, 6 to 8 liters per person aged 15+, (figure 4), and as the 3 countries have an expressive and similar population of natives who have moved to Ireland (Ourworldindata, 2019; CSO, 2020). Yet, according to Alcohol.org (2020) in a rank of 25 countries which the highest consumption of beer, China Brazil and Mexico would be place within the top 5.

As the beer segment holds a strong market within the three countries and is also a significant market in Ireland, it was chosen as the best branded alcoholic segment for investigation. Furthermore, the fact that these countries belong to three different continents allowed for a more heterogeneous cultural perspective, for the research.

Three participants, who used to consume the same brand, were chosen from each country, as the aim of the study is to gather a more concise insight of their perception about such brands in their own countries and now in their new location. Brazilians, Chinese and Mexican were considered towards their engagement in the consumption of Budweiser, Tsingtao and Corona, respectively. The study aims to understand if changes occurred or not, and which differences or similarities exist among the participants' purchase decision experience.

Although some participants were known by the researcher, the majority of them were intentionally chosen for their explained pattern of consumption and engagement with the relevant brand through a selection made by the researcher on a social media platform.

3.8 Time Horizon

Suggested by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012), a research study must consider a time frame from its execution, where the cross-sectional study is representative of one particular period of time in which the research is being carried out, and longitudinal when the research is repeated over a long period of time. For the author, the cross-sectional study is seen as a good option for qualitative research which aims to explain how variables and facts are related. At this time, the cross-sectional approach was chosen due to the timeframe available for the development of the research.

3.8 Data collection

According to Bryman and Bell (2011) the possibility of being flexible is what makes the interview process really attractive, suggesting the method as one of the most common within qualitative researches.

As this paper aims to study the dynamics within the responses, motivations, attitudes, feelings, and purchase decisions towards a brand, a semi-structured interview was adopted as the method of data collection, aiming to achieve in-depth perception of consumer's perception towards a brand and their purchase decision regarding it.

For the semi-structured interview, a list of questions served as a guide, however, interviewers are able to express their own ideas in a free approach, allowing the researcher to discover meaningful insights in an open-ended process (Descombe, 2003; Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill, 2012).

For the purpose of achieving rich information from the participants, a list of 20 questions (Appendices 1) was divided into sections regarding cultural transition, patterns of consumption, and engagement with a brand.

3.9 Data analyses

Saunders, Lewis and Thornill (2012) admits that usually interconnected with an interpretative philosophy, when the researcher needs to understand the subjective meanings alongside the socially constructed information and experiences shared by the participants, the qualitative research brings a richness and fullness, brought through words, rather than numbers. According to Aronson (1995), qualitative data achieves experiences, perceptions, attitudes, engagement, feelings and motivations, in which its interpretation can be diversely developed, with the thematic analyses being one of the options.

The thematic analysis allows the researcher to gather deep assumptions, shedding light and bringing insightful conclusions to the phenomena and field studied, as also helping the researcher to identify themes that can be potentially relevant for the research question (Aronson, 1995; Saunders, Lewis and Thornill, 2012). As this research aimed to explore the different themes which emerged from the participants'

drink experience when moving to Ireland, investigating its influence on their consumer behaviour and engagement with a brand, the data was analysed following a thematic analyses.

After the interview being recorded, notes were also taken and the transcription was promptly processed using the website Otter.com (Appendices 2), allowing the researcher to accurately pinpoint the emergent themes, patterns and contrasts of the information provided by the participants, in a manner where the feelings and impressions gathered from the interview could be easily remembered for posterior analyses.

The themes which emerged from the data collection were categorized by the researcher into codes to provide a more comprehensive and manageable information for the findings section. As the process of the research was genuinely organic, moving back and forth between the interview audios, transcriptions and notes in order to accurately transcribe the gained impressions from the participants.

In this study, an evolving knowledge regarding cultural studies and consumption emerged. It was strongly enriched and enabled throughout the whole process by the readings of the research's field literature and the data of the interviews. In this context, additional questions of interest by the researcher, and evaluated to be relevant for the field of cultural-transition studies as a whole, arose throughout the process and were also approached in the interviews. This approach allowed rich and valuable pre-codes set which, even not addressing this study question and objectives, thus not presented in the Chapter 4 with the findings, were rich, valuable and meaningful information which has opened scope for future research and recommendations in cultural-transition studies which other objectives, such topics will be further discussed in Scope for future research, Chapter 6.

Regarding the information gathered for the purpose of this study objective, the coding process will be now briefly explained in order to provide a credible and clear explanation towards the data analyses management and outcomes. The pre-codes of this research, although not incorporated to the final findings of this study, have importance and relevance for the field of research and should be considered as themes for future studies. A categorization of two examples of the six selected themes follows:

“When I arrived to Ireland I started to drink more lager beers. I tried Corona here when I started to dating with my boyfriend. He bought me a lot of Corona

because he told “all Mexican likes the Corona”, and to be honest, I didn't like so much. Yeah, because the taste is so different here. The taste here is more soft. It's more like water, the taste is so different. I kind of stopped buying corona because the quality is not kind of the same thing.” (Participant G).

“The first impression that I have about is my memories of my friends. When I have been like Brazil or even in Ireland, we always used to drink the same kind of beers. So yeah, it's a bit of my memories of my friends and the time I was in Brazil”, (Participant B).

The first passage was coded into categories of “taste perception”, “new product purchase”, “enjoyment”, “ethnic identification”. While the second into “homesick, “repurchase” and “brand perception”, for example. The second set of categories were arranged in quality and emotional connection, themes which will be presented in Chapter 4 under the “cultural transitions and its influence on product evaluation” heading (Figure 5). The chapter will also present themes such as price, purchase dissonance, product trustworthiness and changes on alcohol consumption rates, themes emergent from the investigation of this research topic.

This chapter presented the chosen research methodology which enabled the researcher to address the immigrants’ cultural transition experience and its influences on their purchase decision towards a branded alcoholic drink which was previously consumed by them in their native country. The gathered data was of extreme importance, once it was able to portray the participants’ feelings, perceptions, attitudes and decisions, meeting the research objective and highlighting important outcomes for potential future research.

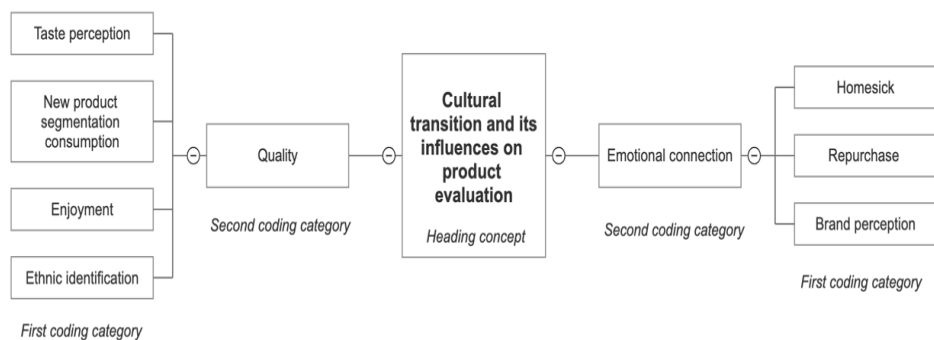


Figure 7 Research Theme Categorization

3.10 Ethical Consideration

According to Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2012) the assurance of ethical conduct is planned to avoid harm through the realization of the research. This research followed the ethical approach required by the National College of Ireland towards the conduction of studies that involves participants. The first assurance of this study was to be interviewing participants over 18 years old. At the beginning of every interview, the participants were informed of the reason for being chosen for the research, as well as informed that the interview was being recorded, also assured of the anonymity of their identity and their right to ask for the verification of the processed information at any time.

3.11 Limitation

Regarding the research process, the qualitative methods of study and the semi-structured interview as strategy has potential limitations, as the presence of bias can exist when interpreting the given information by the participants about their experiences, feelings and attitudes. Regarding an inductive and exploratory research, which has been conducted using a small sample, limitations can emerge when the generalization of the findings for the entire population could be seen as insufficient.

Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter aims to analyze the key findings which have arisen from the conducted interviews. The nine interviews were managed to gather how the cultural transition experienced by the consumers has influenced their engagement (purchase decision) towards the branded alcoholic drink which they used to consume in their country and is also present in the Irish market space.

By questioning, interpreting and exploring the consumers/interviewees answer, the researcher could examine their opinions, behaviour, feelings and attitudes towards their adaptation in Ireland and also their consumption decision. As mentioned in the data analyses section of the methodology (section 3.9), the acquired information was tracked via a thematic analysis aiming to explore the relevant categories to answer the research question and achieve the study objective (section 3.1 and 3.2).

The interviews, conducted to bring to light immigrants' adaptation and purchase decision topics, allowed the generation of six themes regarding their alcohol consumption in Ireland and their engagement with the previously consumed brand. The findings were analyzed with strong consideration of their immigration experience. The relevant findings from this research are focused on product quality perception, price and trustworthiness, post-purchase dissonance, brand emotional connection and changes on immigrants' rate of alcohol consumption.

This section will be initiated by introducing the participants, followed by a heading presenting the six elements of influence on their purchase decision. A significant number of participants' considerations will be presented as a way to provide credibility throughout the gathered data and capture the participants' perceptions in-depth, thus providing a rich demonstration of their perceptions.

4.2 Demographics

This study includes 9 participants from China, Brazil and Mexico. Five of them were recruited through a social media platform dedicated to Brazilians and Mexicans residing in Dublin, the other participants were suggested by friends of the researcher.

The participant’s time spent in Ireland varies between 1.5 and 4 years, and their ages are framed in the late twenties. Detailed information can be found in the following table:

Participants	The branded alcoholic drink they used to purchase	Time living in Ireland
A (Brazilian)	Budweiser	4 years
B (Brazilian)	Budweiser	4 years
C (Brazilian)	Budweiser	8 years
D (Chinese)	Tsingtao	7 years
E (Chinese)	Tsingtao	5 years
F (Chinese)	Tsingtao	3 years
G (Mexican)	Corona	1.5 year
H (Mexican)	Corona	3 years
I (Mexican)	Corona	1.5 years

Table 1: *Interviewees’ nationality, branded alcoholic drink of consumption, and time living in Ireland.*

4.3 Cultural Transition and Its Influence On Brand Engagement

4.3.1 Product Quality Perception

Considered by Aaker (1991, p.81) as the “overall feeling about a brand”, perceived quality can be seen as an important element for boosting purchase decisions. This dimension is intrinsically connected with the customer perception, manufacturing, product-based and actual product or objective/quality concepts emerging, and with product or service performance and reliability being considered.

In the food and beverage industry, for example, the perception and evaluation of taste play an important role. Therefore, consumers who used to purchase a specific brand in their countries, when moving abroad and finding the same brand in the new market space, would instinctively expect to have the same experience regarding taste perception, reinforcing the perception of product quality that they once held.

However, when a brand has its presence in different cultural spaces, changes in its product features can occur, potentialized by the use of local manufacturing materials, such as local water, for example, or even by glocalization strategies which aim to address consumers' local preferences.

“Almost all the times I used to drink Corona. When I arrived in Ireland I start to drink more lager beers. I tried Corona here when I started to dating with my boyfriend. He bought me a lot of Corona because he told “all Mexican likes the Corona”, and to be honest, I didn't like so much because the taste is so different here. The taste here is more soft. It's kind of more like water. I kind of stopped buying Corona because the quality is not kind of the same thing here”, (Participant G).

The participant's statement above highlighted a change in taste perception regarding Corona beer, she clearly considers the taste of Corona in Ireland as “more like water/softer”, than in Mexico. However, the shift in taste perception by the acculturating individual can potentially be seen as a consequence of her adaptation and adjustment to the provided products and beer options in Ireland, as the consumer attested that she “started to drink larger beers” once arriving in the country. This fact can highlight the host cultural influences on purchase decision, either caused by a possible change in the product manufacturing, or by the individual taste perception changes due to new patterns of consumption of stronger beers, available in Ireland.

Another Mexican participant exemplifies the host cultural influence on his decision not to buy Corona by acknowledging changes in quality perception and abundant availability of other options to consider:

“I realised that Corona it's a beer easy to drink. Kind of sweet and that's why many people like it. I don't drink more here in Europe, we have another plenty of options to drink a beer. I prefer something more strong. I don't know what is to be honest with you, but I feel it like less quality, you know. Because I already had an experience with the other beers from Europe. When I try Corona here in Europe I feel it like..I don't like it anymore”, (Participant I).

However, to another Mexican participant, considered to be loyal to the brand, the consumption remains the same, as his perception of the beer quality and his preference didn't change after arriving in the new cultural space,

“Yes, the quality is the same. I would drink Corona because of two things. I think that I am supporting somehow Mexico even though I know that it is not from Mexico, and I love the flavour you know, I got used to it, reminds me of sunshine”, (Participant H).

For others, however, although their taste perception changed in Ireland, the consumption in the new cultural context still followed the old patterns. In these cases, the perception of quality and brand relevance (irrespective of perceived taste change) remained strong in the new cultural space. This sheds light on the importance of a strong brand attachment and loyalty for keeping consumers who move across cultures and experience brand-taste glocalization.

“I used to drink Budweiser in Brazil. I still drink this beer here, I think the quality here is very superior. Here it is a little bit more strong, probably because of the water. In Brazil it is more soft but is still an easy beer to drink and when I go to Brazil I drink there also”, (Participant A).

Within the Chinese participants, two of them evaluated the quality of Tsingtao as the same, with a third participant acknowledging taste changes but still buying the beer when in Chinese restaurants.

“The quality? No actually. Yeah. And I have many feedback from friends, they also said like the taste that we have here is quite different than in China. But as I mentioned, if we go to the Chinese restaurant, our first choice would be this beer” (Participant F).

4.3.2 Product Price

Price as a factor emerged among four participants (3 Chinese and 1 Brazilian) when deciding what to buy. The three Chinese have mentioned the high price of the Tsingtao beer in the supermarket as a barrier for purchasing it when comparing it with competitors. The high cost of the product can be influenced by its imported status. However, if the beer were placed at the same price as its competitors, the preference for Tsingtao would remain.

“Compared with the local brand, I assume they are like more expensive. And we already have thousands of brands in like Dunnes Stores or Super Value. So we normally buy drinks from the local like groceries”, (Participant F).

“I think it depends on the price cause if Heineken and Tsingtao have the same price, I think I would choose Tsingtao. Much better than Heineken”, (Participant D).

Among the other participants, the price wasn't seen as an issue for their consumption. However, one of the Brazilians has mentioned that, in Ireland, when experiencing a purchase process in a supermarket, her decision would rely on the cheapest beer offer.

“When I buy at the supermarket usually I check what the deals are. So, I get the cheapest. I don't have a favourite beer here, so the price will be the main thing”, (Participant C).

For this participant, therefore, the host culture influenced her decision when other considerable options are available at a good price. However, the same participant said that when in a pub, she would rather order something new before considering Budweiser.

4.3.3 Product Trustworthiness

The participants were asked if in a hypothetical situation where they are in a pub and the only brand which they recognize is the one which they used to consume in their country, if they would try something new or would go for the known one. Five of them (A, B, E, F and H) would prefer to avoid risk and purchase the one which they already know, emphasizing their trust on the brand and the positive recall which is boosted by a “safe decision” association.

“I wouldn't try something new. I think Tsigtao, because I like the taste of the beer”, (Participant F).

“First I would go for Budweiser and then second maybe other brands”, (Participant B).

However, four other participants (C, D, G and I) seemed to immerse in the Irish culture and suggested that the place and people influence purchase decisions:

“No, you know, because when I'm here I try to drink others brands here. I think the brands that we have here and the people influences you, I prefer other brands because the Ireland as a place, and the beers that the country provides to you it kind of influence. I like to try the flavours of the place”, (Participant G).

“Well, I like to try new things. So I didn't go for the ones I knew. Usually here I ask the bartender, like what he would recommend or something like a lager? Let's say that I like lager or IPA sometimes. So usually I would try something new and after drinking like one or two new, like different ones, I would go for something I know, like Budweiser for example,” (Participant C).

The statements above highlighted how the immersion in the host culture has influenced the consumers purchase decision, leading the immigrants to change their behaviour towards the previously consumed brand.

Of important consideration, one of the participants who justified consumption of the same brand, and considering himself as loyal, additionally mentioned that if the supermarket or pub doesn't offer Corona, he wouldn't buy another beer, but change the drink of choice.

"I wouldn't drink beer. I'd either go for cider or spirits. Yes, I'm loyal I think",
(Participant H).

This statement expresses how a strong brand loyalty maintains the consumer, who considers just one brand within the beer segment, with attachment and connection, not being influenced by the cultural transition and the hypothetical situational experience.

4.3.4 Post-Purchase Dissonance

Yet, an interesting factor among two of the Chinese participants was the decision to not buy Tsingtao because of the post-purchase dissonance. The participants suggested that the requirement to bring the bottles to the bottle bank to be an 'issue', an Irish cultural aspect which is not shared by the Chinese when in their own country.

"Actually, I don't drink that at home firstly, which you know, is that we need to go to the bottle bank to throw away all those bottles. We love the beers in glass bottles, but here because of the recycling I don't buy", (Participant F).

"I remember we went to the Asian supermarket and then we've found out some Chinese beer but we didn't buy it cause the bottle. In China is not common to bring the bottles, we don't have this issue", (Participant D).

This interesting insight clearly shows how the host culture has influenced their purchase decision towards the brand which they used to consume in their country, as the implications found in Ireland regarding the recycling of products doesn't match the usual behaviour of these consumers, bringing the perception of consumption as inconvenient and highlighting post-purchase dissonance aspects.

4.3.5 Brand & Emotional Connection

The researcher asked which first thought comes into the participants' minds when they hear the name of the brand, and among those who still consume the same branded alcoholic drink in Ireland, emotional connections were shown as a relevant hook when purchasing it. These connections are interpreted as emotional memories of friends, family and their own country.

“The first impression that I have about is my memories of my friends. When I have been like Brazil or even in Ireland, we always used to drink the same kind of beers. So yeah, it's a bit of my memories of my friends and the time I was in Brazil”, (Participant B).

“I think that happiness, because a lot of memories about my classmates when I was in China and also with my friend as well and also family as well, I think towards happiness and family”, (Participant D).

It shows the importance of building strong brand associations, which will remain as a hook for recognition, recall and purchase attitudes even when individuals cross borders and experience the acculturation process. Brands are also considered cultural expressions by some authors (Kayla and Arnould, 2008), and in cases where consumers experience immigration and adaptation, the consumption of the brand which they used to consume in their country can help facilitate connection with the heritage culture, possibly leveraging the consideration for the brand in a purchase decision process.

4.3.6 Changes on Rates Of Alcohol Consumption

As suggested by Caetano and Clark (2003) the process of acculturation has its related associations with health-risk patterns of behavior regarding smoking, alcohol and drug consumption. An interesting perception among the participants was the rate of alcohol consumption and its variation after arriving in Ireland. Within the 9 participants, 4 of them have reported drinking less in Ireland than they used to do in their own country (D,E, F, one G), 4 of them reported to be drinking more in Ireland

than in their own country (A, B, H, I), with just one stating the same level of alcohol consumption in both countries. One of the Chinese gave shreds of evidence of a strong heritage collectivism culture as a hook for the explanation of drinking less in Ireland:

“Definitely I drink more in China because in China you know, we have a lot of relationship from work for life after work. So, the culture there is to do everything by relationships. So we have a lot of after work parties and during the weekends, so that's why definitely we drink more there than here”, (Participant F).

“I used to drink more in Mexico. I used to go out more there”, Participant G.

For some, the perception of the Irish culture is shown as a motivation to encourage high levels of alcohol consumption,

“I used to drink on the weekends in Brazil, and here also you know. But I think the Irish culture brings more few pints you know? Everything here it's a reason to go to the pub. So you drink more here than in Brazil. Yeah, I drink more here in Ireland than in Brazil”, (Participant B).

“I don't think the frequency was the same. I started to drink more here because of the quality, you prefer to consume the things like to try the new drinks that are available here”, (Participant A).

Despite participant C, who attested the same level of alcohol consumption in her heritage/host culture, the other eight participants have been influenced by their immigrating experience to drink less (D, E, F, G) or more (A, B, H and I). Those who increased their level justified this with the high quality of the drinks in Ireland, a wide range of availability and a high involvement with the strong “pub culture” in Ireland. Those who justified less consumption did it using low levels of friend relationships in Ireland and going out less often.

4.5 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the main findings of the research regarding the participants' cultural transition and its influences on branded alcoholic drink purchase decision, presenting themes of product quality perception, price and trustworthiness, post-purchase dissonance, brand emotional connection and changes on the immigrants' rate of alcohol consumption. The first five findings represented a direct influence of their interaction with the host culture to their product evaluation and brand engagement, with the last topic (changes in their alcohol consumption) highlighting influences of the host culture in their overall alcohol consumption behavior.

The relevance of each finding, as it relates to this research objective, discussed in Chapter 1 and 3, will be further discussed in the following section.

Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction

This study aims to explore the influences of cultural transition, associated with geographical location change, on customers' purchase decision towards a branded alcoholic beer which they used to consume in their native country.

Therefore, this chapter will discuss the findings presented in the preceding chapter demonstrating connections with the secondary research knowledge presented in Chapter 2, to provide a contextualization of the gathered information while discussing it.

5.2 Cultural Transition And Purchase Decision

5.2.1 Product Quality Evaluation

Although some researchers advocate that the power of globalization has been influential in shaping similar consumer behaviors across the world, and brands which have a presence in different market spaces benefit from utilizing homogenous and cultural-free strategies throughout different market spaces (Levitt, 1983; Ohmae, 1989; Wilk, 1998; Usunier, 2000), this research emphasises the importance of strongly considering an individual heritage culture, the particular dimensions of countries' cultures, and the changes related to the heritage/host culture continuous cultural interaction, which impact an immigrant.

With immigrants having their brand preferences shaped by continuous interaction with their heritage and host culture, a situation that accelerates their integration and adaptation to the new cultural context, consumption and product-service meanings are constantly reevaluated (Segev et al., 2012). This statement, emphasizes the suggestion made by Moore, Weinberg, and Berger (2012) which advocates that the stronger the immigrant adaptation to the host culture, the better the assumption of the host culture consumption patterns and cultural traits. In this study, the influences of host culture on consumer decision were found in the participants' considerations.

When the participants were asked about whether or not differences regarding the product quality were perceived in their new cultural context, diverse opinions emerged. According to the Brazilian participants, the Budweiser in Ireland tastes stronger than in Brazil, however even aware of the change in the product taste, the same pattern of consumption remained for the majority of them, as the stronger taste was seen as relevant and coherent by the consumers within their new cultural context.

Although the consumers expressed an acceptance of the new stronger taste of the product in Ireland, compared to that of Brazil, once they return to Brazil, they purchase the brand again, as there is a “cultural fit” regarding the taste of the Brazilian product which matches Brazilian cultural context expectations. Thus, showing a positive brand glocalization strategy which is shaped according to cultural spaces and can leverage its brand presence in different markets.

On the other hand, the perception of changes in quality has made some participants avoid continuing the previous purchase behaviour, which they used to exemplify in their country. For example, the Mexican consumers who have acknowledged Corona in Ireland as being “too soft/like water” do not buy the brand anymore, in Ireland. Also, the existence of a “vast availability of different brands in Europe and Ireland” is to be considered a relevant influential factor on purchase decision, as participants acknowledged this as an opportunity to immerse themselves in the host culture as consumers, thus changing their previous consumption tendency towards Corona.

Regarding 2:3, the belief of the Mexican participants who attested that the taste of the product is different in Ireland may be explained either by changes in the production/ingredients of the beer, or simply due to the immigrants’ adjustment to the brand’s product characteristics which are unique to the host country, formulating a new set of considerations (Shocker et al., 1991). Moreover, the only Chinese participant who acknowledged the difference in the taste of Tsingtao in Ireland, said that she would keep buying it, as she enjoys the brand anyway.

The discussion highlights how strong customer-based brand equity (Keller, 1993) delivered positive consumer behaviour in the cases of the 2 consumers of Budweiser, and 1 consumer of Tsingtao when experiencing cultural transition, where even with changes of taste perception having occurred, the consumption of and engagement with the brand remained. The prior, could not be said for 2:3 Mexican

participants, who have not kept their previous brand relevance and repurchase patterns, even given their changes in taste perception.

5.2.2 Price Evaluation

From the participants' data analyses, price was referenced as a factor in the purchase decision process by 4 participants, three of them Chinese. The Chinese shared their perception regarding Tsingtao from a trade-off point of view.

Two of the participants acknowledged that they would rather buy other brands if the price of Tsingtao is expensive in the supermarket. Choosing the brand only in a situation in which its price is the same or cheaper than the competitors.

All Chinese participants have mentioned that when in a Chinese restaurant, Tsingtao would be the first beer which they would order, however in a supermarket, other brands are considered if the product price is too expensive. Moreover, the Chinese participants mentioned that the lack of availability of the beer in the mainstream supermarkets, which results in the consumers having to visit an Asian Market to find the brand, sometimes causing a purchase dissonance circumstance,

“In the Chinese restaurant yeah, they provide this beer, but in the supermarket, I didn't often see the beer. I was trying to find this beer in Tesco or Aldi but I didn't find. This is an issue”, (Participant D).

As mentioned by Lee and Ro Um (1992), brand evaluation can be figured through aspects of perceived importance, which considers the price as a relevant factor for brand involvement and choice.

Moreover suggested by Ittersum and Wond (2010), a trade-off is commonly seen when immigrants try to keep heritage patterns of consumption, as uncomfortable economic outcomes due to the expensive price of imported products, leads to a loss of cultural product purchase behaviour. In a country where the availability of branded beers is high and offered across a diverse pricing spectrum, Tsingtao became an unlikely choice, emphasizing the strong influence of competing brands when a

significant number of “consideration options” are available, as suggested by Laroche et al., (1998).

This consideration sheds light on cultural transition influences on Chinese purchase decision and brand involvement, emphasizing that Tsingtao consumption mainly occurs when its purchase is convenient (good price, easy to find and when visiting Chinese restaurants). As the three participants mentioned that Tsingtao is the first choice when in China, the research has given rise to questions regarding Tsingtao’s relevance and resonance among Chinese consumers while they are experiencing an acculturation process in Ireland, suggesting that the brand has temporarily lost its strong and favourable consideration among its consumers, who in their new cultural context prefer to buy mainstream products due to their convenience and price range.

5.2.3 Trustworthiness

Seen as one of the categories within customer-based brand equity by Lassar (1995), trustworthiness is extremely important when considering brands, once consumers highly value brands which they trust. In this study, the researcher suggested a hypothetical situation for the participants to consider: “If you are in a pub and the only brand you know is the one which you used to consume, would you order it or would you go for something new?” Four participants confirmed they would order the brand they used to consume (two Chinese, two Brazilian, one Mexican), and four participants confirmed they would order something new (two Mexican, one Chinese, one Brazilian).

According to Kotler (2001), perceived risk might affect the buying process, and as attested by Hofstede, Hofstede and Minkov (2010), different ways of handling uncertainty are adopted from culture to culture, as it’s a cultural learning process. In the Hofstede cultural dimensions of uncertainty avoidance, China scores 30, Brazil 76 and Mexico 82 (Figure 9), where the higher the score, the greater the preference for avoiding uncertainty. According to the author, countries expressing high uncertainty avoidance levels might maintain strict codes of behavior and belief in unknown situations.

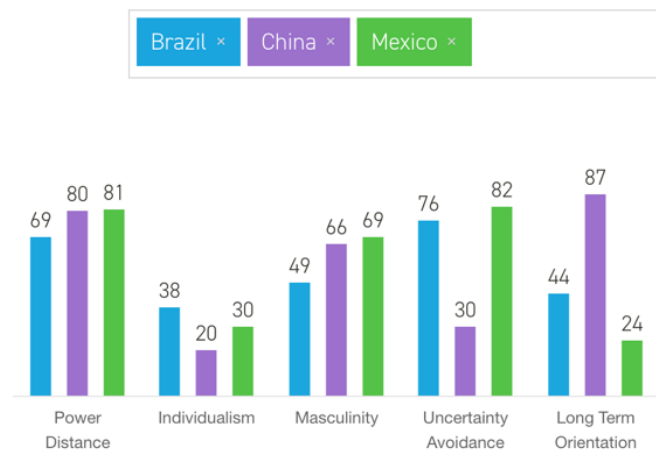


Figure 8 Hofstede's National Culture Dimension

Source: hi.hofstede-insights.com

However, in this research, 2:3 participants from Mexico, the country showing the highest uncertainty level, have said to prefer trying something new rather than holding the previous patterns of behavior and decision towards a previously consumed brand, going against the expected outcome of Hofstede's cultural dimensions. Moreover, 2:3 participants from China, the country with the lowest level of uncertainty, have mentioned that they would maintain their old behaviors towards the previously consumed brand, which according to the Hofstede measurement, would be contrary to the expected outcome.

The findings are relevant and insightful when showing unexpected information, highlighting the dynamic which embraces cultural aspects and individuals' cultural traits, which can sometimes be not so much congruent with an expected assumption that everybody from the same country would adopt the same pattern of behavior in certain situations. However, it's also important to consider the small sample approached for this research, does not allow for a large scale of different individuals' behavior, but opens scopes for future studies regarding such themes.

Therefore, trustworthiness should be seen as an important feature for brands to build with their consumers, an element which can boost positive brand responses, associations and judgement, thus leveraging consideration, recall, credibility and superiority. It can also be beneficial when customers face situations of "low involvement", such as the suggested hypothesis, where the participants wouldn't have

the expertise to evaluate other options and would rather choose the one which they trust over others (Keller, 2001).

Yet, of important consideration, the Mexican participant who confirmed no change in product taste perception and quality, also confirmed that in a situation where a supermarket or pub doesn't offer Corona, he would change the alcohol drink segmentation of consumption from beer to spirits, emphasizing how trust in a brand can drive "product-segmentation loyalty", driving further brand loyalty and its overall benefits (Aaker 1991).

5.2.4 Host-Cultural Element As A Barrier For Brand Purchase

An interesting and curious finding from the actual research was gathered from the Chinese participants' data analyses. Two of the Chinese participants expressed the main reason for not buying Tsingtao beer in Ireland as being its post-purchase dissonance, as the product is only available in bottles, causing inconvenience, due to the fact that they must drop empty bottles to the bottle bank.

"And you know, after you drink the bottle then you should throw the bottle to the bottle bank, and we are so lazy that we don't want to go there. If you want to throw the glasses, sometimes it's really hard to find the places. So, we normally buy can. In China is not common to bring the bottles, we don't have this issue", Participant D.

For Chernatony, Harris & Christo-doulides (2004), preference for convenience can be seen as one boost for repetitive purchase behaviour towards a particular brand, in this context, however, as the product doesn't allow for the expected convenience regarding its disposal, the post-purchase dissonance discourages a purchase decision towards the brand.

According to Hawkins (2010) dissonance occurs once the consumer no longer considers the product's features to be attractive, as a consequence of its unpleasant outcomes upon committing to the purchase decision. As dissonance is unpleasant, the act of purchasing is avoided or reduced. Additionally, when the decision to buy is made considering the dissonance, a negative feeling possibly emerges, usually causing final avoidance or decision delay.

This fact highlights a second problem for Tsingtao as a brand, for the participants who have moved to Ireland. Firstly, the price (which can be reasonably understood, as the product is imported), and secondly, the considered purchase dissonance regarding its packing disposal. This finding exemplifies how the understanding of the host cultural dimensions, even the simplest ones which may not always be considered (such as the recycling process), should be evaluated by international companies when aiming to sell their products in different market spaces.

It also highlights the relevance of considering host culture influences on immigrant behavior. In this case, even mainly selling to Chinese consumers, the understanding of their behaviors should not be taken for granted, but reanalyzed considering host environment implications; as cultural context influences every aspect of consumers lives, and traits of the host culture can be a potential influence for new consumption behavior, as products from the host culture become considered in a new set of considerations, thus potentially influencing consumption decision and behaviour (Chernatony, Harris & Christo-doulides, 2004, Moore, 2012).

5.2.5 Brand Association

Brand association is seen as a source of meaning, value, salience and consideration for brands, built-in tangible and intangible ways, it aims to gather a place in the customer mindset where favourable and strong judgment and feelings are achieved (Keller, 2001).

“When I try Corona here in Europe I feel it like.. I don't like it anymore”,
(Participant I).

“I remember when I drink Corona, in the Mexican party in El Grito, because it was a Mexican party. So everybody was drinking Corona. I said “I need to drink my Corona to feel more like Mexican”, (Participant I).

Interesting, the statements above were made by the same consumer. It is insightful to note that even without considering the brand in his new cultural context, because i) cultural transition influenced his taste and quality perception of the brand

and ii) his interaction with a wide variety of brands available in Ireland has made him stop consuming Corona, nonetheless in circumstances where the participant wished to feel more connected with Mexican culture, the brand was *still* considered and consumed.

As previously mentioned, according to Wang (2004), Wango and Lo (2007) and (Bardhi et al., 2010), when consumers become immigrants, they normally engage in ethnic and heritage patterns of consumption as an opportunity to feel a pleasant “feeling of home”, developing attitudes which enable connections with their native space and experiences.

Regarding the participants who are still pursuing the same purchase decision towards their previously consumed branded beer, or even consuming it less frequently than in their heritage country (as with the Chinese participants), the brand association is seen as a hook for memories and positive feelings that connects them with their heritage cultural space and moments with friends and family. This information is rich for brand management when clearly showing that positive association is a driven force for consumption towards a brand, even more for individuals who are facing immigration process and aim to reconnect with their roots.

5.2.6 Acculturation And Rates Of Alcohol Consumption

Some researchers have shown positive connections between acculturation and increased/decreased levels of immigrant’s alcohol consumption interestingly, associating levels of acculturation with patterns of drinking (Markides, Krause & Mendes de Leon, 1988; Caetano, 1987). For the authors, the stronger the acculturation process, the higher the alcohol consumption, which emerges as consequence of individuals’ likelihood to experience pubs, restaurants and parties.

Between the research participants, four reported drinking less since coming to Ireland. The three Chinese and one Mexican, have all justified this by saying that they used to go out more often in their own country than in Ireland, thus experiencing a busier social life in their heritage space and consuming more alcoholic drinks. Coming from a collectivism cultural structure, where the interaction with friends and social activities are high, their limitation regarding groups of friends in Ireland might be an explanation for the reduction in social life enjoyment.

On the other hand, two Mexican and two Brazilian have said to be drinking more, justifying the behaviour because of the wide availability of good beers in Ireland at a good price, and also mentioning perceptions regarding a strong “pub-culture” in the country which they embraced after arriving to Ireland. In this context, the cultural transition experienced by the consumers has led them to adopt the host-culture values and behaviour, figuring relationships which can be framed in an Integration strategy level of acculturation (Berry, 1997). It also highlights consumer acculturation concepts of “cultural aspects blending”, as the previous consumer behaviour rooted in the original culture changes as a result of the connection with the host culture, emphasizing a new assumption of social motivation for consumption (Penaloza, 1989).

5.3 Chapter Summary

Built on the relevant themes presented in Chapter 4, this section explored and discussed the themes which have met the research objectives, earlier presented in Chapter 3. The different influences of cultural transition to the immigrants purchase decision towards a brand emphasise how dynamic the interactions between culture and consumption can be. This complexity shows how important the consideration of not only the immigrants heritage culture is, but also the influences that the host culture can bring to their patterns of behaviour, perception, attitudes and purchase decisions towards a branded product. This chapter discussed the research findings, showing evidence of cultural influences of immigrant consumers towards a branded alcoholic drink which they used to consume in their country, presenting, when suited, comparison or reaffirmations to the previous theories presented in Chapter 2.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

6.1 Conclusion To The Study

The aim of this study was to explore the cultural transition experienced by immigrants and its influences on their purchase decision towards a branded alcoholic drink which they used to consume in their native country. Through qualitative data collection and thematic analyses, in an inductive approach and using semi-structured interviews, the researcher gained a deeper comprehensive knowledge of the relationship of cultural influences on the participants' purchase decision. The study therefore concluded that the host culture had important and significant influences on the consumers' purchase decision process, having its findings answer the study question presented in Chapter 3.

The data analyses allowed the researcher to conclude the following: Only one participant, who had identified himself as loyal to the Corona brand, was not influenced by his cultural transition to Ireland in his purchase decision and brand perception. Two Brazilians have said that the taste of Budweiser is stronger in Ireland, however their change of brand quality perception empowered by their cultural transition to Ireland, didn't impact their purchase decision towards the brand, which still remains.

This concludes that even with the occurrence of changes in the product taste perception, it is significantly important for brands to foster a strong connection with their customers, enabling them to still leverage their relevance to the consumer when cultural transitions and host culture influences exist. Highlighting also the importance of considering nuances of glocalization as an element which aids resonance in different market spaces, as analysed through the adaptation of Budweiser to the Brazilian and Irish market space, as discussed in the previous chapter.

On the other hand, six participants have changed their purchase decision towards the branded alcoholic drink which they used to consume in their country, Two Mexican participants have stopped buying the brand suggesting that the quality in Ireland does not meet their expectations, one Brazilian bases her purchase choice mainly on an evaluation of price, and when in a pub would try new beers before choosing Budweiser, and three Chinese participants did not completely stop their

purchase of Tsingtao, but are drinking it considerably less often, as price and post-purchase dissonance heavily affect their purchase consideration process in Ireland.

This concludes that cultural influences can cause new taste perception evaluation, either as a result of local product-manufacturing changes, or the consumers interaction with the host culture products and offers, leading to a new set of service, brand and product consideration.

The data gathered by the Chinese participants' considerations highlights the increased price of imported products as an issue, which is reasonably understood, however the data mainly shed lights to the post-purchase dissonance as a barrier to their purchase decision. This implication highlights the importance of consider local culture particularities and expressions, as well as the necessity of a deep understanding towards ethnic groups cultural traits, important information when managers are aiming to reach specific groups as target audience. In this case, the Chinese relationship with the recycling system in Ireland is driving loss of sales for the company, an element that could be avoided if host cultural influences on the acculturating individuals were investigated by the company.

Furthermore, regarding product and brand evaluation with consumers, this study has also shown important considerations when dealing with trustworthiness and brand association themes. Showing the strong importance and relevance when securing a place in the customer mindset, a dimension which can work as a boost for brand consideration in a "low involvement" and in moments where the immigrants want to reconnect with their heritage cultural expressions, memories and moments.

6.2 Managerial Implications

This research brings to the field important outcomes when analysing culture and its influences on immigrant consumers, information that can be deeply important for global brand managers, education institutions embracing foreign students, research on cultural influences of consumption, global brand positioning management, and more.

In a world in which rates of immigration are increasing globally (Segev et al., 2013), the on-going relationship between heritage and host culture extend implications for companies which have consumers constantly crossing borders, and for companies which aim to go abroad. Brands that have a presence in different cultural markets must

understand the impact of cultural dimensions on immigrant consumption and purchase decision, developing tactical strategies which are adjusted to the local market space and consumers, but also addressing dimensions that can be relevant for sub-cultures present in such countries. With this rationale, marketers are able to expand strategies on how to effectively reach their wide possibilities of consumers in a cultural set.

The mentions of changes in the taste quality perception by the majority of the participants, should provide insight to marketers on how to better advertise their brands in specific cultural spaces, driving attention to tactical strategies. In an example that Corona is seen as ‘too soft’ for Ireland, the company could advertise itself as a way of “lighting up” the beer consumption, contrasting the brand with the “heavy” and “strong” taste found in the country’s beer market offers; or even running campaigns which would resonate with the Mexican culture, as a way of intensifying brand association and emotional connections with those consumers, specifically, on an ethnic level. It highlights the importance of cultural consideration for better positioning which, through a culturally bound action, could drive new consumption while also trying to keep previous consumers, thus contributing for a brand loyalty development.

A strong managerial implication can be related to the post-purchase dissonance presented in this study. The understanding of local cultural dimensions and its impact on foreign consumers should be deeply considered by managers, as making incorrect/inappropriate assumptions and “ethnicizing” a market space can lead to poor strategies and loss in sales. The Tsingtao in bottles could be just a normal packaging decision for the company, however the non-consideration of Chinese consumers towards the Irish recycling system, seems to be boosting loss in purchase decision towards the brand by its main target audience.

This research also emphasizes the importance of positive brand associations for driving consumption, calling attention to the importance of building strong brand equity which keeps resonating with individuals who experience cultural transitions.

6.3 Research Limitation

It’s important to understand that even though the research carefully conducted, the study conclusions are subjective to limitations. Firstly, although the study adoption

of acculturation concepts, and participants adaptations to the host country figure similar patterns, such acculturation dimension could not be exactly indicated regarding the immigrants' stage in the process. Secondly, even with the diversity in the sample of selection, the investigation towards three countries and brands of consumption brings limitations to the study if replicating it on a large scale. Thirdly, the scope of this study was impacted by time constraints and word count limits allowed for its submission.

6.4 Recommendation For Future Research

Throughout this research development, the researcher pinpointed additional areas of interest which emerged from the pre-coding categorization and additional findings, information which could have brought secondary objectives to the paper:

- I) Investigate how far host culture influences the maintenance or change of the heritage values, attitudes and behavior;
- II) Explore how language barriers experienced by immigrants influence their purchase decision choices;
- III) Analyze the positive receptiveness by the host culture as a booster in host product and brand consumption.

Given the time constraints for finalization and submission of this thesis, it was not possible to restructure the study to further incorporate such additional objectives. However, the themes provide meaningful and valuable information for further research opportunities and areas of investigation, building on the presented work.

Therefore, this research has shown the remarkable and outstanding influence of culture on purchase decision, even when such brands had been previously consumed by the immigrants in their native spaces. Concluding the importance of considering the host culture and its influence on the acculturating individuals, and opening scope for researches which must approach wider and heterogenous nationalities, and brands from different product/service categories.

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Appendices

Interview Questions

- **Acculturation**

1) *Why did you come to Ireland? And how long have you be living here?*

2) *What was your first impression of the country and the people? Did you find your new cultural context welcoming or the experience wasn't smooth at the beginning?*

3) *The adaptation in the country was easy? What was the easiest and difficult part of moving to Ireland?*

4) *Do you think the language barrier was a problem for you to interact with the Irish culture?*

5) *How is your interaction with the Irish culture now?*

6) *How do you connect with your own culture? What you miss the most from there?*

7) *Do you think Ireland is an opened country in relation to foreign people? And how far it influences your "consumption" of Irish culture?*

8) *Your group of friends is mainly composed of Chinese/Mexican/Brazilian people or there are people from other countries?*

- **Patterns of consumption**

9) *What is the main reason/motivation for you to drink?*

10) *How often did you use to drink in your country? Moving to Ireland made you drink more? How often do you drink now?*

11) *Do you prefer to try new alcoholic brands or keep consuming the ones you know?*

- **Engagement with a brand**

12) Which alcoholic brand did you use to drink in your country?

13) Do you still drink this brand in Ireland? How often / what is the main reason that made you stop drinking the brand here?

14) And do you think they it changed because of the culture influence?

15) When do you think about the brand what is the first thing which comes into your mind? And the first memory?

16) What is your perception of the brand here? Your perception of its quality has changed?

17) There are others brands that you are now more interested because you think it resonates better in Ireland?

18) You arrive in a pub and among the beers which are there, the only one you know is Corona. Would you ask for Corona or would you try an unknown one?

19) Which brand are you purchasing now?

20) Which do you think is the strongest competitor for X in Ireland?

Participant I interview transcription

Unknown Speaker 0:00
Why did you did you come to Ireland?

Unknown Speaker 0:06
Ah, I came to Ireland to mainly

Unknown Speaker 0:13
improve my English a little bit, but the main reason was to travel to meet new people to make the experience how we see the Europe. How is the people? How is the q2. So that's what actually the main reason not to travel to many people and know how is to live in Europe

Unknown Speaker 0:37
and for how long have you I believe in the

Unknown Speaker 0:42
one year and a half,

Unknown Speaker 0:44
okay. And which was your first impression, or the first impression you got here?

Unknown Speaker 0:54
Well, my first impression was a little bit Shocking because of the accommodation

Unknown Speaker 1:03
okay

Unknown Speaker 1:06
what's shocking I was

Unknown Speaker 1:09
used to

Unknown Speaker 1:12
I was I used to live by myself my apartment in Mexico and then when I arrive here to to Ireland to Dublin I saw the it's almost impossible or very expensive to have your own let's let's not say your own apartment just your own room. Yeah. So was my first impression was that and then I start to walk

Unknown Speaker 1:43
the city

Unknown Speaker 1:46
and I arrived in

Unknown Speaker 1:50

winter so it was a little bit cold, not too much light. But the even though I really enjoyed this at the moment, Just my think of the accommodation.

Unknown Speaker 2:03

And what did you think about the people? Do you think your English was a barrier to connect with them and enjoy the country at the beginning ?

Unknown Speaker 2:09

The Irish people

Unknown Speaker 2:11

I think

Unknown Speaker 2:14

it's difficult to make a really good friend, relationship with them. But once you get it they are really really nice. They help you a lot. But in general, the first impression when you first meet somebody from Ireland, I think they are very, very friendly, they help you. They, if you are for example lost or you want to reach one place, they always kill you. And in a good mood. Sometimes people working the pumps, you know, it's it's different, but people on the streets, they see decency like that they are really, really nice and

Unknown Speaker 2:56

nice and like how do you interact with them? How do you

Unknown Speaker 3:03

working was the first interaction that I had.

Unknown Speaker 3:07

I had

Unknown Speaker 3:09

the first two weeks that I just arrived. I live with Irish family also.

Unknown Speaker 3:18

And

Unknown Speaker 3:20

I had

Unknown Speaker 3:23

like one one other girlfriend from Ireland abroad. So I could, I could

Unknown Speaker 3:31

involve a little bit.

Unknown Speaker 3:33

Unfortunately, she's not anymore My girlfriend

Unknown Speaker 3:38

and I met his family and her family

*Unknown Speaker 3:43
travelling together. That's so*

*Unknown Speaker 3:45
nice and like how do you try to connect with the Mexican culture while you're here?*

*Unknown Speaker 3:55
Well, I went to of course, looking for Mexican food.*

*Unknown Speaker 4:00
Like the restaurant El grito, of course.*

*Unknown Speaker 4:04
So many friends from Mexico as well, most of my friends have to say they're from Latin America. And one of my best friends in Ireland is from Mexico. So, yeah, Mexico has been in my vain here in Europe in my life in my culture all the time.*

*Unknown Speaker 4:24
So you go to Mexican restaurants and Mexican parties, things like that.*

*Unknown Speaker 4:29
Exactly. Yes.*

*Unknown Speaker 4:32
Okay. And what do you miss the most from Mexico.*

*Unknown Speaker 4:38
The food or coffee Of course, food. I really really means the food.*

*Unknown Speaker 4:45
On obviously my family, you know, of course my father, my mother, my brother, sometimes there but just that just the food and people my family, not the CT. Not the you know, Mexico is kind of secure, insecure right now.*

*Unknown Speaker 5:06
It's like, kind of like Brazil maybe sometimes.*

*Unknown Speaker 5:10
That's what I heard something. I never been in Brazil but that's why people say from Brazil recently.*

*Unknown Speaker 5:18
Yeah. And like when you got here, you start drinking more than you're drinking Mexico*

*Unknown Speaker 5:25
or less.*

*Unknown Speaker 5:29
I think I was drinking*

*Unknown Speaker 5:33
less because it's expensive.*

*Unknown Speaker 5:37
Or more frequently if you will know what I mean, for example, in Mexico used to
drink only weekends,*

*Unknown Speaker 5:46
for example,*

*Unknown Speaker 5:49
but a lot, huge parties. And then when I arrived to Ireland, I realise that*

*Unknown Speaker 5:57
trying to go out or Have a beer in a place It can be*

*Unknown Speaker 6:04
more expensive than Mexico. So I, when I go out with my friends, usually during the
week I just grab 123 pints and that's it no more because it was expensive. So I
reduced the amount of alcohol that I was used to drink, but I do it more frequently is
I mean, if it makes it quite just during Friday, Saturday in Ireland, I drink
Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, but less alcohol.*

*Unknown Speaker 6:40
Okay. He's interesting points. And let me see here. So in Mexico, you used to drink
Corona? Yes, and here in Ireland*

*Unknown Speaker 6:54
Just like a couple of times*

*Unknown Speaker 6:57
Why?*

*Unknown Speaker 7:00
I remember I when I drink Corona in the Mexican party in El grito Independence
Day in Ireland, because it was a Mexican party. So everybody was drinking Corona.
I said, I need to drink my Corona to feel more like Mexican. And*

*Unknown Speaker 7:20
you say, you ask why?*

*Unknown Speaker 7:22
Yeah, If you go to the pub do you drink Corona or you order another beer?*

*Unknown Speaker 7:30
No, I just, I order another beer. 90% of the time. I always drink another beer like
Guinness a*

Unknown Speaker 7:45
Red ale, for example,

Unknown Speaker 7:46
as well. And do you think they it changed because of the culture influence?

Unknown Speaker 7:53
Perfectly Sure. I realised that Corona it's a beer is easy to drink. Kind of sweet and it'll be That's why many people like it, it's easy to drink. I don't drink more here in Europe, we have another plenty ~~plenty~~ of options to drink a beer. So I realised that goes on. I mean, I feel proud when I see Corona in every

Unknown Speaker 8:28
country I travel

Unknown Speaker 8:31
because it's from Mexico, and represents Mexico in one way, but it's not

Unknown Speaker 8:38
clear if you know but yeah. And regarding quality when you're drinking Corona in Ireland, do you think is the same quality?

Unknown Speaker 8:50
No, I don't. I didn't feel the same. I used to drink Corona in Mexico. We just went I went to the beach

Unknown Speaker 8:56
because as I said, is a soft dream. It's a soft view. Nice little bit sweet. So used to drinking beers when I went to the beach. And here in Ireland No,

Unknown Speaker 9:07
it's

Unknown Speaker 9:09
I prefer something more strong. Yeah,

Unknown Speaker 9:14
yeah. But like in terms of quality you don't you don't see the corona like the taste in Ireland is it's bad or it's kind of to solve is kind of the same days.

Unknown Speaker 9:27
No, I think is

Unknown Speaker 9:30
when I try I don't know what is to be honest with you, but I feel it like less quality, you know, Because I already had an experience with the other beers from Europe. When I try Corona here in Europe I feel it like..

Unknown Speaker 9:47

now I don't like it. I don't like it anymore.

Unknown Speaker 9:54

So let me just ask you

Unknown Speaker 9:59

two more questions when you think about Corona what is the first thing that comes into our mind

Unknown Speaker 10:06

Ah, lemon and salt and beach. Okay.

Unknown Speaker 10:10

Yeah, if you go to a pub and you don't know the beers that they have there and they do have Corona so do order Corona, or do you go for something new?

Unknown Speaker 10:21

something new. Okay.

Unknown Speaker 10:28

Let me see. Actually there is no Corona here in this in this place. That's my view. So, that's, that's an example. Okay.

Unknown Speaker 10:41

So, I have

Unknown Speaker 10:44

For you what is the strongest competitor

Unknown Speaker 11:05

I think Heineken. Okay.

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