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Project Submission Sheet

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Key Drivers of Local Brand Loyalty in Ireland. A study of the jewellery industry

Aracely Ramos Preciado

A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment for the award of MSc Marketing.

Submitted to the National College of Ireland, August 2025.

Submission of Thesis and Dissertation

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(Thesis/Author Declaration Form)

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Degree for which thesis is submitted: MSc Marketing

Title of Thesis: Key Drivers of Local Brand Loyalty in Ireland. A study of the jewellery industry

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Abstract

Since the integration of Ireland into Globalization, the market has quickly evolved to facilitate international brands moving into local markets to the point that it is more often seen to see consumer switching between brands (Local/Global), especially for those who have more interaction with international people. To reach consumer perspectives, the researcher focuses the study to cover part of the Gen Z and Millennials, who in turn represent the population that consumes more jewellery.

The presented study explores the different perspectives, opinions, and attitudes of girls aged 18-39 years old, who were born and/or raised in Ireland and have an affinity for Jewellery, to comprehend the main drivers in their consumer behaviour. The process followed an analysis of previous studies conducted in different countries, as well as the literature and theories review to finalize in seven in-depth interviews with the public that covered the main characteristics of internationalization.

Through qualitative research and the implementation of thematic analysis, the findings revelled that female consumer from 18 – 39 have a positive response to stories and symbology present in jewellery, giving a driver to conduct to brand loyalty among the participants, yet it is also presented a sensibility perception to international marketing strategies, inclining the consumer to prefer global brands.

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First, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Dave Hurley, for his passion and patience in teaching, as well as for encouraging me to see this study as a viable process with clarity in every meeting.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION OF THE SUBJECT OF STUDY 11
1.1 Background to the Study 11
1.1.1 The Open of International Markets 11
1.1.2 Instability of Cultural Influence 11
1.1.3 Increase of Brand Awareness 11
1.2 Gaps in the Literature 12
1.2.1 The Lack of Focus on Local and Meaningful Brands 12
1.2.3 The Link Between Culture and Globalization in Jewellery 13
1.3 Research Justification and Rationale 13
1.4 Overall Aim of the Study 14
1.5 Research Questions 14
1.6 Research Methods for the Present Study 15
1.6.1 Scope of Research 15
1.7 Overview and Structure of the Research Project 16
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW 17
2.1 Brand Loyalty 17
2.1.1 Emotional Loyalty 17
2.1.2 Quality Loyalty 18
2.2 Brand Experience. 19
2.2.1 Dimensions of Brand Experiences 19
2.2.2 Mechanical, Functional, and Humanistic Clues 20
2.2.3 Emotional Design 21
2.3 Cultural Identity and Storytelling 21
2.3.1 Cultural Identity 21
2.3.2 Brand Storytelling 22
2.3.3 Symbolism in Jewellery 23
2.4 Consumer Perception 24
2.4.1 Globalization and Glocalization 24
2.4.2 Quality and Trust Perception 25
2.4.3 Schema and Memory 25
2.4.4 Customer Satisfaction 26

2.5 Emotional and Symbolic Loyalty Key Drivers. 27
2.5.1 Emotional Branding 27
2.5.2 Symbolic Consumption 28
2.5.3 Brand Attachments 29
CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY 31
3.1 Introduction 31
3.2 Research Aims and Objectives 31
3.3 Research Proposal, Philosophy and Design 32
3.3.1 Ontological and Epistemological Approaches 33
3.3.2 Interpretivist and Positivist 34
3.3.3 Qualitative versus Quantitative Research Strategies 35
3.3. 4 Inductive Versus Deductive Research 36
3.4 Data Collection Method: Semi-structured Interviews 37
3.5 Sample Selection Technique and Justification 38
3.6 Ethical Considerations 39
3.6.1 Ethical Approval 39
3.6.2 Informed Consent 40
3.7 Data Analysis Method: Qualitative Data Analysis 40
3.8 Limitation of the Research 41
CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS 42
4.1 Introduction 42
4.2 Objective 1 42
4.2.1 Cultural Influence 43
4.2.2 Symbolical Consumption 43
4.3 Objective 2 44
4.3.1 Brand Trust 44
4.3.2 Brand Perception (Global/Local) 45
4.3.3 Brand Familiarity 45
4.4 Objective 3 46
4.4.1 Emotional Attachments 46
4.4.2 Brand Loyalty 46
4.5 Objective 4 47
4.5.1 Story Telling 47

4.5.2 Cultural Heritage 48
4.6 Objective 5 48
4.6.1 Brand Identity 49
4.6.2 Design and Functionality 49
4.6.3 Product Signal 50
4.7 Summary 50
CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION 52
5.1 Introduction 52
5.2 The Impact of Cultural Values on Customer Satisfaction 52
5.2.1 The Understanding of Symbolic Consumption Through Cultural Identity 52
5.3 The Influence of Previous Experiences on Brand Perception 53
5.3.1 Brand Perception in a Globalized Country 53
5.3.2 Effectiveness of Social Media Building Visual Perception 53
5.4 Main Factors of Brand Loyalty 54
5.4.1 The Importance of Quality on Building Long-Lasting Relations 54
5.4.2 The Significance of Emotional Connection with the Consumer 55
5.5 The Relationship Between Customer Identity and Brand Loyalty 56
5.5.1 The Reinforcement of Loyalty Through Narrative 56
5.5.2 The Weight of Cultural Identity 57
5.6 Shaping Customer Perception 58
5.6.1 The Influence of Packaging Design in Purchasing Experience 58
5.6.2 The Importance of Intangible Values 59
CHAPTER 6: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS 60
6.1 Conclusion to the Study 60
6.1.1 Brand Satisfaction and Cultural Values 60
6.1.2 Reinforcement of Brand Loyalty Through Emotions and Quality 60
6.1.3 Strengthening Brand Image Through Narrative 60
6.1.4 Brand Enhancement and Different Perceptions 61
6.2 Recommendations 61
6.2.1 Recommendations for Future Research 61
6.2.2 Recommendation for Professionals 62
REFERENCE LIST 64
APPENDICES 75

Appendix 1 - Informed Consent 75
Appendix 2 – Interview 77

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1.1.3 Brand awareness by category in Ireland as of March 2024. 12
Figure 1.2.1 Percentage of consumers agreeing that global brands made better products than local, country-level ones in selected markets worldwide as of October 2023 14
Figure 2.2.2 Clue categories 20
Figure 2.4.4: Customer satisfaction effect 27
Figure 3.1: Research Onion Model. 31
Figure 3.7 Thematic analysis process 41

LIST OF TABLES

Table 3.3.2 Paradigms describe through the different approaches 35
Table 3.3.3: Qualitative and Quantitative comparison 36
Table 3.5: Participants Information 39
Table 4.1: Main themes 42

CHAPTER 1:
INTRODUCTION OF THE SUBJECT OF STUDY

1.1 Background to the Study

1.1.1 The Open of International Markets

Over the past years, immigration in Ireland has shown an increase that it has not seen since 2007, with around 87 thousand people from different parts of the world by the end of April 2024 (Central Statistics Office, 2024). This has promoted not only the interaction with international people, but the access to foreign brands to the country, increasing the importation of goods by 50 billion U.S. dollars from 2020 to 2024 (Statista, 2023). This development has been reflected in the jewellery industry with around 2% of annual growth (Statista, 2025). Opening this gap to international brands increases the number of options available, creating anxiety and overwhelming consumers (Schwartz, 2004) making the perception of brands a more complex framework.

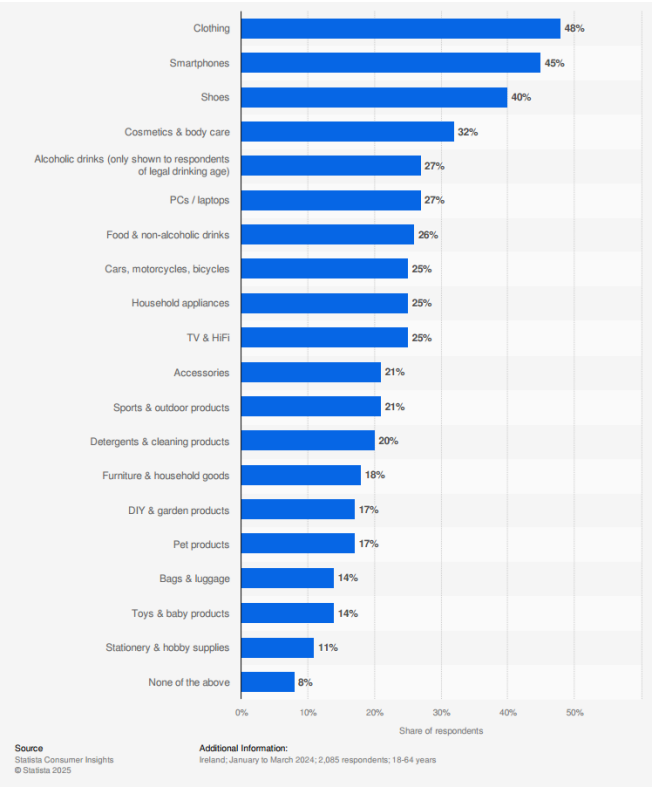
1.1.2 Instability of Cultural Influence

Different authors indicate that cultures play a main role in the shape of perceptions. Shavitt and Barnes (2019) stated that culture directly influences motivators, styles, and preferences, which ended up affecting decision-making as well as the consumer journey. A study conducted in two prominent countries in Africa found that culture is a great influence when it comes to brand preference, stating that cultural identity is divided into Global and Local, both influencing differently in the consumer. Furthermore, it was interestingly found that local identities are a weak driver to local brands (Yeboah-Banin et al., 2021). Conversely, this association is not absolute and differs from a study conducted in Indonesia, which finds that people buy local brands as a sign of respect for their culture (Hardilawati and Abd Ghani, 2024), demonstrating variations in the results, indicating the presence of deeper factors influencing individuals depending on cultural aspects.

1.1.3 Increase of Brand Awareness

As mentioned in section 1.1.1, the opening of markets increases the number of brands in the country, influencing consumer behaviour, albeit with some variations in countries and products. For the Irish market, brand awareness heavily fluctuates among product categories – see Figure 1.1.3. According to The Irish Times (2021), for Irish consumers, brands are important, and this is reflected in brand loyalty, expressing that they are open to brand messages with a tendency to prefer local brands. In contrast to a study conducted in the nearest market (UK), the findings placed luxury and international brands at the top of consumer tendencies, leaving behind any local brand (Statista, 2024).

Figure 1.1.3 Brand awareness by category in Ireland as of March 2024 *(Statista, 2024).*



1.2 Gaps in the Literature

1.2.1 The Lack of Focus on Local and Meaningful Brands

Adding to section 1.1.1 and considering that immigration is not the only reason for the presence of foreign brands in the country, different studies have been interesting in the influence these factors have on consumer perception, suggesting that there are several variables that can affect their perception, not only by the presence of Global brands (Rivaldo et al., 2022). For this same reason, researchers focused their studies on the new wave of preferences, exploring the main drivers of brand loyalty that came with fashion and luxury brands, addressing characteristics that might be useful to understand different industries (Sung et al., 2020). Conversely, it is also suggested that luxury can be related to symbolic consumption, giving access to different kinds of brands (Abass, Oluwaseyi and Shkar, 2024).

It seems that literature is interested in internationality as the future of the market (Matricano and Vitagliano, 2018), giving minimal attention to brands that include SMEs, which in turn, focus on traditions and cultural attachments, giving a basis to the analysis of brand love, and emotional connections (Yeboah-Banin et al., 2021).

Yet, existing studies barely consider variables that lead to the understanding of drivers in brand loyalty around local businesses. The researcher focuses attention on variables

considering Global and Local businesses in the sector and country not being explored before, starting to fill the gaps of drivers of local brand loyalty, opening the analysis of using global strategies to reach an extended market.

1.2.3 The Link Between Culture and Globalization in Jewellery

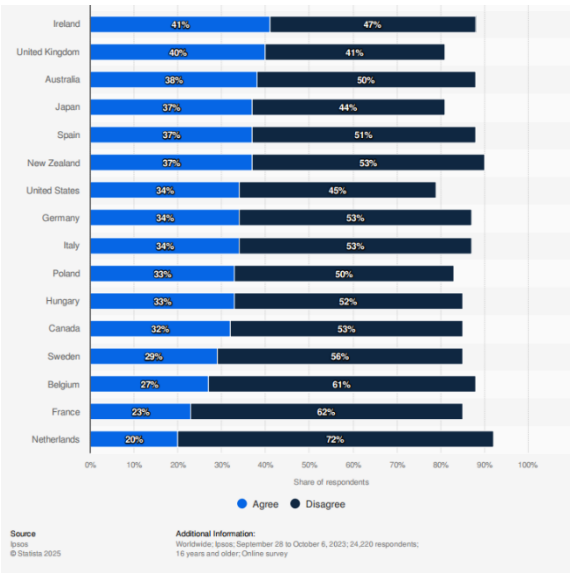
The literature identified culture as a multifaceted state in which globalization and tradition coexisted (Awanis, 2018), making various studies accessible in which the authors consider these two influences in the preference of brands. Using identity as a predictor of variables in specific industries, driving consumers to prefer one brand over another (Yeboah-Banin et al., 2021) or the creation of strategies that align with their preferences (Amaral and Torelli, 2018).

Although there are various studies exploring the importance of these variables in relation to the brand, there is not sufficient information that addresses the necessity of understanding consumer perception and culture. These, associated with the fact that Jewellery industry is mainly focused on global markets (Matricano and Vitagliano, 2018), incline the research to approach the relationship between culture and its main drivers of brand loyalty in an environment that has been evolving with international presence, contributing a narrow focus to the literature on industry and country.

1.3 Research Justification and Rationale

Due to the increase of competition coming not only from local brands but also international ones, it is more common to see global brands adapting strategies to penetrate the local market (Wang and Wong, 2025), giving advantages over the SMEs, shaping the perception of consumers. In 2023, IPSOS published a table comparing different countries and their consumer perception on global vs local brands – see Figure 1.2.1. Visualizing a great difference between countries. In the case of Ireland, it is illustrated that a similar percentage of people perceive better quality on products, having a minimum tendency to Local (Statista, 2023), giving a broad perspective of preferences, but not concluded in specific industries.

Figure 1.2.1 Percentage of consumers agreeing that global brands made better products than local, country-level ones in selected markets worldwide as of October 2023



Different studies also recognized the importance of understanding consumer behaviour and the various variables that can affect their perceptions (Wall and Carbone, 2006), engagement (Racine, 2021), and loyalty (Singla and Gupta, 2019), concluding in an array of factors. Despite the analysis of previous research that focuses on different products and countries, adding the limited data from Irish consumers, the main drivers of brand loyalty remain scarcely explored. Therefore, the presented study adds the analysis of variables that affect the perception and brand loyalty of the Irish consumer to the literature, collecting data from different themes exposed in Chapter 3.

1.4 Overall Aim of the Study

Considering the previous discussion, and taking into consideration the gaps presented in the literature to seek a deeper understanding of consumers' perceptions in relation to experiences, personal significance/meaning, and social environment are potential drivers to brand loyalty. Factors that have not previously been considered in studies focused on Ireland, contributing to filling the gaps in order to develop strategies that can be useful to the Irish Jewellery industry.

1.5 Research Questions

Taking into consideration the gaps in the literature discussed in section 1.2, the following questions functioned as sections to explore in the presented study.

1. How does personal and social environment build meanings that can drive brand loyalty?
2. What is the consumer perspective around brand preferences and key drivers of loyalty?
3. What is the relation between experiences and brand loyalty?
4. How important are the symbolic connections and meaning to consumers?

The presented question will be answered and discussed in Chapter Six.

1.6 Research Methods for the Present Study

Even though previous research with a similar focus considered large samples to reach the main objectives of their studies, the researcher took the main objectives of the study into consideration to find the methods that align better with the objectives. For instance, and in order to reach a deep comprehension of the consumer behaviour, perspectives and main drivers (Creswell and Creswell, 2018), a quantitative study with an interpretivism paradigm is presented, considering the cultural and social variables (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020) presented in the focus and scope of the study. With a similar objective, the researcher took an epistemological approach in relation to the understanding of "origin of knowledge" and the impartiality of collection and analysis of data (Aliyu, et al., 2015), conducting seven in-depth-interviews where time was given to develop and comprehend each question (Mistry, 2012).

Some of the limitations presented in the study include the time, reducing the sample size, and having to choose a gender to allow access to a wider perspective that might be considered later in the analysis. And for the nature of the study, it is also presented the lack of generalization (Melnikovas, 2018) and the previous preparation of the interviews, with it being necessary to inform the participants about the topics being covered and the structure of the interview, affecting the "natural" answers (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

1.6.1 Scope of Research

The researcher focused on the understanding of the biggest consumers of Jewellery in Ireland, for instance, a small sample of women aged 18-39 representing the gender with the biggest demand for jewellery (Responsible Jewellery Council, 2021), and two generations that purchase the most (Statista, 2025). The sample also includes a series of aspects to cover, including Irish identity, considering almost exclusively Irish women who were born or raised in the country, with a small selection of mixed backgrounds, attending to the expressed in section 1.1.1, giving an overview of international influence, in order to satisfactorily explore the questions discussed in section 1.5.

1.7 Overview and Structure of the Research Project

Chapter 1: Introduction

This Chapter introduces the background of the topic chosen and gaps in the literature of cultural influence in consumer behaviour. In addition, it presents the aims, objectives, and structure of the research.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

In the literature review, the main topics that were identified in Chapter One are explored. The information provides academic considerations and relevant studies that take the research into concepts that would be beneficial for the analysis of data.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology chapter breaks down the framework, revealing objectives, methods, and theories to approach the collection of data. In the section on the collection of data, detailed samples, methods, and ethical considerations are provided for carrying out of the study.

Chapter 4: Findings

This chapter presents impartial results of the collected data, giving insights into the main themes described in the methodology and fair participation of all the interviewed subjects.

Chapter 5: Discussion

The Discussion Chapter contains a critical analysis of the primary data in relation to previous studies and academic theory. The information provides a deep theoretical understanding that explains theoretical implications.

Chapter 6 – Conclusion and Recommendations

The final chapter concluded the study, reflecting the objectives and aims discussed in Chapter 3. It also provides contributions to strategies for local brands and suggestions for future research or studies.

CHAPTER 2:
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Brand Loyalty

Russell-Bennett and Parkinson (2015) explain that brand loyalty is a concept constructed in 1940's – 1950's and it makes references to consumer attitudes towards brands calling it "Brand preference". It was not until 1969 where it was developing the term "Brand loyalty", did it become associated with consumer behaviour and attitudes. Cambridge (n.d.) describes loyalty as a habit of purchasing products of same brand.

Brand loyalty has multiple benefits, for instance it is described as a "sustainable source of competitive advantage" (Little, 2022). In the following part, it explores two slopes of loyalty that may be used in the present research.

2.1.1 Emotional Loyalty

Emotional loyalty is defined as a psychological preference for a brand that takes into consideration beliefs and affective attachments to continuous purchases (Russell-Bennett and Parkinson, 2015). Emotions can be evoked from different aspects, for example, elements such as logos and colours that not only promote a connection with the brand, but also create a higher impact on purchase decisions (Sha, 2024). To understand the consumer, it is important to note that emotions are described as a complex mental reaction that comes from a previous experience and leads to changes in behaviour and psychological responses. This is also described as a key natural factor to define if something is good for them (University of West Alabama, 2019).

It has been studied that not all brands evoke the same emotions, in the same way, and not all consumers are attracted to the same stimulus. This is the reason why every category or brand has different motivators (Magids, Zorfas and Leemon, 2015). A study that analysed four dimensions of brand personality (sincerity, excitement, constant, and competence) showed that excitement and sincerity provoke a better impact in the consumer, heightening the level of loyalty (Letukytė, and Urbonavičius, 2022). It is noticeable that brands are focused on consumer connection and one of the most important key factors to maximise results, is the understanding of customer engagement objectives, modifying the emotional strategies to focus on them (Magids, Zorfas and Leemon, 2015) as emotions are catalysers making it viable to connect with consumers (Quesada, 2024).

When making references to loyalty, reward programs came to light. On one hand, some authors describe it as a method that increases emotional connection and give them a sensation of being valued (Katz, 2023). On the other hand, some criticized the strategy as generic, promoting frustration and pressure on the consumer (Liu, 2007) in any case, emotions define the attitude and behaviour towards the brand. Yap (2023) suggests that companies should focus on emotional connection in order to promote loyalty. This can

be reinforced using the *REP framework* that uses *Recognition, Enhance and Personalization*, where the consumer is valued, the offers and experiences are built for them, and the product adds extra value to the experience.

In a world with a great variety of brands for a similar product and promotions that grab consumers attention, emotional loyalty will be then a differentiation that makes the consumer more resilient to the market (Katz, 2023), as it was explained by Shahid, et al. (2022) emotional attachment drives brand loyalty.

2.1.2 Quality Loyalty

In contemporary market where brands do everything to catch consumers, it seems that companies have to balance high-income, long-lasting relations, and customer satisfaction in products and services (Diktaş and Tekin, 2018) making sure to cover all the consumer necessities without risking profits. As Budianto (2019) explains, if a consumer feels satisfied, they will stay loyal to the brand making it less possible to swap between brands, which is one of the main concerns in a competitive market that is immersed in promotions.

Customer satisfaction can be divided into two, the first one is service quality, which is described as the ability to fully fit predetermined needs or expectations. The second is product quality, the ability to cover customer desires, reliability, durability, and other attributes that go beyond expectations (Suhendi and Sabihis, 2021). Quality can be subjective; however, this will measure, from an individual perspective, how well or badly a product/service is (Khan, 2023).

Budianto (2019) contemplates Gronroos in the Tjiptono dimension of service quality, divided into six stages of services provided by the company.

1. Professionalism skills - a criterion in which the consumer is aware of the services provided and their ability to solve problems.

2. Attitudes and behaviours - consumer perception towards the company, feeling that they can be helped if they need it.

3. Accessibility and flexibility - the sensation that the services provided are made to facilitate their use, which also gives the sensation of personalization.

4. Reliability and Trustworthiness - the feeling that the system and service are trustworthy.

5. Service recovery - this is related to situation control, making the ability to solve situations or problems visible.

6. Reputation and recovery - as is seen in emotional loyalty, quality is considered an advantage among other companies, this stands and differentiates from other companies showing a service that looks for consumer necessities and satisfaction.

The six dimensions cover the full experience of purchase, generating a feeling of trust and security in the consumer. Gunawan (2022) states that a consumer's purchasing

decision is rational and is strongly related to a psychological state and a feeling of satisfaction. For satisfaction Phophalia, et. al. (2020) describes it as the happiness extension for the product or services received but explains that from the jewellery business perspective, quality loyalty is a difficult goal to reach, as other aspects to fulfil consumer necessities are also included, not only including quality products but also promotional offers, and after sales services.

According to a study conducted by Budianto (2019) quality affects directly to consumer loyalty by almost 40%. For instance, to create a reliable relationship with the consumer, it is important to consider service quality and relation quality, trying to avoid conflicts that can create negative experiences and build loyalty (Diktaş and Tekin, 2018).

2.2 Brand Experience.

Brand experiences are defined by Schmitt, Zarantonello, and Brakus (2009) as a group of elements such as packaging, environment, and identity that evoke in the consumer multiple feelings and sensations in response, promoting and conduct to satisfaction and loyalty. Other authors define the concept as the evolution of what was called *the relationship between the company and the custumer* (Gentile, Spiller and Noci, 2007). Brand experience is indeed a connection with the brand that generates passion and affection, creating long-lasting loyalty (Mostafa and Kasamani, 2021).

As this strategy reinforces brand association, companies implement it to attract and retain consumers (Akoglu and Özbek, 2021). On the other hand, some authors conclude that the efficacy of this strategy will vary depending on age and income, with young consumers being more likely to present brand attachment to certain products (Huaman-Ramirez and Merunka, 2019).

2.2.1 Dimensions of Brand Experiences

To define a brand experience, it is important to understand the dimension these experiences can reach or evoke in the consumer. Schmitt, Zarantonello and Brakus (2009) state that brand experience and its attributes can be defined in four dimensions. The first one is described as "*sensory"* as the result of brand stimulus or the activations of the five senses, taste, touch, sight, and sound. The second, "*affective"* for the ability to evoke feelings and sentiments in the consumer. "*Behavioural"* connects with physical actions or experiences that can be translated into encouragement. In the end, a cognitive stimulus called "*intellectual",* describes what the brands provoke in the consumer, curiosity or problem-solving.

Other authors break the dimensions into six, adding to the explained before "*pragmatic"* a dimension describing the product life cycle, "*lifestyle"* as a reflection of identity and values, and "*relational"* which can be found in communities that have a feeling of belonging and connection to the brand (Gentile, Spiller and Noci, 2007).

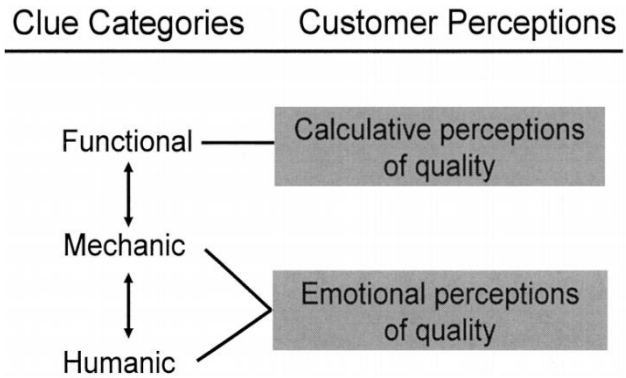
The product and target will define the strategy to focus on. For example, in a study conducted by Ligaraba (2024) where it the response of consumers to the four main

dimension was analysed, it was found that *"sensory"* is the dimension that presents a stronger response in young adults. Another example is the in-store experiences in the luxury industry, creating an atmosphere of uniqueness, personalized attention, and exclusivity that tackled emotions that attracted the consumer to purchase the product (Shahid et al., 2022) being "*affective"* the dimension used.

2.2.2 Mechanical, Functional, and Humanistic Clues

Before the consumer decides to purchase a service, they go through a journey full of expectations, these expectations can be used for companies to create "clues" that guide them to an experience that covers their expectation and needs before, during and after the purchase (Berry, Wall and Carbone, 2006). These clues can be grouped into different characteristics represented in the following graph

Figure 2.2.2 Clue categories
(Berry, Wall and Carbone, 2006)



Mechanical clues: This attribute to all tangible factors, what the customer and employees can perceive (Chua et al., 2014) as was mentioned in the dimensions. These physical senses refer to the five senses, which in this case are translated into the service. Examples of mechanical clues are the design of the place, colours, cleanliness, music, etc. (Mostafa and Kasamani, 2021).

Functional clues: Refer to the technical quality of the service (Berry, Wall and Carbone, 2006) that is delivered to the customer, these factors will translate into the quality of the product, waiting time, and revisiting intentions (Chua et al., 2014).

> *"Knowing what functional clues will comprise the evaluation of the core service and managing them well is fundamental to meeting customers service expectations…"* (Berry, Wall and Carbone, 2006, p. 47)

Humanistic clues: This is reflected in the staff and its behaviour (Berry, Wall and Carbone, 2006). Consumer experience is not merely complete with the right selection of music or scent of the store, but also the correct attention, making the staff training crucial to ensure the ability to solve problems or give a guide to the consumer to make a decision or enjoy the experience (Mostafa and Kasamani, 2021).

2.2.3 Emotional Design

Interaction Design Foundation (2016) defines emotional design as a concept that describes the emotions and feelings that a design evokes and translates into memorable experiences. In a competitive market, brands are looking to be distinguished from others, and in volatile industries such as fashion, connecting with the consumer on an emotional level boosts brand loyalty (Kim and Sullivan, 2019). Connecting emotionally with the consumer is highly important as Ligaraba (2024) explains, that compared with satisfied consumers, emotional connections are twice valued.

It is also important to understand that the design has to focus on a necessity and the function of efficiently covering consumer goals. Conversely, is also important to be aware of consumer response (emotions), as negative experiences can modify consumer perception and prevent them from re-purchasing a product (Interaction Design Foundation, 2016).

There are different emotions that can be transmitted to the consumer, with the basic feelings being the ones that generate stronger responses (Niharika and Yadav, 2023) in the market, it will then be the products or services that need the use of emotion at different levels. For those that are cultural and creative, the focus on consumer goes beyond function and need an emotional factor to convey, using a more complex strategy (Jiazhu, et al. 2024).

A study conducted by Li and Ratthai (2024) cite Donald. A. Norman who classified different levels of the emotional elements *"instinct, behaviour, and reflection"* with "*instinct"* being the physical attributes of the product and how it is perceived by the consumer, opting for products that align to their cognitive feelings. The "*behavioural*" explains the functionality, how effective it is, and if it is reliable to use it more than once. *"Reflection level"* triggers the subconscious necessities and feelings, making use of storytelling, cultural and spiritual needs. Li and Ratthai (2024) state that *"A good cultural and creative product should be functional, practical user-friendly, and convenient to meet the material or spiritual needs of consumers in many ways"*. It is suggested that in order to achieve an increase in recommendation rates and repurchases, it is necessary to link the brand to emotional experience (Jiazhu, et al. 2024).

2.3 Cultural Identity and Storytelling

2.3.1 Cultural Identity

The American Psychological Association defines cultural identity as a reflection of individual identity as part of a group that shares similar characteristics, and influences behaviour (APA, n.d.). It is considered that people have multiple identities that facilitate their role in society. With this frame, Awanis (2018) describes cultural identity as a "multi-layered construct" that identifies the individual with reference to groups, ethnicities, national culture, and global culture.

Strizhakova and Coulter (2024) explore the consumption of cultural identity and distinguish between those who have a strong *global cultural identity* and *local cultural identity.* Expressing that in a globalized society, local cultures have more interaction with external global cultures blurring geographical borders. However, there is a distinction perceived between both. People with local cultural identity tend to express themselves strongly, which in some cases is translated into characteristics of nationalism and ethnocentrism, while the global cultural identity has a broad understanding of cultures, trends, technologies, and values.

Understanding consumer's cultural identity could carry different benefits for the brand,

> *"Consumers with a salient cultural identity were more likely to promote, to pay a higher price for a branded product, to accept a high stretch extension, and to exhibit stronger self-brand connections in the context of identity-congruent brands"* (Amaral and Torelli, 2018, p13).

However, not all individuals have the same cultural identity, as every aspect of the persona is based on various and different sources, as well as multiculturalism that creates in some people a conflict of cultural identity (Awanis, 2018) making the process of commercialization more complex. Creating strategies with a clear cultural identity can be then a potentiator of consumer connection or a creator of boundaries to different groups of people (Amaral and Torelli, 2018).

2.3.2 Brand Storytelling

Storytelling has existed in the world for years, starting with the necessity to pass stories on as a cultural activity, to contemporary years using video as one of the most effective commercial media to transmit stories to consumers (Alla, 2021). Brands that use storytelling to connect with the consumer tend to maximise word-of-mouth communication, as the consumer creates their own story that relates to the brand (Magdalena, 2020). Another benefit of the creation of stories that appeals to consumers, is the ability to shape the perception of the brand, increasing the possibilities to purchase the product (Meng-Chuan, 2020) as well as the sense of happiness that stories drive to the consumer to make them less sensitive to prices (Meng-Chuan, 2020). These benefits are reflected in a study conducted in Morocco, which shows that social media storytelling played an important role in consumer purchasing intentions (Haitham and Evrim, 2023).

Alonso (2024) suggests that "*At its core, storytelling in marketing involves crafting a narrative that resonates with your audience on an emotional level. It goes beyond promoting products or services; it's about creating a connection that fosters trust and loyalty*". Alla (2021) states that by using this type of narrative, the product value increases twenty times. On the other hand, Mills (2023) presents David Houghton's critical view of storytelling, mentioning that even if it is considered one of the most

effective strategies to connect companies, failure to present a predictable message following a natural flow makes the message easy forgettable.

Using storytelling in campaigns helps the brand to connect at different and deeper levels, generating trust and belonging (Alonso, 2024). The creation of successful storytelling starts with the correct identification of the values and core emotional elements that distinguish the consumer to represent their reality (Magdalena, 2020) "*By using stories to convey brand values, unique selling propositions and details about items, marketers can improve the mental interpretation as well as the comprehension of these concepts*" (Haitham and Evrim, 2023). In general, the nature of a consumer is to put their own emotion into the story, to understand and explain the experiences, making them identify with the product (Meng-Chuan, 2020).

2.3.3 Symbolism in Jewellery

The use of objects as body ornaments dates back thousands of years to Africa, where people made use of bones, stones, etc. to be necklaces and bracelets. The first insights of the use of metals, gems, and coloured glass took place in Egypt, where they were passed off as luxurious ornaments with symbols that reflect power, wealth and, depending on the colour of the piece, fertility or another meaning (Satpathy, 2017). From the first ornaments found in African countries to the contemporary, jewellery is one of the few products that can be directly related to cultural values (Perez and Pompeu, 2021).

Jewellery expresses emotion and emotion interacting with the environment in an artistic way, giving the representation of stories in some cases (Hosny, 2022). This significance of jewellery varies from culture to culture and is transmitted from generations using it as a non-verbal symbol (Satpathy, 2017). In countries such as China, combining artistic pieces charged with cultural symbols to promote self-strengthening and cultural confidence, approaching the consumer with innovation and heritage (Xiaoying, 2024), which are the cultural elements that determine the country's market, deeply rooted in their traditions (Mei and Ahmad, 2023).

Jewellery consumers are divided into two by Perez and Pompeu (2021). Those who look at jewellery as a symbol of status and ostentation, generally represented by consumerists, and the consumers who are linked to values, who look at jewellery as an opportunity to express themselves and opt for consumer artisanal, jewellery with new processes, and mythical pieces.

As was mentioned before, symbols are attached to cultural values, which, in some cases, share a general meaning. That is the case of specific pieces that are used as symbols of commitment (Perez and Pompeu, 2021), or others that can be found in very few countries. An example of this, is the dragon in China, which means good luck and power and is not replicated in the rest of the world (Mei and Ahmad, 2023). In a study conducted in Brazil, it was found that people who use certain types of jewellery to

reflect power, avoid judgment and translate it into a symbol of self-protection (Perez and Pompeu, 2021), an attitude that has been repeated in other countries with religious or mythological symbology. Jian et al. (2019) states that the relation between a brand's symbolism and brand love is strongly related, making them more likely to acquire a product that represents these values.

2.4 Consumer Perception

2.4.1 Globalization and Glocalization

The terms Globalization and Glocalization express the expansion of economies in different ways. The growth of economies across borders, making the market interconnected through the exchange of goods, culture, and social and political ideas is defined as **Globalization** (Wilson, 2011). On the other hand, **Glocalization** makes reference to when an industry that has expanded into different countries, is facing important changes in its strategies, as it has to adapt a global view to local values (Wang and Wong, 2025).

Globalization came first with numerous benefits to industries, such as the increase in or openness to cultural and creative aspects, where it allows an extended visualization of the world that in the same way helps to grow the economy (Olsen, 2024). It is said that Globalization creates opportunities to modernize and grow financially, (Shamsuddoha, 2009) factors that the same way are homogenising cultures (Olsen, 2024). Critically, Hardilawati and Abd Ghani (2024) state that the presence of global brands in the market is changing consumer behaviour. For a long time, companies have been delivering their business with a standard strategy by seeing the world as a single culture (Globalization), however it has been seen that more companies are looking at local necessities, adapting their product, services, or strategies to people's needs (Deliceırmak, 2022).

Chakraborty, Wang, and Wong (2025) state that the success of a company will be co-related with the proportion of their understanding of the host country, their values, norms, and strategies of local investment. A product or service that is well "Glocalized" is more attractive and easily accepted by consumers (Shamsuddoha, 2009).

Glocalization will also depend on the cultural distance. Taking the U.S and its foreign direct investment (FDI) as an example, when the expansion occurs with countries with similar cultures (language, values, norms), the FDI will flow easily as the strategies will be less affected. A similar phenomenon happens with expansion to countries geographically close (Chakraborty, Wang and Wong, 2025). Big and well known companies have also faced a level of glocalization. An example of this is McDonalds, and its introduction of local flavours and vegan options to stay in the market. Deliceırmak (2022) explains that a balance in global strategies and local necessities is necessary to remain outstanding in the market.

2.4.2 Quality and Trust Perception

The National Academies Press expresses the complexity of trust, as this includes different aspects and the perception of *"benefits and risks, uncertainty, credibility, and vulnerability"* taking a side and giving "the benefit of the doubt" (NIH, 2015).

There are various aspects that can lead to consumer trust. One of them is the quality of the product or service, which is strongly related to a consumer's trust If a consumer has doubts about the acquisition of a product, it can be highly related to the perception of low quality (Rivaldo et al., 2022). However, this phenomenon is bidirectional and organic products is an example of this. Label a product as organic creates in the consumer an immediate sense of trust and perception of high quality, making it more feasible to purchase (Khan, 2018). The perception of the quality and the six stages of service mentioned before for Budianto (2019) can also be included with this.

Rivaldo et al. (2022) state that trust, quality perception, and marketing strategies are key to maximizing a good response from the consumer and strengthening the purchasing decision. People who trust tend to be more committed to a brand (Kassim and Abdullah, 2010). This is also confirmed by Khan (2018) in his study, showing an important relation between perceived quality and consumer trust.

As was explained before, the perception of quality is subjective, and it can be described as the difference between previous expectations and the service or experience received when purchasing a product (Rivaldo et al., 2022). If a product overcomes the expectations of the consumer, they will be satisfied and this satisfaction will lead to trust and end up in loyalty (Kassim and Abdullah, 2010).

2.4.3 Schema and Memory

According to the American Psychology Association, memory is *"the ability to retain information or a representation of past experience, based on the mental processes of learning or encoding"* (APA, 2018). Memory can be divided in three, *"Sensory"* refers to the information that is received through the senses, for example, the smell of a coffee. *"Short-term"* information with a limited period of retention and *"Long-term"* after a process of rehearsal a short-term memory becomes long-term and stays for extended periods of time, in this category, slogans and jingles that for its constant repetition stay in the consumer can be found (Niosi, 2021). The recollection of memories can be voluntary and involuntary and is used by brands to influence behaviour, feelings, and decisions (Orth and Gal, 2014). Long-term memories are not isolated and are grouped into categories that occasionally refer to Schemas (Niosi, 2021).

Webb and Dennis (2020) define schemas as *"abstract mental representations that influence perceptual and memory processes",* schemas are not static and can be modified with time and experiences, making this framework a route to store information and the ability to recall.

Halkias (2015) recognizes three main consumer schemas that are used in marketing:

1. Product category schema: Defines the categorization of products identifying three levels. In the highest level the differences are greater, sharing a few characteristics between them. At the basic level, there is more information about the groups, sharing more similarities and differences among them. In the last level, subornative, the similar features are higher with low differences that are also characterized by their detailed information.

2. Brand schema, based on attributes: This schema is connected to a significant and functional value that are associated with different characteristics of a brand.

3. Advertisement schema: As advertising is in constant exposure, this creates expectations in the consumer and a build up of visual and auditory characteristics that would be attached to brands.

Nostalgic brands are one of the most prominent examples of the use of schemas. People store experiences and feelings attached to categories and these memories are triggered by package designs, ads, and colours that are involuntarily associated with positive feelings increasing buying intention (Orth and Gal, 2014).

2.4.4 Customer Satisfaction

More than ever, customer-led strategies in the industry, generate highly competitive and force brands to elevate their standards and quality, as the market is full of brands reaching the same segment (Hill and Brierley, 2017). Customer satisfaction is described by Mittal and Frennea (2010) as the result of post-consumption, evaluating different factors that indicate their satisfaction. These can be measured by comparing the experience and expectation of the customer, taking into consideration if the product exceeds their "needs and wants" and the value received for their money (Hamzah and Shamsudin, 2020). Some of the benefits of reaching expectations is how it can translate into an increase in the value of the brand, as good comments will be spread about it (Riaz, Hanif and Hafeez, 2010).

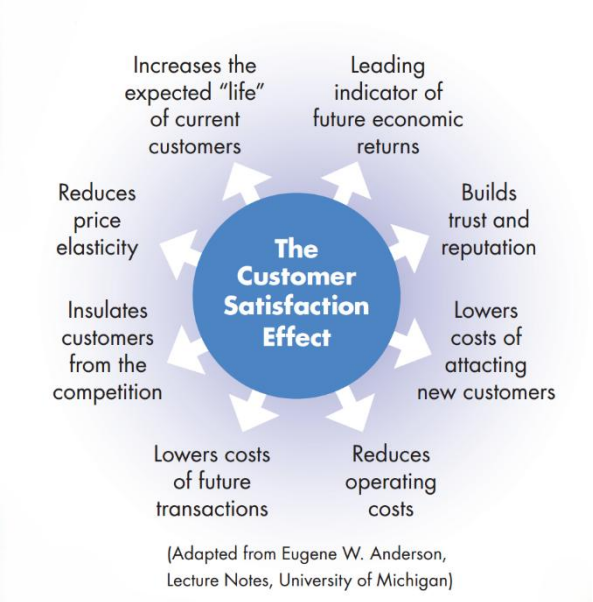
Hill and Brierley (2017) explain that when customer satisfaction is measured, some objectives can be reached to gain customer loyalty. These objectives are:

- The understanding of the customer perspective.
- The possibility to identify priorities for improvement (PFIs).
- Analysis of cost-benefit.
- "Misunderstanding gap" related to customer service.
- Setting service improvement and monitoring.
- Identifying the position of the brands among competitors.
- Improvement of customer loyalty, retention, and revenue.

Hamzah and Shamsudin (2020) state that reaching customer satisfaction, or the contrary, customer dissatisfaction, will generate similar behaviour among the other customers, as they tend to follow other people's behaviour. A study conducted in Pakistan, where different factors that affect Customer satisfaction were analysed, concludes that every variable affects and complements the others, with customer service and pricing being the most important variables in their study (Riaz, Hanif and Hafeez, 2010).

Mittal and Frennea (2010) also describe customer satisfaction as an aspect that differs from brand image, equity, social responsibility (CSR) etc., explaining that these factors focus on customer perception, when Customer satisfaction is based on *"product usage or service experience"* giving eight direct effects on the brand – see Figure 2.4.4.

Figure 2.4.4: Customer satisfaction effect



2.5 Emotional and Symbolic Loyalty Key Drivers.

2.5.1 Emotional Branding

In the contemporary world, companies are being motivated by new consumers who, due to globalization, are connected with others who share the same beliefs and values, and this combined with new technologies "inspired emotional opportunities" (Racine, 2021). As was mentioned previously, companies use different techniques that make the consumer recall a brand. However, emotions are the factor that make these strategies go deeper and stay longer in the consumer's mind, creating a relationship between the brand and the consumer (Wong, 2024). This relationship can only be built if the emotion matches the consumer, making them feel identified with (Singla and Gupta, 2019). For instance, brands target consumers on a subconscious level that can result in brand engagement (Racine, 2021). A study conducted by Hardilawati and Abd Ghani (2024) analysed the preference for a product that is linked to their traditions,

finding that the emotional connection with the brand makes the consumer prefer that product over others.

Wong (2024) expresses that Scientists consider emotions as a determiner of consumer's attention, persuading their behaviours and decisions, while at the same time referring to authenticity, consistency, visual design, and storytelling as common indicators of successful emotional branding campaigns. Nowadays, companies promote their product using human-emotional factors. An example of this is their increase in the use of "influencers" to connect more efficiently with specific groups of people with whom, they have had a previous connection (Racine, 2021). Adding to this factor, companies can communicate a product's benefits and future through feelings association (Singla and Gupta, 2019) that in a competitive market, a good emotional strategy can be the element that stands to brands (Wong, 2024).

Taking into consideration that most of the authors agreed on the benefits of emotional branding, these strategies can evoke all emotions, not just positive, for instance, it is important to target the correct emotions, as one bad experience or negative emotion can lead to disconnection (Acharya, 2019). Singla and Gupta (2019) state that the application of emotional branding can lead in two different ways, a well-done application increases brand loyalty and builds trust, making the consumer more connected with the brand. On the other hand, when the strategy exaggerates the product features or benefits giving exaggerated information, it can cause the brand to lose trust, as the consumer feels the intention of manipulation and a sense of being lied to.

2.5.2 Symbolic Consumption

Consumption in some of the cases is a "problem solving" where the product covers a specific function. However, when a product is charged with meaning, or the brand symbolizes something to the consumer, it is called symbolic consumption (Prónay and Hetesi, 2016). Brand symbols can communicate cultural aspects, luxury, sustainability, exclusivity etc., and be reflected in the consumer in areas such as social status, identity, or personal values (Abass, Oluwaseyi and Shkar, 2024).

For a brand or product to be considered symbolic, it has to be recognized by a group of people, with physical characteristics being easier to recognize (Witt, 2010). Nevertheless, there are other factors that can create meaning. For example, brands that align and show in their strategies culture, sentiments, and social shifts enable the consumer to create stories that connect with the brand, and with time, enhance the brand as a symbol (Abass, Oluwaseyi and Shkar, 2024).

For those who look at brand self-esteem, the process of symbolic consumption becomes cyclical, starting with the purchase of a product that increases the public's self-conscious, and maintaining that self is necessary to keep consuming (Akbar, and Islamli, 2023). A study conducted by Abass, Oluwaseyi and Shkar (2024) suggests that symbolic consumption is the what the media consumer uses to express their identity, making the brands resonate with them and remain loyal.

In the case of symbolic consumption, it has been found that culture plays an important role in making variables in purchasing decisions. On one hand, there are few countries that are more attached to their traditions, aligning with the brand as the reflection of their culture. That is the case of the study by Hardilawati and Abd Ghani (2024), where it showed an Indonesian preference in some articles. On the other hand, countries such as South Africa and Ghana, where they see in their product consumption the benefit of quality and status of global brands (Yeboah-Banin et al., 2021).

Prónay and Hetesi (2016) covered some descriptions of consumption and summarized that in modern societies, people started to acquire products to demonstrate status and *"the idea behind the purchase of products from a symbolic aspect is that we are what we own"*. Following in the same vein Akbar, and Islamli (2023) conclude that symbolic consumption and self-esteem is highly related. However, the general meaning of the concept is also criticised, as it is complex and includes aspects such as interpersonal bonds, and communities, as well as context (Prónay and Hetesi, 2016). Witt (2010) is also an author who agreed on the state, as it mentioned that symbols cannot be recognized in all places, as well as the meaning, that, depending on the context or place, can express different things.

2.5.3 Brand Attachments

Some authors suggest that brand attachment goes beyond brand loyalty, creating a strong long-lasting relationship with the consumer that sees the brand as part of themselves (Shimul, 2022). For instance, brand attachment is considered to be the result of successful brands that can link and enhance customer self (Park, MacInnis, and Priester, 2006).

Proksch, Orth, and Bethge (2013) state that attachments depend on the consumer's anxiety and security, with "attachment security" being related to the emotional support the consumer feels when acquiring a brand or product, while "attachment anxiety" describes how the consumer is related to others, how worthy they feel the product is, and how possible is to achieve love and attention. Some of the feelings of "security" are connected to collective culture, giving them an effect of self-image and status - points that are being tested and proven in The U.S. and South Korea in a study that concludes that most of the brand attachments indicating a necessity of social belonging (Sung et al., 2020).

Shimul (2022) explores four streams of brand attachment and describe them as the core of the concept. The first streams indicate the *"consumer's sense of self and possession"*. This focuses on material possessions, and the emotional meaning given to the object. The second, *"Connection-Automaticity-Attachment"* is charged with symbolic representations relating the brand with nostalgia, places, music etc. *"Connection-Prominence Attachment Model"* is the third stream and describes a strong link between a brand and the consumers self, perceiving the brand as part of them relating memories and feelings with the brand. The last one *is "brand attachment borrows"* which focuses on affection and how the consumer perceives the brand

reflected in themselves, choosing brands that are congruent to them. Consumer behaviour will vary and depend on different aspects such as gender and level of attachment (Proksch, Orth, and Bethge, 2013).

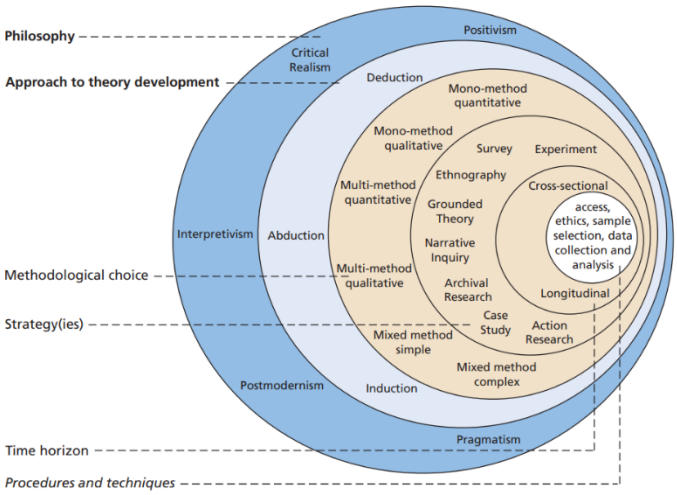
Part of the literature includes consequences of brand attachment and how they can be reflected in many areas. One of them focuses on the devaluation of other products, and in consumer finances "The stronger the customers' attachment … the higher the unit price that the brand can bear" (Park, MacInnis, and Priester, 2006. P.21). Others suggest that the nature of strong connections with brands can be unhealthy and drive consumer to compensate emotional support with products (Proksch, Orth, and Bethge, 2013).

CHAPTER 3:
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

In numerous areas of the industry, researchers make use of different procedures and techniques that help them to reach their objectives. This research methodology is defined by Creswell and Creswell (2018) as the analysis and understanding of tools and techniques used in a project. This means that it is not only a structure that guides the research, but it also includes the reasoning of the selection of techniques. It is also important to highlight the relationship and difference between similar terms, Saunders, et al. (2023) differentiate the terms methodology and method. The former refers to the theory of approaching a project, including philosophical assumptions, and the latter as a technique to collect and analyse data. In other words, it is expressing the "how" and "why" of the approach. For methodology, it also includes the critique and analysis of the knowledge, constituting the science behind the research (Adams, Khan and Raeside, 2014). To develop the following research, the use of the Research Onion Model by Saunders was selected– See figure 3.1, in which the framework stages as a base of method's selection is illustrated.

Figure 3.1: Research Onion Model.
Source: Saunders, et al. (2023 p.131).



3.2 Research Aims and Objectives

To clarify the concept and context of the research, it is necessary to break the project into aims and objectives, and structure a guideline to follow, providing the possibilities and boundaries that can be achieved (Pruzan, 2016), which in the same way, will mark the purpose and goals of the study (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Every objective is

structured around the research aim and will specify the steps to cover to achieve a well-rounded outcome (Saunders, et al., 2023).

The study conducted looks for an understanding of preferences between global and local and what the key factors that drive the consumer to purchase one brand over another are. As was seen in Chapter 2, similar variables can result in different results depending on the product and cultural environment. In the end, the findings could be used in the industry to generate strategies that align with consumer preferences.

Among the objectives, the cultural values and perceptions are highlighted, as it is indicating the rise in demand for traditional designs (Statista, 2025), as well as the majority of sales coming from luxury brands, with most of them being foreign brands (Statista, 2024). The presented objectives seek to deeply understand these key drivers and are divided into five objectives – see table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Main Objectives

Objective 1	To explore how symbolic and cultural values affect consumer perception and satisfaction.
Objective 2	To analyse the impact of previous experiences on the perception of local / global brands.
Objective 3	To explore the strongest tendency in brand loyalty, comparing quality and emotional connection.
Objective 4	The exploration of the perception of heritage and storytelling affecting customer loyalty.
Objective 5	To analyse how extended Mechanical, Functional, and Humanistic clues, transform the perceptions of Local / Global products.

3.3 Research Proposal, Philosophy and Design

The Western Sydney University (2023) defines research as a way to create new knowledge, generating concepts and methodologies for the purpose of expanding the stock of knowledge "*This could include synthesis and analysis of previous research …".* Enhancing the understanding of the world. Adams, Khan and Raeside (2014) claim that a framework or "master plan" indicates the methods and information needed to perform research. For the purposes of the study, various frameworks were analysed to determine their applicability and synergy, and according to Quinlan (2011), a good fit of elements will lead to reaching the objectives.

Among the frameworks analysed, the **Grounded Theory,** a methodology that can be used in qualitative and quantitative research, was included and its characteristics can help the researcher to develop a deep understanding of motivators and behaviours that cause the consumer to prefer certain brands (Tie, Birks and Francis, 2019). However,

it was analysed that the time-spent in the collection of data made this option unsuitable for the predetermined time of the realization of the study. Another considered framework was the **Case study** that would be beneficial to delve deeply into the main drivers of brand loyalty. This is due to its principal characteristic of analysis in real word, contemplating industry and contextual aspects (Rashid et al., 2020). On the other hand, similar to previous framework, the structure for collecting data is complex and it is necessary to conduct different studies for both local and global brands.

After these considerations and in order to structure the research, the author has selected the **Onion Model** by Saunders, et al. (2023) – see Figure 3.1. This Model represents a methodological process that breaks down the methodology into six different layers, each layer represents different stages in the design of the study giving a framework and direction to follow. Critically, Melnikovas (2018) states that even though the model is well-developed, future research is not taken into consideration future, suggesting an additional layer that explores *alternative futures*. Notwithstanding a foresight would be beneficial in the development of strategies and the purpose of the study. The alternative cited was dismissed due to the insufficient evidence in similar studies.

The Model is characterized by the illustration of the process giving a clear subdivision of layers, making three main groups visible, with these being the peripheral the layer that covers philosophy and theoretical approaches, playing an important role in shaping the selection of strategies. In this group, the assumptions and beliefs that make it possible to create new knowledge and the theory that will be tested to finally determine the findings can be found. Moving to the inner model, this answers the "how" of the study with the *methodological choice, strategies*, and *time horizon*, giving broad alternatives to use. To finalize the core of the model, the procedures and techniques to collect and analyse data are represented (Saunders, et al., 2023). The Onion Model is structured in a way that every layer is independent from each other, while at the same time still being connected, making it necessary to consciously complete (peel) one layer in order to move on to the next.

Some of the aspects mentioned in the Onion Model are described in the following topics, where detailing the different stages concluding with the philosophical approaches and methods used in the research are.

3.3.1 Ontological and Epistemological Approaches

Before exploring the approaches, it is important to understand paradigms that according to Britannica Dictionary (n.d.) is *"a theory or a group of ideas about how something should be done, made, or thought about"*, representing the worldview or belief that have been accepted as well as argued (Aliyu, et al., 2015). As was mentioned before, philosophy delves into assumptions through all the stages of the study, predetermining the understanding and the selection of methods.

With the purpose of developing future findings, it is important to consider Ontological and Epistemological assumptions (Saunders, et al., 2023). Pretorius (2024) describes

these approaches as a *philosophical foundation of the research paradigm*. In the case of an **Ontological** approach, this refers to *"the nature of reality",* questioning a phenomenon as the result of social interactions or a product (Bryman, 2016) and **Epistemology** as the origin of the knowledge (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). Aliyu, et al. (2015) also reference these approaches as responders of the questions, *what is the form and nature of reality?* (Ontological) and *what is the basic belief about the knowledge?* (Epistemological). The importance of covering these methods relies on the minimization of personal biases. For instance, they were considered by the researcher to develop a deep understanding of the purchasing preference giving clarity and reliability to the final analysis (Pretorius, 2024).

The nature of the study inclines the researcher to explore the nature of brand loyalty in a specific culture, as was shown in previous studies where the findings presented variables from product or country (Hardilawati and Abd Ghani, 2024; Sung et al., 2020; Jian et al., 2019) highlighting the nonexistence of "truth", assuming that different variables result in different findings (Moon and Blackman, 2014). Therefore, an Epistemological approach was the impartial perspective to conduct the study (Aliyu, et al., 2015), having not interfered with previous studies and allowing the collected data to be the knowledge to analyse, while rejecting the Ontological approach that believes in the "nature of the reality" (Bryman, 2016) and not considering different environments.

3.3.2 Interpretivist and Positivist

Interpretivism and positivism are two principle paradigms used in research with a main characteristic to contrast with each other (Junjie and Yingxin, 2022). Alharahsheh and Pius (2020) describe **Positivism** as a natural science in which the information collected is the centre of analysis, simplifying the data to control and isolate variables. This objective approach has the advantage of avoiding personal bias generating *"law-life generalization".* On the other hand, Saunders, et al. (2023) critique positivism, expressing that even though the researchers opt to include a positivist stance, these are influenced by a *value position,* and that belief in "*universal law"* rejects that diversification from part of the world. The criticism of Positivism builds up the **Interpretivist** approach, exploring deep variables considering different circumstances, cultures, and social realities (Alharahsheh and Pius, 2020), the aspects that change the perspective and meaning of certain things (Saunders, et al., 2023).

Pretorius (2024) exposes the two different paradigms in relation to the ontological and epistemological approaches, a point discussed before.

Table 3.3.2 Paradigms describe through the different approaches
(Pretorius, 2024, p.7)

Paradigm	Ontology	Epistemology
Positivism	**Realist**: Objective reality exists independently of human perception.	**Objective**: Knowledge is discovered through empirical observation and measurement.
Interpretivism	**Individual Relativist**: Reality is subjective and can only be partially known through individual interpretations.	**Interpretive**: Knowledge is gained by understanding the meanings individuals attach to their experiences.

Considering previous research, findings (Chapter 2), and the previously expressed, a Positive approach cannot be suitable for the research's objectives as the Positive approach demands the results to be measured and replicable (Saunders, et al., 2023) - aspects that do not align with the nature of the study. For this same reason, an Interpretivism approach is most suitable for the study as it includes symbolic interactionism that gives value to perceptions and social context (Junjie and Yingxin, 2022).

3.3.3 Qualitative versus Quantitative Research Strategies

In recent years, Globalization has created an open window for diversity, making the country culturally flexible, and making it possible to homogenise different aspects of the social environment (Olsen, 2024). This aspect, combined with the cultural identity, makes the research an explorative approach, which, as is described for Davies (2025), is a personal orientation and perspective, that for the bulk of the study, will require a contemporary perspective from the consumer, and the impact it has due to globalization.

Qualitative and quantitative are two different research approaches that, depending on the objectives, can guide the researcher to understand the different insights. For a quantitative approach, the research tests specific theories analysing the variables. The results can be replicable, and the report follows a structure. On the other hand, Qualitative is described as a deep understanding of social and human problems using procedure and "emerging questions" that would be analysed and interpreted by the researcher (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

Basias and Pollalis (2018, p94-95) analysed different resources that conclude in the projection of differences between the two research methods:

Table 3.3.3: Qualitative and Quantitative comparison

	Quantitative	Qualitative
Interpretation	• *"...usually refers to the systematic investigation of phenomena through statistical and mathematical analysis and the processing and analysis of numerical data"*	• *"... includes a sequence of interpretative techniques that seek to describe, decode and translate concepts and / or phenomena instead of capturing the frequency of certain phenomena in society"*
General context	• Statistical tools • Questionaries • Test hypothesis that are related with phenomena	• Observation • Deep interviews • Analysing phenomena
Advantages	• Objective. • Easy to analyse large amount of data. • Easier to identify differences.	• Analysis of phenomenon in its environment • Deep understanding of the complex nature of phenomena • Support on deeper analysis
Data form	• Numeric	• Spoken words / text

Taking into consideration the points listed above, and the objectives exposed in point 3.3.2, which is expressing the necessity of a deeper understanding of consumer behaviour, the use of a method that allows the interviewee to drive into different characteristics that make the researcher identify the key drivers of consumer behaviour is recommended.

Previous studies, cited in Chapter 2, employed a Quantitative strategy. These were characterised by different variables such as different countries (Sung et al., 2020) or multiple brands (Jian et al., 2019) requiring analysis of different variables and statistical comparisons. Despite the studies having similar aims, the current research is focused on one country and no other elements, but drivers of brand loyalty permitting the deeper exploration, and discarding the strategy followed by former researchers.

For instance, even though **quantitative** explores the effect of different circumstances and verifies different theories, the fact of not permitting the free expression of preferences (Basias and Pollalis, 2018) makes it the less favourable alternative. **Qualitative** research, in contrast, is characterised by a deep understanding of motivations and behaviours (Barnham, 2015). For this reason, to cover perception and connections, qualitative is the approach selected in the study.

3.3. 4 Inductive Versus Deductive Research

Inductive and deductive are two of three theories considered by Saunders – see figure 3.1. Each of them aligns better with one of the research strategies, approaching a

theoretical development (Saunders, et al., 2023). For example, Creswell and Creswell (2018) express that Qualitative studies, typically use an **Inductive** method, as it looks for the significance of the data, detailing complex situations, looking for patterns, themes etc. Conversely, a **Deductive** method moves from broad to particular and tests theories by *empirical observation,* making a basis for Quantitative research (Aliyu, et al., 2015). These two methods test or develop theories (Saunders, et al., 2023) in the selection of the theoretical approach, the focus of the study was considered, as well as the line of Qualitative and Quantitative strategies, looking for a method that aligned with the differentiations. Ultimately, the researcher opted to conduct the study with an Inductive method as it builds from particular answers to general themes that develop in theories (Creswell and Creswell, 2018) a characteristic that would be lost in Deductive where it is required to test previous theories.

3.4 Data Collection Method: Semi-structured Interviews

Qualitative and Quantitative studies phenomena with the difference reflected in the approaching information. One explores it with statistics, while the other observes and analyses the behaviour, experiences and interaction without the necessity of using mathematics (Basias and Pollalis, 2018)

Saunders, et al. (2023) consider various methods of data collection, including experiments, different types of questionnaires, case studies, focus groups, etc. Former studies are distinguished for the use of structured interviews (Hardilawati and Abd Ghani, 2024; Sung et al., 2020; Jian et al., 2019) as it prioritizes the correlation of information through different countries or brands. On the contrary, as the selection of the study was a Qualitative strategy, every alternative that aligned with Quantitative research was rejected.

It is important to consider that the theory guides the interview but does not shape the information collected as a co-relation between the two of them has to exist, with this being the theory, the framework and the data and the possibility to challenge the preexisting knowledge (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). As is shown in the Onion model, data collection is one core aspect to cover in the research, building on the analysis and structure of the previously covered points. In a Qualitative strategy the researcher not only collects data from interviews but also observes and analyses the phenomena (Basias and Pollalis, 2018). In the variety of interviews, it was distinguished that Structured and Unstructured interviews had to be diminished for their focus. The Structured collect standardized responses, not allowing unexpected insights and the Unstructured for its “lack of focus” collecting different answers that might be difficult to analyse.

From the different methods of data collection, the researcher selected the semi-structured interview, a method that, even though still focused on answering questions, the format is more flexible and less direct, keeping the mind that the researcher is open to the information generated in the interview (Bryman, 2016). Saunders, et al., (2023) state that semi-structured interviews or in-depth interviews have the advantage of

exploring different perspectives, giving the opportunity to "*find out and understand your participant's views, explanations and meanings"* structuring questions to each participant, contrasting with questioners that give the same questions to all the participants. For this reason, the interviews are carried out individually, allowing every participant the possibility to extend their perspective about the topic and to not be influenced by others. This type of interaction "uncovers" the point of view of the participant, exploring the questions through their experiences (Bryman, 2016).

The process of interview was conducted online and subsequently transcribed into a document that is securely stored in an online folder, where the participants can also access it to validate the veracity of the transcript. The documents generated will be stored for a period of a year, in the case that future reviews are required by the academics. In relation to the recorded session, this is stored in audio format protecting the privacy of the participants according to that expressed in point 3.6 Ethical considerations. The result of the collected data is taken into three of four stages of analysis, description, interpretation of data, and conclusion through theorization considering the different perspectives of the participants (Quinlan, 2011).

3.5 Sample Selection Technique and Justification

Considering that the research is aimed at the drivers of brand preferences in Ireland, a diverse country known for its rich cultural roots, history of immigration, and international presence (BBC, 2024), the selection of participants cannot be selected randomly and have to follow certain characteristics that suit the study, differentiating them from similar studies where it considers wide characteristics that might suit a greater population (Sung et al., 2020). For this study, the main characteristics include the exclusive participation of local people who have been born and/or raised in the country, with some of the participants having a mixed cultural background. As was mentioned, the sample has to be meaningful and "representative" (Saunders, et al., 2023).

For the number of participants, Mistry (2012) states that when researching targets groups with specific characteristics, it is better to consider a small sample in order to proceed with in-depth interviews that allow the participants to share their perceptions. Hence the selection of eight people for the study, who cover the main characteristics.

Regarding age, it is considered that people from 18 to 39 depict the group that buys the most luxury jewellery in Europe (Statista, 2024), also representing approximately 60 percent of the jewellery sales (Statista, 2025). Another factor to consider, is the information provided by Responsible Jewellery Council (2021), which mentioned that less than 10 percent of men drive the global jewellery demand, diminishing the participation of males in the study.

The interviews were conducted individually, giving the participants the opportunity to develop their own opinions (Mistry, 2012). The summer holiday period was an element taken into consideration, as the interviews were carried out during July and some of the participants were not easily accessible. The sessions took place online, with their

participation being recorded to eventually be transcribed, and to protect sensible information that goes against the General Data Protection Regulation.

The information provided follows the European Commission (2023) that anticipates the protection of the participants regulating the data, expressing that this can include *"...sexual orientation or ethnic identification records"*. For instance, to protect the privacy of the participants, the use of pseudonyms are included (Creswell and Creswell, 2018). In the same vein and considering the nature of the study, it includes real data such as age, gender, and cultural background, crucial information for the analysis.

Table 3.5: Participants Information

Participant 1 Age: 30 Female Irish	**Participant 2** Age: 20 Female Irish / British
Participant 3 Age: 19 Female Irish / Nigerian	**Participant 4** Age: 24 Female Irish
Participant 5 Age: 18 Female Irish / Mexican	**Participant 6** Age: 24 Female Irish
Participant 7 Age: 22 Female Croatian / Raised in Ireland	

3.6 Ethical Considerations

3.6.1 Ethical Approval

Comprehending that ethical consideration can anticipate future issues at any juncture of the research (Creswell and Creswell, 2018), The National College of Ireland developed the *Human Participants Ethical Review Application Form,* a document that has to be filled out before commencing the study. In this document, information such as time period, data collection, sample size, the method to analyse the data, the ethical risk that has been identified, etc. can be found. Previous to the initiation of the study, the researcher filled out the form with general information to be analysed by the ethical committee, with this being successfully accepted without further recommendation.

3.6.2 Informed Consent

The European Parliament and of the Council is the principal body of General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). In the *REGULATION (EU) 2016/679,* articles 6, 7, 13 and, 14, clarify the protection of participants in reference to conditions that have to be covered to consent, information that has to be provided and, lawfulness of processing (European Union, 2016). It is also important to indicate that The European Commission (2023) states a relation between ethics and human rights, with consent of participation and privacy being the main connections. This informed consent decreases the possibility of incurring privacy issues that might affect the study.

Following what was stablished in the GDPR, an initiatory email was sent in advance to the participants of interest, inviting them to be participants in an in-depth interview. The email includes their role in the interview and the purpose of the study as it was mentioned that; *"Research participants must also be competent to understand the information and should be fully aware of the consequences of their consent"* (European Commission, 2023). The email also includes a pre-structure format of the interview with the topics to be discussed highlighting the option to withdraw their participation at any time without being liable to consequences.

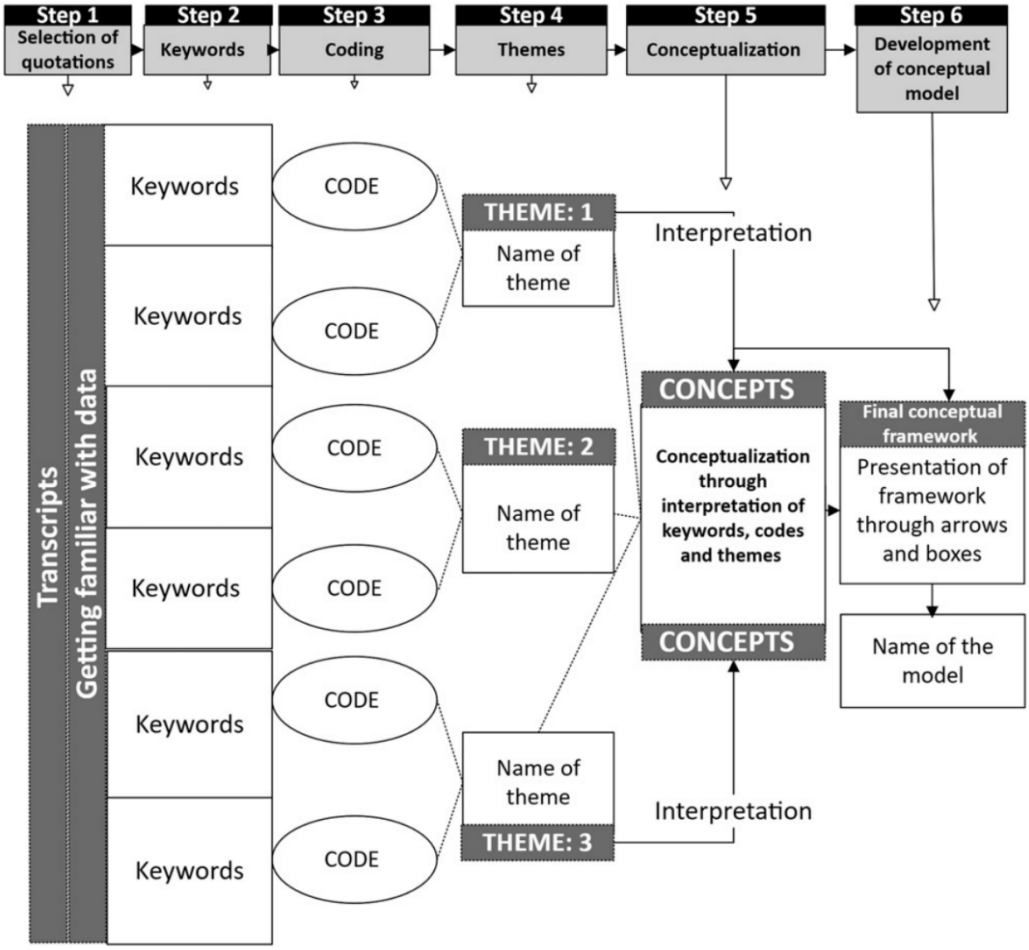
The informed consent also includes a link where the video, information related to the research, findings and conclusions can be accessed and is protected by passwords given during the interview.

3.7 Data Analysis Method: Qualitative Data Analysis

As part of the core of the Onion model, data analysis in Qualitative research is included in the procedures and techniques this is described by Saunders, et al. (2023) as a procedure that is often realized with a simultaneous analysis during and after the collection of data. This is in contrast to a Quantitative data, in which it only occurs after the data collection.

To comprehend the information collected during and after the interviews to find the key drivers of local versus Global jewellery, it is suggested by Bryman (2016) to break down the information into themes, organizing the data to subsequently analyse it through the literature explored in Chapter 2. Taking as a base the proposed by Bryman, each interview followed a similar structure, guiding the information to "uncover" specific themes that are discussed in Chapter 4. To process the information, the individual recorded session was transcribed and followed the six steps suggested in the International Journal of Qualitative Methods by Naeem et al. (2023) – see Figure 3.7.

Figure 3.7 Thematic analysis process
(Naeem et al., 2023, p.4)



Naeem et al. (2023) describe the method as a "system" that promotes a meticulous analysis, finding keywords and partners that help the researcher to connect data, interpretations and findings, making it a suitable method for the proposed research.

3.8 Limitation of the Research

Most of the authors agreed that the principal limitation of the Qualitative methodology is the lack of generalization (Creswell and Creswell, 2018; Aliyu, et al., 2015; Melnikovas, 2018), making it difficult to apply to a particular population. In the case of the study, the sample taken is composed of people with diverse cultural backgrounds, who, even if born and raised in the country, have a different cultural influence.

Another main factor that has to be taken into consideration is the structure of the process, which, in spite of its nature, the use of flexible interviews was imperative. The ethical considerations mark the previous acknowledgment of the topics to cover, as well as the predetermined question that guides the interview, making an "unnatural environment" and setting that can interfere with a natural answer (Creswell and Creswell, 2018).

CHAPTER 4:
FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the findings from seven semi-structured interviews conducted in July 2025. The structure of the interviews follows the methodology discussed in Chapter 3 as well the data analysis, according to the process of "*Thematic Analysis*" (Naeem et al., 2023, p.4), which identified five main themes – see Table 4, which aligns with the objectives previously discussed. The presented table summarizes the findings, structuring the chapter, which will present some of the most relevant quotes that will not be exclusive to a few of the participants, giving voice to all of them to have a rounded perspective of the themes discussed in the interview.

Table 4.1: Main themes

Research Objectives	Major Themes	Minor Themes
1. To explore how symbolical and cultural values affect consumer perception and satisfaction.	Cultural influence	Symbolical composition
	Consumer satisfaction	
2. To analyse the impact of previous experiences on the perception of local / global brands.	Brand trust	Brand Familiarity
	Brand perception	
3. To explore the strongest tendency in brand loyalty, comparing quality and emotional connection.	Emotional attachments	Customer retention
	Brand loyalty	
4. The exploration of the perception of heritage and storytelling affecting customer loyalty.	Story telling	Narrative Marketing
	Cultural heritage	
5. To analyse how extended Mechanical, Functional, and Humanistic clues, transform the perceptions of local / Global products.	Brand identity	Product signals
	Desing and functionality	

4.2 Objective 1

Taking into consideration the first objective highlighted in symbolic and cultural values/consumer perception, it was divided into two major themes and one minor:

- Cultural Influence

- Consumer Satisfaction.
- Symbolical Consumption.

The presented themes were discussed with the interviewees through a series of questions, motivating them to share the importance of some of the aspects and how these influence purchasing.

4.2.1 Cultural Influence

At the beginning of the interviews, participants were encouraged to discuss their culture, with it being interesting to note a despair perspective about cultural influence. The most prevalent comments were about a lack of importance, while others highlighted the significance for them. For example, some participants mentioned the appearance as the main influence.

> *"Not everything I own has a meaning some things are just pretty to look at…"* (Participant 7)

For others, it not only shares the influence in acquiring Irish Jewellery but also the opportunity it gives to open conversations and share pride for their culture.

> *"I like to connect a lot with Irish jewellery because it's a nice way to, you know, start conversations or like show appreciation for my culture… I think like green gems, especially in jewellery, I like a lot… it's a good conversational piece"* (Participant 2)

On the other hand, a participant with mixed culture expressed a greater inclination for her cultural background, even though she was born and raised in Ireland, showing a strong cultural influence.

> "*Cultural symbols and meaning like crosses or like the African designs influence my choices when it comes to it"* (Participant 3)

4.2.2 Symbolical Consumption

Getting further into the interview, it was noticeable that there was a tendency to prefer certain pieces of jewellery with symbols or meanings, as they see a representation of their culture in the pieces. For example, one of the participants considers jewellery to be a part of herself.

> *"It's a little bit of me, and even if I'm abroad, I like to, you know, show I'm Irish"* (Participant 2)

Seemingly, one of the participants expressed that jewellery is a great representation of her culture, but also a trendy accessory.

> *"When buying something with significance, I do feel more satisfied because it shows my appreciation and love for my culture, even though sometimes I tend*

> *to buy Chinese jewellery that still holds cultural significance. Like I said before, the Claddagh ring, because it's very popular now, but it's also symbolic of Irish culture"* (Participant 5)

Conversely, some others consider that acquiring a product with a symbol or meaning does not represent something for them, and when they are buying something with those characteristics, it is to follow trends or support local stores.

> *"I would buy something if it's pretty or not, but and like knowing if there's history and culture behind, or if I'm supporting a local small business, that would make you buy"* (Participant 1).

4.3 Objective 2

The second objective explores how influenced the participants feel by previous experiences and how this interferes with their perceptions, identifying the following themes:

- Brand Trust
- Brand Perception
- Brand Familiarity

4.3.1 Brand Trust

Contrary to cultural influence, brand trust showed a similar perspective among the participants, expressing their inclination towards global brands, as they consider their quality is better compared to local brands. For example, the next participant expressed that her perception of quality is influenced by society.

> *"I think it might be an unfair judgment to make, but I would typically go towards a global brand easier because I know it's sold a lot, it has a lot of sales, you know people trust this brand… I would assume that has a good level of quality…"* (Participant 2)

It seems that the effect of trendy fashion influences their decision in most of the participants, differing with one participant who expressed a different point of view, seeing local brands as consciously made.

> *"I tend to trust local brands more than global brands because they tend to be made more with better quality and better metals. And I feel like they're more personal, which makes them feel more valuable, more trustworthy"* (Participant 5)

4.3.2 Brand Perception (Global/Local)

As it was mentioned in the previous sections, one of the major recurring themes in the interview was the divided perception of Global and Local brands, splitting the participants into two different groups in order of preference. However, when it comes to perceiving the market, participants generally agree, when describing both, recurring to identify them with the size of the company.

> *"The first thing I think of as a local brand is like a teeny tiny shop, maybe with like know only a few people working behind the scenes and it's maybe a family owned and then global I think of it's like across the world and everyone can access it and see it and enjoy it"* (Participant 1)

Others highlighted the rusticity and fashion, distinguishing the local and global markets.

> *"When I think about like the brand like Claddagh Jewellery, which is like the Irish brand, I think more of like classic and the traditional style. While when I think of kind of like Swarovski crystal jewellery, it's more colourful and more modern and more trendy kind of"* (Participant 5).

4.3.3 Brand Familiarity

Even though the majority of participants recall some brands and pieces of jewellery from Local and Global brands, they recognized their familiarity with global brands due to their high interaction on social media and their social circle. For example, the punctual mention of brands and situations where they have contact with the product.

> *"I find brands such as like Pandora and Swarovski to be more memorable as they're really popular and you see many girls wearing them all the time. There's more advertisements on YouTube and Instagram and it's like all over that they're kind of affordable for more type of modern jewellery"* (Participant 5)

For one participant the relation of familiarity came with the presence of big brands that are more popular in other fashion sectors.

> *"I think the more global ones, like for an example, probably Chanel, because it's advertised everywhere"* (Participant 4).

Others consistently mentioned their tendency to be familiar with brands due to the constant interaction on social media, and trust in influencers.

> *"I think ads are a huge thing to me. I scroll on like Instagram a lot and I see the influencers I like promoting certain brands and like that would draw me more towards a brand because it's people I like and I can see wearing jewellery… that would make me like be interested to look at their stuff and stuff like that… I'll remember like an influencer that I saw wearing that"* (Participant 2).

4.4 Objective 3

This objective compares emotional and quality aspects in relation to brand loyalty, identifying two major themes and one minor:

- Emotional Attachments
- Quality Loyalty
- Customer Retention

4.4.1 Emotional Attachments

A subsequent theme was the mention of emotional attachments, bringing in different parts of the interview, the Claddagh ring is one of the pieces that brings more emotional attachments as they make it part of their daily life.

> *"I wear my Claddagh ring every day. And you know, sometimes I forget, and when I realize I forgot to wear it, I feel sad… I'm very happy wearing it. I feel very proud, yeah, that it is a part of my culture*" (Participant 1).

Others mention a special connection with a piece that includes in their brand strategy, the option to customize the bracelet. For example, two of the participants mentioned having a connection with Pandora, as it represents part of them.

> *"I have a Pandora bracelet, and it plays a role in my life because I can buy charms and each charm represents like some things I'm interested in, because you can buy the charms that are, you know, sports or any hobbies and I'm very proud to have that"* (Participant 5).

4.4.2 Brand Loyalty

After taking into account previous experiences with the brands and their connection, it was revealed that there is a long-standing relation with some brands. For example, one of the participants looks back on her more recurrent brand, expressing that her affinity is connected to culture and lifestyle.

> *"I usually like brands like Vivienne Westwood and other brands like Louis Vuitton and all of that because I know Vivienne Westwood is handmade but it's also like made in factories and these people have it… there's also like a show that I watch and the main character always wears it"* (Participant 3)

In contrast, some others expressed their preference for quality and price.

> *"There's some brands that I find myself coming to again and again. I like Lynette's jewellery, for example, and I find myself coming because they're*

affordable and because the durability of the jewellery itself is like is great so that's something I look for. I've bought from a brand even if it's like a beautiful piece of jewellery if it tarnishes or you know um if it's not very well made I wouldn't find myself looking again even if it's gorgeous" (Participant 2).

In the same way, their loyalty can be withdrawn if the product does not meet the quality requirements or if any other brand offers quality at a better price was exposed.

> *"I would definitely (switch brands) I'd try other brands if their quality is good… brands that are reasonably priced but that won't turn your skin green or irritate you"* (Participant 6).

4.5 Objective 4

The following objective investigates the influence of two factors that plays a role in customer loyalty. This factor includes cultural perspectives and storytelling, proposing the subsequent themes:

- Storytelling
- Cultural Heritage
- Narrative Marketing

4.5.1 Story Telling

According to the interviewees, one of the most popular symbols that connects with them is the Claddagh as a representation of a love story, that goes beyond the principal story and still communicates with others. For example, one of the participants mentioned the different messages that can be transmitted depending on the position of the ring.

> *"I think that the Claddagh ring holds, like, there's kind of this thing where if you wear it a certain way, it means that you're in a relationship. And that goes back to how it was, like, reasons and stuff"* (Participant 5).

Another participant finds attraction in the story of the brand and the way they are still communicating through a museum and direct connection with the producers.

> *"Newbridge silverware, I think they're a very, I like how open they are about their history. For example, like they have a museum in Newbridge that tells their story of how they came about and, you know, how they started making jewellery. And I think that's really lovely to see. And you see the people behind... You don't get so much with global brands"* (Participant 2).

The stories mentioned not only came from the brand (meaning/story behind). For others the story communicated is represented by a TV show, grabbing her attention to these pieces.

> *"I think the ones from my show that I watched. I think I like seeing people from my show wear it. And then that's all they wear. Then I want to wear it because I really enjoy watching the show, so I like to wear it as well"* (Participant 3)

4.5.2 Cultural Heritage

When the topic of cultural heritage was taken, a reflection of values, beliefs, and traditions was demonstrated by the participants including pride and enthusiasm, sharing their perception about that. For example, and once again, the story of the Claddagh ring and its meaning, as well as other symbols that represent her culture.

> *"Irish jewellery is inspired by like history and Celtic knots really. Celtic knots are a big thing that you'll see a lot. You'll see the Trinity knot and you'll see the likes of the Claddagh ring. That has a big history meaning we all know, like I would assume everyone who buys a Claddagh ring knows the story of the man in Galway who proposed to his wife and he made it handmade for her and the heart means love, the crown is loyalty and the hands for friendship and that was what he was offering for her"* (Participant 1).

For heritage, it is also including their beliefs, with religion being an aspect mentioned by one of the participants as an accessory that distinguish herself among others.

> *"I think when I see the cross, more of my faith. When I wear the cross, I'm proud to wear it because people will know I'm a Christian and all. And we can talk about the Bible and stuff like that"* (Participant 3).

Another example was given by one of the participants that expresses that there are certain pieces of jewellery that have been passed down by generations and are now losing their meaning but still preserve as a traditional symbol.

> *"...from a different part of my country, there is these like shell almost symbols that are just passed down like culturally, but I'm not sure if they mean anything specifically, it's just what people used to wear like years and years ago"* (Participant 7).

4.6 Objective 5

The last objective pursues the understanding of clues and their influence on the perception of local and global brands.

- Brand Identity
- Desing and Functionality
- Product Signals

4.6.1 Brand Identity

Digging into aspects that characterize brands, the majority of the participants recall pieces of jewellery or brands that have a unique presentation. For example, the case of a Global brand that has a theme in all its products is presented.

> *"Vivienne Westwood, because it has a little symbol. It's like, it kind of looks like one of the planet Saturn, the one with the ring, I think that's it… It has it on everything, the jewellery and the packaging, it's like its own symbol, it's its own design"* (Participant 3)

For some others, identity came from design and the place of origin, an example given by one of the participants that describes identity as a group of characteristics that cannot be found in other countries.

> *"When you go to Mexico and like small villages, they tend to have little stands of jewellery, which is like handmade. And like the origin of it, it's like all traditional. And I like it because it's unique and you don't find it in places like Ireland because it's unique to its origin, which is like Mexico"* (Participant 5)

Referring to the place of origin, it was mentioned that these aspects would interfere with some people's perception. However, for herself it is an aspect that does not influence.

> *"There's so many people concerned about the product came from China… I don't know like Switzerland… it wouldn't really pose a problem to me"* (Participant 1)

4.6.2 Design and Functionality

Exploring other aspects that change the consumer perception, the participants were asked what their main concern was when buying a product, resulting in similar responses that revolved around functionality and design. For example, participants see the quality as a principal characteristic that can make her switch from brands.

> *"I think jewellery can definitely be expensive. So I would like to know that I have like quality for my money and I would rather pay more and have a good durable product"* (Participant 2)

In the same vein, another participant who also gives importance to quality considers the design as the main factor to consider the same brand or search for other options.

> *"Sometimes it does, because if a brand is cheaply made or seems to only be a trendy piece which will go out of style, I tend to switch brands for something that is more casual, and it won't go out of style and things like that"* (Participant 5)

Having been given the example of functionality, one of the participants mentioned the importance it has for her, perceiving this attribute as an extra that can attract her to buy it.

> *"I love when things are functional. I like when you can wear things multiple ways, for example, or even with the bracelet. I like that it's just a collectible item. And if you travel anywhere, they can always get specific little charms and, you know, like they have special collections"* (Participant 7)

4.6.3 Product Signal

Finalizing the interview, it was asked about aspects that grab the attention of consumers, with some of the participants showing excitement when it comes to packaging, expressing their preference for designs that include design in every aspect, making the purchase a full experience.

> *"I love when it comes in like a box of any type. I think it's really nice. ... you know, any product you buy from it is sold in like a suede pink box, and I think that's lovely. And it like really draws me to the brand because it's a sense of like luxury… you feel more like a treat for yourself"* (Participant 2).

In contrast, another participant that also gives importance to the packaging, looks for a more subtle but elegant presentation.

> *"From a style point of view, definitely something that looks elegant, kind of old money vibes, and then materials and packaging. I am a silver girly all the way, or like white gold. Probably that stuff and then packaging and textures. I just like simple things. I don't like a lot of too many things in one place"* (Participant 7).

One of the participants expressed her concern for the environment, mentioning that it is a point that dissuade them from making a purchase.

> *"I would be somewhat of a like, aware consumer of where things are coming from and how environmentally friendly packaging is. Like, the more plastic is involved is not very appealing, and, you know, how far it's travelled… that wouldn't make me happy and that's like a fault I would see that would turn me off"* (Participant 1).

4.7 Summary

Taking as a basis the primary data collected, it is suggested that women aged 18 to 39 take into consideration different variables when considering whether or not to buy jewellery and, depending on the purpose, the inclination for Global or Local differs.

During the interview some of the factors that can be considered in a purchase decision were discussed, starting with heritage, which although symbolic and cultural values were present in some of the participants, feeling satisfied and proud about those pieces, it does not determine or influence their purchases, with fashion and trends being the factors that are most considered. Contrasting with preferences related to trust and quality, having a significant preference for Global brands due to their higher exposure on social media and a feeling of validation and belonging. However, when the interview gets into connections, two different approaches to the customers came to light, with symbols and personalization being key determinants to acquire a product, as expressed by the participants that jewellery forms a part of themselves. The quality and design were also a continuous topic during the interview, as the participants expressed the importance of these two components to stay loyal to a brand or to switch and try different brands.

To sum up, among the customers interviewed, their preference is built through a complex mix of factors such as cultural influences, quality concerns, and emotional connections. On one hand, Local Brands are leading the preferences in some of the participants due to the cultural and emotional connection they have with symbols, as well as the feeling of artisan jewellery. On the other hand, Global Brands stands out for the prestige built by international interactions, social media, fashion, and influencers. Even though some of the participants showed an inclination to Global/Local Jewellery, brand loyalty was not absolute, making them switch from products when seeking personal satisfaction.

CHAPTER 5: DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The following chapter expands the main themes proposed in Table 4.1, through an analysis of primary data collected in Chapter 4, in comparison to the theories and previous studies cited in Chapter 2.

5.2 The Impact of Cultural Values on Customer Satisfaction

Looking back at the objectives described in Chapter 3, the first objective focuses on the exploration of symbolic and cultural values shaping customer perceptions and directly impacting their satisfaction. As Mittal and Frennea (2010) observed, this is the need to reach or exceed their expectations, as well as the perception of value for money, in a category where the product is directly related to culture (Perez and Pompeu, 2021). According to the findings, people are not necessarily influenced by symbolic jewellery, but it does represent a factor that increases their satisfaction.

5.2.1 The Understanding of Symbolic Consumption Through Cultural Identity

One of the most prominent themes during the realization of primary research was the symbolism as part of their cultural identity. Although the findings in section 4.2, indicate that most women are acquiring jewellery as a representation of their culture, this is not a constant among the consumers who refer to the fact that the fashion trends play a major role in the purchasing decision. In line with this, secondary research explains the most prominent behaviour, initiated by the root of significance, as jewellery is considered a representation of stories, which in an artistic way, connect with others (Hosny, 2022) and when combined with cultural symbols, are strongly related to a deep emotional connection (Jian et al., 2019).

Irish women, as other women, have the necessity to be identify in a group, where they share global, national or ethnical culture (Awanis, 2018), making use of accessories to differentiate themselves, not only to indicate fashion, but to open a space of dialogue that shares identity (Participant 2). Xiaoying (2024). This explains that a piece of jewellery that is charged with symbolic meaning increases self-strengthening, relating to the consumer to their heritage, and feeling identified by the symbols. The symbolic consumption is consistent with previous research conducted by Hardilawati and Abd Ghani (2024), which convey that people consume products with cultural representation as this shows respect for their traditions or community.

Interestingly, mixed backgrounds showed a wider perspective of cultural appreciation on symbolic consumption. They did not show preference between the country they grew up and the country where their ascendants came from (Participant 3), instead widening the admiration of cultures outside their background (Participant 6). This way

of appreciation for other cultures can be explained by Awanis (2018), who clarifies that multicultural people can develop a cultural identity conflict, making the process of reaching this market complex. On the other hand, these consumers are more likely to spend more money when buying a product, as it is rare and difficult to get (Amaral and Torelli, 2018).

5.3 The Influence of Previous Experiences on Brand Perception

The second objective was mainly to analyse the different perspectives consumers have on local and global brands, taking into consideration previous experiences and how these influence their perceptions. Considering primary and secondary data, the analysis will focus on and discuss two main sections, giving a general view of the influence it is generating in consumers, as well as their current visualisation of brands.

5.3.1 Brand Perception in a Globalized Country

Several studies focused on the tendency of consumer behaviour in a modern world, as the markets are no longer isolated and are not only exchanging goods, but also culture (Wilson, 2011). As a result, participants showed a transformed perspective in reference to Global and Local brands. Secondary research shows that companies not only look to introduce products in the market, but also adapt their strategies to connect with the consumer, making it easier to penetrate those markets (Deliceırmak, 2022; Shamsuddoha, 2009).

According to Halkias (2015) brand perception can be understood through a Brand Schema, which allows the relationship between different values and characteristics to a brand to form. This process was validated on primary research, which, in an exercise of perception, describe global and local brands as a group of characteristics that distinguish both of them, for example, quality, traditional style, modernity, tiny shops, mass production, etc.

Primary data recognized the inclination to acquire international products, which, according to the responses, are purchased worldwide, bringing the companies to the attention of a large number of consumers that can damage their reputation if the quality does not meet the basic requirements. A principle like this is present in secondary research and is specifically backed by Hamzah and Shamsudin (2020), who indicate that good or bad experiences can explode into new behaviour among the consumers. This was reflected in chapter four, which indicates that due to the number of reviews, it is not possible to compare local and global brands as, following what was expressed by the majority of them, they ended up buying products that are more familiar.

5.3.2 Effectiveness of Social Media Building Visual Perception

Followed by the data collected in Chapter four and the constant mention of the influence of social media in shaping consumer's perceptions, the use of schemas of memory by Halkias is considered in the analysis (2015), which infers that

Advertisement Schema structure and organization of memories help the consumer to recall certain brands. In the same way, the *Journal of Brand strategy* explains that when values and beliefs are combined with technology, connections are created (Racine, 2021).

Primary data validates that the constant exposure to advertising on streets and mainly online transforms the perception of a product, as most of the participants indicate the high presence of brands on social media, and similar to that, TV shows, which also generate social media content (Participant 3). These kinds of interactions have been analysed by other researchers, as is the case with Haitham and Evrim (2023) that aligns with primary research, mentioning that social media is an important medium to connect with consumers, as well as increasing their the intention to purchase a product. Secondary data also suggests that companies that understand consumer behaviour, direct their strategies to match consumer emotions (Singla and Gupta, 2019), making it more memorable and easier to recall brands voluntarily or involuntarily (Orth and Gal, 2014) giving way to the Advertisement schema, as a result of constant exposure to a specific brand.

Another phenomenon occurring due to the exposure of advertising, is the tendency to desire a product when an influencer or artist is wearing it, or the case of many people wearing the same jewellery, hence turning into a significance of quality. This is described by the University of West Alabama (2019) which mentioned that previous experiences, in this case the interaction with a brand, generates emotions that translate into a psychological natural response believing that this product is good or bad for them.

5.4 Main Factors of Brand Loyalty

On the third objective, the analysis of brand loyalty is considered, which as explained before, is the sum of consumer behaviour and attitudes towards a brand (Russell-Bennett and Parkinson, 2015), and in contemplation of primary and secondary research, two main factors: perception of quality and emotional connections will be compared. To examine these two factors, the analysis is divided into two subtopics discussed below.

5.4.1 The Importance of Quality on Building Long-Lasting Relations

Through Chapter Four, various aspects that promotes customer satisfaction and loyalty are mentioned, with one of them being quality. According to Khan (2023), this perception is not always objective, and in the Jewellery market, the perception of quality refers not only to cover a necessity, but also the inclusion of service and promotions (Phophalia et. al., 2020). Primary research was conclusive in the aspects they considered when a product has good quality or not, indicating fabrication method, price, and durability as the most important factors. This is in contrast to what is stated

by Diktaş and Tekin (2018), which mention service and relationship with the consumer as the aspects that generate reliable relationships.

One participant gave an example of a brand that she finds herself purchasing more than once, saying that what traps her attention isthe design, but what keeps her loyalty is the quality of the piece (Participant 2). Another explains that it would be possible for her to switch from brands if another brand offers the same quality at a better price (Participant 6), confirming what was mentioned by Phophalia et. al. (2020), who suggested that price influences the quality perception.

Other aspect highlighted in the collection of data was the necessity of trust, as she expressed that even if the designs and previous purchases reach her expectations, she would not be interested in acquiring more jewellery if she considers one of the pieces to no longer have the same quality. This indicates the necessity of the company's commitment, who have to focus on the quality of their products as well as building trust (Rivaldo et al., 2022; Khan, 2018; Kassim and Abdullah, 2010). The aspects mentioned before, represent a general view of aspects considered by the interviewees, prefiguring brand attachment, a principle that goes further than brand loyalty and promotes long-lasting relationships (Shimul, 2022).

5.4.2 The Significance of Emotional Connection with the Consumer

One of the topics recurrently mentioned in both primary and secondary research, is the importance of emotionally connecting with a product or brand. Leaving behind the preference of Global and Local brands, most of the participants admitted to having an emotional connection with Jewellery, explaining that these pieces play a role in their daily life. Jiazhu, et al. (2024) explain that in creative or cultural products, the consumer needs an emotional connection, which can vary in level and emotion, and depending on each one, can lead to loyalty or brand attachment. In reference to brand attachments, this can be reflected in different ways. This is the case with Participant 1, who mentioned that she feels sad when she is not wearing her Claddagh ring. This behaviour is discussed in section 2.5.3, indicating that (brand) attachments are directly related to anxiety and a necessity of secureness, factors that can be related to self-image or status (Proksch, Orth, and Bethge, 2013).

In secondary research, four steams of brand attachments were explored (Shimul, 2022), with the four of them being present in the collection of primary data. For those who mentioned Pandora as their predilect object, the full representation of Brand attachment is presented, as it is a product that represents memories and emotions through "charms", which given a meaning by the user, makes it a part of them. On the other hand, local and symbolic pieces of jewellery, present different levels of the four steams, differentiating the connection, as the meaning given is not by the user but for the story of the piece, making the process of targeting consumer more complex, as the meaning will not adapt to the consumer generating different emotions to those who are aware of the story or not. In the case of local brands, Yap (2023) considers three

frameworks to reinforce consumer connection in order to achieve loyalty, visualizing the lack of "personalization" in their strategy and an opportunity to increase the connection.

Knowing the consumer is paramount when planning strategies, as different brands transmit different emotions, and not all the consumers will be triggered by the same emotions (Magids, Zorfas and Leemon, 2015). That is the case of one of the participants that brought to light a different approach when connecting with a brand, looking at the differentiation the brand has in relation to others, not having a specific meaning but the fact of seeing people she likes wearing these brands, invokes "admiration" as the emotion that catalyses her preference for the brand (Quesada, 2024).

5.5 The Relationship Between Customer Identity and Brand Loyalty

The four objectives are focused on the exploration of storytelling and heritage and how these factors are affecting customer loyalty. According to relevant data collected in both primary and secondary research, it is considered to approach the objective in two different sections, including aspects such as narrative and the connection with culture.

5.5.1 The Reinforcement of Loyalty Through Narrative

Based on primary research, an inclination to connect with the brands through stories is perceived. The familiarity all the participants have with the history or story of certain pieces suggest that their connection is generated through a unification of values and the representation of the product, implying that the brands are satisfactory when communicating these messages to the public. As explained by Haitham and Evrim (2023), the use of stories that transmit values increases the possibility of understanding the concept of the brand.

Meng-Chuan (2020) states that consumers tend to reflect on their own emotions in the stories and, given by the participants, different examples of emotional connection, full stories with meanings, and personal identification in the interview. This is the case of the Claddagh ring, its story and uses, as well as the evolution of representation from the user, confirming her sentimental status. For another, her connection comes from a different narrative, expressing her excitement for a TV show. Either way, the presentation of the story homogenizes the brand and personal story, confirming the previous theory, that also can be associated with one of the brand experience dimensions, *lifestyle*, which indicates the sense of belonging and boosting of self-image (Gentile, Spiller and Noci, 2007).

However, not all the connections boost the self-image. For others, the attraction comes from a historical narrative. One of the participants indicated that their affinity to a brand is a result of their dedication to not only selling quality but also to

communicating the process, human resources, materials, and techniques with their consumers to explain each product. The participant found it as a distinctive characteristic, with it not being usual to connect with a brand from its foundations, aligning to the strategies discussed before where companies not only include in their strategies values, but also details about the product and extra propositions (Haitham and Evrim, 2023).

To conclude, findings in secondary research suggest that the main purpose of the use of storytelling in marketing is to connect with consumers, shaping the brand perception (Meng-Chuan, 2020), increasing mouth-to-mouth communication (Magdalena, 2020) and finalizing and boosting loyalty (Alonso, 2024). These are theories that have been confirmed by the participants by sharing their own stories with the brands at the beginning and throughout the whole process of the interview.

5.5.2 The Weight of Cultural Identity

The association of identity when purchasing a product is a recurring theme, with these mainly being symbols highly connected to their culture. Secondary research indicates that in countries with a high traditional root, the importance of symbolic jewellery is passed down through generations, strengthening cultural confidence (Xiaoying, 2024; Satpathy, 2017).

The importance given by participants to cultural representation is noticeable, putting a weight that might suggest an appropriate way to wear these pieces of jewellery in each of the symbols. For one of the participants, Irish symbols are charged with history, antique designs, and one of them a handmade representation of a love story, making those characteristics outstanding to make the participant believe every person who wears them knows the meaning and story behind them, making it a distinctive characteristic that identifies a country, not being replicable in other countries (Mei and Ahmad, 2023), hence being possible to identify a feeling of "love" (Jian et al., 2019).

For some of the participants, cultural identity is also reflected in their beliefs, namely considering their religious representations as part of themselves and feeling proud to belong to a community. Another reflection of cultural identity are symbols that have become tradition and over the years, though these have lost the real meaning (Participant 7).

Secondary data explores previous studies in which the inclination to global brands is concluded, as the cultural identity does not represent a main factor when acquiring a product (Yeboah-Banin et al. 2021). Contrary to what was expressed in primary data in which it is clearly expressed that, even though only in some aspects, if international products are more attractive for the "benefits" they offer, cultural representation is still valued by the participants, having influence over their purchasing decisions.

5.6 Shaping Customer Perception

The final objective is to focus on consumer perception. As was explored in section 4.6, two main clues are considered in the analysis, Mechanical and Functional, due to the importance and recognition they were given by the participant.

5.6.1 The Influence of Packaging Design in Purchasing Experience

During the last section of the collection of primary data, the differences in characteristics that differentiate a product from the others were explored, with three out of four dimensions of brand experience being prominent (Schmitt, Zarantonello and Brakus, 2009).

When mentioning Mechanical clues, the majority of participants consider packaging an important element when buying Jewellery. One of the participants explained that Jewellery is an expensive product: for instance, receiving the product in an elaborate box makes it feel like a full experience. In consideration of the presentation, textures such as suede, colours and the extension of the symbology of the product were mentioned. This is the case of *Vivienne Westwood,* a brand that designs the packaging around the jewellery, in order to follow the same line. Donald A. Norman classified different emotional elements, validating the expressed by the participants, transmitting their perspective with *"instinct"* and connecting physical characteristics with their cognitive feelings (Li and Ratthai, 2024).

As mentioned before, in primary data, consumers consider the acquisition of jewellery to be an experience that is described in the four dimensions of brand experience (Schmitt, Zarantonello and Brakus, 2009), including "sensory" aspects with the physical aspects as detonators of the senses, "affective" with the emotions generated by the product, having mentioned *a treat for yourself* by one of the participants, and "appealing*"*. For the fourth dimension, "intellectual", a sense of luxury for some of the participants was also considered, with it being consistent both in primary and secondary research.

Contrasting with the sense of luxury and exclusivity mentioned by other participants, one of the participants included sustainable characteristics not considered before. On this, she showed concern about the ecological materials used in the packaging, as well as the carbon footprint, with this being a turnoff if the brand is not concerned about the environment. Such characteristics are reflected in one of the extra dimensions considered by Gentile, Spiller and Noci (2007), where *lifestyle* is a reflection of personal values and identity.

It can be concluded that packaging not only covers the need to present the jewellery, but is also an opportunity to increase the value and perception of the product. As discussed before, packaging design turned the purchasing of jewellery into a memorable experience that transmits emotions to the consumer (Interaction Design Foundation, 2016).

5.6.2 The Importance of Intangible Values

Referring to functional clues, intangible aspects of the jewellery were considered, which in secondary data, expressed this feeling as *"behavioural"* as it is related to reliability, durability and usability. In primary data, some of the participants highlighted the importance of quality of materials, how long the piece stays in good condition, and how versatile it is. For participant 2 and 6, the presence of durability was of great importance, as some of the pieces they acquire have specific characteristics that make them more costly, determining that if the jewellery does not meet their expectations, it would be easy to switch brands. These types of reactions are related to consumer satisfaction discussed in section 2.4.4, explaining that consumers look for good value for money (Hamzah and Shamsudin, 2020). They also state that not meeting their previous expectations could lead them to feel manipulated by the over-exaggeration of features promoted by the brands, breaking their trust (Singla and Gupta, 2019).

In the case of functionality, one of the participants expresses the multiple ways to use the jewellery, making the jewellery versatile and easy to wear. In the same vein, it is important to bring back a brand mentioned by some of the participants, which includes in their uses the customization, adding "charms" to make a unique product. This validates consumer schemas by Halkias (2015) which "*based on attributes"* influence their perception, linking functional aspects to a brand.

Intangible values are not key factors that drive the consumer to purchase a product. However, they are related to the pre-purchasing experience, shaping the perception of the consumers in reference to the brand, how determined they are to acquire more products or try new brands.

CHAPTER 6:
CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Conclusion to the Study

The primary objective of the presented study was to analyse local and brand perceptions in order to explore the main drivers of brand loyalty among women between 18 to 39 in Ireland. Through the examination of objectives described in Chapter 3, and the discussion of findings, it can be concluded that the study has contributed to the understanding of values that affect attitudes and behaviour towards brands (Russell-Bennett and Parkinson, 2015), highlighting four main values that enhance brand loyalty, making the aims satisfactory.

6.1.1 Brand Satisfaction and Cultural Values

The first consideration to address is symbolic and cultural values as a main driver to brand satisfaction, that even though this aspect is not considered essential, it does prove to have an effect on consumers, exceeding their expectations (Hamzah and Shamsudin, 2020) by increasing their connection between the brand and their own identity (Amaral and Torelli, 2018), creating consumer attachments that will turn into loyalty (Shimul, 2022). Conversely, it also presents that participants identify their culture through symbolic jewellery. However, this does not represent a main reason to prefer a brand. Accepting the presented theories from Shimul (2022) and rejecting previous research by Hardilawati and Abd Ghani (2024), who mention that these values pretend to increase brand preference.

6.1.2 Reinforcement of Brand Loyalty Through Emotions and Quality

The second driver to consider is emotion and quality as aspects that reinforce brand loyalty (Shahid, et al., 2022; Budianto, 2019). Emotions can differ among consumers (Magids, Zorfas and Leemon, 2015). As shown in the study, emotions connected to the consumer through beliefs, memories, and nostalgia, are psychological aspects that drive attachments (Russell-Bennett and Parkinson, 2015). In consideration of quality, although it is considered subjective (Khan, 2023), this considers consumer expectations, reinforcing brand trust (Diktaş and Tekin, 2018), similar to what is presented by the interviewees who mention that quality is one of the main drivers to remain loyal, aligning with the statistics presented by Budianto (2019).

6.1.3 Strengthening Brand Image Through Narrative

For the third value, and following the line of emotions, heritage and storytelling are presented as aspects that strengthen the brand image (Magdalena, 2020). Considering these values as one main aspect, it is the base when resonating with the consumer (Alonso, 2024), using it as an identification (Magdalena, 2020), easily transferring the consumer's emotion into the brand (Meng-Chuan, 2020). This explains why the consumer makes reference to personal stories and experiences with jewelry or brands,

not only including symbolic meaning but also transparency and presence, resonating on different and with deeper levels (Alonso, 2024).

6.1.4 Brand Enhancement and Different Perceptions

The final takeaway is to consider consumer perception, a value that was identified in different forms and influences the consumer to keep purchasing (Meng-Chuan, 2020; Rivaldo et al., 2022). Consumers recognize, and are conscious about, the characteristics offered in the market (American Psychological Association, 2018), opting to acquire products that align with their lifestyle and identity (Shimul, 2022). Some of the characteristics shaped consumer perception and were presented in literature to later being validated for participants, with those being being ones that can be tangible (Chua et al., 2014), highlighting the different senses it generates in the consumer, taking them to a luxurious experience (Berry, Wall and Carbone, 2006) or in the case of quality, to trust (Khan, 2018). On a tangent, global and local perspectives have been shaped around the consumers (Hardilawati and Abd Ghani, 2024) as a result of a high presence of brands on social media, not only increasing the purchasing intentions (Haitham and Evrim, 2023) but also enhancing characteristics mentioned before.

6.2 Recommendations

6.2.1 Recommendations for Future Research

The presented study focused on the Irish female perspective of jewellery, concluding in a satisfactory collection of qualitative data that contributes to the understanding of consumer behaviour. Nonetheless, the study considers specific characteristics that narrow the perspective of other consumers, pointing out some aspects that need a deeper exploration to cover a wider consumer perception.

Ideally, future studies would consider expanding the perspective to men, as even though they represent 10% of consumers, these individuals spend more money on jewellery (Responsible Jewellery Council, 2021). It would also be an interesting perspective to compare, analysing similar factors that drive loyalty and the characteristics that are taken into consideration when purchasing jewellery. Seemingly, expansion of the age gap would enrich the study as its coverage includes only 60% of consumers (Statista, 2025), leaving behind the perspective of minorities that could make a difference in positioning a brand.

In relation to drivers, the study includes a general observation of values that are considered in the local and traditional jewellery. For instance, it is suggested to delve into the complexity of values, giving as an example the differences between historical storytelling and the use of influencers to connect and stay longer in the consumer mind (Wong, 2024) as media try to create strategies that lead to a long-lasting relationship (Shimul, 2022). Furthermore, an aspect that arose during the collection of secondary data, was the tendency of sustainability, a factor that was absent during the study, but

can attempt to create a constant in consumers looking for sustainable products, with it being a variable to study further, as local brands cover some of the concerns shown by the participants (Participant 1) and value that can boost the position in the market.

6.2.2 Recommendation for Professionals

The study previously referred to the inclusion of several recommendations that would be beneficial for marketers to potentially increase purchases and brand loyalty among consumers in Ireland. Based on chapters two and four, it is suggested to include three main aspects in the strategies that have already been carried out by the local brands.

6.2.2.1 Focus on Storytelling

Carrying a piece of jewellery is a direct connection between consumer and tradition (Perez and Pompeu, 2021), giving way to the appreciation for their own culture (Participant 2). Storytelling is the easiest way to transmit their meaning through generations (Alla, 2021), not only increasing the word-of-mouth (Magdalena, 2020) but also purchasing intentions (Meng-Chuan, 2020). Unfortunately, during the study it was noticeable that not all the consumers were aware of the meanings, devaluing a value that can strongly connect with them (Alonso, 2024), suggesting that it is necessary to promote storytelling as a medium to connect emotionally (Magdalena, 2020). For instance, it is recommended to pay special attention to storytelling, as this improves brand image (Alla, 2021) and perception (Meng-Chuan, 2020), by transmitting the meaning through consumers.

6.2.2.2 Improvement on Social Media Presence

Referring to the age gap this study was based on, most of them have a constant interaction on social media, with them having mentioned that advertising is their main reference for trends and quality (Participant 5), which would lead to future purchases of the product (Haitham and Evrim, 2023). Conversely the effectiveness of the media, through publications or the use of influencers (Racine, 2021), consumers cannot recall an interaction between them and a local business, giving reference of global brands (Participant 2) finding a gap of opportunity to interact with their customers and reach more of the public, that in the same, way for their continuing contact, made it a perfect medium to implement storytelling (Alla, 2021).

6.2.2.3 Experience of Packaging

Similar to social media, packaging was a reference of global brands, described as part of the experience (Participant 7) and an activator of senses (Schmitt, Zarantonello and Brakus, 2009) which translate into feelings and subsequently attract consumers (Shahid et al., 2022). The experience perceived by the consumer exceeds their expectations (Participant 2), promoting trust, loyalty, and satisfaction (Kassim and Abdullah, 2010). However, as mentioned before, it is an experience that is related to global brands, giving them an advantage over the locals. Therefore, it is recommended to include an adaptation of packaging design in the strategies, to be consistent with the

nature of the jewellery design, to implement an integral emotional branding (Wong, 2024) and to try to evoke authentic sensations that would result in consumer engagement (Racine, 2021).

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 - Informed Consent

Participant Consent Form

Key Drivers of Local Brand Loyalty in Ireland. A study of the jewellery industry

Consent to take part in research

 I…… voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.

 I understand that even if I agree to participate now, I can withdraw at any time or refuse to answer any question without any consequences of any kind.

 I understand that I can withdraw permission to use data from my interview within two weeks after the interview, in which case the material will be deleted.

 I have had the purpose and nature of the study explained to me in writing and I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study.

 I understand that participation involves…[outline briefly in simple terms what participation in your research will involve].

 I understand that I will not benefit directly from participating in this research.

 I agree to my interview being audio-recorded.

 I understand that all information I provide for this study will be treated confidentially.

 I understand that in any report on the results of this research my identity will remain anonymous.

This will be done by changing my name and disguising any details of my interview which may reveal my identity or the identity of people I speak about.

 I understand that disguised extracts from my interview may be quoted in dissertation.

 I understand that if I inform the researcher that myself or someone else is at risk of harm they may have to report this to the relevant authorities - they will discuss this with me first but may be required to report with or without my permission.

 I understand that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be retained in a digital file until 30 July 2026.

 I understand that a transcript of my interview in which all identifying information has been removed will be retained for one year period.

 I understand that under freedom of information legalisation I am entitled to access the information I have provided at any time while it is in storage as specified above.

 I understand that I am free to contact any of the people involved in the research to seek further clarification and information.

Aracely Ramos Preciado
Master of Science in Marketing
National College of Ireland
x23411643@student.ncirl.ie

Signature of research participant

--- ---

Signature of participant Date

Signature of researcher

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

--- ---

Signature of researcher Date

Appendix 2 – Interview

- How old are you?
- Can you describe your cultural background?

Part 1. Cultural Influence and Consumer Perception

- When buying Jewellery, there any cultural aspect that influence in your decision?
- This symbolic or cultural characteristics influence in your satisfaction.
- How important is that the jewellery you buy have a cultural meaning?

Part 2. Impact of Previous Experiences on the Perception of Local / Global Brands

- Comparing local and global brands, how do you describe each one?
- Do you consider yourself familiar with local brands? If so, does this make you more likely to buy it?
- Thinking in previous experiences, does this influence in your trust?

Part 3. Quality and Emotional Connections

- Related with emotional connection, can you describe any time you feel emotional connected to a Jewellery brand?
- About Quality, what are the aspects you consider the most? Does it make you buy same brands, or it doesn't influence your decision?
- Theres any reason you stay with certain brand.

Part 4. Heritage and Storytelling

- Do you look or pay attention to the history or story behind a brand?
- Do you feel connected when a brand shared historical stories or cultural aspects?
- These aspects of storytelling and brand heritage influence in your loyalty?

Part 5. Mechanical, Functional, and Humanistic clues

- When you were a special piece of jewellery, how do feel? Do you feel it represents you or make you feel that you belong to a group?
- When we talk about perception, does the packaging, consumer service or general presentation affect it?

- In local and global brands, do you notice any difference in the way they present or sell their products?