FASHION & LOYALTY: AN ANALYSIS OF CONSUMER LOYALTY IN THE CLOTHING INDUSTRY

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Signed Statement

This dissertation is submitted in fulfilment with part of the requirements for the BA (Hons) Business and Management with Marketing at Cardiff Metropolitan University. I declare that this dissertation has not already been accepted in substance for any degree and is not concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree. Where not otherwise stated through the use of referencing, this data is the result of my own independent research.

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Abstract

Competition amongst firms is intense within the fashion industry, with more options for the consumer than ever before. Firms are altering their brand strategies to adopt and manage this increase in competition with an apparent increase in effort to form a connection between brand and consumer. Cultivating a brand loyalty is more important than ever for fashion firms, to ensure that their brand has a stable sales basis and a positive image. There is a suggestion however that loyalty may be dissipating. With the emergence of fast-fashion brands who offer similar styles to more expensive brands but at a more affordable prices, it can be deemed that it is no longer enough to offer just a high quality product but to offer intangible benefits to the consumer such as an identification with the brands personality. This dissertation attempts to understand the reasons for brand loyalty or lack of brand loyalty amongst millennial consumers in this sector. Millennials are frequent consumers of clothing products, therefore attempting to understand their consumption activities is of real benefit to fashion firms. The first objective of this research is to identify the key brand characteristics which can spark brand loyalty. The second is to assess the effect a downgrading strategy can have on a fashion brands image and loyalty. Thirdly this dissertation aims to assess the view that loyalty is difficult to cultivate for brands operating in a fast-fashion system. An online survey was utilised to collect both quantitative and qualitative data from 43 respondents in the millennial age bracket in a mixed method approach. The research indicated that product quality above all else is the key to ensure that millennial consumers repurchase from brands. Based on results, fast-fashion brands do benefit from a behavioural loyalty of repeat purchases but appreciation of these brands is mostly associated with affordability rather than a deep attachment to the brand. Results also indicate that if the mass luxury brand maintains a high level of perceived product quality, there will be less severe dilution of brand image and loyalty when increasing accessibility.
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Abbreviations

WOM- Word of mouth

Respondent Answers
SA- Strongly Agree
AG- Agree
SWA- Somewhat Agree
NA- Neither agree nor disagree
SWD- Somewhat disagree
D- Disagree
SD- Strongly Disagree
CHAPTER 1: Introduction

1.0 Background

Vast technological advancements and the globalisation of the fashion industry has given customers more brand choices than ever to choose from, leading to intense competition amongst the many firms in the market (Bhardwaj & Fairhurst, 2010). In the luxury fashion market particularly, firms are adapting their branding focus towards creating an “emotional attachment” between the brand and the customer in an attempt to create a growing brand loyalty (Cailleux et al, 2009). In the past firms have relied upon customers purchasing their products as a way of demonstrating their social status (Peng et al, 2011). However, with numerous brand’s almost becoming grouped by customers in terms of their perceived quality, firms are looking to differentiate their brands identity away from competitors in order to attract customers.

With the emergence of fast-fashion brands who offer styles similar to more expensive brands but at more affordable prices (Cachon & Swinney, 2011), there is an apparent threat to luxury brands. As a result of this, many fashion brands have adopted a downgrading strategy in order to reach a larger number of consumers through an increase in accessibility (Truong et al, 2009; Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012; Hennigs et al, 2013). There is a concern however that the downgrading strategy can have a negative effect on brand image and brand loyalty (Kim & Lavack, 1996; Hennigs et al, 2013), with Okonkwo (2007) stating that downgrading threatens the characteristics of luxury brands.

1.1 Aim

The aim of this dissertation is to gain an enhanced understanding of brand loyalty amongst consumer’s aged 18-34 in the clothing retailing sector. This dissertation will aim to create suggestions and recommendations based on the results collected.
1.3 Objectives

In order to answer the stated research aim, the researcher has set three objectives. These are:

1. To assess the extent that consumers in the millennial age bracket remain loyal to fashion brands and to understand the reasons for this loyalty or lack of loyalty.

2. To establish the general position that brands deemed as “mass luxury” hold, in comparison to traditional luxury prestige brands.

3. To assess the general view consumers hold on brands that operate in a “fast-fashion” system and whether there is substance to the claim that loyalty is difficult to cultivate in this market.

Key terms: brand, branding, brand loyalty, mass luxury, luxury, fast-fashion.

1.4 Key Terms

The fashion industry is often used to characterise not only clothing, footwear and accessories; but also the textile industry (home furnishings & fabrics). Despite previous literature often coining both clothing and textiles as one industry (Hines & Bruce, 2007), when referring to the term fashion, this dissertation is solely focused on the clothing industry. As Black (2008 p.11) states; it is no longer a requirement to differentiate the terms ‘fashion’ and ‘clothing’. In today’s society, most consumers have more clothes than they need, purchasing to “refresh their wardrobes” rather than for function and necessity. With the term fashion based on wants and the term clothing traditionally associated with needs, it is relevant to state that this dissertation encompasses the terms clothing and apparel within the term fashion, and fashion within the terms clothing and apparel.

Defining the “Brand”

Despite the clear presence of brands throughout business, defining a brand exactly is a near impossible task due to numerous conflicting assumptions and ideas from various theorists in the field. The American Marketing Association (AMA) offer a broad definition of a brand
being a name, term, sign, symbol or design, or a combination of these items. Furthermore, both Aaker (2009) and Kapferer (2012) state that from a basic legal viewpoint, a brand is nothing more than a set of signs that make it possible for a business to differentiate its product from that of a competitor, and to certify product origin. However, De Chernatony (2009) argues that both the AMA broad definition and the most basic legal viewpoint are too similar to the definition of a trademark which is defined as a symbol, logo, sign or term legally established to a company and/or product. This basic explanation of a brand seemingly only takes into account the tangible aspects that differentiate a brand rather than the intangible, symbolic aspects that Kotler & Keller (2011) claim are synonymous with what a brand represents.

As Keller (2008) states, a brand is more than just a name or logo that helps consumers to identify a product amongst others, to an extent a brand can provide a product with a personality, which can increase the perceived value and trustworthiness of the product. With these intangible aspects in mind, De Chernatony (2009) defines a brand as a set of values that enables a promise to be made about a unique and welcomed experience. The phrase “unique” is also apparent in Kapferer’s (2012 p.12) definition, stating that the brand should be understood as a “commitment to a unique set of values” in the products, services and behaviour which “make the organisation or product stand out”. With an emphasis on the term “unique” apparent amongst numerous definitions, and a general consensus amongst theorists that a brand has a set of associations that an individual ensures with a name and product (Tybout & Calkins, 2005); this dissertation will use the following definition when referring to the term “brand” or “branding”:

“A distinct set of values and associations that ensures to the consumer a unique experience with a product or service.”

1.5 Summary
This chapter has outlined the aim and objectives of this dissertation whilst giving a brief background into the subject area. Chapter two will review the literature that is currently available on brand loyalty in a fashion context.
CHAPTER 2: Literature Review

2.0 Introduction

This chapter will outline the key literature and theory surrounding brand loyalty in a fashion context in an attempt to identify any gaps in knowledge that the research will attempt to fill.

2.1 Brand Equity & Brand Loyalty

Kotler (2008) describes brand equity in its most basic form as the added value or liability that is given to a product or service stemming from an association with the brand. Aaker (2009) identifies five categories of brand equity, these are brand loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality, brand association and other proprietary brand assets. Of the five categories listed by Aaker, brand loyalty can be said to be the most beneficial to firms. Kotler & Keller (2011) suggest that brand loyalty benefits firms by not only providing a predictability and security in demand but by also making it more difficult for other firms to enter the market. Aaker (2009) furthermore indicates the importance of brand loyalty to brand equity, claiming that a small yet intense loyal customer basis can have a significantly positive effect on brand equity.

Emotional Attachment & Brand Communities

Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000) claim that brand loyalty needs to be based on the unique characteristics that the brand offers, an identification with these unique characteristics leads to a deep relationship with the consumer and loyalty that is more thorough. Thomson et al (2005) terms this deep relationship and identification with a brand’s unique characteristics, as an emotional attachment. As interactions with the brand become increasingly positive for the consumer, Thomson et al claim that loyalty increases and consumers can adopt a form of emotional attachment towards the brand. Cailleux et al (2009) claims that fashion firms, especially those who sell at high prices; are looking to shift their branding focus away from a more traditional purchase for status strategy, and are moving into an effort of building an emotional attachment for the consumer as they feel this can create a loyalty that lasts longer. Utilising Keller’s (2013) customer based brand equity model (see figure 1), those who have an emotional attachment to a brand are placed at the top of the pyramid, in the
“Resonance” stage. Consumers in this stage have an intense and active loyalty towards the brand and will engage in activities such as social media interaction, as they feel a sense of attachment to the brand and the identity it portrays (Thomson et al, 2005). The mentioned attachment to the identity a brand portrays is where, according to much theory; fashion brands can cultivate a loyal following through marketing activities.

Figure 1: The customer based brand equity model (Keller, 2013)

Batra et al (2012) states that as favourable opinions toward a brand increases, a brand love may occur to the consumer. But, why does this benefit the brand? Firstly, Batra et al identifies an increased willingness to invest as one of the ten major components of brand love. Kotler & Keller (2011) claim that consumers are often willing to spend 25% more on a product from a brand they are loyal towards than they would on a product from a competing brand.

A loyal following of a brand or an appreciation of a brand’s values and imagery allows communities to form around a brand (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001; McAlexander et al, 2002). Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000) state that not only do loyal and committed customers provide a stable sales base but they also influence others through positive word-of-mouth (WOM) and defending any shortcomings of the brand. Brand communities are beneficial as they consist of consumers who are willing to spend on the brand, whilst also increasing awareness of new products and creating this stated positive WOM.
False Loyalty

Despite the focus firms place on brand loyalty and the benefits associated with it, theorists such as Dawes et al (2015) argue that brand loyalty may be dissipating. One reason put forward for this is the inability for brands, especially those operating on a large scale; to cater for consumers individual differences. Dawes et al claim that the modern day consumer has more choice and is more dismissing of brands, seeking the best experience rather than sticking to what they know.

Knox & Walker (2001) suggests that even consumers who appear to show a commitment to a certain brand will purchase from others occasionally. Furthermore, due to the many competing brands in the clothing industry and the nature of trends changing on a constant basis (Black, 2008), consumers are likely to be loyal to multiple brands. Multi-brand loyalty relates to the when a consumer is supposedly loyal to multiple brands within a product category. Bandyopadhyay & Martell (2007 p. 39) term consumers who are loyal to and repurchase from numerous brands within the same product category as “multiple users”. However, Oliver (1999) states that although loyal customers may purchase from other brands from time to time; they are less likely to switch brands as often as a non-loyal customer and are less susceptible to competing brands marketing activities. Additionally, when a consumer is loyal and identifies with a brand as part of their own actual self-concept; Kotler & Keller (2011) identify that he/she are unlikely to change opinion on this brand and are therefore unwilling to consider alternatives. Nonetheless, with the many competing clothing brands, offering different products for different needs, it is likely that a consumer would purchase from competing brands at some point. Kotler & Keller’s interpretation of the consumer’s self-concept suggests that consumers may not consider cheaper alternatives to their favourite fashion brands. However, with high-street brands; such as Zara, being majorly successful; which appear to offer styles similar to luxury fashion retailers, there is real evidence to suggest that consumers will consider cheaper alternatives in the fashion market. So whilst consumers, may be loyal to a brand’s identity and the image that it portrays, they may not translate this loyalty into an actual purchase which can profit the firm; but rather go with cheaper alternatives more often than not when it comes to the point of purchase.

Behavioural and Attitudinal Loyalty

From a basic measurement of brand loyalty in relation to repeat purchase behaviour (Oliver, 1999; Sharp et al, 2002), a more profound view on brand loyalty has arose, viewing loyalty as
not only a behavioural aspect, but also an attitudinal aspect (Jacoby & Kleyner, 1973; Dick & Basu, 1994; Bennet & Rundle-Thiele, 2002; Bandyopadhyay & Martell, 2007; Cheng, 2011). More recently developed from Bandyopadhyay & Martell (2007), attitudinal loyalty refers to consumers who resonate with the brand due to the favourable attributes for which the brand is associated with. While Keller (2013) identifies the benefits toward a brand when a consumer resonates with it e.g. engaging in brands activities and spreading positive WOM; there are possible negatives related to attitudinal loyalty. Whilst those who demonstrate attitudinal loyalty are admirers of the brand and do benefit the brand through increasing awareness, Cheng (2011) identifies that if the attitudinal loyal customer is not also behaviourally loyal (repurchase frequently); they actually benefit very little to the business in terms of revenue. Furthermore, Cova & Cova’s (2002) study on “consumer tribes” suggest that tribes (brand communities) form around an emotional aspect; for instance a brand’s image and the lifestyle associated with this image, rather than a rational or tangible aspect which in this case can be related to the actual physical purchase of a product. It can be argued therefore that consumers wish to purchase into the lifestyle of the brand but may do this through other ways than purchasing the brands products e.g. being active in online brand communities (Adjei et al, 2010). However, although there are seemingly more financial benefits associated with behaviourally loyal consumers, they benefit little else to the brand in terms of promotion and can be lost easily. Whilst behaviourally loyal consumers may repurchase more frequently, they are more likely to switch brands commonly and be more susceptible to marketing activities. They are also more likely to spread negative WOM if they are unsatisfied with a brand’s product (Cheng, 2011).

2. 2 Exclusivity & Loyalty- Luxury for the Masses?

Luxury fashion brands

In the luxury fashion market particularly, firms have relied heavily upon customers purchasing their products as a way of demonstrating their social status (Peng et al, 2011). This social status is demonstrated through the exclusivity of certain brands. But, what leads to a brand being characterised as a luxury brand? In terms of the products offered, a luxury brand is often defined through its superior quality & craftsmanship, distinctiveness and its high transaction value (Fianda & Moore, 2009). Okonkwo (2007) states that for a brand to be deemed as luxury, its products must be innovative in design and be of an
exceptional standard of quality which eclipses a customer’s expectations. However, a brand is often deemed as luxury due to more than a perceived high quality of its product range. Jackson (2004, p. 158) argues that aspects such as exclusivity, premium prices, status and image come together to make luxury products “more desirable for reasons other than function”.

**Brand Signage**

Aaker (1997) suggests that brands hold certain personality characteristics, which can create distinct associations and values to consumers. Keller (2009) claims brand signage helps luxury fashion brands to portray these characteristics, which can spark positive associations, increasing the chance of purchase and a loyalty growing towards the brand.

The main form of brand signage used throughout the fashion industry is a distinguishable logo or symbol (Okonkwo, 2007). Take for example the American based brand *Tommy Hilfiger*. The brand is formed around its signage, with the distinctive red, white and blue logo prominent in every aspect of the brand from its marketing activities, all the way to product design. Positive brand associations help contribute to the creation of a fashion brand’s overall brand image (Huang & Sarigöllü, 2014). In the case of *Tommy Hilfiger*, the brand image and identity is built around the “All American” association which stems from the similarity of the brand signage to the USA flag. Da Silveira et al (2013) claims that the uniqueness of a brand’s identity helps differentiate the brand from competitors. Through embracing its American roots, the brand identity is differentiated away from competitors and the brand personality is distinct; with daring and bold designs in advertising and products falling into the “excitement” category in terms of Aaker’s (1997) five dimensions of brand personality. Utilising brand signage effectively has allowed *Tommy Hilfiger* to hold a unique positioning, which helps brands to build further by planning strategically, and extending customer relationships (Wheeler, 2010).

The combination of sound intrinsic and extrinsic values is what allows luxury fashion brands to charge a premium price for their products (Theng So et al, 2013). If customers purchase luxury products for reasons other than function and product quality, then it is a necessity for the luxury fashion brand to ensure their brand image and luxury status are maintained.

**Mass Luxury**

Nueno & Quelch (1998) identify a limited production run as one of the major brand dimensions in the luxury fashion industry. With this importance of exclusivity and prestige in
the fashion market, firms take a number of steps to ensure their products appear to be out of reach for the majority of customers. Not only is this done through premium pricing in order to price out customers deemed as undesirable (Kapferer & Bastien, 2009), but also the distribution of products is controlled and highly selective in order to limit the accessibility to customers (Fianda & Moore, 2009).

Despite an evident exclusive strategy amongst numerous firms in the industry, Kastanakis & Balabanis (2012) claim that one of the main difficulties facing brands within the fashion industry is the seemingly unmanageable task of maintaining a perceived exclusivity from the customer’s viewpoint whilst also increasing brand awareness, in order to grow their revenues and market share. As Simmel (1904; cited in Black, 2008) classically states, fashion was originally only for the wealthy and elite in society but has now filtered through to the masses. This has led to brands deemed as luxury, increasing the accessibility of their products through both price and availability (Okonkwo, 2009).

Silverstein & Fiske (2003 p. 3) describe these brands as “new luxury”. Their products are of a higher perceived quality and prestige than that of middle range products but are not overly expensive, increasing the levels of availability to the general consumer (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012). One main way brands within the luxury fashion industry are making their products more accessible is through line extension (Hennigs et al, 2013). Line extension is where a current brand is used to enter a new market segment within its existing product category through a change of price and/or quality (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Kim & Lavack, 1996). When undertaking a line extension, brands can either take an upgrading or downgrading strategy (Hennigs et al, 2013). In order to increase accessibility to customers a downgrading strategy is adopted, whereby a brand introduces new offerings at a lower price and quality level (Kim & Lavack, 1996).

Prestige and luxury for the masses or “masstige” (Truong et al, 2009 p.376), inherently targets a broader scope of consumers than that of a traditional luxury brand. Price-sensitive customers who may have admired a brand but have been unable to purchase due to higher product costs are now inclined to purchase due to the lower-end products associated with a downgrading line extension strategy, in turn benefiting the brand due to increased sales and market share (Magnoni & Roux, 2012). Truong et al’s (2009) study on the positioning strategies of “masstige” brands discovered that consumers rank these brands in terms of prestige much higher than middle-range brands despite their price points being similar. Indicating that the mentioned task from Kastanakis & Balabanis (2012) of maintaining a
certain level of perceived exclusivity and prestige whilst also taking a mass marketing strategy can be achieved. Truong et al claim that this has now skewed the line of separation between luxury brands and others. From the perspective of the consumer, an increase in accessibility may have a “bandwagon” type effect (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012 p. 139). The bandwagon effect refers to the extent to which demand for a product or brand increases due to others using the product or brand (Ko & Megahee, 2012).

**Risks of downgrading**

However, a downgrading strategy can be damaging to fashion brands. Firstly as the bandwagon effect attracts those who follow others (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012), those consumers are unlikely to remain loyal repeat purchasers of the brand’s products as they may go with the next trend. In terms of the customer pyramid (Wilson et al, 2012), these customers would lay within the iron or lead sections (figure 2). They have little loyalty to a brand and are swayed by social cues. A downgrading strategy may also deter those consumers who were previously loyal advocates of the brand from repeat purchasing (Hennigs et al, 2013). This is as a downgrading strategy can have a negative effect on how exclusive the brand is viewed and as a consequence, the brand’s image may be damaged (Kim & Lavack, 1996). Whilst those who purchase from brands due to an increase in popularity and accessibility are seen as bandwagon type consumers, Kastanakis & Balabanis (2012, p. 139) terms those on the opposite end of the spectrum as “snobs”. Snobs have two main goals from their consumption activities. The first is to disassociate themselves away from the majority of consumers in order to establish individuality; secondly snobs look to attain a dissociative status through the uniqueness of their chosen brand. So in its nature, downgrading can be seen as a way of isolating and disregarding the snob consumer (Ko & Megahee, 2012).

![The Customer Pyramid](image_url)
Theng So et al (2013, p. 404) claim that a successful branding strategy allows luxury firms to make “distinguishable brands” in return for a “loyalty and preference” from customers. With Hennigs et al (2013) amongst others (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Kim & Lavack, 1996) stating that a downgrading strategy threatens the luxury characteristics of distinguishability and uniqueness, then in turn this strategy can detract the more loyal “snob” customers who are seeking brands for their uniqueness in order to establish individuality.

**Downgrading done right- The case of Polo Ralph Lauren**

A prime example of a brand successfully undertaking a downgrading strategy can be seen from the American clothing giant *Polo Ralph Lauren*. *Polo Ralph Lauren* have 10 different ranges of apparel centred on the distinct *Ralph Lauren* name, most notably the initial *Polo Ralph Lauren* range and the more expensive *Purple label* (Investor.RalphLauren, 2017). Kapferer (2012) states that *Ralph Lauren* utilise a downgrading line extension strategy through two methods. Firstly *Ralph Lauren* fragment their market through offering a range of brand subsidiaries, each differing in price points, design, and even quality. Kapferer argues that this allows customers to purchase from the brand whilst still holding a sense of individuality despite the high levels of popularity surrounding the brand. For instance, a customer may purchase from the more exclusive and less accessible *Purple label*, many others may own *Ralph Lauren* items, but not from this particular label. Vigneron & Johnson (2004) also indicate that as well as purchasing for perceived quality, consumers also have a preference for luxury brands due to their perceived uniqueness, with the *Purple Label* offering both of these qualities to consumers.

Kapferer also identifies that *Ralph Lauren* utilise a line extension downgrading strategy within each label they offer with some products much cheaper than others, allowing consumers to buy into the brand at a lower price. Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000 p. 129) states that *Ralph Lauren* have intuitively developed a portfolio of brands that are “linked together”, allowing them to introduce new products, aimed at new consumers and market segments without incurring the expense and risks associated with creating a new brand from scratch. Aaker & Joachimsthaler suggest that as *Ralph Lauren* kept the quality of their products still reasonably high and did not sell at extremely reduced prices, a less severe dilution of the brands status and upscale appeal was suffered.
2.3 “Fast Fashion”

Black (2008, p. 11) claims that in the last fifteen years fashion has become “faster and cheaper” through vast increases in global communication and competition. This has in turn spiked demand and consumers expectations, leading to faster fashion cycles. Black puts the increase in pace down to a change in international trade agreements such as the general agreement on trade and tariffs (GATT), which has reduced restrictions on cheaper goods entering the market. Black views this as unsustainable and possibly damaging for the fashion industry. However, many theorists argue that this is only damaging for the higher priced luxury fashion brands, identifying the popularity and success of many lower priced high street and online brands. Cachon & Swinney (2011) state that lower priced brands are succeeding for two reasons. Firstly they benefit from short production and distribution times, allowing large scales of production across many outlets. The second benefit stems from the first. The short production times help to make sure that their product designs are highly fashionable. Cachon & Swinney claims it is easier for these brands to react to new changes in style and trends as they can create new products in a quick and efficient manner, distributing products quickly and directly to customers across various stores and online.

Hamel (2012, p. 86) describes change as “relentless, seditious and occasionally shocking”. In the fashion industry particularly, change can most definitely be described as relentless. Black (2008) describes fashion as pluralistic in its nature as a number styles may be in trend and rapid turnaround is the norm. Furthermore, Cachon & Swinney (2011) claim that socio-cultural changes in the lifestyle of the consumer have ensured that they are knowledgeable about new styles and trends in apparel, dispelling the traditional six-month seasonal cycles that firms could previously base their product range upon. Beatty & Ferrell (1998) claims that if brands fail to adapt their product lines to change, then they face failure. Fernie (2004) also identifies that many purchases in the fashion industry are made on impulse by the consumer, therefore it is critical that there are high levels of availability as demand is difficult to predict. For these reasons, brands are increasingly operating in a “fast fashion” system due to the quick response strategies associated with the system so that they can react to change swiftly and effectively (Gabrielli et al, 2013). The fast fashion system combines a quick response strategy with enhanced designs systems, synonymous with more luxury brands.

When referring to the term “fast fashion” this dissertation will use the following definition, interpreted from Gabrielli et al (2013) & Cachon & Swinney (2011):
Fast-Fashion, slow loyalty

Despite the positives associated with operating in the fast fashion market, such as an ability to alter styles efficiently to offer the right products at the right time, there are difficulties that face firms. Most notably, theorists identify the difficulty in cultivating brand loyalty. One such reason put forward for this is the concept of heuristics. Heuristics in the case of fashion brand selection centres on the phrase “it costs more, therefore it must be better”. Parguel et al (2016) identify that consumers hold perceptions of higher quality and prestige when the price of a product is also high.

Heuristic thinking and post-purchase behaviour

Kotler and Keller (2011) identify that repurchasing from a brand is a form of post-purchase behaviour. Gabrielli et al (2013) study on consumers perceptions on fast fashion, found that as consumers generally hold very low expectations, particularly in terms of product quality; post-purchase evaluations are generally positive as consumers are mostly more satisfied with the product than they thought they would be before purchasing. Griffin (2002) expands further upon Kotler & Keller’s five-stage model of the consumer buying process (figure 2). Griffin identifies that after the initial purchase in the purchase decision stage, consumers go through a cycle of actions. Firstly deciding whether or not to repurchase, then secondly making the repurchase, and thirdly after making the repurchase, moving back into a post-purchase evaluation. The benefit to brands here is that if the consumer is consistently satisfied with their purchase, then they are unlikely to fall out of the cycle.
Figure 3: *Five-stage model of the consumer buying process (Kotler & Keller, 2011)*

It can be argued therefore that instead of damaging a fast-fashion firm’s brand loyalty and equity, the concept of heuristics can, in fact, benefit the brand. This is as consumers expectations are reduced due to the lower prices associated with fast-fashion brands, which often results in an increased satisfaction, as value for money is increased due to the trendy designs and quality of products in relation to price. Griffin (2002) would argue that as the post-purchase evaluation has been found to be mostly positive, the decision to repurchase is an easier one for the consumer and repeat purchase beyond this is likely, cultivating a form of behavioural loyalty for the fast-fashion brand.

### 2.4 Gaps in knowledge

Bhardwaj & Fairhurst (2010) state that although in recent years there has become a greater understanding of the fast-fashion process, most literature is focused on an organisational perspective. Therefore there is limited research on consumer’s behaviour to fast fashion brands.

Consumer’s behaviour towards clothing brands appears to be generalised, with no appreciation of the possibly differing consumer attitudes and post-purchase behaviour across the differing price points and quality levels. Ko & Megahee (2012) claim that luxury fashion and fast fashion are converging, with the boundaries that characterised the two previously separate markets starting to erode. D’Aveni (2010) refers to a phenomenon of “Zarafication”, where characteristics of fine fashion are seemingly appearing within fast-fashion, such as store patronage where consumers shop in certain high street or fast-fashion stores in order to demonstrate their social status and to impress others. Purchasing for social status reasons is accepted to be a key characteristic of the luxury fashion industry.
(Okonkwo, 2007; Peng et al, 2011; Theng So et al, 2013), so the suggestion that this characteristic is emerging in the fast-fashion market, questions current literature.

Research in the field has indicated that consumers may purchase less noticeable items of apparel, such as jeans or base layer tee-shirts; from cheaper fast fashion brands, but when purchasing noticeable, staple items they purchase from mid-level up (Gabrielli et al, 2013). The concept that consumers purchase different items from different brands in this manner is yet to be discovered. There is an indication that consumers are therefore multi-brand loyal (Knox & Walker, 2001) Thus, this research will aim to further discover consumers purchasing patterns, as brand loyalty towards luxury brands may be lower than was first thought.

As mentioned in the Brand Equity & Brand Loyalty section of this dissertation, the general consensus in modern day literature is that loyalty can be separated into two components; attitudinal and behavioural (Jacoby & Kleyner, 1973; Dick & Basu, 1994; Bandyopadhyay et al, 2005; Bandyopadhyay & Martin, 2007; Cheng, 2011). Assessing the futility of the claim that higher priced luxury brands are associated with attitudinal loyalty, whilst behavioural loyalty is more common in lower priced brands, such as those deemed as fast fashion; is one objective of this study which will help to gain a better understanding of what affects consumer loyalty in the fashion industry.

2.5 Chapter Summary

To conclude, this literature review has identified the key theory currently set out which attempts to explain consumer decision making and brand loyalty. Brand loyalty and consumer decision making have then been focused on the fashion industry to identify possible gaps of knowledge for which the research will attempt to fill. Chapter two sets out the methodology for which the research for this dissertation will adhere to.
CHAPTER 3: Methodology

3.0 Introduction

The term methodology refers to the theory of how research should be undertaken (Saunders et al, 2012). Therefore this chapter will examine the different processes used to achieve the desired research aim. The project aims to investigate the extent to which brand loyalty impacts consumer decision making within the fashion industry and the reasons for this perceived loyalty or lack of loyalty. Easterby-Smith et al (2008) state that one requirement of research in a business environment is that its findings have some form of practical consequence, whether that is minimal or leads to the undertaking of some form of action in response to the research findings. Primary research will be undertaken in the form of a survey with participants to gain both quantitative and qualitative data in a mixed method approach. The primary research will gain data from a number of participants deemed as “millennials” who are deemed integral to the clothing industry. An analysis of the primary research data will then be constructed, comparing it against secondary research to identify any contradictions and similarities to previous theories in the field. This will give the researcher a basis for which to create new suggestions for the fashion industry.

3.1 Research Design

The research design utilised was in the form of a survey. The survey was formulated using an online self-completed questionnaire (appendix A). Online self-completed questionnaires are delivered via the internet to each respondent, with each respondent receiving the same set of questions in a predetermined order without an interviewer being present (Saunders et al, 2012). Using this design maintains the objectivity and validity of the research as there is no observer effect, which can alter how participants answer questions. O’Cass (2004) utilised a survey in the form of a self-completed questionnaire for his research on fashion clothing consumption; gaining clear patterns in data of how involved consumers within the chosen sample deemed themselves to be with fashion. This indicates that this research design is effective at gaining participants own personal opinions in relation to the fashion industry, which is a clear objective of this dissertation.
As the research seeks consumer’s opinions on a variety of factors, a purely qualitative approach in the form of interviews could have been undertaken. The decision was made not to go with this option as quantitative data helps to identify patterns in respondent’s answers.

The research takes a pragmatist approach. Pragmatism entails both positivist and interpretivist approaches (Saunders et al, 2012), applying the most practical approach which can integrate different perspectives in order to collect and interpret data effectively. Pragmatism involves the use of research methods and approaches that are solely relevant to achieving the desired research aim (Kelemen & Rumens, 2008). Although pragmatism is not strictly tied to the mixed method approach, the concept does take into account that no single point of view or research design can give an entire picture of the subject being studied (Saunders et al, 2012). Hence, this research will utilise a mixed method approach, as both quantitative and qualitative data can give two different viewpoints, giving the data greater background and allowing comparisons to be made.

As this dissertation will be developing theoretical explanations, and from this; creating suggestions that can help to further develop insight into consumer’s behaviour in relation to loyalty in the fashion industry, this dissertation will also utilise a grounded theory method. Bryant & Charmaz (2007) claim that a grounded theory refers to a methodological approach which involves inquiry into existing sets of data. Furthermore, Saunders et al (2012) state that grounded theory is used to develop theoretical explanations within the business environment; in particular explanations of consumer and employee behaviours. As this research is involved in understanding consumer’s behaviour, taking a grounded theory method is therefore appropriate. In turn, utilising the grounded theory method results in taking an abductive approach (Saunders et al, 2012). Abduction is the process of gaining new insights in order to create new conceptual possibilities which can then be examined in order to contribute to the research field (Reichert, 2007).

3.2 Mixed Method Approach

The researcher is aware of the possible validity and interpretation issues that arrive with the descriptive nature of qualitative data. However, although descriptive data cannot be measured numerically, it can be categorised into sets of reoccurring themes amongst the responses (Saunders et al, 2012). Although a solely quantitative approach could have been taken with this research, a mixed method approach was undertaken in this study. Bryman &
Bell (2011) state that as this method obtains both quantitative and qualitative data, it increases the validity of the results as both sets of data can be compared and contrasted to identify any underlying findings. Furthermore, Creswell (2013) states that when both types of data are used in conjunction with each other, a greater understanding of the research problem is achieved. One way in which the two methods are used together is through the use of follow-up questions. After being asked forced-choice closed question e.g. yes or no; the participant will then be asked to explain their reasoning for their selected option in an open ended question directly after.

### 3.3 Quantitative Data

Quantitative data is obtained in the form of a number of closed questions throughout the survey. Quantitative data refers to data that is numerical (Saunders et al, 2012), this means it can be easily quantified and analysed in order to identify the central tendencies that stem from the research.

A form of closed question utilised is through a number of itemised rating scales to gain participants opinions on a number of statements. The scales are composed of Likert-type items scored on 7 point scales ranging from “Strongly Agree” to “Strongly disagree”. This technique has been shown to be effective in previous research on brands and fashion. Goldsmith et al’s (1993) research on fashion leadership utilised a Likert-type scale to gain participants opinions on 5 different statements related to the study, leading to an overall score being derived to each participant based on their response. This technique is simple to self-complete for participants when explaining their attitudes and allows mean scores for each statement to be calculated (Brace, 2008). Both positive and negative statements will be used as this ensures that participants read each one carefully and gives real thought to their selection (Saunders et al, 2012). This research will utilise a similar scoring system to that of Goldsmith et al’s, the details of which are set out below:

Participants will be attributed a score ranging from 1-7 for each statement in relation to their choice of response on the seven-point scale.

- **Strongly Agree (SA) = 1**
- **Agree (AG) = 2**
- **Somewhat Agree (SWA) = 3**
- **Neither Agree nor Disagree (NA) = 4**
Somewhat Disagree (SWD) = 5
Disagree (D) = 6
Strongly Disagree (SD) = 7

Utilising this scoring system allows a mean score to be easily attributed to each statement, increasing insight to results. A low score near to 1 will indicate that respondents thoroughly agree with the statement; a score near 4 will indicate that respondents do not feel strongly either way, whilst a high score near 7 demonstrates a deep disagreement to the statement.

**Ranked List**

Additionally, ranking questions are utilised to gain further quantitative data. A ranking question is a question asked in a closed manner, in which the participant is presented with a list of items and instructed to place them in a rank order (Saunders et al, 2012). The item ranked at 1 on the list, is the item that the participant believes is the highest ranked in relation to the chosen variable.

A key objective of this research is to assess the impact downgrading can have on consumer’s perceptions of brands and to identify whether there is a distinct set of categories brands in different price points fall within. In order to gain an understanding of this topic, two ranking questions where presented to the respondent (see appendix A). Below is the rationale behind the chosen independent variables (clothing brands) which respondents are requested to place in a ranked order.

In these ranking questions, participants were asked to place four different unisex brands, each representing a different price point and market segment as set out in the literature review (luxury, mass luxury, mid-level and fast-fashion). The brands representing luxury are *Saint Laurent* and *Burberry*. Both of these brands share luxury characteristics such as superior quality & craftsmanship, distinctiveness and a high transaction value (Fianda & Moore, 2009). Both brands also utilise premium pricing, which Jackson (2004) claims makes luxury products more desirable for reasons other than function.

The two brands chosen to represent mass luxury are *Tommy Hilfiger* and *Polo Ralph Lauren*. As indicated in the literature review, *Polo Ralph Lauren* are a brand whose downgrading strategy is widely acknowledged as successful (Aaker & Joachimsthaler, 2000; Kapferer, 2008), making the brand an ideal representative for mass luxury. *Tommy Hilfiger* also shares many similarities with *Polo Ralph Lauren* in the way that they segment their market; with different, inexpensive brand subsidiaries seemingly making the brand more accessible. Both
brands are priced above brands deemed as fast-fashion, whilst being as a whole, slightly lower in price than brands termed as mass luxury. Finally, the two variables chosen to represent the fast-fashion category are Zara and Topshop (Topman). Zara is widely recognised as the connoisseur of fast-fashion, with the brand making an appearance in numerous literature (D’aveni 2010; Cachon & Swinney, 2011; Ko & Megahee, 2012). Likewise, Cachon & Swinney state that the quick response strategies which allow fast-fashion brands to react to new high fashion trends rapidly, where first developed by Zara. Topshop, and the male twin brand Topman; also operates with quick response strategies nearly identical to that of Zara.

3.4 Qualitative Data

Qualitative research is undertaken through a number of open-ended follow up questions. Qualitative research is associated with interpretation (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005), meaning the results had to be analysed and interpreted by the researcher along with the quantitative results. Consumers are often not entirely aware of their motives in consumption; qualitative methods allow researchers to gain insight into both the consumers’ conscious and unconscious motives (Saunders et al, 2012). Although quantitative research methods are utilised in the survey to gain statistical data, quantitative methods are not equipped to comprehend information of a subjective nature (Cassel & Symon, 2004); hence the use of qualitative open ended questions. Qualitative data is based on meanings and words, therefore the data is non-standardised and requires classification in to categories (Saunders et al, 2012). The researcher is aware of any validity issues that may arise through the interpretative nature of qualitative data. Through utilising quantitative data alongside qualitative data, participant’s answers to open questions can be more reliably categorised (Saunders et al, 2012).

Bryman & Bell (2015) state that qualitative data is often associated with the generation of new theory rather than the testing of existing theory, this indicates that qualitative data will be effective at stemming new knowledge that can contribute to the existing literature on fashion and branding. Furthermore, Silverman (2015) also states that qualitative data can be used to test existing literature and theory, allowing the data to test any theory set out in the literature review.
3.5 Sample

Saunders et al (2012) state that as well as being impractical and unmanageable, it can also be deemed unnecessary to undertake a survey that has a sample representative of the whole population. The survey sample consisted of those aged 18-34, often termed as “millennials” (Howe & Strauss, 2009). Millennials are frequent clothing shoppers, with Mintel (2016) detailing that a total of 45% of U.K. clothing purchases are made by consumers aged 18-34. Therefore a sample consisting of millennials is relevant to a study on the clothing industry. The researcher utilised convenience sampling as it adequately and efficiently collects data (Bryman & Bell, 2015).

A total of 43 participants responded to the survey, with 60% of the sample male and the remaining percentage female. Although the sample cannot be deemed wholly representative, with a slight percentage higher of male respondents than female, the sample population is still of real use. Fashion consumption and involvement are traditionally viewed as female dominated (Auty & Elliot, 1998; O’Cass, 2004), with research from Goldsmith et al (1996) finding that women consider themselves to be more fashion innovative than men. However recent market research has shown that men are becoming much more involved in fashion, 60% of male shoppers aged 16-24 are buying clothes at least once a month, compared to 53% of females in the same age bracket (Mintel, 2016). Furthermore, the total percentage of shoppers being male has risen by 4%, to 46%. Although there is a slight imbalance with 40% of the survey sample being female and the percentage of U.K. shoppers being female is 54%, both genders have been fairly represented in the convenience sample at hand.

3.6 Ethical Considerations

The respondent’s anonymity will remain intact throughout the process. All participants are made aware prior to commencement of the survey; that the information that they provide will remain anonymous and that only the researcher will have access to the data. Saunders et al (2012) identify that ensuring confidentiality of data and the anonymity of the participants taking part as a key ethical principle to abide by; this research abides by this principle. Informed consent must also be given by participants before taking part in the research. Participants are made aware of the voluntary nature of their participation and
have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. A statement of the research purpose is displayed to the participant before initiation of the questionnaire, along with an assurance of any ethical issues that may be of concern (appendix C). This research has received full approval from the Cardiff Metropolitan Ethics Committee, demonstrating that there has been a consideration of any ethical issues that may arise to participants and the researcher whilst undertaking this research.

3.7 Data Analysis

Both quantitative and qualitative data will be analysed using Microsoft Excel. Depending on the question variation, a percentage/mean rating/mean ranking will be identified throughout the results and analysis section as well as a clear demonstration of results utilising various charts.

3.8 Summary

This section has identified the key characteristics of data analysis, whilst indicating how results will be relevant and interpreted towards the research objectives. This section has also outlined the research methods which will be utilised to effectively collect data. Chapter four outlines the findings from the data collected and compares this with existing theory and literature.
CHAPTER 4: Results & Analysis

4.0 Introduction

This chapter will identify the findings from the conducted primary data; for which the method has been set out in chapter three of this dissertation. The method for collecting the primary data was in the form of a self-completed online questionnaire based survey, collecting results from a total of 43 respondents between the ages of 18 and 34.

4.1 Interest in fashion

Figure 4 shows that of the 43 respondents to the survey, 95% claimed they had purchased an item of branded clothing in the last twelve months. This indicates that the millennial age group have a large interest in fashion, coinciding with recent market research from Mintel (2016) which indicated a similarly high figure also.

**Figure 4:** Number of respondents who have purchased branded clothing in the last 12 months.
4.2 Loyal consumers- Why they recommend & repurchase

70% of respondents claimed that there are fashion brands that they would recommend to friends or family members. Whilst 14% of respondents claimed they were unsure on whether or not they would recommend, 16% answered “no” to the question (Figure 5). With over two-thirds of respondents claiming they would recommend; this data supports Keller’s (2013) view that consumers who have positive opinions about a brand can spread positive word of mouth (WOM), in this case, the positive WOM is an actual encouragement to purchase from a brand.

Figure 5: Are there any fashion brands that you would recommend to your friends or family?

In order to gain further qualitative data to examine the reasons behind participant’s responses, a follow-up question was asked. Participants were asked the identity of the brand/brands they would recommend or have recommended and the reasons for doing so if they had answered “Yes” to the previous question. When explaining their reasons; a number of mixed responses were gained providing a large amount of qualitative data to be analysed by the researcher. A categorisation of the key themes and the frequency of their appearance from the 30 participant’s responses who answered “Yes” to the previous question is shown in figure 6 (a full list of responses can be found in Appendix A).
The term that is apparent in nearly all of the total responses is “quality”. This indicates that consumers will recommend clothing brands to others based mostly on the functional and physical aspects of the brand’s products rather than the intangible aspects which can supposedly make a brand more appealing to consumers as set out in the literature review.

### 4.2.1 Importance of quality in consumer opinion and brand advocates

From the results gathered, clothing brands who satisfy the physical attributes that the consumer sees as important, such as durability and the fit of the clothing item; are likely to benefit from consumer recommendations. The most important attribute in relation to positive WOM and repurchase from the data gathered appears to be quality. Figure 7 highlights this importance. When participants were presented with the statement: “If I am satisfied with the standard of quality from a new brand I am likely to tell others about the experience”, in a Likert-type scale question; 93% of responses ranged from “somewhat agree” (SWA) to “strongly agree” (SA), meaning that a large proportion of participants scored low in relation to this statement. The mean respondent score for this statement was 2.5 (scoring system set out in chapter 3.3). Furthermore, when participants were shown the statement “If I am satisfied with the quality of product from a new brand, I am likely to purchase again from this brand”; 95% of responses ranged from SWA to SA. Meaning that yet again, participants mostly scored low in relation to this statement; with a mean score of
1.9. As well as further indicating the importance of product quality in relation to positive WOM, this data supports Griffin’s (2002) post-purchase loop, as participants are demonstrating that if they are satisfied with a product, they are likely to repurchase. This indicates that consumers in the millennial age bracket do in fact make a post-purchase evaluation (Kotler & Keller, 2011) in relation to the five stage model of the consumer buying process (Figure 2).

**Figure 7: Mean scores highlighting the importance of quality (scoring system set out in methodology)**

Figure 8 further highlights the necessity for a brand to portray a high level of perceived quality to the consumer. In this ranking question; participants were asked to rank six separate characteristics of a brand in order of what they seek when purchasing. The characteristic of “High Quality” was viewed as the most important characteristic by 49% of respondents, receiving a mean ranking of 1.6. While another tangible brand characteristic of “Good Product Design”, received the second highest mean ranking of 2.3, with 33% of participants identifying this as the most important characteristic for a fashion brand. “Popularity” received the most negative ranking of 5.3, with 56% of participants placing popularity as the characteristic they are least concerned with when seeking a clothing brand and 0% of participants ranking the characteristic as the most important of the six presented.
An “Identifiable logo or symbol” was also ranked negatively, with a mean ranking of 4.2; 5% of responses ranked this characteristic as the most important. Likewise, only 5% of participants ranked “Strong Image/Identity” as the most important characteristic, with this characteristic receiving a mean rating of 4.0. “Individuality” received a mean ranking of 3.6. However, 10% of participants recorded this characteristic as the most important; indicating a demand for uniqueness amongst some millennial consumers.

![Diagram of consumer ranking of brand characteristics]

**Figure 8: Consumer ranking of brand characteristics**

### 4.2.2 Millennials may seek luxury characteristics but are unwilling to pay a premium

Interestingly, the three characteristics that ranked the highest in figure 8 are all associated with luxury fashion brands. As set out in the literature review of this dissertation; Fianda & Moore (2009) identify that a luxury brand is often defined by its superior quality and craftsmanship as well as its high transaction value. Similarly, Okonkwo (2007) claims that for a brand to be deemed as luxury, its products must be innovative in design and be of an exceptional standard of quality which eclipses a customer’s expectations. This data indicates that luxury brands are in fact the most desirable for the millennial age bracket as they contain the characteristics that the majority of the respondents claimed they rank as the most important when selecting a brand. Theng So et al (2013) claim that a combination of
superior physical properties (e.g. quality & design) and extrinsic values (e.g. uniqueness/individuality) is what allows luxury brands to charge a premium for their products. However, although consumers may seek the characteristics associated with luxury brands; the results shown in figure 9 indicate that consumers may be unwilling to meet the stated premium prices. The mean response when participants were questioned “What is the maximum you are willing to spend on a branded item of clothing?” lay within the category of £75-100. Additionally, only 16% of participants claimed they are willing to spend a maximum above £150; whilst 33% are unwilling to spend over £75. This also indicates that brands who take a downgrading line extension strategy (Aaker & Keller, 1990; Kim & Lavack, 1996; Hennigs et al, 2013), often termed as mass luxury as set out in the literature review; may inherently target the millennial consumer who is looking for luxury characteristics but at a more affordable price. This is as mass luxury brands target a broader scope of consumers through lower product prices (Truong et al, 2009).

![Figure 9: Maximum willing to spend on branded clothing](image)

**4.2.3 Willingness to invest in favourite brands**

Although figure 9 indicates that most consumers in the sample are unwilling to spend a premium price for luxury clothing items; figure 10 demonstrates that the millennial consumer does have an increased willingness to invest when they hold favourable opinions
toward a brand. Respondents were asked to select one of the eight categories below to demonstrate the increase in percentage they are willing to spend on their favourite clothing brand or brands. The mean percentage lay within the 25-40% categorisation; with 32% of respondent’s stating that this is the percentage band for the increase they are willing to spend. Just one participant stated that they are not willing to spend more on a brand they are favourable towards compared to another brand, whilst 7% of participants indicated that they are willing to spend a difference of 100% and above on their favourite brand or brands.

With the mean percentage of participant responses laying within the 25-40% category; this indicates that Kotler & Keller (2011) statement, that consumers are often willing to spend 25% more than they would on a competing brand does have some fruition with millennial consumers. Likewise, Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000) state that loyal consumers provide a stable sales basis. However, to characterise this data as evidence of Batra et al’s (2005) “willingness to invest” component of brand love; would be wrong. Although there is a clear increase in the amount respondents are willing to spend on their favourite brands compared to other brands they do not hold such favourable associations with. There is no evidence to suggest that this brand favouritism can be translated into what Batra et al defines as brand love.

Despite the lack of evidence from the data identifying brand love, 73% of respondents claimed they do feel a sense of loyalty to a fashion brand (figure 11). Although this may seemingly indicate that brand love may be evident within the participant sample; when considering that 98% of respondents claimed they are willing to spend more on a clothing brand they deem as their favourite, the results indicate that an increase in willingness to invest is not just attributed to brand love. This is as a sizeable proportion of participants (21%) claimed they felt no sense of loyalty towards any fashion brands, whilst also stating that they are willing to spend an increase of 10% and over for their favourite brand.

Therefore, there may be an over-emphasis on building a deep connection between a fashion brand and the consumer in order to increase a willingness to invest; as most consumers who only hold a favourable opinion of a brand rather than feel a sense of loyalty are still willing to spend more on this brand.
**Figure 10:** Percentage more willing to spend on favourite brand/s

**Figure 11:** Number of respondents who feel they are loyal to fashion brands
4.2.4 Reasons for repurchase and positive WOM differ

An aspect that stands out from the data collected is that respondent’s reasons for repurchasing brands and recommending brands do appear to have slight differentiations. In an open ended question, participants were asked the identity of a favourite clothing brand which they have purchased from on more than one occasion, along with the reasons for this repeat purchase. Responses to this question naturally resulted in a large amount of qualitative data which has been categorised into the key themes stemming throughout the responses (Figure 12). Figure 12 identifies the seven most mentioned aspects that respondents identified as the reason for their repurchase from the brand they had stated. The key reason consumers in the research sample repurchase from a brand are the positive assessment of style, design and fit of the clothing they have purchased from the brand, with this reason being mentioned by respondents on 17 separate occasions. Similar to respondents reasons for recommending a brand to friends or family (Figure 6); quality is seemingly a key aspect in the re-purchase decision as this reason was mentioned a total of 13 times by respondents. Data gathered from figure 12 is also concurrent with respondents ranking of clothing brand characteristics (Figure 8). This as the two most positively rated characteristics within figure 8 are “High Quality” and “Good Product Design” which were the two most frequently mentioned reasons for repurchasing in figure 12. This demonstrates an assurance in the sample respondents preferable brand characteristics, as on two separate occasions the same characteristics were identified as important. This data indicates that there may be an over-emphasis on brands attempting to portray strong extrinsic values (Jackson, 2004). This as on two separate occasions, a majority of respondents have indicated that they deem brand values which can be deemed as intrinsic as the most important; as well as indicating that intrinsic values are the most essential in recommending brands to others (Figure 6).

Brand image, individuality & uniqueness, and exclusivity where apparent themes in a number of responses within figure 12. This indicates that millennial consumers do hold the intangible associations with brands which are frequently mentioned amongst branding literature (Tybout & Calkins, 2005; Keller, 2013; De Chernatony, 2009; Kapferer, 2012). Although the mentioned intrinsic values do appear to dominate consumer’s preference, the key difference between the data in figure 5 and figure 12 is the increase of intangible and extrinsic values listed by participants.
4.2.5 Evidence of the “snob” consumer

With individuality & uniqueness, along with exclusivity being mentioned a total of 12 occasions by respondents; there is an indication that the “snob” consumer who purchases products to disassociate themselves from others through the uniqueness of their brand and product choice (Kastanakis & Balabanis, 2012; Ko & Megahee, 2012), may be present amongst millennial consumers who have an interest in clothing brands. Participant 29’s response to the reasons why they had/have recommended a brand furthermore identifies this:

“… I steer away from recommending brands to people that I personally wear” – Participant 29

Despite the appearance of the “snob” consumer from the data gathered, this type of consumer does still appear to be in the minority. When participants were asked whether an increase in accessibility of their favourite brand would deter them from purchasing again (see appendix C); 57% of consumers answered “No”, 33% answered “Maybe” whilst 10% identified that it would deter them from purchasing again. Despite this, 43% of respondents did identify that they would either be deterred from purchasing again or were unsure, an indication that an increase in accessibility would cast some doubt to the repurchase decision for a proportion of consumers. An increase in accessibility and reduction in price is a key
aspect of a downgrading line extension strategy (Kapferer, 2008; Okonkwo, 2009; Hennigs et al, 2013). A risk that is widely associated with taking a downgrading strategy is that consumers who were previously loyal brand advocates may be discouraged from purchasing again from the brand (Hennigs et al, 2013). With a minimum 10% of respondents admittedly being put off by a downgrading strategy, the data demonstrates that this risk is apparent amongst the millennial consumer group.

As set out in the literature, Kastanakis & Balabanis (2012) claim that a downgrading strategy attracts those deemed as “bandwagon” type consumers who are attracted to brands for their popularity and ease of access. In terms of Wilson et al’s (2012) customer pyramid (Figure 2), these customers are less profitable to the brand than “snob” consumers. It can also be interpreted from the literature review that the “bandwagon” consumer is likely to be multi-brand loyal (Knox & Walker, 2001), if loyal at all. However, the data does indicate that splitting millennial consumers into a category of “snob” or “bandwagon” is rather limited and that this concept may not be possible to apply to the fashion industry. Figure 7 reveals that the large majority of respondents deemed popularity as the least important characteristic when seeking out a brand. Additionally, in participants open ended answers to the reasons why they recommend and re-purchase brands (Figure 5 & Figure 12), popularity was not mentioned by any of the respondents. With “bandwagon” type consumers associated with selecting brands based on popularity, there is little evidence to suggest that this type of consumer is present within the sample of respondents.

4.3 Brand Personality

Aaker (1997) claims that brands can have personality traits which can be portrayed to consumers. Data in figure 13 would suggest that consumers recognise these traits amongst brands. 84% of respondents claimed that they do see certain fashion brands as having distinct personality traits. Additionally, in a follow-up question (figure 14); 92% of the respondents who claimed they do recognise personality traits within brands, indicated that they prefer clothing brands with personalities they can relate to their own. Thomson et al (2005) claim that when a consumer can identify with a brand’s unique characteristics an emotional attachment to the brand can form. The results point toward an indication that consumers can relate to a brand on a personal level or integrate the brand into their own self-concept (Kotler & Keller, 2011).
Figure 13: Extent to which respondents identify brand personality

Figure 14: Respondents response to identification with brand personality

4.4 Brand communities

Figure 15 demonstrates that the majority of respondents do not consider themselves to be part of a brand community.
71% of respondents stated that they do not consider themselves to be part of a brand community, while 21% of respondents answered yes to the question in figure 15. Although the data validates the existence of the brand community set out in the literature review (Muniz & O’Guinn, 2001; McAlexander et al, 2002), the majority of consumers considered themselves not to be a part of a brand community; indicating that the presence of these communities may be overstated.

Despite low numbers of respondents being part of a brand community, 74% of respondents follow a fashion brand on some form of social media which demonstrates a form of advocacy for the brand. On top of this, 82% of the respondents who stated that they followed a brand on social media claimed they interact with the brand (liking or commenting on posts) on at least a monthly basis (see appendix C). In terms of the customer based brand equity model (Figure 2), Keller (2013) claims consumers who are in the resonance stage have an intense and active loyalty to the brand. As a high percentage of respondents are demonstrating that they are interacting with their favourite brands through social media, the findings are indicative of an active loyalty.

Results indicate that if the millennial consumer is unsatisfied with the quality of a product from their favourite brand there is a strong possibility that they will dispel any loyalty towards this brand and spread negative WOM. In a Likert-type scale question with responses ranging on a 7 point scale from SA to “Strongly Disagree” (SD), 64% of responses were either
marked as “Agree” (AG) or SWA when presented with the statement shown in figure 16. The mean score from respondents was 3.2 (scoring system set out in chapter 3.3). Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000) claim that as well as spreading positive WOM, a stable and loyal customer basis will also defend any shortcomings of the brand, figure 16 indicates that a large proportion of respondents are unwilling to defend any shortcomings of the brand and are likely to spread negative WOM if they are unsatisfied with quality. This, therefore, indicates that the loyalty exhibited by a large proportion of respondents is behavioural, as behaviourally loyal consumers can be lost easily and are likely to spread negative WOM if they are unsatisfied with a brand’s product (Cheng, 2011).

Figure 16: Mean statement score for negative word of mouth

4.5 Fast-fashion- respondent’s opinions and loyalty

In order to gain an understanding of the popularity of fast-fashion brands, respondents were asked if there are any fast-fashion or high street brands (Zara, River Island, H&M etc.) that they purchase from on a frequent basis (Figure 17). The results show that 69% of respondents do purchase from fast fashion brands on a frequent basis.
To gain further qualitative data, participants who answered “Yes” in figure 16 were asked a follow-up question to state what it is that they admire about these brands. Results were categorised into the key themes in order to aid analysis (Figure 18). The most frequently mentioned aspect from the open-ended responses was affordability. Affordability was mentioned by respondents on 14 separate occasions. Secondly, trendy and up to date styles were mentioned a total of 10 times by respondents. Two more key themes were an inclination for fast-fashion brands to offer good essential items and a high level of quality for the cost of the items. Lastly, product variety was mentioned 4 times by respondents. Three responses which encompass other responses in a more detailed manner are presented below (full list of responses can be found in appendix C).

Participant 29 said:
“...they offer styles similar to more expensive brands, up to date with the latest trends whilst also being a lot less expensive. I also like to purchase more essential items from these brands”.

Participant 16 said:
“Cheap affordable, generally items that are one colour like black jeans or white under t-shirts”

Participant 18 said:
“There is a lot of choice and the styles are really up to date and affordable”
As can be seen in figure 17, affordability was the key reason participants admire fast-fashion brands. This indicates a loyalty towards fast-fashion brands that is behavioural in its nature (Jacoby & Kleyner, 1973; Dick & Basu, 1994; Bennet & Rundle-Thiele, 2002; Bandyopadhyay & Martell, 2007; Cheng, 2011) as responses were mostly associated with the price of the products fast-fashion brands offer.

Trendy and up to date styles were mentioned often as a reason for admiration of the fast-fashion brand. This concurs with one of the two main benefits that Cachon & Swinney (2011) state operating in a fast-fashion system delivers. Cachon & Swinney identify that the short production times and quick response strategies that are synonymous with the fast-fashion system help to ensure that products are up to date and in keeping with the latest styles as products can be produced as and when new trends are identified. The results indicate that the fast-fashion system does result in this benefit to the brand.

Although up to date styles were mentioned as a reason for admiration, the key subject for admiration stemmed from a price aspect, company this with a number of respondents (see participant 29 and participant 16’s response) identifying that they purchase their essential items from fast fashion brands, then the results indicate that fast-fashion brands may suffer from a lack of loyalty, especially an attitudinal loyalty. Most responses are associated with the price aspect, with a lack of indication in results pointing towards an appreciation.
amongst millennial consumers of positive brand associations. Likewise, with a number of responses indicating that respondent’s purchase essential items from fast-fashion brands and may go to more expensive brands for more noticeable items, there is an evident group of “multiple users” (Bandyopadhyay & Martell, 2007) within the sample. This data concurs with Gabrielli et al’s (2013) suggestion that some consumers purchase essential items from fast-fashion brands but when purchasing noticeable staple items, purchase from mid-level upwards.

Figure 19: Respondent ranking of brands in terms of quality and exclusivity (1 being the highest quality and most exclusive).

Figure 19 demonstrates that respondents have clear perceptions and opinions towards the brands representing luxury, mass luxury, mid-level and fast-fashion (justification of brand choices to represent each category set out in chapter 3.3). In terms of exclusivity, the brand representing luxury (Saint Laurent) had a mean ranking of 1.4, with 74% of respondents deeming the luxury brand as the most exclusive of the four brands. Quality was also similarly ranked to exclusivity for the brand representing luxury (Burberry), with a mean ranking of 1.6 by respondents. However compared to exclusivity, there were a lower number of participants who ranked the luxury brand as having the highest quality, standing at 57%.
The mass luxury brand for exclusivity (*Tommy Hilfiger*) was given a mean ranking of 2. Coinciding with this, the mass luxury brand for quality (*Polo Ralph Lauren*) was also given a mean ranking of 2. However, a higher proportion of respondents placed the mass luxury brand as the highest quality than the most exclusive of the four brands shown; with 33% placing the mass luxury brand as the highest quality compared to 17% of respondents deeming the brand representing mass luxury as the most exclusive. For exclusivity, the brand representing mid-level (*Levis*) was given a mean ranking of 3.8, with the mid-level brand in the quality ranking (*Carhartt*) attributing a near identical mean ranking of 3.9. Fast-fashion brands received the lowest mean ranking in both categories. For exclusivity, the fast-fashion brand (*Topshop*) received a mean ranking of 3.8, with 90% of respondents identifying the fast-fashion brand as the least exclusive. Secondly, the mean quality ranking for the fast-fashion brand *Zara* stood at 3.6. However, a lower proportion of respondents ranked the fast-fashion brand as the lowest quality in comparison with exclusivity, with 67% deeming the fast-fashion brand lowest in terms of quality.

The results shown in figure 19 indicate that millennial consumers do have clear perceptions of the quality and exclusivity of fashion brands. As the brands selected were mostly done so based on their retail prices (see chapter 3.2), there is an indication that millennial consumers do have a heuristic thinking process when making judgements on a brand. The results support Parguel et al’s (2016) statement that consumers have higher perceptions of quality and prestige when the price of a product is also high. This is as the brands ranked highest in exclusivity and quality are also the brands that retail their products at the highest price.

Additionally, the data gathered indicates that consumers do hold much lower expectations of quality towards fast-fashion brands. The majority of respondents placed the brand representative of fast-fashion as the lowest quality of the four brands displayed. Gabrielli et al (2013) suggest that as consumers hold lower expectations about the quality of the fast-fashion brand product, they are generally more satisfied, as the quality surpasses their expectations. Figure 19 demonstrates these lower expectations; whilst data in figure 17 demonstrates that respondents do hold positive post-purchase evaluations in relation to the quality of fast-fashion brands products.

In agreement with Truong et al’s (2009) study on the positioning strategies of mass luxury brands, figure 19 demonstrates that respondents hold perceptions of higher perceived quality and exclusivity with mass luxury brands than other clothing brands that offer products at a similar price level. This indicates that the two brands utilised in the survey,
Polo Ralph Lauren and Tommy Hilfiger, have successfully undertaken the mentioned task in the literature review from Kastanakis & Balabanis (2012) of maintaining a perceived exclusivity and quality from the customer’s viewpoint whilst also increasing brand awareness, in order to grow their revenues and market share. However, more research would have to be undertaken involving a wide range of brands that can be characterised as mass luxury to be able to generalise this assumption beyond the two stated brands.

4.6 Brand Signage

If your favourite brand was to remove its signage from products, would you continue to purchase from this brand?

![Pie chart showing 69% Yes, 31% No](chart.png)

**Figure 20: Number of consumers willing to purchase from their favourite brand without signage on products.**

Figure 20 shows that 69% of respondents would continue to purchase from their favourite clothing brand if the brand removed its logos or symbols from products. To gain further qualitative data, those who answered “Yes” to the question shown in figure 19 were asked to explain why they would continue to purchase; those who answered “No” were asked to give a reason why they would not continue to purchase. The full list of open ended responses can be found in Appendix B.
One reason that came frequently from respondents who claimed they would continue to purchase was that they saw the brand name as an assurance of the quality of the clothing item. Most responses identified that they hold favourable opinions about the brand not due to the signage, but as a result of the quality and the design of the clothing. Take for instance participant 20’s response

“As quality is of high importance for the branded apparel which I wear, I would continue to purchase with less outlandish branding as I trust the brand.”

Participant 20’s response amongst many others (see appendix C) further highlights the necessity for quality in order to hold favourable associations and cultivate loyalty. With most respondents identifying that they would continue to purchase without brand signage, there is an indication amongst results that there is too much attention in current literature (Okonkwo, 2007; Keller, 2013) on the positive characteristics and associations brand signage can portray.
CHAPTER 5: Concluding thoughts & suggestions

This chapter will draw on conclusions and recommendations in relation to the three objectives identified in Chapter 1.

5.1 Suggestions & Recommendations

i) Fast-fashion brands should continue to focus marketing activities toward a behavioural loyalty.

The results indicate that the majority of consumers who purchase from fast-fashion brands do not do so for the brand’s image, but rather for the affordability and quality for the price. Aaker (1997) identifies that brands can have personality traits that are usually associated with people, and that when consumers identify with a brand’s personality a loyalty toward the brand can grow. Data in figure 14 supports Aaker’s viewpoint, with a majority of respondents claiming that they do prefer brands with personalities they view as similar to their own. Despite this, the results demonstrate that the millennial consumer does not pay attention to fast-fashion brands personalities and mostly have a loyalty that is behavioural with little appreciation of fast-fashion brands unique characteristics. Bandyopadhyay & Martell (2007) would argue that this indicates a lack of attitudinal loyalty among millennial consumers towards fast-fashion brands as respondents mostly do not claim to admire these brands for their brand values and unique characteristics but rather for their affordability.

At first glance, the research may point toward a lack of attitudinal loyalty being a real negative of operating in a fast-fashion system. As set out in the literature review, attitudinal loyalty benefits the brand through an increased chance of positive WOM and increased engagement from consumers in brand activities amongst other benefits. However, missing out on these benefits may be justifiable, Cheng (2011) identifies that consumers who are attitudinally loyal but do not translate this loyalty into a behavioural form with an actual purchase are not beneficial to the brand in terms of revenue. With the large economies of scale that fast-fashion brands operate in and the fast response systems they utilise, high
sales levels are essential (Cachon & Swinney, 2011). There is a clear trend amongst the large majority of respondents indicating that they are behaviourally loyal towards fast-fashion brands which will, in turn, benefit these brands financially. Despite the likelihood of these respondents being multi-brand loyal (Knox & Walker, 2001) to a number of fast-fashion brands which is associated with behavioural loyalty; the researcher suggests that these brands should continue to focus on cultivating a behavioural loyalty with their marketing activities as high levels of sales are more significant to sustain and justify the current fast response systems and high levels of production these brands operate with.

ii) Mass luxury brands may be deemed lower in terms of quality and exclusivity but the brand image has not suffered drastically from a downgrading strategy.

Although results suggest that the majority of consumers rank luxury brands with the largest retail prices as the most exclusive and of the highest quality, both luxury brands in figure 19 ranked highly in both aspects; 33% of respondents deemed the mass luxury brand Polo Ralph Lauren as being of a higher quality than the stated luxury brand Burberry. This demonstrates that a downgrading strategy can be achieved without a severe dilution of the brand image, which Kim & Lavack (1996) identify as a major downfall of a downgrading line extension strategy.

From the data gathered, the mass luxury brand will inherently target the millennial consumer. This is as the majority of respondents seek characteristics synonymous with luxury brands but are unwilling to pay the premium prices that come with this (see figure 9). 10% of respondents admitted that they would be put off if their favourite brand increased its accessibility, which does indicate that the substance of the risk of losing loyal brand advocates who offer more than just a stable sales basis (Hennigs et al, 2013). Despite this, the researcher concludes from the data, that amongst millennial consumers the brand dilution and loss of loyal consumers does not appear severe enough to dispel the downgrading strategy, as perceived quality and exclusivity can still be maintained.

iii) Quality should be the most important aspect for fashion brands to cultivate a loyalty from the millennial consumer.

Despite the emphasis on brand image, unique characteristics and personality throughout branding, and fashion branding literature (Aaker, 1997; Theng So et al, 2013; Da Silveira et
al, 2013; Huang & Sarigöllü, 2014), throughout the results the majority of respondents frequently mention quality and other tangible aspects such as the fit and style of clothing as the most important brand aspects.

Cailleux et al (2009) claim that firms operating in the luxury fashion market are altering their branding focus towards creating an emotional attachment between the consumer and the brand. Results shown in figure 13 and figure 14 do suggest that there is the basis for what Thomson et al (2005) describes as an emotional attachment to form with the majority of respondents.

Aaker & Joachimsthaler (2000 p. 33) claim brand identity should be the “cornerstone” of a brand’s strategy; however, results from the sample of millennial consumers indicate that there are lower levels of appreciation of brand identity than was previously thought. Despite figure 13 demonstrating that 84% of participants do recognise distinct personality traits in fashion brands, and a further 92% of these respondents claiming to prefer brands with personalities that they can relate to their own (figure 14); this appreciation of brand personality mostly does not translate through to the reasons respondents claim they recommend brands (figure 6) or the reasons they repurchase from brands (figure 12).

For these reasons and the results collected, the researcher recommends that primarily fashion brands should ensure that their products remain of a high quality throughout any changes such as a downgrading strategy. For fast-fashion brands especially, results demonstrate that quality is essential in ensuring that consumers are satisfied post-purchase in order for them to make a positive evaluation and become behaviourally loyal.

For brands deemed as mass luxury, quality is also essential to ensure the risks associated with a downgrading strategy (see section 2.3) are kept to a minimum. If the quality of products remains high but accessibility increases, results indicate that there will not be a dramatic effect on brand image and brand loyalty amongst the millennial consumer group.

5.2 Research limitations

As referred to in section 3.3, the sample size for this study was relatively small in comparison with other studies in fashion branding literature. The small sample size of 43 means it is not possible to generalise these results as a representation of the majority of millennial
consumers in the UK. Furthermore, the convenience sampling technique utilised resulted in a slight demographic imbalance, with 60% of respondents being male, which is unrepresentative of fashion consumption; with Mintel (2016) identifying that there is a larger amount of fashion consumption amongst women than there is in men within the UK.

The researcher is aware that statistical analysis tools such as SPSS could have been utilised in order to gain an increased insight into the results. As a large proportion of the research resulted in a qualitative data to be interpreted by the researcher, the decision was made to simplify the process. Furthermore the mixed method approach was adopted to ensure results had both a statistical and interpretivist background.

Additionally, results shown in figure 19 cannot be generalised as respondent’s opinions on each category. This is as specific brands were shown to respondents, the ranking respondents gave to each brand may only be representative of their opinion on that specific brand rather than all brands who share similar characteristics and offer products at the same prices.

5.3 Further Research

Despite this research not being able to conclusively identify the reasons behind brand loyalty in the fashion sector, it does show clear patterns amongst respondent’s opinions on clothing brands and the factors affecting their purchase decisions. With an increase in resources, a future practitioner will be able to take the basis of the research design and undertake the research on a much larger scale with greater analytical tools. With more time, future researchers will be able to use more advanced software such as the mentioned SPSS. However, there are clear patterns in the data collected, which if replicated on a larger scale to ensure generalisability could inform market development.

5.4 Closing Statement

Brand loyalty is of vital importance to almost all firms, especially those operating within the fashion industry. The aspect of product quality is known to be integral to sparking positive associations with a brand. Yet, with the many brands the consumer has to choose from in the current market, firms are attempting to differentiate away from competitors by offering intangible benefits to become part of the consumers own self-image. Whilst results indicate
that these intangible benefits can have a positive attempt on the millennial consumer’s perception of the brand and brand loyalty, quality should not and cannot be overlooked in the creation of a loyal consumer basis.
APPENDICES
Appendix A: Participant consent and information form

Fashion & Brand Loyalty

Summary of Project
The aim of this work is to assess the factors in consumer brand choices and loyalty within the fashion industry. This project has received the approval of Cardiff School of Managements” Ethics Committee, Cardiff Metropolitan University.

Participation
You have been selected to take part in this survey as you fall under the 18-34 age bracket (millennial), whom firms within the fashion industry heavily market their products towards. You have the right to withdraw from the research at any time you choose. In order to make this data as valid as possible, please do answer the questions as accurately as possible. The survey should take no longer than 5-7 minutes. Upon receiving the data, the results will be interpreted and analysed, comparing against other previous theory to discover any similarities or contradictions.

Privacy
Participants will remain anonymous throughout the survey. Participants are required to state their age and gender at the beginning of the study. If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study please do not hesitate to contact me. Email: st20063985@cardiffmet.ac.uk
Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this survey.

I understand that participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason or I can discuss my concerns with the researcher Marcus Tansey (st20063985@cardiffmet.ac.uk). I understand that my data will be stored on password protected computers, anonymised after completion of the survey.
and that no one will be able to trace my information back to me. The raw data will be retained for up to three years when it will be deleted/destroyed.

☐ By ticking this box I agree to take part in this study.

Appendix B: Questionnaire

Gender

☐ Male
☐ Female

Age:

Have you purchased an item of branded clothing in the last 12 months?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Do you feel a sense of loyalty to any fashion brands?

☐ Yes
☐ No

Are there any fashion brands that you would recommend to your friends or family?

☐ Yes
☐ No
☐ Not sure

If you answered Yes to the question above, please state the name of the brand/brands you have recommended and the reasons for doing so.

Do you see certain fashion brands as having distinct personalities that would usually be attributed to a person such as sophistication, ruggedness and competence?

☐ Yes
☐ Maybe
☐ No
If you answered **Yes** to the above question. Do you prefer clothing brands that have personalities you can relate to your own?

- Yes
- No

Please rank the following characteristics in order of what you seek in a clothing brand:

- High Quality (1)
- Individuality (2)
- An identifiable logo or symbol (3)
- Good product design (4)
- Strong image/identity (5)
- Popularity (6)

Please state one of your favourite clothing brands that you have purchased items from on more than one occasion and the reasons for doing so:

What is the maximum price you are willing to spend on a branded item of clothing?

- £0-25
- £25-50
- £50-75
- £75-100
- £100-150
- £150-200
- £200-300
- £300-500
- £500+

For my favourite brand/s, I am willing to pay (X)% more than I would on another brand.

- 0%
- 1-10%
- 10-25%
- 25-40%
- 40-50%
- 50-75%
- 75-100%
- +100%
Please rank the following statement from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly agree (1)</th>
<th>Agree (2)</th>
<th>Somewhat agree (3)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (4)</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree (5)</th>
<th>Disagree (6)</th>
<th>Strongly disagree (7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am likely to dislike a brand I once held in a high regard, when mass quantities of people are also wearing it.</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please rank the following brands in terms of exclusivity (1 being the most exclusive):

_____ Levis (1)
_____ Saint Laurent (Yves Saint Laurent) (2)
_____ Tommy Hilfiger (3)
_____ Topshop (Topman) (4)

Please rank the following brands in terms of the quality of their products (1 being the highest quality):

_____ Polo Ralph Lauren (1)
_____ Zara (2)
_____ Burberry (3)
_____ Carhartt (4)

Do you follow any fashion/clothing brands on any form of social media? (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc)

☐ Yes
☐ No
If you answered Yes to the above question. How often do you interact with the brand? For example liking content or commenting on posts.

- Never
- Every Day
- Weekly
- Fortnightly (4)
- Monthly (5)
- Yearly or very rarely

Would you consider yourself to be part of a brand community? -do you keep up to date with the brands activities or discuss the brand with other people who are also enthusiasts?

- Yes
- No
- Not sure

If your favourite clothing brand was to remove its signage from products (e.g. logo), would you continue to purchase from this brand?

- Yes
- No

If you answered Yes to the above question. What are the reasons for continuing to purchase? If you answered No, why would you not continue to purchase?

If your favourite brand was to reduce its exclusivity and become more affordable, would this deter you from purchasing again?

- Yes
- Maybe
- No

Are there any "fast fashion" or high street brands (Zara, River Island, H&M etc) that you purchase from frequently?

- Yes
- No

If you answered Yes to the above question. What is it that you admire about the brand/s?
Please rank the following statements from strongly agree to strongly disagree:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly agree (1)</th>
<th>Agree (2)</th>
<th>Somewhat agree (3)</th>
<th>Neither agree nor disagree (4)</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree (5)</th>
<th>Disagree (6)</th>
<th>Strongly disagree (7)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If my favourite brand lets me down with the quality of a product I am likely to not remain loyal to the brand and tell others about the poor quality.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>If I am satisfied with the quality of a product from a new brand I am likely to purchase again from this brand.</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
<td>[ ]</td>
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<tr>
<td>If I am satisfied with the standard of quality from a new brand I am likely to tell others about the experience.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Is an increase in personalisation and influence on a brands products and service something that is of interest to you?

- [ ] Yes
- [ ] Maybe
- [ ] No
Appendix C: Full research results

Question 1- Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>60.47%</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>39.53%</td>
<td>17</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
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**Question 2 - Age:**

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<tr>
<td>19</td>
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<tr>
<td>22</td>
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Question 3 - Have you purchased an item of branded clothing in the last 12 months?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>95.35%</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4.65%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 4- Do you feel a sense of loyalty to any fashion brands?

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>72.09%</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>27.91%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 5.1 - Are there any fashion brands that you would recommend to your friends or family?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>69.77%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>13.95%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>16.28%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Yes  | 14%  
Not sure | 16%  
No | 70%
Question 5.2- If you answered Yes to the question above, please state the name of the brand/brands you have recommended and the reasons for doing so.

Recommended Selected. This was due to the quality of the clothing, good fit and the clothing has lasted me a long time, some brands I have bought from have looked damaged after washes, but items I have purchased from Selected have not. This is a main reason I have recommended Ralph Lauren- recommended to a friend who was looking for a high quality shirt

Urban outfitters/ nice fits

Adidas- comfortable and can be worn for different purposes

Recommended ASOS for affordable and trendy clothing

Roxy- pretty dresses

Nike sb. Great quality

Fred Perry, Levi, ASOS, Farah

No fear

Jack Wills - good quality clothing, nice fitting, reasonably priced  Ralph Lauren - quality clothing

I have recommended brands based on quality (for example: APC, JW Anderson), or because of a certain, distinctive style (for example: Hood by Air, Places + Faces). I steer away from recommending brands to people that I personally wear, because fashion, like many art forms, is subjective and is to be viewed by oneself in the way which one chooses. Because of this, I feel no need to encroach my fashion views or ideas on other people.

Whistles- the pieces are of a good quality, durable, stylish and re wearable. Recently recommended to a friend who was looking for a new sweatshirt.

boohoo as they have really pretty designs and are great value

Nice clothes, nice fit decent brand

North face for reliability, practicality and durability.

Nike shoes, for comfort.

Nike, always good quality

Ralph Lauren/ Levis/ Cahartt/ Selected Homme/ Farah- all affordable and stylish

Vans, Ralph Lauren, Topman- I like them so I would recommend

Nike because they offer so many different types of clothes

BDG, lazy oafs, Topshop- affordable

Marshall Artist, liked the clobber
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Boohoo</td>
<td>Really cheap and OK quality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nike</td>
<td>Recommend for essential gear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H&amp;M</td>
<td>OK quality and stylish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superdry</td>
<td>As I work for them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph Lauren</td>
<td>Good quality and lovely clothes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Fear</td>
<td>Because I stuck with this brand and I like the image</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diadora</td>
<td>I think it is new, cool and indie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A.P.C</td>
<td>Quality of the products high and my friends have a similar taste in clothing to me</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 6 – Do you see brands as having distinct personalities that would usually be attributed to a person such as sophistication, ruggedness and competence?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes,</td>
<td>83.72%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>11.63%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>4.65%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 6.2 - If you answered Yes to the above question. Do you prefer clothing brands that have personalities you can relate to your own?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>92.31%</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>7.69%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 7- Please rank the following characteristics in order of what you seek in a clothing brand:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>High Quality</th>
<th>Mean</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>High Quality</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Individuality</td>
<td>3.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>An identifiable logo or symbol</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Good product design</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strong image/identity</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Popularity</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>High Quality</td>
<td>48.84%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>41.86%</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6.98%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Individuality</td>
<td>9.30%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>16.28%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>23.26%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>An identifiable logo or symbol</td>
<td>4.65%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>4.65%</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>20.93%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>23.26%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Good product design</td>
<td>32.56%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>30.23%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16.28%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16.28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Strong image/identity</td>
<td>4.65%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>6.98%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25.58%</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>27.91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Popularity</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6.98%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9.30%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Question 8- Please state one of your favourite clothing brands that you have purchased items from on more than one occasion and the reasons for doing so:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Brand</th>
<th>Reason</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban Outfitters</td>
<td>I have always liked the general style and the clothing looks quite individual. I like my clothing to look quite different to others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adidas</td>
<td>always been high quality and very durable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Saint Laurent</td>
<td>pricey but really high quality and not many other people wear it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Outfitters</td>
<td>Boohoo- really wide range of clothing which is similar to my style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Levi's</td>
<td>bought a few denim jackets and jeans because they’re stylish and durable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Whistles /</td>
<td>the jeans and dresses are my favourite and like the minimal style.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superdry</td>
<td>I like the image of the brand and good quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zara</td>
<td>really like the style of the clothes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vans</td>
<td>I like the style, quality and I know the fit is how I like it.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Carhartt</td>
<td>Practical and fashionable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No fear</td>
<td>like the fearless image.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jack Wills</td>
<td>good quality clothing, nice fitting, reasonably priced Ralph Lauren - quality clothing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supreme New York</td>
<td>Supreme as a brand has revolutionised street wear, since starting out as an anti-brand in the later 90's, they have gone on to turn the fashion world upside down, collaborating with some of the biggest names in fashion, however still sticking true to Supreme's routes of not caring about connecting to the masses. If you don't know about Supreme or the subculture behind it, don't worry you're not meant to...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edit</td>
<td>I like the minimal style, its good quality and it’s quite unique as it’s quite unknown.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oasis</td>
<td>The designs are nice and simple and work with my other clothes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ralph Lauren</td>
<td>Nice material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nike</td>
<td>this brand supplies nice affordable clothing that can be used casually as well as in leisure activities from items like t-shirts down to footwear which are durable.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nike, levis</td>
<td>both decent for my needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nike sportswear</td>
<td>as it is good quality, reliable and a typically stylish brand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fat face</td>
<td>t-shirts, comfortable and great material.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tommy Hilfiger</td>
<td>really high quality and loads of different styles.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
New Balance - comfort.

Levis - Californian Heritage brand with a relaxed personality. Strong reputation for good quality and technical denim.

stussy, love the look of the clothes.

I like Levi's because the quality is good and it lasts a while.

Agora, Unique items that don't sell anywhere else.

Element t shirts... I like the plainness.

BDG, I believe this brand has an individuality.

Ralph Lauren - I like the design, quality and look of most of their clothing.

Nike, comfortable, recognised sports brand.

Selected because I like the nice simple designs in the women's section.

Nike: good quality.

Specialised - Best cycling kit around.

Yumi Clothing - they have a good range of dresses and accessories different to other high street stores and brands.

Primark - really cheap and a lot of products that I often like.

Fred Perry for good quality.

Ralph Lauren, good quality and timeless fashion.

Superdry - affordable and good quality.

Next - positive previous experiences with the brand and good quality.

Addidas - good specialised gear.

Saint Laurent as love the design of the products and the whole classic French image. Penfield as the coats and winter wear are warm and a decent price for the quality.
Question 9.1 - What is the maximum price you are willing to spend on a branded item of clothing?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>£500+</td>
<td>2.33%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>£300-500</td>
<td>9.30%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>£200-300</td>
<td>2.33%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>£150-200</td>
<td>4.65%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>£100-150</td>
<td>11.63%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>£75-100</td>
<td>39.53%</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>£50-75</td>
<td>20.93%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>£25-50</td>
<td>4.65%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>£0-25</td>
<td>4.65%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 9.2 - For my favourite brand/s, I am willing to pay (X)% more than I would on another brand.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>1-10%</td>
<td>9.30%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>10-25%</td>
<td>27.91%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>25-40%</td>
<td>30.23%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>40-50%</td>
<td>16.28%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>50-75%</td>
<td>4.65%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>75-100%</td>
<td>2.33%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>+100%</td>
<td>6.98%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Question 10.1 - Please rank the following brands in terms of exclusivity (1 being the most exclusive):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Levis</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
<td>11.90%</td>
<td>76.19%</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Saint Laurent (Yves Saint Laurent)</td>
<td>73.81%</td>
<td>19.05%</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
<td>2.38%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Tommy Hilfiger</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
<td>66.67%</td>
<td>14.29%</td>
<td>2.38%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Topshop (Topman)</td>
<td>2.38%</td>
<td>2.38%</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.76%</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 10.2 - Please rank the following brands in terms of the quality of their products (1 being the highest quality):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Question</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Polo Ralph Lauren</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>38.10%</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>26.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Zara</td>
<td>0.00%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>26.19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Burberry</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30.95%</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Carhart</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>35.71%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 11.1 - Do you follow any fashion/clothing brands on any form of social media? (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram etc)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>76.19%</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>23.81%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 11.2 - If you answered Yes to the above question. How often do you interact with the brand? For example liking content or commenting on posts.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>8.82%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Every Day</td>
<td>2.94%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>41.18%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Fortnightly</td>
<td>20.59%</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Monthly</td>
<td>17.65%</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yearly or very rarely</td>
<td>8.82%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 12 - Would you consider yourself to be part of a brand community? - do you keep up to date with the brands activities or discuss the brand with other people who are also enthusiasts?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>21.43%</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>71.43%</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>7.14%</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 13.1 - If your favorite clothing brand was to remove its signage from products (e.g. logo), would you continue to purchase from this brand?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>69.05%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>30.95%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 13.2 - If you answered Yes to the above question. What are the reasons for continuing to purchase? If you answered No, why would you not continue to purchase?

My favourite clothing brand is mostly not associated with a clear logo. I like the design and the style of the clothes rather than a stand out logo. I see the brand name as an assurance of quality rather than something to show to others.

I want people to know what brand I am wearing. I think a logo is really important.

Saint Laurent is a brand I love for the design and quality of the items. Although I do like the subtle branding, I would still purchase without it.

My favourite brand barely has any signage on products.

I really like the logo of my favorite brand and it looks stylish in my opinion (three Adidas stripes).

Although I like the logo- I prefer the quality of Levi's.

I like my favourite brand for the style and the quality, not overly fussed on branding.

The logo and branding make the clothes for me.

I really like the logo on my favourite brand.

If the quality and fit is still good I'm not concerned about the logo.

Still good design and quality.

I love the no fear logo.

I like people to see what brand I am wearing.

Once you buy into a subculture, it's no longer about the logo of the brand, it's about the design of the products, the creative direction behind the image being portrayed. With or without a logo, you know the image of the brand and subculture and that's the reason you buy the product.

I like my favorite brands as the designs are up to date and are great quality, im not fussy on overly branded products.

I like the designs rather than the branding.

Because I wouldn't be interested in the brand.

Because generally I buy clothing with a small logo which adds a nice touch without it I'd be wearing a plain boring shirt.

Because the logo is incorporated into the design of most of their clothing items, which I really like.

Because the logo/brand is not the main reason behind purchasing the product.

Not bothered about the logo.

Quality of the clothing.

No relation anymore.
As quality is of high importance for branded apparel which I wear, I would continue to purchase with less outlandish branding as I trust the brand.

because the clothing is high quality and good style.

I don't pay top price for the name, or for the logo, I pay because the quality is good.

Still good designs.

Would have to see what difference have been made.

Quality.

I usually like the design or look of the clothing.

Could get the same type of item at much less cost.

Most clothes I wear don't have branding.

I like the logo to be on the clothing.

Logos don't matter to me.

Still like the style and design of their clothes and it's a good price point.

Sound logo which I really like.

Quality and style.

Good quality and nice design.

I like the clothes.

Still perceive it to have the same quality even if the brand is less identifiable.

Quality.

I enjoy quite minimalistic designs anyway, not heavy branding.
Question 14 - If your favourite brand was to reduce its exclusivity and become more affordable, would this deter you from purchasing again?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>9.52%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Maybe</td>
<td>33.33%</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>57.14%</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 15.1 - Are there any "fast fashion" or high street brands (Zara, River Island, H&M etc) that you purchase from frequently?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
<th>Answer</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>69.05%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>30.95%</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Question 15.2 - If you answered Yes to the above question. What is it that you admire about the brand/s?

I admire these brands as they offer styles similar up to date with the latest trends whilst also being a lot less expensive. I also like to purchase more essential items from these brands.

Fits my style.

H&M is really similar to my style and is cheaper than some other brands.

I purchase most of my items from these brands. I do like them but do see them as cheaper alternatives to brands I prefer.

They're affordable and offer great clothes mostly.

I purchase essential items which aren't as noticeable from these brands. I like the affordability.

I but a lot from these stores, I like the styles and the low prices.

Great clothes and can buy quickly.

Affordable and good selection of essentials.

Zara. Good cheap stylish clothes.

I like to buy my basic items from these brands e.g. jeans. As well as the occasional item that I like the look of. I like Zara a lot.

There is a lot of choice and the styles are really up to date and affordable.

Cheap but effective.

Cheap affordable, generally items that are one colour like black jeans or white under t-shirts.

H&M- cheap.

Zara- love the clothes

Affordability, up to date/current.

Good quality and somewhat affordable.

Constantly keeping up to date with trends.

Urban outfitters really nice plain clothes.

They often portray a lot of catwalk looks but not as extravagant.

Like the clothes and purchase a lot.

Variety and sizing.

Good selection of clothes, decent prices.

Zara- close to more expensive brands.

Decent quality at affordable prices.

Cheap and okay quality.
Fairly cheap and good quality.

Cheap.
Question 16 - Please rank the following statements from strongly agree to strongly disagree:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Neither agree or disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>If I am satisfied with the standard of quality from a new brand I am likely to tell others about the experience.</td>
<td>4.8% (2)</td>
<td>57.1% (24)</td>
<td>31% (13)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4.8% (2)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2.4% (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I am satisfied with the quality of a product from a new brand I am likely to purchase again from this brand.</td>
<td>28.6% (12)</td>
<td>59.5% (25)</td>
<td>7.1% (3)</td>
<td>2.4% (1)</td>
<td>2.4% (1)</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If my favourite brand lets me down with the quality of a product I am likely to not remain loyal to the brand and tell others about the poor quality.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>38.1% (16)</td>
<td>26.2% (11)</td>
<td>21.4% (9)</td>
<td>9.5% (4)</td>
<td>4.8% (2)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix D: Ethics Approval Form

When undertaking a research or enterprise project, Cardiff Met staff and students are obliged to complete this form in order that the ethics implications of that project may be considered.

If the project requires ethics approval from an external agency (e.g., NHS), you will not need to seek additional ethics approval from Cardiff Met. You should however complete Part One of this form and attach a copy of your ethics letter(s) of approval in order that your School has a record of the project.

The document Ethics application guidance notes will help you complete this form. It is available from the Cardiff Met website. The School or Unit in which you are based may also have produced some guidance documents, please consult your supervisor or School Ethics Coordinator.

Once you have completed the form, sign the declaration and forward to the appropriate person(s) in your School or Unit.

PLEASE NOTE:
Participant recruitment or data collection MUST NOT commence until ethics approval has been obtained.

PART ONE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of applicant:</th>
<th>Marcus Tansey- ethics number 2016D0232</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor (if student project):</td>
<td>Paul Buckley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School / Unit:</td>
<td>Cardiff Metropolitan University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student number (if applicable):</td>
<td>20063985</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Programme enrolled on (if applicable):</td>
<td>BA Hons Business Management with</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Title:</td>
<td>Fashion &amp; Loyalty: The Extent to which consumer’s remain loyal to brands within the Clothing Industry.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expected start date of data collection:</td>
<td>01/02/2017</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Approximate duration of data collection:</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funding Body (if applicable):</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other researcher(s) working on the project:</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve NHS patients or staff?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the study involve taking samples of human origin from participants?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your project fall entirely within one of the following categories:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paper based, involving only documents in the public domain</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory based, not involving human participants or human tissue samples</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practice based not involving human participants (eg curatorial, practice audit)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compulsory projects in professional practice (eg Initial Teacher Education)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A project for which external approval has been obtained (e.g., NHS)</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

If you have answered YES to any of these questions, expand on your answer in the non-technical summary. No further information regarding your project is required.

If you have answered NO to all of these questions, you must complete Part 2 of this form

In no more than 150 words, give a non-technical summary of the project

The project aims to investigate the extent to which brand loyalty effects consumer decision making within the fashion industry and the reasons for this perceived loyalty or lack of loyalty. The author will conduct secondary research in the form of a literature review which will examine and evaluate existing data and theories on the subject of brand loyalty and how it relates to the clothing industry. Primary Research will be undertaken in the form of a survey with participants to gain quantitative data. The primary research will gain data from a number of participants, particularly those deemed as “millennials” who are so integral to the clothing industry as well as an older demographic to see if opinions change with age. An analysis of the primary research data will then be constructed, comparing it against secondary research to identify any contradictions and similarities to previous theories in the field.
**DECLARATION:**

I confirm that this project conforms with the Cardiff Met Research Governance Framework

I confirm that I will abide by the Cardiff Met requirements regarding confidentiality and anonymity when conducting this project.

**STUDENTS:** I confirm that I will not disseminate any material produced as a result of this project without the prior approval of my supervisor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of the applicant:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**FOR STUDENT PROJECTS ONLY**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name of supervisor:</th>
<th>Date:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of supervisor:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

**Research Ethics Committee use only**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision reached:</th>
<th>Project approved</th>
<th>Project approved in principle</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision deferred</th>
<th>Project not approved</th>
<th>Project rejected</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
PART TWO

A RESEARCH DESIGN

A1 Will you be using an approved protocol in your project? No

A2 If yes, please state the name and code of the approved protocol to be used\(^1\)

n/a

A3 Describe the research design to be used in your project

**Survey:** The researcher will gain quantitative data in the form of an online survey, taking advantage of web-based tools such as ‘SurveyMonkey’ and promoting the survey through social media. ‘SurveyMonkey’ and other online based services are convenient and are used by many multinational companies (White & Rayner, 2014 p.65). The researcher will utilise an itemised rating scale within the survey which has been shown to be effective in previous research on brands and fashion (see Muncy, 1996; Goldsmith et al, 1993). The scale will be composed of five Likert-type items scored on 5 point scales ranging from *strongly agree to strongly disagree*. This technique is simple to self-complete for participants when explaining their attitudes and allows mean scores for each statement to be calculated (Brace, 2008). The results will then be analysed by the researcher using Microsoft Excel to calculate the central tendencies (mean, median & mode) and to see if there are any fluctuations in results depending on gender and age of the participant.

\(^1\) An Approved Protocol is one which has been approved by Cardiff Met to be used under supervision of designated members of staff; a list of approved protocols can be found on the Cardiff Met website [here](#).
Survey Sample: The sample will mainly consist of millennials, those aged 18-34 (Horowitz & Bruce, 2012). The research will use convenience sampling as the survey will be promoted onto social media and the participants who take part will do so as they are looking at social media. However, the researcher does have a form of control as to who can take part in the survey. This is as social media allows the survey to only be sent to desired participants if required, making use of purposive sampling as judgement will be used to select the most suitable participants that will best enable the researcher to answer the research question (Saunders et al, 2012). The sample frame will mostly contain sample units that are millennials due to the convenience sampling used, however it will also consist of an older demographic to see if there are any changes with age. This utilises maximum variation sampling (Saunders et al, 2012) to see if attitudes on clothing brands changes with age. The sample frame will contain over 400 units. The sample size will be 80. This will give the researcher enough data to form an argument on the research topic and the relatively large size in comparison to the sample frame will lower the likely error of generalising the population. The survey will take a maximum of 5 minutes to complete for each participant, increasing the likelihood of participants completing the survey to the best of their abilities. The survey will only ask for the participants age bracket e.g. 18-21; and the participants gender in an optional section of the survey. This ensures that the participants confidentiality remains intact.

References

Website

Horovitz, Bruce (4 May 2012). "After Gen X, Millennials, what should next generation be?". USA Today.

Books


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A4 Will the project involve deceptive or covert research?</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A5 If yes, give a rationale for the use of deceptive or covert research</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A6 Will the project have security sensitive implications?</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A7 If yes, please explain what they are and the measures that are proposed to address them</td>
<td>n/a</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**B PREVIOUS EXPERIENCE**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>B1 What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project do you have?</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>B2 Student project only</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What previous experience of research involving human participants relevant to this project does your supervisor have?</td>
<td>Paul Buckley has over 35 years’ experience in research in industry, government and academia. He has consulted internationally in research in the U.K, Europe, U.S.A. and Mexico and has taught business research and statistics at three leading U.K. business schools. He has conducted policy research for MAFF, been a consultant to international law firms and has worked for, and been a consultant on consumer issues to a number of European blue chip companies and SMEs. His research formed the basis for the International Grocery Distribution guidelines on food package labelling and contributed to Government legislation on food labelling. He has a sound commercial understanding of</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
business, business research and strategy and is very experienced in project design and management. He has wide ranging experience of advising industry on research finding implications, and extensive experience in statistical analysis. He has made numerous appearances on TV and radio and at international conferences, being an invited speaker at the Royal Institution; and has been quoted in and/or had articles published in, all the major newspapers in the U.K.

C POTENTIAL RISKS

C1 What potential risks do you foresee?

None

C2 How will you deal with the potential risks?

n/a
Reference List


