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Applied Project
Submission

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Notes:

"INVESTIGATING THE CHALLENGES IN RETAINING BRAND LOYALTY IN THE FASHION SECTOR IN TODAY'S DIGITAL AGE"

Compiled by Meggie Teixeira Correa in part fulfilment of the
Degree of Bachelor of Arts (Honours) in Marketing Studies

Independent College Dublin

November 2022

**"INVESTIGATING THE CHALLENGES IN RETAINING BRAND LOYALTY
IN THE FASHION SECTOR IN TODAY'S DIGITAL AGE"**

Thesis Approved:

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Independent College Dublin

November 2022

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

SUMMARY

Research aim

This project aims to Investigating the challenges in retaining brand loyalty in the fashion sector in today's digital age, provide businesses new insights from over 100 consumers in Ireland as well as the perspective of marketing professionals about Brand Loyalty in the digital age. Uncovering several opportunities for businesses to boost relationships, increase customer lifetime value and reduce the chance of leaving.

Research objectives

➤ Understand consumer's purchasing attitudes in a virtual space.

➤ Study the role of customer relationship management in enhancing customer loyalty.

➤ Measuring the impact of social media marketing on brand loyalty.

➤ Understand business's challenges and how strategic brand thinking can help organisations become successful brands in a competitive market.

➤ What challenges do marketing professionals face in customer retention and in boosting Brand Loyalty?

The goals

➤ To explain my declaration with scientific justifications of how and why.

➤ To both disseminate and acquire knowledge while researching this interesting topic.

➤ I plan to conclude the applied project precisely and effectively before December 2022.

The challenges

It is a challenge to explore a thrilling and profound matter covering so much information in the field in such a short time. This research demands time, patience, self-discipline, goodwill, and strength to be focused on the topic.

1. INTRODUCTION

Customer loyalty is one factor that has been majorly shifting in recent times, mainly as a result of the impact of the digital age. Indeed, consumers facing various brand choices are more likely to buy from labels that demonstrate concern and provide excellent customer care. This phenomenon is explained due to consumers being introduced to new brands, and lifestyle changes were abundant. This aspect explains customer's expectations and why what they consider to be a satisfying user experience has shifted over time.

Brands are trying to find ways to build customer loyalty in these changing times and face a highly competitive market. Consumers nowadays do not buy only goods and services; most want to buy relationships, stories, and magic. Companies are challenged to build a strong brand that their customer identifies with and will choose the brand over similar products and services every time.

So many companies understand that promoting deeper consumer connections in the long term is the key to sustainable business success. In order to construct these relationships, brands should take a thoughtful and comprehensive approach to develop their consumer engagement process.

Customer engagement matters for organisations, especially online e-commerce, because success in the digital age is no longer solely defined by foot traffic and sales. As more customers become digital buyers, the success drives user lifetime value (LTV), consequently reducing customer purchase costs and developing capital-efficient company evolution. These are possible only when brands invest in personalised consumer engagement strategies.

This literature review summarises some topics to develop and compose a hypothesis around our perception of the matter. The overall idea is to comprehend how companies can increase brand loyalty with digital media support and what actions consumers expect from a company to maintain their engagement, primarily in the fashion sector.

Digital strategies have been used to achieve this relationship between customers and brands. The themes below aim to present this concept from the practical views and some features behind this process.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 BRANDING

Indeed, a powerful brand triggers an emotional reaction in the audience. To cause this reaction and stand out from various brands has been challenging for organisations facing a highly competitive market.

Keller, L. K. (2008) explains brand as a 'title, term, sign, logo, or design, or a mix of them intended to specify the goods and services of one seller or group of sellers and distinguish them from those of the competitor.

A brand is composed of the perceptions and feelings people have toward a company, and indeed facing a competitive market, organisations use branding strategies to influence consumers' perceptions concerning a particular company. The idea involves an emotional connection between the brand and the audience. According to Brassington, F., and Pettitt, S. (2006), branding is the ongoing method by which a customer's optimistic perception should be created of the product. Branding maintains individual identification, which benefits all parties involved in the exchange process and, at the same time, makes it easier to buy or sell products in the market.

Great companies, for example, Microsoft, Amazon, and Walt Disney, have made solid brands with so much efficiency, offering a high level of value and excellent consumer experience.

2.2 BRAND AWARENESS

Companies measure how well customers know and recognise a determined brand through brand awareness. According to Keller, L. K. (2008), brand awareness can be explained as brand recognition and recall performance. Brand awareness happens when individuals recognize or know the name of a brand.

If buyers know a brand, they probably will only consider it for purchase in some cases, impulse buying or some lower engagement classifications. In other words, increasing brand awareness reduces reliance on consumers to find a brand by chance because the brand will see them first.

Independently brand awareness is a spontaneous recollection of the brand name or product. With a line of categories, customers can use this approach to assess how the top-of-mind brand is to them. One example is when a brand is the first to be named unprompted by

someone, this fact is called "Top of mind." It can be defined as the expected state because individuals tend to identify the products they use, which is usually a powerful indicator of choice and performance.

2.3 BRAND PYRAMID MODEL

The brand pyramid framework is instrumental for companies entering a market for the first time. According to MindTools.com (2015), is composed of five critical phases, they are:

A. Presence – In this first step, the consumers are conscious of the brand and might have tested the product or service before. Nevertheless, they may not have an emotional affection towards it.

B. Relevance – In the second phase, the consumer expresses needs and desires for a given brand. In this stage, shoppers begin to compare the product cost between competitors, and this analysis helps to determine the value and benefits of buying the brand.

C. Performance – In this stage, the consumer begins comparing the brand with other competitive brands available in the market. The brands start to be associated with a specific identity by consumers.

D. Advantages – Consumers decide all the benefits of being associated with a distinct brand and display an emotional attachment toward it.

E. Bonding – Customers show a powerful bond with the brand in this step. The consumers are generally satisfied with the brand and then conduct additional muscular and emotional attachments, and it is possible to promote the brand to their counterparts, relatives, friends, etc.
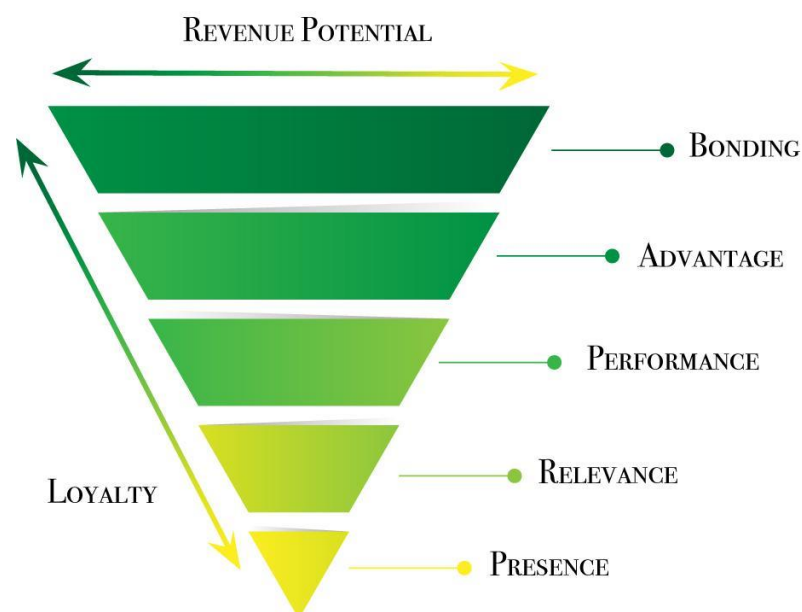
(Source: Brand Pyramid Model, MindTools.com, 2015)

2.4 BRAND LOYALTY

According to Harvard Business Review (2020), companies with high scores on brand loyalty grow revenues 2.5 times faster than industry peers. Building brand loyalty is a challenge, but at the same time, one of the most suitable ways to keep customers, attract new clients, and generate fans for an organisation for many years.

A. S. Dick and K. Basu (1994) designed a framework of brand loyalty based on comparable attitudes and reiterated patronage. The authors explain that mentality is used to evaluate a brand position on a continuum of favourability, so brand perspectives vary from high to low. Brand loyalty is when a consumer's level preference for a specific brand is higher than for others in a market. When consumers admire and have a potential appreciation for a brand, they don't need to be heavily marketed or convinced to buy a product or a service because they already feel connected to the brand and trust it more than competitors with similar offerings. Brand loyalty is the customer's dedication to a brand that pushes them always to purchase their products and services regardless of competition, convenience, or price.

Brand loyalty is different from customer loyalty. The first rests on your brand's image, and the second one talks about products and services to which someone is devoted. A dedicated audience renders gain. Aaker, D. A., and Joachimsthaler, E. (2000) describe brand equity as brand awareness, perceived quality, brand connection, and brand commitment. According to the authors, the heart of brand value is brand loyalty.

2.5 BRAND POSITIONING

According to Patel, S. (2022), brand positioning is positioning a brand in the customer's mind. It is not just a slogan or a fancy logo; brand positioning is a method an organisation uses to differentiate itself from competitors. In their book, Ries, A. and Trout, J (2001) state that companies are more focused on building products rather than brands. According to the authors, a product is something constructed in a factory. A brand is something made in mind. To be successful nowadays, organisations need to build brands, not products.

A brand's positioning requires an understanding of buyer's perceptions and an ability to identify direct competition. A brand can influence how much consumers are willing to spend their money on your product if adequately positioned.

Influential brand positioning occurs when a brand is considered bright, worthwhile, and believable according to the consumer's view.

2.6 MARKETING

The concept of Marketing has become essential to the Business performance of companies. A company has to be able to define the products or services that can captivate a target audience. The author Kotler, P., and Keller, K (2014) describes marketing as the science and art of exploring, creating, and delivering value to satisfy the needs of a target market at a profit. Word of mouth has always been a powerful source of marketing throughout the world. However, personalised marketing strategies nowadays elevate how marketing practice engages individual customers or prospective customers. According to Drucker, P. (1973), marketing aims to know and understand the consumer so well that the product or service suits him and sells itself… marketing aims to make selling superfluous. Johnson, M (1982) considers marketing as the process that assesses client necessities and satisfies them by creating an effectual demand for and then delivering the goods and services at a profit.

2.7 DIGITAL MARKETING

Digital Marketing is different from traditional marketing because it aims to promote an organization's image via the auxiliary of the internet. Digital marketing uses technologies to help marketing activities improve customer knowledge by matching their needs Chaffey, D. (2012). This phenomenon has become essential, and companies have become aware of the importance of digital marketing in developing their business. Introducing new technologies has created new business possibilities for marketers to control their websites and reach their business ideals Kiane, G. (1998) online advertising has become a powerful marketing vehicle for building brands and increasing traffic for corporations to grow Song, Y. (2001). Anticipations in terms of producing effects and calculating success for advertisement money spent digital marketing is more cost-efficient for measuring ROI on the advertisement Pepelnjak, J. (2008).

2.8 SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

According to Ducker, P. (2006) marketing aims to know and understand the customer so well the product or service fits him and sells itself. A marketing strategy is a plan for reaching a specific marketing-related goal (or goals) focused and achievable.

A digital marketing strategy is a plan for establishing an internet presence through online channels such as organic search, social media, paid ads, and other web-based mediums

such as your website. The goal of digital marketing strategies is to increase awareness about your business and attract new customers to your brand. Keller, L. (2009) suggested that communication can strengthen dimensions of brand equity such as brand awareness, customer loyalty towards brand.

2.9 CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT

One method to advance customer engagement is to enclose a Customer Relationship Management solution with consumer data to support and engage them with its products and services. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) is founded on the philosophy of using a variety of clients and marketing for relationship construction. Dowling, G. (2003) argued that developing a customer relationship is the best way to gain loyalty. A relationship with customers requires strong coordination between information technology (IT) and marketing departments to retain customers for a long time. Hence, in achieving CRM, many organizations use tools, technologies, and procedures to support customer relationships and enhance sales, Salesforce (2022) The importance of customer satisfaction cannot be denied, as happy customers are like free advertising for the company Homburg, C., Koschate, N. and Hoyer, W. (2005) It is argued that keeping existing consumers is more convenient than encountering new ones. Hence, organizations are setting strategies to ensure customer retention and changing their employees to be more customer-and service-oriented (0000).

2.10 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

According to Taylor (2012), the anticipations of customer services are currently over because customers desire more things from retail. They are looking for new products, colours, and layouts, which are more demanding, refined, and price liable. So many factors can influence consumer purchases. Ramanathan and Williams (2007) say that gender and personality characteristics can affect consumers' emotional reactions to advertisements.

Corporations use customer journey maps to better understand their customers' experience interacting with their brand. Comprehending what the client is experiencing during touchpoints with a brand can help companies identify pain points and improve the customer experience.

Leaders from Business consider customer experience is prominent to organizations competitiveness (McCall 2015)

Personalized marketing is an individual marketing tactic companies have adopted to control real-time customer data to improve engagement. To work individually with consumers

is necessary to understand the customer lifecycle process, which describes the various steps a consumer goes via before, during and after they complete a transaction. When customers become brand representatives, the company's upsell potential increases. New product features, releases, or only suggestions are also great ways to move consumers through the lifecycle. Brands can quickly turn first-time buyers into loyal customers as long as your messaging is consistent, relevant and in tune with their needs.

Each customer has a different relationship with brands, and it varies on a case-by-case basis, but basically, there are five stages of a customer lifecycle.

- ➢ Reach: This first step develops awareness right away from customers. Thus, all marketing material and content should be available in places, and all channels to consumers find out more about a brand.
- ➢ Acquire: Offering relevant content or messaging is the secret of this step. Companies need to show who they are and understand who their consumers are and what their needs are. Personalized communication and direct contact increase the likelihood of future conversions.
- ➢ Develop/nurture: After a purchase, organizations must keep in contact with the consumers and develop a relationship with them, ensuring they're delighted with their initial transaction.
- ➢ Retention: Companies who keep sending relevant and meaningful messages have chances that make them return and purchase again.
- ➢ Conducting customer feedback analysis is key to finding actionable insights that lead to stronger customer relationships.
- ➢ Advocacy: Once the retention phase of the lifecycle is achieved, the customer has no problem recommending the product or service to friends and family.

3. METHODOLOGY

This study will be based on an exploratory analysis founded on helping to comprehend a problem based on its nature. The project will be intended to Investigate the challenges in retaining brand loyalty in the fashion sector in today's digital age. It is founded on a phenomenological reflection because it involves the study of a phenomenon. The methodology is a mixed method, qualitative and quantitative, in which the data collection method will consist of interviews and a survey. The survey will be applied to people who buy products and services online in Ireland to understand their point of view concerning the influence of a Brand in their purchase decision process. The interview will be applied to Marketing Professionals to comprehend their perspective on how social media marketing has been influencing companies in Brand Loyalty growth.

Mixed Method - The methodology that will be used in this study is a mixed method, qualitative and quantitative. The quantitative method sample used is consumers who live in Ireland, with a sample of 109 respondents using problem-solving techniques. The survey process to obtain primary data sources is in the form of direct answers from questionnaires conducted via google forms, including sixteen open-ended questions together with multiple choice questions, added in appendix 01. The qualitative method was done through interviews with three marketing professionals who have a career working with Brand Loyalty, added in appendix 02. The interview consists of five open questions asked by the interviewer.

This chapter will describe the methods and stages observed to collect the data required for the primary research. The chapter goal will present the research design used to carry out this research successfully. The research design is divided into different categories: research philosophy, research approach, research strategy, a sample of respondents (sampling of the target people, sample size, and procedure used to gather the primary data), data compilation methods and practices, and data examination procedures. Ultimately, this chapter will examine the dependability and validity of the research criteria. To add information and auxiliary to the study, the researcher will conduct a secondary interview to gain the Marketing professional's perspective on the influence of Brand Loyalty facing a competitive market and how companies have been managing their digital media strategies to increase Branding Loyalty.

3.1 Research Process - Survey

3.2　　Pilot Results

The first version of the survey was made in Google Forms and sent to six people to evaluate the questions and correct the mistakes that would have destroyed the general data-gathering technique. The idea was to obtain the data and measure how much time the participants would spend filling out the forms. The pilot survey was an effective data collection method to measure the validity of the research process because the researcher identified mistakes and made several changes to the questions after the pilot collected the results.

As anticipated, the pilot highlighted the corrections or adjustments that must be made in the questionnaire. Two questions were modified, one was deleted, and three were added to focus the research questions. The choice of an online platform was essential to secure agility and precision in the data collection process. It served to reduce or even eliminate human failure in data compilation. One of the pilot's significant outcomes was the education level of participants, and it was clear that only some of the questions were appropriate for the interviewees.

3.3　　Hypothesis

This survey was elaborated on and founded on four main Hypotheses:
- ➢ People are entirely unaware of what is influencing them when they make a decision
- ➢ Digital Media Channels are tools that influence and encourage people to buy online
- ➢ Consumers are loyal to brands that give them a significant experience

The questionnaire was created based on the following hypotheses, which simplified and re-structured written language to reach a sample of people from different backgrounds or levels of knowledge. Indeed, this research identifies that people are unwilling to spend time responding to questions, especially when it does not give them financial returns, even if it offers something, such as awareness. So, the researcher created a straightforward and relatable questionnaire to get a basic level of engagement the interviewees.

3.4　　Questionnaire form

The questionnaire was developed and divided into three categories. Each question was for the purpose of collecting data to explore the research question. The questions were mainly designed to examine consumers' purchasing decisions, explore their awareness of popular

digital media channels, and understand their perspectives on the topic of Brand Loyalty. The method used to gather information was qualitative, with fifteen closed questions and one open question in the questionnaire.

Firstly, the research philosophy is explained, and then the research approach, strategy, sampling respondents, analysis ethics, data collection tools, data investigation procedures, and, ultimately, the methodology limits are revealed. Underneath each heading, the logic and benefits of selecting the particular research method are explained.

3.5   Ethical Considerations

An invitation was sent to the interviewees to be part of this project by answering the survey questions. The first step was the pilot; some friends, the applied project supervisor, and some classmates kindly answered the questions. The final questionnaire was sent to individuals via WhatsApp, and I requested that the recipients transmit the link to their friends and acquaintances, creating a chain of contributors. The entire survey was done according to the conscious consent (Consent form is reported in attachments pg. 00) of the sample interviewed, and all the participants had the option to not respond to the survey and not pass on the questionnaire.

The survey did not request participants' personal information, so this process was anonymised. This approach was sufficient to track and recognize any individuals interviewed (the most confidential questions were associated with the participant's demographics and entailed age categorisation). The entire questionnaire is related to their view concerning the discussed issue. All data collected will be used expressly to complete the Applied Project, and all data is stored digitally where the investigator is the only person to access the information.

3.6   Approach Ontology

In ontology, an inductive technique is the straightforward approach when employing qualitative or mixed methods. One of the survey questions was in open form and offered the sample the possibility to respond to the question according to their point of view concerning the issue and lived experiences. The researcher's vision was to understand the topic through the lens of the sample, especially in light of the belief that the world may be comprised of multiple realities.

3.7 Research Process – Interviews

Two interviews were conducted in this study with two professionals in Marketing to comprehend their perspectives and opinions on the challenges and opportunities of companies with brand engagement, specifically in the digital field. The methodology was inductive, with in-depth insight into the interviewer's life experiences. Each of them had a moment of conversation with the researcher by phone and email. The two interviews were executed from 31/10/2022 to 15/11/2022.

4. EMPIRICAL FINDINGS, ANALISYS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Analysis of Questionnaire (Quantitative Research)

To collect data to complete the research requirement, quantitative research was performed in the form of a questionnaire with 15 closed questions and one open question. The Google Forms tool was chosen because it is a popular and easy-to-use research tool. Out of all the questionnaires sent out and collected over different locations, overall, 109 questionnaires were fully completed, and the data were collected via Email, WhatsApp, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

The researcher's main goal through the questionnaire survey was to investigate the consumer's behaviour concerning brand loyalty in the digital field, considering various dimensions of brand management on different age groups around Ireland. The survey Questionnaire was mainly focused on participants between the ages of 18 and 60+.

The survey had a total of 109 participants. Among them, 57 were female, (48.6 percent) of the survey population, 51 were male (51.4 percent of the total survey population), and one person chose the option: "preferred not to say". Thirty-one participants (28.4 percent) are included in the age group between 31-35, the highest age category in the survey, while 25 participants (22.9 percent) are between 36-40. Then 19 respondents (17.4 percent) considered between 26-30, and 19 (17.4 percent) weighed between 41-59. Furthermore, 1 participant (0.9 percent) falls in the age group 60+age group.

To analyse the last two questions, we will use the Net Promoter Score or NPS method, which first came into existence in 2003. NPS helps an organisation to differentiate its market space between three categories of consumers, as follows: (1) Promoters – who will promote the brand, (2) Passives – who do like the product but may or 41 may not promote the brand and can easily switch to a competitor and (3) Detractors – who will never be brand loyal as they are the unhappy consumers who may portray a negative image of the brand (Grisaffe, 2007). Nearly all the respondents in this survey were favourably educated and from diverse professional experiences, including also multiple undergraduate students who also took part in the survey.

The pictograms downward support a better understanding of the discoveries.

Question 4

**What product category do you usually buy online?**
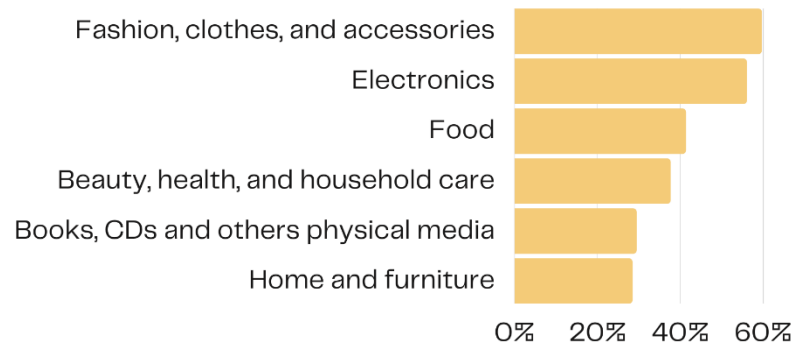
Brand Loyalty has been changing in a dramatically different world in recent times. The pandemic - COVID 22 disrupted many industries and left businesses running to adjust to shifting customer necessities. Some sectors found an opportunity in the vulnerable market to increase branding, mainly in the digital area. Online sales are a rapidly expanding element for multiple businesses. Nevertheless, the survey results prove that only some industries utilise e-commerce as much as the fashion industry. Online sales are a rapidly expanding element for multiple businesses. Nevertheless, the survey results prove that fashion e-commerce has been utilised as much as other industries. Nearly six out of ten consumers in our survey said they are more likely to buy online Fashion, clothes, and accessories product categories, while with (65 respondents), and younger generations are even more likely.

According to the survey participants, the category they most by-product is Fashion. How fashion e-commerce brands operate nowadays has constantly been evolving and exciting. New technologies have been introduced in the making purchase process and making the industry trend very highly, for example, the return of goods and services, where consumers can receive clothes and by a determined deadline can return if it does not suit them. Some aspects have been boosting the fashion sector as digital innovation, increasing globalization, and shifts in consumer spending habits have impacted the fashion industry amid seismic changes.

The integration of digital channels is gaining power in the fashion industry, and with it comes challenges and in the same solutions. This new technology has helped brands enrich their customers' shopping experiences because they have started offering more creative content and strategies focusing on satisfying experiences.

Question 5

How often do you buy products online?

Never
0.9%

Rarely
12.8%

Sometimes
46.8%

Very Often
33.9%
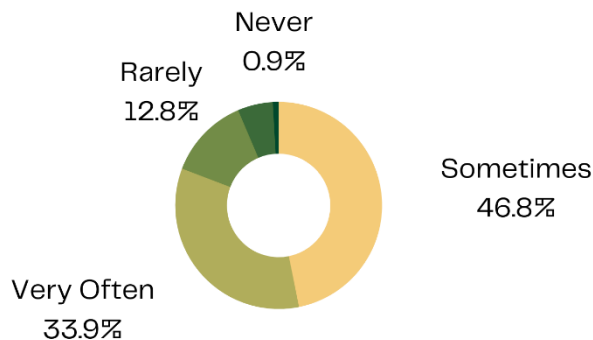
Purchase frequency refers to the number of times an individual buyer purchases within an exact period. It is considered a crucial component of sales forecasting, but diverse business industries and sectors will have variable rates of acquisition frequency. This data is essential for companies to understand consumer behaviour and adapt their strategies according to the target market, for example, how many new customers become return buyers and which new consumers can be prospective.

This statistic presents the online shopping frequency according to the results of this survey with 46.8% making purchases sometimes, while 33.9% very often. A total of 12.8% said they rarely buy products online.

Question Purpose and Findings

▪ Purpose: Knowing the frequency with which people buy goods in online shopping is essential to comprehend better customer routines.

▪ Findings: Online shopping will remain dominant, with 80% of 18-59-year-old consumers nowadays claiming they do online shopping.

Question 6

**What do you look for when choosing online products?**
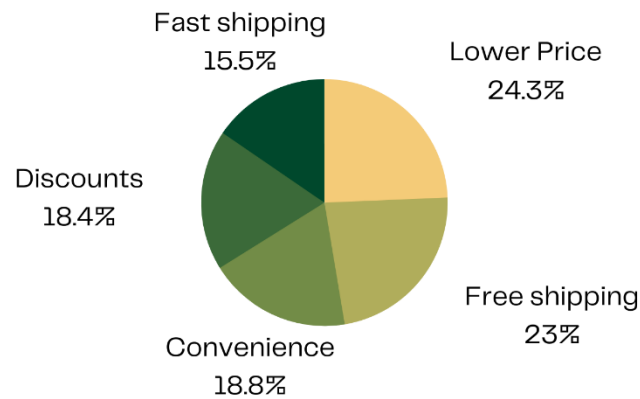
Indeed, the lower price enables new products and services to infiltrate the market and draw consumers away from the competition, even though people are looking for more than low prices. 24.3% of respondents said they are looking for lower prices when choosing online products. This result proves that customer benefits are a factor in customer loyalty, as discounts, lower costs, and faster and more accessible service are good strategic actions for companies to use to attract prospective new leads.

Question Purpose and Findings

▪ Purpose: This question strives to find out what consumers see when buying online.
▪ Findings: Low Price is the #1 factor maintaining customers loyal to their favoured brands. A number of 24.3% of the consumer respondents tended to get attracted to commodities with low price tags. Free shipping is also a great strategy to grow the popularity of online shopping because it expands conversion rates. Delivering easy pricing systems is a competitive advantage.

Question 7

**How do you typically find out about brands in this product category?**
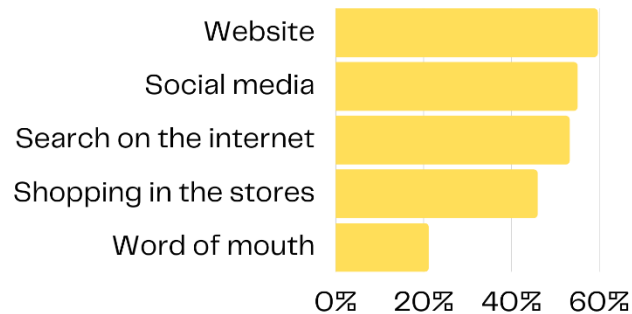
Shopper research is key to better understanding the customer journey from initial channel search to website visit to purchase. When asked how they channel, they typically discover brands and products online, respondents were given a choice to choose more than one source. However, of the 59.6 (percent) who selected the answer website. 55% said they do so through social media (such as Instagram and Facebook), The amount of 53.2% prefer to "search on the internet" to find out about their favourite brands. Shopping in the store is another option with 45.9%. Mailed advertising represented only 1.8%. This order of choice instantly reflects our general findings, even when more than one answer was selected. The primary channel outcome, customers prefer to search about their brands, is valuable because retailers need to sell their brand and make it count.

Question Purpose and Findings

▪ Purpose: After understanding the main categories under which the participants buy products, this question seeks to understand through which routes and channels they most efficiently gain knowledge about the brands.
▪ Findings: Websites, social media, and Searching on the internet are the information channels through which consumers find their brand's favourite categories of products and services.

Question 10

How many Brands are you loyal to?
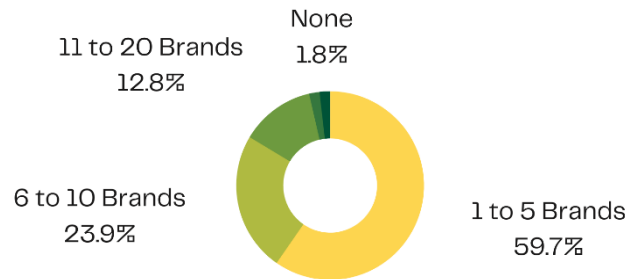
Brand loyalty is something compelling. Consumers can shop for their favourite brands for years and sometimes even for life, which does not mean that trademarks can get complacent. Misleading messaging and inadequate customer service can turn away even considerably devoted clients. When evaluating the consumer's influence on brands' faithfulness, the below pie chart shows that most of the participants (with 59.6%) said they are loyal to 1 to 5 brands, while 23.9% are devoted to 6 to 10 brands.

Question Purpose and Findings

▪ Purpose: Investigate the participant's level concerning brand loyalty.

▪ Findings: 59.6% of all survey respondents feel loyalty toward at least one to five brands or companies.

Question 11

**Are you more inclined to be loyal to a brand whose values align with yours?**

80.7%

It might seem obvious that customers who have had a bad experience with a brand are unlikely to be faithful to it. Some essential factors contribute to or impact on a person's decision to become a loyal customer. Still, interestingly one of these factors is values. It can make a difference and be attractive for consumers who identify with the values of the company and may cause them to be more than simply mere consumers but become loyal consumers. A business's brand values are the core guiding principles that shape every aspect We can understand that good customer experiences instantly impact consumer fidelity, so companies must be clear about their brand values and determine their brand's identity, message, and personality. Because investing in and knowing brand values is an important step to show that the business remains unique in a saturated market.

Question Purpose and Findings

▪ Purpose: Investigate if the values of a company can influence consumers' brand loyalty.

▪ Findings: Consumers still view Loyalty programs as a great option to keep loyal to a brand, with 32.1% saying that companies should find new ways to reward loyal customers and 22.9% declaring being a member encourages them to spend more with the company.

Question 12

## Which factors make you loyal to a brand?
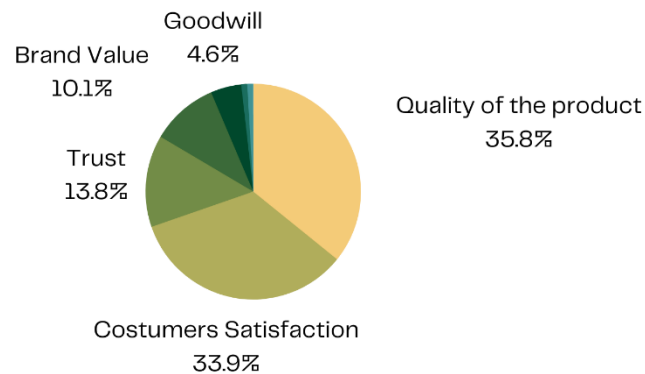
Brand loyalty is when a consumer gets favourable experiences with a product or service, and this factor results in repetition buys over time. Excellent customer experience, High-quality products, pleasurable customer service, and transferred values are all essential aspects that affect brand loyalty. Consumers are far from being loyal to the brand, most only by the price aspect as in previous years, with 35.8% of consumers saying they purchased products from brands that offer higher quality products and services. Additionally, they selected Customer satisfaction with 33.9% as a significant factor that makes relevance to them being loyal to a brand. Only 13.8% of consumers consider trust to be an important factor for them to be brand loyal.

Question Purpose and Findings

▪ Purpose: Understanding which aspects of a Brand becomes most interesting and influences consumers to be loyal to a trademark.

▪ Findings: Product quality is the top factor in retaining customers dedicated to their favourite brands. Some consumers in the past years were only influenced by the price aspect, but currently, they have been changing their minds in relation to previous years. 53.2% of consumers said in this survey that they prefer to purchase products from brands that offer higher quality products and services. Additionally, they selected Customer satisfaction as a significant factor that is relevant to them being loyal to a brand.

Question 14

### What do you think about Loyalty Programs?
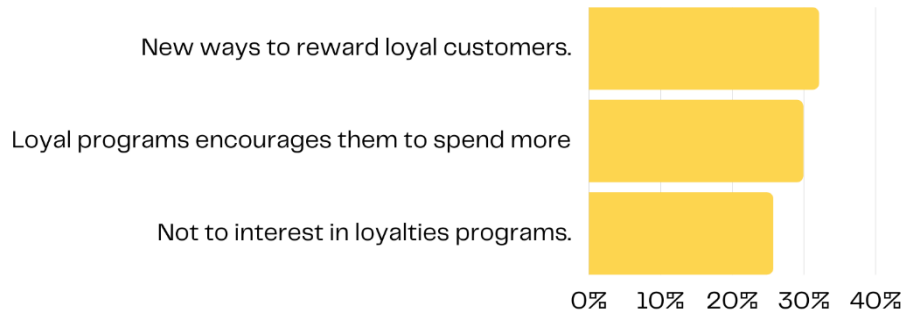
An efficient marketing approach that businesses use to build up their customer base is a customer loyalty program that rewards and recognizes customers who buy or engage with a brand repeatedly. Consumers still view Loyalty programs as a great option to keep loyal to a brand, with 32.1% saying that companies should find new ways to reward loyal customers and 22.9% declaring that being a member encourages them to spend more with the company.

Question Purpose and Findings

▪ Purpose: To investigate the consumer's perspective on a Loyalty Rewards Program.

▪ Findings: 32.1% of customers say companies should find new ways to reward loyal customers, and they believe earning rewards and loyalty points is one strategy that adds value to the shopping experience.

Question 16

How likely are you to recommend this brand to a friend or colleague?
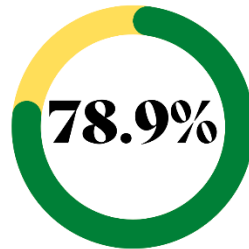
Word of mouth is one of a brand's most influential and cheapest marketing tools to attract new customers and increase Brand Loyalty, regardless of how the digital world advances.

Getting a suggestion from being referred by a friend is a great option, mainly with so many great small businesses competing for awareness. A referral from a delighted customer can set companies apart and in front of competitors. Based on the understanding of the Net Promoter Score (NPS), out of the 109 participants, 78.9% (86 participants) are likely to recommend brands to their near and dear ones.

Question Purpose and Findings

▪ Purpose: This question was designed to capture customers' ability to recommend a company to others.

▪ Findings: Over 75% of respondents are more likely to suggest a brand they like to people.

The researcher aims to analyse which Brands have been developing their brand loyalty and why consumers are their fans. A total of 68 participants answered this specific question.

Question 15

What is your favourite brand?

1. Apple	2. Adidas	3. Zara
Zara	Shein	Puma
Adidas	Nike	Dunnes Store
Dell	Sansung	Northface

Why you admire your favourite brand?

High Quality Products	Convenience	Customer Service
Post sale after sales	Better and Fair price	Style
Excelent return	Satisfaction Policy	Good Vouchers
Free Shiping	Safe and Security	Product Style

Apple is the top brand loyalty company in the survey. People who buy Apple products tend to continue to buy Apple products, and there are many reasons for this: Image is a key driver for the company. Apple's products are firmly established as high-quality, up-and-coming products that are clearly one step ahead of the competition.

4.2 Analysis of Interviews (Qualitative Research)

The author of this project conducted two interviews with brand strategies marketing professionals. The interview consisted of five questions focused on Brand Loyalty strategies, strategies to retain consumers, and customer engagement.

Interview with Lucas Cantao, Brand & Communications at Facebook, with 12 years of experience in brand management roles.

- The critical challenge to keeping consumers loyal is creating a real connection between the company and the brand.
- Companies are deciding to start storytelling strategy marketing, using a narrative to communicate a message.
- Understanding the consumer's journey along the way is essential because there are many options in the digital world.
- One of the factors that can help companies create connections with their customers is inbound marketing, in other words, a personalised strategy, offering great content.
- CRM is fundamental to a company's analysis and understanding of consumer journeys and expectations.

Interview with Rachael McKenna, Brand & Communications Manager, Woodies, with 7 years of experience in brand management roles.

- Customers have many more choices and can easily access info in the digital age. For example, more retailers like Amazon.
- Companies have been investing in innovative business models to deliver a new experience.
- When customers engage with your brand, you are higher on their consideration set. They will think of you first! Example: Voucher Dunnes (€10 off voucher is only valid for a limited time).

- In terms of brand, a customer must be aware of the brand, and the company needs to tell a story that shoppers will remember and engage with.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

The moderated analysis showed that Digital Media has a statistically significant effect on brand loyalty. In contrast, the traditional marketing effect was not statistically significant. ECommerce has played an essential role in the fashion and apparel industry, and the industry is one of the top preferences for customers to buy products.

It is not possible to determine or measure whether the quality product versus price influences the customer decision-making process because the sample was only with 109 people, but definitely price and quality of the product affect them. This study further strengthens that a personalised marketing strategy currently affects brand loyalty, and customers begin to decide on a brand that matches their values and beliefs.

The aim of marketing is Brand loyalty, which is a challenging task to achieve. A company should try and manufacture a product that satisfies a customer's needs and wants. It should be a perfect product with high quality, and currently, only an ideal product can make customers more and more loyal hence achieving the goal of Brand loyalty.

Loyal customers are sure to repeat product purchase in the long run. Customer loyalty, therefore, impacts an organisation's profitability. In addition, factors affecting customer loyalty include:

- The quality of services or products provided.
- The corporate image of the organization.
- Customer satisfaction.

Another critical aspect of consumer devotion is that it can be used to segment any market. In other words, the market can be divided into groups according to the customer loyalty classification. Customers are looking for more than buying a product or service, they search for good experiences, and the brands that make them feel special have the chance to become loyal customers.

Recommendation

To win in this era, especially in e-marketplaces, brands and retailers must take a hard look at factors that drive consumers to purchase, paying close attention to quality products or services, personalisation, convenience, and value.

- **Memberships Influence Shopper Loyalty**: Discounts, convenient shipping benefits, and a wealth of additional features have steadily been adopted and have welcomed loyalty memberships.

- **Personalised ads:** This practice communicates directly with consumers through the website, google searches, and social media. It offers relevant recommendations to consumers to attract them to discover more about the products and services of a brand because dynamic ads encourage users to return and make additional purchases.

- **Customer Service and Quality Product drives Shopper Retention** - The "New" Customer Experience and Expectations Moving Forward. Good experiences provide good customers by providing streamlined processes and quickly addressing any issues that may come up.

- **Creating a solid connection with Customers:** Companies should invest in a Storytelling strategy as a way for you to share the most important values with current and prospective customers. Inbound marketing is complementary to personalising all the content from the company to consumers.

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