TO WHAT EXTENT DOES SELF-IMAGE AFFECT BRAND PREFERENCE WHEN SHOPPING FOR FAST MOVING CONSUMER GOODS (FMCGs)?

A STUDY OF THE YELLOW FATS CATEGORY

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ABSTRACT

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To what extent does self-image affect brand preference when shopping for fast moving consumer goods (FMCGs)? A study of the yellow fats category

There has been a great deal of research investigating the affect of self-image on brand preference. While previous research has found that self-image does affect brand preference, much of this research has focused on high value and high involvement products. There is a significant gap in the literature, identified by Jamal and Goode who state that:

> More work is needed to establish the significance of self-congruence on brand preferences… in the case of high frequency and low value brands. (2001, p.490)

The purpose of this study is to gain an insight into how consumers make choices when shopping for fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs) and to identify whether self-image affects brand preference in this context. This study focuses specifically on yellow fats, a term used to refer to butter, margarine and spreads.

A multi-method research design was used in the form of twenty-five qualitative individual depth interviews and twenty-one hours of in-store observations. Quantitative Likert scales were used to measure levels of self-image congruence based on Sirgy's (1997) approach.

The findings of this research have clearly identified that there is a link between self-image and brand preference in the context of yellow fats. This is significant as no research has previously identified a link between self-image and brand preference in this category.

In addition to this, this research has two major contributions to literature:

1. It is the first to visually depict self-image congruence.
2. It has also identified two factors moderating self-image congruence that have not been referenced in any previous study in this area; recency of purchase and the notion of wanting to be the perfect female role model.

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Most importantly:

To my Mum, Dad, Grandma, Grandad, Jude, Jonny and Flo I would like to say

'Thank you for EVERYTHING!'

Your belief in me is what kept me going and stopped me giving up

(even when I really, <u>really</u> wanted to).

This is dedicated to you...

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.0 Research Purpose

There has been a great deal of research investigating the affect of a consumer's self-image on their brand preferences. While previous research (Sirgy 1982; Malhotra 1988; Hong and Zinkhan 1995; Eriksen 1996; Graeff 1996(a); Sirgy and Su 2000; Jamal and Goode 2001) has found that self-image does affect brand preference, much of this research has focused on high value and high involvement products. There is a significant gap in the literature, identified by Jamal and Goode who state that:

> ...more work is needed to establish the significance of self-congruence on brand preferences… in the case of high frequency and low value brands (2001, p.490).

There has been very little research focusing specifically on self-image and brand preference in the context of fast-moving consumer goods (FMCGs). In order to address this gap in the literature, this study aims to gain an insight into how consumers make choices when shopping for FMCGs and to determine whether self-image affects brand preferences when shopping for FMCGs. This study focuses specifically on yellow fats, a term used to refer to butter, margarine and spreads (Mintel Yellow Fats UK, 2007). No previous research in this area has focused on the yellow fats category.

This research is primarily intended to be of relevance to academic researchers studying the relationship between self-image and brand preference. It will be of interest to marketing practitioners, especially those working with FMCG brands and those working in the yellow fat category.

1.1 Definition of FMCGs

The term FMCG refers to products that are ‘frequently bought and used’ (Brierley 1995; p.14). FMCGs have a relatively low price and are generally sold in supermarkets and shops. They account for the majority of products that consumers buy on a daily or weekly basis; these include newspapers, toiletries, cigarettes, drinks and most food related products. Many of these goods, especially foods, have a use-by date, which by definition ensures they have a relatively short life (Brierley 1995).

FMCGs can be thought of in direct contrast to consumer durables, which have a relatively long life (most come with a guarantee of a year upwards). Consumer durables refer to goods that are bought occasionally and have a relatively high price; these include most major household appliances such as furniture, computers, fridges, as well as gardening equipment and cars. It is estimated that on average consumers buy only consumer durables every three years (Brierley 1995).

1.2 The Importance of FMCGs

To the majority of consumers FMCGs are often thought of as less important purchases than consumer durables due to their low price and short life, however, in economic terms FMGCs are of considerable importance. In fact, in the UK alone, consumer expenditure on FMCGs is estimated at £113.77 billion for 2007 (www.igd.com/analysis/datacentre, 2007). This accounts for 44.2% of the retail market as a whole and represents 15.7% of total consumer expenditure for 2007. It is also a growing market with nine of the ten top FMCG retailers in the UK reporting an increase on net sales in 2006 (www.igd.com/analysis/datacentre, 2007).

It is therefore clear that FMCGs are of great importance, not only to the companies that produce, sell and market these goods, but also to the public who buy them and to the economy as a whole. Thus it is not surprising that companies such as TNS and ACNielsen invest considerable time and money tracking FMCG sales. They are able to provide a wealth of detailed statistical information regarding what consumers buy, how much they spend, which supermarkets they frequent, which brands are the most popular and much more.

1.3 Research Need

What is less understood in relation to FMCGs is the relationship between a consumer’s self-image and how that affects their brand preferences and ultimate brand choice. Previous research (Sirgy 1982; Malhotra 1988; Hong and Zinkhan 1995; Eriksen 1996; Graeff 1996(a); Sirgy and Su 2000; Jamal and Goode 2001) has concluded that self-image does affect brand preference, however, there is a gap in the literature. This is because very little research focuses specifically on self-image and brand preference in the context of FMCGs (and none focusing on yellow fats). It is this relationship that provides the main focus for this study.

In order to fully understand the extent to which self-image affects brand preference in this category, it is also necessary to understand what other factors affect brand preference as these factors may moderate congruence levels. This will address another gap in the literature identified by Xue (2008) who states that more moderating factors need to be researched in order to truly understand self-image congruence.

1.4 Yellow Fats

The FMCG market as a whole was obviously too vast to study in enough depth within the budget and time constraints of this study. Yellow fats were chosen after careful consideration of a number of factors detailed below.

They are an established product with high levels of penetration. They are considered to be a basic essential in the fridge, therefore a large percentage of the UK population buy them. The Grocer (08/07/06) reported that 99% of British households purchase butter and spreads; this is because “yellow fats are an integral part of most consumers’ diets and are difficult to totally avoid” (Mintel Yellow Fats 2007).

It is a product category that is relatively low in cost and accessible to everyone, therefore it is used by people of all ages, genders, ethnic backgrounds, religions and socio-economic groups (Mintel Yellow Fats UK 2005). It is also an adaptable product that can be used for many different purposes - for example, when cooking and baking, in sandwiches or on toast. It is also a category that aims to offer ‘something for everyone’ with a wide variety of products that cater for those who are health conscious, taste-motivated, ethically-motivated, interested in the natural foods, and even those with food allergies (Mintel Yellow Fats UK 2007).

This makes the findings of this study potentially more relevant and transferable for the FMCG market as a whole, than if a niche product category had been chosen. For example if bottled water had been selected, the findings may not be as easily transferable to other FMCG categories because it is only used by a small and distinct segment of UK consumers.

Yellow fats are also an important FMCG product category in financial terms, with TNS Worldpanel reporting it be worth £855 million - the fifteenth largest category within the total food market (52 w/e 23 April 2006).

Perhaps more significant for the purposes of this study, yellow fats are a heavily branded FMCG product category with over thirty sub-brands competing for market share and consumer attention. Researching a category that offers brand choice is vital in understanding brand preferences.

It is also important to acknowledge that yellow fats are not largely affected by any major seasonal changes that may interfere with the results of this study. They are not generally considered to be a luxury product; they are relatively low in terms of cost and are typically thought of as a household essential. This indicates that consumption is less likely to be significantly affected in the event of an economic downturn or financial problems that individual consumers may face, than other more expensive and luxurious FMCG categories. Therefore yellow fats are seen to be a stable and important FMCG category worthy of research.

Other categories considered included bread, cheese and cereal as they are also FMCGs that most households will buy as they are often considered to be ‘basic essentials’. However, after analysing market data, none of these categories had as high a penetration level as yellow fats, nor did any one category meet all the criteria previously discussed as well as yellow fats.

1.5 Supermarket Shopping

Supermarkets are where the majority of consumers purchase FMCGs, with Tesco, Asda and Sainsbury dominating the UK market with a combined 64% market share (TNS Worldpanel, 52 weeks to January 2007). It is estimated that these three supermarkets alone enjoyed £65,855 million worth of net sales in 2006, which represents a combined 22.6 % rise on the previous year (IGD Datacentre 2006 estimates).

Research has identified that 68% of the UK population do their main weekly grocery shop at Tesco’s, Asda or Sainsbury’s (Food Retailing UK November 2007). The rise of smaller supermarket formats such as Tesco Metro and Sainsbury’s Local, combined with the introduction of longer opening hours, means that even in an emergency consumers will still tend to head for a supermarket. Due to their size, supermarkets benefit from large economies of scale. This means they can offer lower prices in comparison to other outlets (such as convenience stores) for products such as yellow fats, which encourages consumers to continue to shop there.

The Grocer (08/07/06) reported Tesco as having the largest share of the yellow fat market with 29.3%, followed by Sainsbury with 16.2% and Asda with 14.2%. Yellow fats are very much a planned purchase and tend to be routinely added to the list of the weekly shop when consumers get close to running out (Mintel Yellow Fats UK 2007).

This study will focus on consumers' supermarket shopping because this is where the majority of consumers purchase yellow fats. Due to the large size of the stores there is also likely to be a greater range of brands and therefore more choice, which is important for the purpose of this study which seeks to understand brand preference.

1.6 Research Aims and Objectives

The ultimate aim of this research is to explore whether self-image affects brand preference when shopping for FMCGs. In order to achieve this aim it is also necessary to understand how consumers make brand choices when shopping for FMCGs. This is important as it is likely to identify other factors affecting brand preference, which may moderate the extent to which self-image affects brand preference. Therefore the aim of this research is two-fold:

- To explore whether self-image affects brand preference in the context of FMCGs;
- To identify factors affecting brand preference when shopping for FMCGs.

In order to achieve the research aims the following objectives have been set, they have been broken down into secondary and primary objectives:

Secondary Research Objectives

- To establish a clear definition of self-image;
- To examine existing research into the relationship between self-image and brand preference;
- To explore what is currently known about the yellow fats category.

Primary Research Objectives

- To identify key FMCG brands consumers are unwilling to substitute and why
- To identify factors affecting brand preference when shopping for FMCGs
- To identify factors affecting brand preference when shopping for yellow fats
- To measure levels of self-image congruence in the context of yellow fats

1.7 Structure of the Thesis

The following Chapters seek to address the aims and objectives of this research.

Chapter 2 (Literature Review) will address all of the secondary research objectives. It will define self-image before exploring the current literature relating to self-image congruity. It will also explore what is currently known about the yellow fats category.

Chapter 3 (Methodology) will discuss the research design and the methods used for this research. It will provide a rationale for all decisions that were made and reflect on how well the chosen methods worked in practice. It will also provide an outline of the limitations of these methods and discuss what was done to minimise them.

Chapter 4 (Findings and Analysis) will address the primary research objectives. The findings will be analysed in relation to existing literature to ensure theoretical validation.

Finally, Chapter 5 will conclude the research and provide recommendations for future research. It will also discuss some potential ideas for marketing practitioners based on the research findings.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Section 1: Self-Image

The purpose of this section is to answer the following objective:

- To establish a clear definition of self-image

2.0 The Concept of Self-Image

Before focusing specifically on the relationship between self-image and brand preferences it is important to review the various definitions of self-image that have been postulated. This is necessary as it will help to establish a comprehensive definition, which is a prerequisite for understanding the relationship between self-image and brand preferences.

2.1 A Multidimensional Construct

One of the problems in self-image research is the plethora of definitions (Sirgy and Su 2000). The main definitional argument relates to whether self-image is a unidimensional or multidimensional construct (Todd 2001). Traditionally the 'self' has been viewed as unitary: a single self that is relatively consistent (Allport 1955). However, more recent research has found this view to be far too simplistic, with the common consensus prevailing that the self is in fact a highly complex multidimensional construct (e.g. Burke and Tully 1977; Rosenberg 1979; Sirgy 1982; Markus and Nurius 1986; Belk 1988; Malhotra 1988).

William James (1890) often referred to as the 'founding father' of self-image, was among those who pioneered this multidimensional view. His definition of the self is still widely quoted as a starting point to understanding the self-image. James postulated that:

> A man's Self is the sum total of all that he can call his, not only his body and his psychic powers, but his clothes and his house, his wife and children, his ancestors and friends, his reputation and works, his lands and his horses, and yacht and bank account (James 1890/1950; p.291).

Although James' definition is dated, the fundamental essence of his argument is evident in most contemporary definitions. A more recent and succinct definition, which has been widely credited, presents self-image as “the totality of the individual's thoughts and feelings having reference to himself as an object” (Rosenberg 1979; p.7).

2.2 The Subjective Nature of Self-Image

More simply self-image is seen as a person's perception of oneself. It is important to recognise that by this definition, self-image will only relate to the subjective thoughts and perceptions about one’s self and will not present an objective evaluation of the person (Mehta 1999). For example, a person's self-image may portray them as a beautiful, intelligent and humorous individual, whereas to the majority of others they may appear unattractive, stupid and boring. Therefore, when analysing a person based on their self-image, it should be taken into account that this representation may be completely contrasting to how others view them. This poses the question: is this a true representation of the person as a whole?

Mischel (1999; p.437) acknowledges that self-image is “not a simple mirror-like reflection of some absolute reality”. He states that the roots of self-image “are the impressions and evaluations that other people have of us in their responses to us as we interact with them”. Thus a person's self-image is based not only on how one thinks of oneself, but also on what one thinks other people think of them and how they respond to them (Graeff 1996(a)). A person’s self-image is seen to be greatly influenced by how others view them; therefore it is unlikely that a person's self-image would completely contrast with how the majority of others view them, although clearly it may differ. It is therefore felt that analysing a person's self-image, will, in most cases, provide a fair representation of the person as a whole.

2.3 Multiple Selves

Traditionally a person has been viewed as one self with a stable set of personality traits; therefore it was assumed that a person would behave in a similar way in different situations. However, research in recent decades challenges this assumption, presenting the notion of multiple selves (Markus and Kunda 1986). People are expected to act differently in different situations and with different individuals, as it is thought different personality traits become more prevalent depending on varying social situations (Aaker 1999; Markus and Kunda 1986). The idea of a situational self is not entirely new and is consistent with James' writings, as he states that

> ...a man has as many social selves as there are individuals who recognise him and carry an image of him in their mind (James 1890/1950; p.294).

He even describes the division of the one person into several selves.

2.4 The Malleable Self

When viewing the self from a multiple-component perspective, researchers argue that

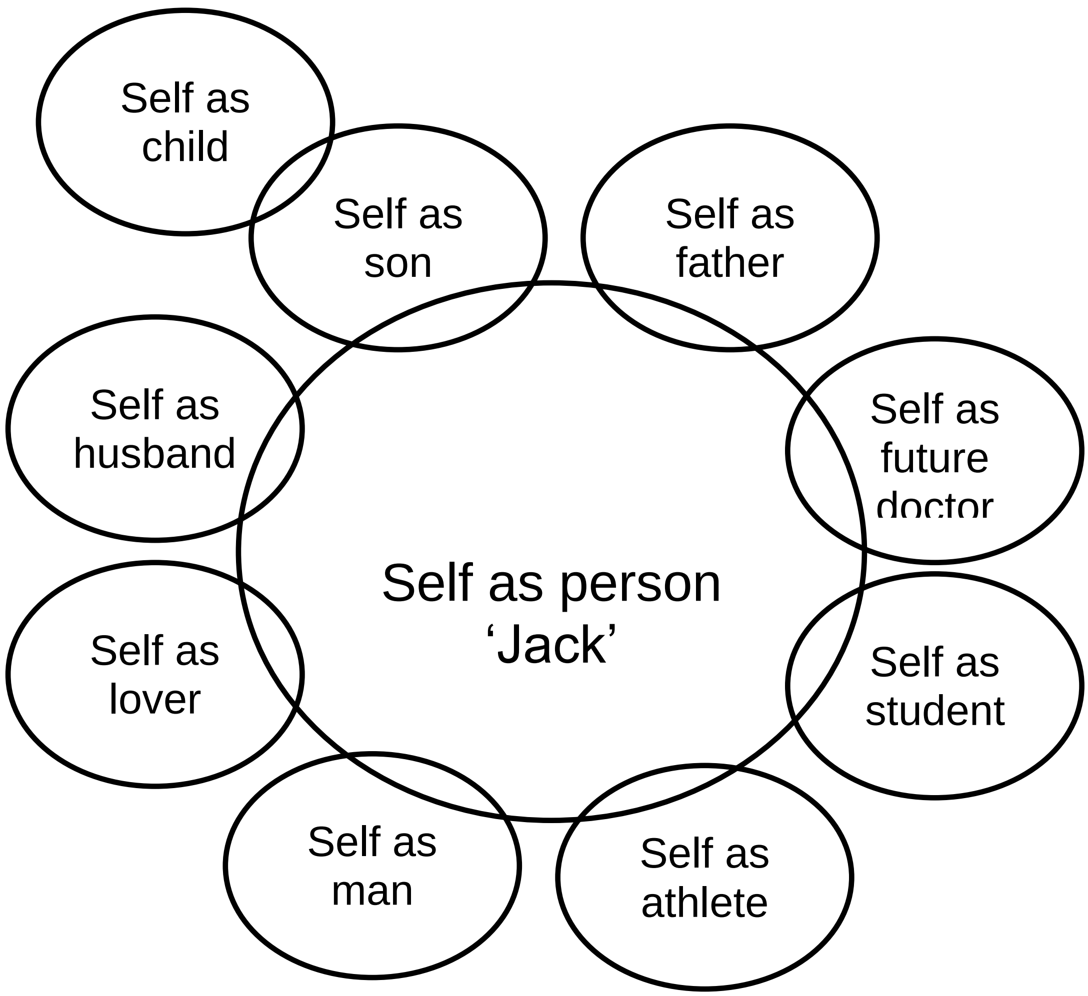
> ...a full understanding of the self is best obtained by using schemes that account for two or more components or dimensions (Loudon and Della Bitta 1993; p.312).

This links to Mishel's schematic representation of a working self-image, the concept of which is discussed below and is represented in Figure 1.

The idea of a 'working self-image', derived from Cantor et al.'s possible selves (1986), implies that self-image is continually changing. This may cause considerable problems when attempting to analyse an individual based on their self-image. Thus there has been much research examining whether aspects of the self-image are stable or malleable (Heatherton and Polivy 1991). Research has shown that although concepts continue to change over time, their foundations remain stable and the core dimensions should still be present as "the inner core does not change with the situation" (Todd 2001; p.185). This indicates that although a person's self-image will modify and develop it is unlikely to change completely.

Figure 1 overleaf clearly illustrates that an individual may live "in many different and sometimes unrelated worlds" (Stevens 1996; p.18). Thus the notion of multiple selves clearly applies. For example, a person may be serious and intimidating whilst at work, but fun and loving at home. Clearly they are still the same person with the same personality, they are just accessing different possible selves "from various self-images that are present in thought and memory" (Mischel 1999; p.440). It is therefore important to recognise that these multiple selves are merely reflecting different aspects of an individual's total personality.

Figure 1: Representation of a Working Self-Image



(Mishel 1999; p.439)

It is clear the self should be further defined as "a multifaceted, dynamic set of concepts consisting of multiple selves" (Mischel 1999; p.440. A number of other conceptualisations for self-image incorporating the notion of multiple selves, have been developed over the past few decades, the following is the most widely recognised (Loudon and Della Bitta 1993; Mehta 1999; Schiffman and Kanuk 2000; Sirgy and Su 2000):

The private self comprises:

Actual self: The perception of oneself as one believes he actually is.

Ideal self: The perception of oneself as he would ideally like to be.

Note: There is often a discrepancy between actual and ideal self.

The public self comprises:

Social self: The perception of oneself as one believes others actually perceive him to be.

Ideal social self: The perception of one's image as he would like others to have of him.

2.5 Motivational Tendencies of the Multiple Selves

Sirgy and Su (2000) state that these possible selves have different motivational tendencies. This is depicted in Figure 2 overleaf.

It is clear from Figure 2 that self-image also has motivational implications, as most people endeavour to maintain positive views of themselves (Baumeister 1996; Graeff 1996(a)). Figure 2 also supports previous research (Byrne 1966; Nisbett and Ross 1980), which shows self-image to be relatively consistent, as most people strive for consistency and “'tend to reduce cognitive inconsistencies” (Mischel 1999, p.438). In fact Mischel (1999 p438) acknowledges that “the experience of subjective continuity in ourselves… seems to be a fundamental feature of personality”.

Figure 2: Possible Selves and their Associated Motivational Tendencies

Actual self	→	Self consistency motive (The motivational tendency to act in ways consistent with one's actual self.)
Ideal self	→	Self-esteem motive (People have ideal images of themselves, and realising these images boosts their self esteem.)
Social self	→	Social consistency motive (People are motivated to maintain an image others have of them. They feel uncomfortable if they act in ways inconsistent with how they believe others see them.)
Ideal social self	→	Social approval motive (People are motivated to do things that would cause others to think highly of them.)

(Sirgy and Su 2000)

At the extreme, the loss of consistency and identity may be a significant contributing factor leading to personality disorganisation, seen in cases of schizophrenia, where the patient experiences two distinct selves, one of them disembodied (Laing 1965). This suggests that we have an innate instinct to "reconcile seemingly diverse behaviours into one self-consistent whole" (Mischel 1999; p.438), which is necessary to ensure that multiple selves remain relatively consistent. It seems that "although the self is highly complex, it is well organised and works in a consistent way" (Mehta 1999).

It is important to recognise that the notion of multiple selves may make analysing an individual's self-image a highly complex task. This is because there are likely to be at least slight inconsistencies between possible selves, which will make an individual's self-image problematic to measure. The majority of self-image researchers have attempted to overcome this by focusing only on the actual self in their studies (for example, Sirgy et al. 1997; Mehta 1999; Jamal and Goode 2001), as this is often seen as the real core self (Todd 2001).

2.6 Definition of Self-Image

For the purpose of this research, self-image will be seen as a multidimensional construct comprising the actual, ideal, social and ideal social selves. Each of these selves has different motivational tendencies, but each strives for self-consistency. The self is highly complex and difficult to measure as it is subjective, situational and malleable. However, the actual self is seen as the real core self and is viewed as the most stable.

This research recognises Graeff's (1996(a); p.5) view of self-image provides the most succinct and comprehensive definition:

> It is an individual's perception of one's own abilities, limitations, appearance and characteristics, including one's own personality. A person's self-image is developed over time, and is based on how one thinks of one's self, as well as how other people think of the person and react to them. Self-image is thus a set of knowledge and beliefs about one's self that is stored in memory.

2.7 Section Summary

This section has explored and established a clear definition of self-image, which is a prerequisite for understanding the relationship between self-image and brand preferences. The following section will use this definition to discuss self-image and its influence on brand preference.

Section 2: Self-image and Brand Preference

The purpose of this section is to answer the following objective:

- To examine existing research into the relationship between self-image and brand preference

This section will aim to examine existing research into the relationship between self-image and brand preference. Section 1 has established a clear definition of self-image; therefore it is now necessary to first define what is meant by the term 'brand preference' in the context of this research.

2.8 Brand Preference

A prerequisite for defining brand preference is to determine what constitutes a brand. Simplistically a brand may be seen as:

> ...a name, term, symbol or design, or a combination of them, which is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors (Kotler 1984; p.482).

However, more recent definitions acknowledge brands as being more than just a name, symbol or design. For example De Chernatony and Macdonald (1998; p.20) state that:

> ...a successful brand is an identifiable product, service, person or place, augmented in such a way that the buyer or user perceives relevant unique added values which match their needs most closely.

This notion of adding value to a brand is extremely important, particularly at a time when most brands are competing in saturated markets and are vying for consumer’s attention. Brand managers understand that consumers use brands to fulfil emotional as well as functional needs (Cocks 1999; p.25). Therefore they attempt to attach values to their brand in order to entice consumers, as well as to distinguish their brand from its competitors.

Creating a unique positioning in the marketplace is significant as it will help to develop a clear differential advantage which is essential for the success and survival of any brand (Jobber 1998). However, in order to position a brand effectively it is necessary to first identify the target market, as the values they attach to the brand can then be tailored to specifically appeal to the designated market segment.

For example most people buy bread as a functional need. However, there are a number of different brands of bread, each attempting to portray a differential advantage. A supermarket own-brand of bread adds value by undercutting its competitors on price. The low price provides the brand with a differential advantage, at least in the eyes of its target market that are likely to be highly price conscious. However, Hovis attempts to gain a differential advantage by positioning itself as a premium brand through added values such as quality, tradition and being well established. Ultimately this brand is likely to appeal to consumers who are concerned with quality and reputation.

It is clear that while supermarket own-brand bread and Hovis are basically the same product, both able to fulfil a consumer's functional need for bread, their contrasting brand images makes them very different brands, at least within the perception of consumers. Therefore they are likely to cater to very different consumer segments.

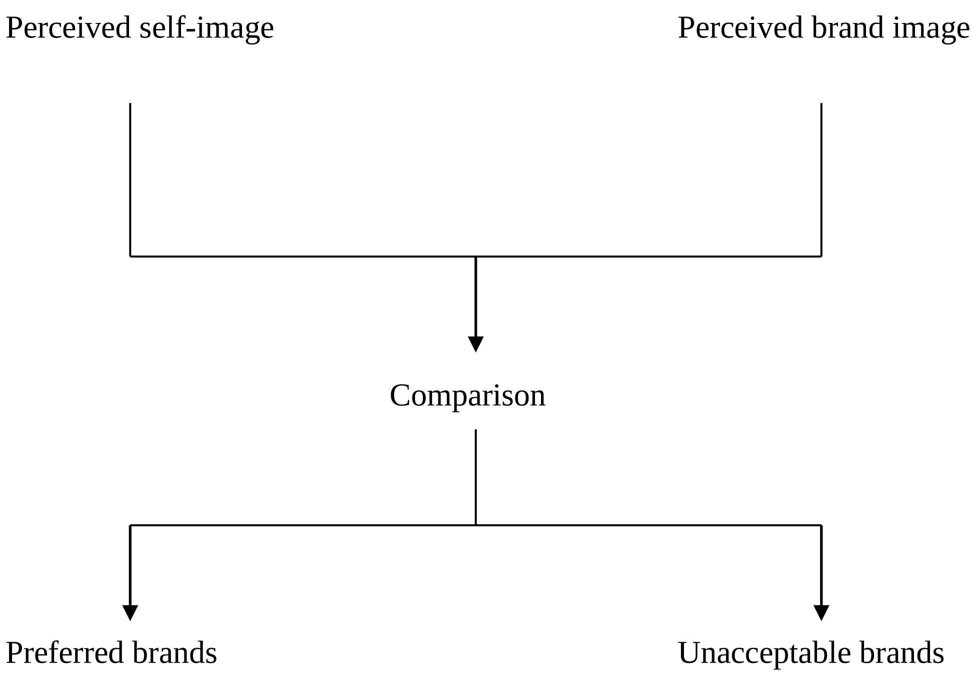
2.9 Image Congruence Theory

This example shows that the concepts 'self-image' and 'brand image' are linked. The theory is that the higher the congruence between an individual's self-image and the brand image, the more likely they are to prefer that brand. For example, a person whose self-image includes seeing themselves as wealthy and only having the best of everything, is likely to prefer premium brands which elude to that image e.g. Hovis. Similarly the higher the incongruence between the brand image and the individual's self-image, the less likely they are to prefer that brand.

In contrast, a person whose self-image is based on a modest 'no frills' approach to life, is likely to view premium brand images as less likely to fit with their own self-image, and therefore they may be more likely to opt for brands with the same 'no frills' ideals, such as supermarket own. This link between self-image and brand image is known as image congruency theory (Sirgy 1982) and is depicted by Loudon and Della Bitta (1993; p.314) in Figure 3 overleaf.

While image congruency theory suggests that consumers will prefer the brand which matches their needs most closely, it is important to recognise that brand preferences are not always translated directly into purchases – "constraining factors such as price and other individual or environmental influences" may modify these preferences before they can be acted upon (Loudon and Della Bitta 1993; p.318).

Figure 3: A Model of the Brand-Choice Process as a Function of Self-Image and Brand-Image



(Loudon and Della Bitta 1993; p.314)

For example when purchasing a car, an individual may prefer a Porsche but they may not be able to afford this brand and may have to purchase a much less expensive car, such as a BMW. Thus the individual's brand preference is not acted upon. However, it is also significant to acknowledge that although the BMW may not be the consumer's preferred brand of all the cars on offer, it may still be their preferred brand of all the cars in that price range, and will therefore still reflect the consumer's brand preference to a certain extent. However, it is clear from this example that the term 'brand preference' is not as simplistic as it may seem.

While image congruency theory does suggest that an individual's self-image will affect their brand preferences, it does not assume that these preferences will directly lead to purchase. However, it is clear that self-image can influence behaviour, as it is essentially who we are and therefore affects our behaviour.

2.10 Self-Consistency

Section 1 of this Literature Review has already established that people are motivated to behave in a way which they perceive as being consistent with their self-image (Mishel 1999). As a result of this need for self-consistency (Sirgy 1982) people strive to project and maintain their desired image and, in an increasingly materialistic society, people use brands as a vehicle for self-expression (Zinkhan and Hong 1991). Thus people are increasingly buying brands more for their symbolic, rather than just functional qualities.

2.11 Symbolic Consumption

This notion of symbolic consumption is significant when analysing the relationship between self-image and brand preferences. Literature suggests that brands are used by consumers as resources for the symbolic construction of the self. Therefore the brands that an individual purchases may be viewed as a symbolic extension of a person's sense of self (Belk 1988; Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1998). In fact, the consumption of brands can even help establish and communicate some of the fundamental cultural categories such as social status, gender, age, and such cultural values as family, tradition and authenticity (McCracken 1993).

This view is reinforced by Dittmar (1992; p.205) who acknowledges that:

> ...material possessions have a profound symbolic significance for their owners, as well as for other people and the symbolic meanings of our belongings are an integral feature of expressing our own identity and perceiving the identity of others.

Therefore people may actually be defined by the products and brands they use (Tucker 1957).

It is important to recognise, however, that brands are only able to portray a symbolic meaning if this meaning is understood and widely accepted by many people. Brands acquire meaning for consumers through their involvement in the socialisation process.

> Advertising is recognised as one of the most potent sources of valorised symbolic meanings… since advertising is a form of mass communication, its meanings also emerge in the interpersonal communication among consumers and may later become socially shared meanings' (Elliott and Wattanasuwan 1998).

Thus it is only when the brand has a socially shared meaning that it can be used by an individual to effectively portray an image to others.

The extent to which brands are used for their symbolic qualities is largely dependent on the conspicuousness of the product (Mehta 1999; Sirgy and Su 2000). This relates to whether the product is consumed in public verses private. For example, driving a car is done publicly; therefore a car is a highly conspicuous product. Brushing your teeth tends to be done in private, thus toothpaste and toothbrushes may be considered to be relatively inconspicuous products.

This is significant when analysing the relationship between self-image and brand preferences because much research (Sirgy and Su 2000; Hong and Zinkan 1995; Martin and Bellizzi 1982) has hypothesised that the private self (actual and ideal) will better predict brand preferences for less conspicuous products, while the public self (social and ideal social) will be more predictive of conspicuous products.

This hypothesis has a logical appeal; conspicuous products like cars can be used to convey status. The consumer is aware that their choice of car will affect how the public perceives them, therefore when buying a car their brand preferences are likely to be influenced by their social and ideal social self, which are concerned with how they want others to see them. Similarly less conspicuous products like toothpaste are usually only consumed in the privacy of the individual's own home. Therefore when purchasing toothpaste their brand preferences are more likely to be influenced by their actual or ideal self, which are concerned with who the consumer really is or who they want to be.

2.12 Self-Monitoring

It is clear that the way in which self-image influences brand preferences is continually changing and differs depending on the types of product being purchased. However it also differs depending on the individual consumer. People are not homogenous and it is inevitable that some people will be more influenced by different parts of their self-image than others; this may depend on whether they are a high or low self monitor (Snyder 1974; Aaker 1999; Sirgy and Su 2000).

Self-monitoring recognises that individuals differ "in the extent to which they can and do observe and control their expressive behaviour and self-presentation" (Snyder and Gangestad 1986). High self-monitors are moderated by situational information and the influence of social others. They are concerned with what people think of them and are therefore more influenced by their public self. In contrast, low self-monitors are motivated by dispositional factors and are therefore ultimately more influenced by their private self.

Snyder's hypothesis has been reinforced by Hogg, Cox and Keeling's (2000) study into the UK alcoholic and soft drinks market, which identified that when in the consumption situation of a bar, high self-monitors will be directed by external information. They will look at what others are drinking and will choose their drink accordingly. So, for example, if everyone is drinking cocktails they will join in even though they would have preferred a glass of wine. However, low self-monitors will be directed by internal information, they will look to themselves and order what they really want to drink, regardless of the choices of everyone else.

2.13 Involvement

The extent to which self-image influences brand preferences is also moderated by how important the consumer believes the product purchase is and therefore how involved they are with the purchasing decision (Perloff 1993). Product involvement refers to the personal relevance of the product to the consumer (Xue 2008).

The concept of involvement is important in understanding the relationship between self-concept and brand preference, as “researchers have shown that product involvement significantly affects consumer decision making” (Xue 2008; p.86). The theory is that the higher involved the consumer is with the product; the more likely they are to be influenced by their self-image. By contrast, in low involvement situations consumers are thought to be less influenced by their self-image and more focused on the functional qualities of the product (Graeff 1996(b)) or on situational variables (Xue 2008).

For example, buying a television is likely to be seen by the majority of consumers as a high involvement purchase, as it is a relatively expensive, long term purchase that will be conspicuous within the home. Therefore when making such a purchase the consumer is likely to be highly involved and will evaluate the different brands carefully before making a decision. During this time spent deliberating they are likely to have activated their self-image by thinking about their own image and how other people will view them in relation to the brand they choose.

In contrast, most consumers see buying FMCGs as a low involvement purchase, as they are cheap and quickly consumed and disposed of. Research (Solomon et al., 2002) has identified that the average consumer spends less than five seconds scanning the supermarket shelves when choosing an FMCG, which implies little time is spent evaluating the pros and cons of different brands. It is often assumed that “peripheral products such as boot polish or dishwasher powder are less likely to be purchased on the basis of image” (Graeff 1996(b); p.18) and are instead more likely to be made after a quick consideration of the brands functional qualities or a situational variable e.g. a price promotion.

2.14 Section Summary

When analysing the relationship between self-image and brand preferences, it is clear that the literature is very well established and generally supports the hypothesis that individuals' prefer brands that are congruent with their self-image. However, it is also clear that this relationship is moderated by a number of factors, such as: brand, price, the conspicuousness of the product, whether the consumer is a high or low self-monitor, and whether the product is a high or low involvement product.

It is the latter of these moderating factors that presents an under-researched area of potential interest. Although the majority of existing research has investigated the relationship between self-image and brand preference in the context of high value and high involvement products, Jamal and Goode identify there is a potential research need by stating:

> More work is needed to establish the significance of self-congruence on brand preferences… in the case of high frequency and low value brands (2001; p.490).

<u>Section 3: An Overview of the Yellow Fats category</u>

The purpose of this section is to answer the following objective:

- To explore what is currently known about the yellow fats category

This study will focus primarily on the yellow fat category as it is considered to be a high frequency product with relatively low value brands. Chapter 1 introduced yellow fats in broad terms and argued why this category is worthy of study. The aim of this section is to review what is currently known about the yellow fats industry in more depth. This will provide context and a wider understanding of the category before undertaking in-depth primary research to determine if a consumer's self-image affects their brand preference when buying FMCGs.

In order to explore what is currently known about the individual brands in this category please refer to Appendix 1, which gives a breakdown and brief description of the key brands in the yellow fats market.

2.15 Definition of Yellow Fats

'Yellow fats' is a term defined by Mintel as referring to butter, spreads and margarine. However it is important to note that a recent reduction in fat levels across the market has resulted in the fact that there are currently no 'real' margarines left (apart from Stork). Spreads now occupy the position margarines held in the market (Mintel Yellow Fats UK, September 2007) therefore this research will focus primarily on butters and spreads.

2.16 Key Drivers to Purchase Yellow Fats

Convenience (in terms of the ability to spread), health (including naturalness) and taste are key factors affecting purchase decisions. Products can be categorised according to the degree to which they satisfy consumer demand for each of these variables. Most brands represent a compromise between the three propositions.

2.17 Market Value and Growth

As stated previously the yellow fat market is a financially important one. It was valued at £908 million in 2007, which represents 12% growth from 2002-07. While the value of the yellow fats market has been growing steadily at around 2.4% a year since 2002, volume growth is now static due to consumers monitoring their yellow fat intake for health reasons. However this is not unique to the yellow fats market as healthy eating has been identified as one of the biggest factors affecting all sectors of the food market at present (Mintel Yellow Fats UK 2007).

Although volume growth is currently static the yellow fats market is worthy of study as it is expected to grow in financial importance as Mintel forecasts that the UK market for yellow fats will grow by an estimated 12% at current prices between 2007-12, breaching the £1 billion barrier to stand at £1.03 billion by 2012. Changes in the UK population are also predicted to have a beneficial impact on sales of yellow fats over the next five years, with the rise in the elderly population boosting sales of butter and healthy spreads because research shows they are particularly heavy users of butter/spreads (Mintel Yellow Fats UK 2007).

2.18 Market Share

Within the yellow fats category, spreads currently account for 54% of overall market value. However, butter sales have grown consistently over the last six years and it is now the most popular yellow fat, with an overall market penetration of over 70%, suggesting that the majority of households now have butter as a standard item (Mintel Yellow Fats UK 2007).

2.19 Section Summary

This section has explored what is currently known about the yellow fats category. This provides the context and a wider understanding of the category as a prerequisite to undertaking in-depth primary research to determine if a consumer's self-image affects their brand preference when buying FMCGs such as yellow fats.

2.20 Conclusion

As can be seen from the discussion in this chapter, there is a gap in our understanding of the relationship between self-image and brand preference in the specific context of high frequency, low value FMCGs. From the study by Jamal and Goode (2001), for example, one of the main findings was that consumers are more likely to prefer a brand if they have higher levels of self-image congruence with that brand, but their quantitative study was in the context of precious jewellery. To what extent does "the strong relationship between self-image congruency and brand preference" (p.489) that they found also apply to lower value and arguably lower involvement goods such as FMCGs? In order to answer this question and address this gap in the literature, this study will explore this relationship using yellow fats as an example of such low value FMCGs.

It has been noted above that much of the research in this area (e.g. Jamal and Goode 2001; Mehta 1999; Graeff 1996(a)) has been quantitative. Whilst this arguably demonstrates that there is a link between self-image and brand preference, it rarely provides the level of depth required to more fully understand and explain this relationship or the factors that moderate it. If, as Mishel (1999) argues, the self is actually comprised of multiple 'selves', then a qualitative research approach that includes observing and interviewing respondents in more than one setting may enable this phenomenon to emerge in a clearer way than through purely quantitative methods.

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

3.0 Introduction

The purpose of this Chapter is to discuss the methods used to ensure the aims and primary objectives of this study were met:

Research Aims:

- To explore whether self-image affects brand preference in the context of FMCGs;
- To identify factors affecting brand preference when shopping for FMCGs.

Primary Research Objectives

- To identify key FMCG brands consumers are unwilling to substitute and why;
- To identify factors affecting brand preference when shopping for FMCGs;
- To identify factors affecting brand preference when shopping for yellow fats;
- To measure levels of self-image congruence in the context of yellow fats.

This chapter outlines the philosophical framework underpinning this research and discusses the methodological approach and sampling technique used for this research. The justification for the methods that were adopted will be discussed, together with an evaluation of the limitations of the chosen approach. Finally, a reflection will be made on how effective the process was and what could be done differently if a similar study were to be undertaken in the future.

3.1 Research Philosophy

In order to make informed decisions about the research design and “reflect critically on their own work”, a researcher must “understand the theories of knowledge (the epistemologies) underlying the methods” (Spratt, Walker and Robinson 2004; p.13). This is of great importance, as it is likely to give the research “greater clarity and a better sense of direction” (Crotty 1998; p.216). Understanding the wider philosophical issues of research is central to any research study as it is likely to improve the quality of the research and ultimately improve the credibility of the findings (Pathirage et al. 2008).

An epistemology is “a way of understanding and explaining how we know what we know” (Crotty 1998; p.3) and relates to how the researcher looks at the world and makes sense of it. Furthermore, it is the way in which the researcher perceives how knowledge should be acquired and accepted (Pathirage et al. 2008). This is important, as such assumptions about the realities of the human world as a whole will inevitably shape “the meaning of research questions, the purposiveness of research methodologies, and the interpretability of research findings” (Crotty 1998; p.17).

3.2 Positivism and Social Constructionism

Pathirage et al (2008; p.6) acknowledge that in terms of epistemological undertakings, there are two fundamentally different perspectives known as “positivism and social constructionism, which can be placed in two extreme ends of a continuum”. Positivist epistemology believes that “the social world exists externally and that its properties should be measured through objective measures” (Pathirage et al. 2008; p.6). From this perspective, there is a belief that if research is undertaken in the right way there is the potential to discover an objective truth (Crotty 1998; p.8). In contrast, the social constructionist view is that “reality is not objective and exterior, but is socially constructed and given meaning by people” (Pathirage et al. 2008; p.6).

Taking into account the aims and objectives of this study it is felt that a social constructionist approach is the epistemology to which this research is most aligned. This is because the main purpose of this research is to explore constructs such as self-image and brand image which are inherently subjective. As this research has previously stated, brands are only able to portray a symbolic meaning if this meaning is understood and widely accepted by many people. This usually happens through their involvement in the socialisation process, as it is only when the brand has a socially shared meaning that it can be used by an individual to effectively portray an image to others. It therefore appears that exploring issues such as self-image, brand image and brand preferences may lend itself more towards the social constructionist epistemology, rather than an objective positivist epistemology.

Table 1 overleaf depicts the contrasting implications of positivism and social constructionism for the research design.

Table 1: Implications of Positivism & Social Constructionism for the Research Design

	Positivism	Social Constructionism
The observer	Must be independent	Is part of what is being observed
Human interest	Should be irrelevant	Are the main drivers of the science
Explanations	Must demonstrate causality	Aim to increase general understanding of the situation
Research progress through:	Hypotheses and deduction	Gathering rich data from which ideas are induced
Concepts	Need to be operationalised so that they can be measured	Should incorporate stake holder perspectives
Units of analysis	Should be reduced to the simplest terms	May include the complexity of 'whole' situation
Generalisation through:	Statistical probability	Theoretical abstraction
Sampling requires	Large numbers selected randomly	Small numbers of cases chosen for specific reasons

(Pathirage et al. 2008; p.6. Adapted from: Easterby-Smith et al. 2002)

3.3 Deductive and Inductive Approaches

Much research has acknowledged that positivism has become synonymous with a deductive approach to research, whereas social constructionism has become synonymous with an inductive approach (Crotty 1998; Gill and Johnson 2002; Pathirage et al. 2008). The fundamental difference between deductive and inductive approaches to research is whether the theory precedes the data (deductive) or whether the data precedes the theory (inductive). Other key differences to the two approaches are listed in Table 2 overleaf.

Table 2: Differences between Deductive and Inductive Approaches

Deduction	Induction
Moving from theory to data	Moving from data to theory
Common with natural sciences	Common with social sciences
A highly structured approach	Flexible structure to permit changes
Explain causal relationships between variables	Understanding of meanings humans attach to events
Select samples of sufficient size to generalise conclusions	Less concern with the need to generalise

(Pathirage et al. 2008; p.5. Adapted and modified from: Saunders et al. 2007)

For the purposes of this study it appears the inductive approach is the most appropriate as this research is intended to be exploratory in nature and is not intended to definitively prove or disprove a particular hypothesis. The benefit of an inductive approach for this research is that it allows for flexibility and also gives the ability to understand meaning, which is key for this study in identifying and exploring which factors effect brand preferences and how they impact on the relationship between self-image and brand image.

3.4 Nomothetic and Ideographic Methods

The fact that this research will be based on social constructionism with an inductive approach inevitably effects which research method is most suitable. Traditionally this type of study uses ideographic qualitative methods, whereas a study using positivism philosophy with deductive approach and nomothetic methods usually use quantitative methods. Table 3 overleaf depicts the comparison between nomothetic and ideographic methods. These differences will be taken into account when designing the research method for this study, as it is already evident that a qualitative method is likely to be the most appropriate in explaining subjective meaning which is central to this research.

Table 3: A Comparison between Nomothetic and Ideographic Methods

Nomothetic methods emphasise:	Ideographic methods emphasise:
Deduction	Induction
Explanation via analysis of causal relationship	Explanation of subjective meaning systems
Generation and use of quantitative data	Generation and use of qualitative data
Testing of hypothesis	Commitment to research in everyday settings
Highly structured	Minimum structure

(Pathirage et al., 2008. p7. Adopted from Gill and Johnson, 2002)

3.5 Pluralism and Pragmatism

While this research will be based in social constructionism with an inductive approach and ideographic methods, it also takes into account the growing concept of philosophical pluralism and methodological pluralism, which challenges the polarised views on philosophies and approaches (Pathirage et al. 2008; p.9). Many researchers now agree that pragmatism and mixed methods complement each other and can improve the quality of the research as a whole (Tashakkori and Teddlie 1998).

As Creswell states:

> ...for mixed methods researchers, pragmatism opens the door to multiple methods, different worldviews and different assumptions as well as different forms of data collection and analysis' (2003; p.12).

This is significant for the purpose of this research, as most of the objectives are exploratory in nature and are therefore well suited to qualitative methods. However, one key objective is to measure levels of self-image congruence in the context of yellow fats, which will inevitably need a quantitative measure. Therefore it is important that this research takes a pragmatic approach, thus while aligning itself with social constructionism with an inductive approach, it will not be constrained by this viewpoint. Instead, this research will use whatever is the most appropriate method to address the research aims and objectives.

3.6 Research Design

Taking into account the purpose of this research, a multi-method research design was used as it was considered to be the most effective way to meet the research aims and objectives; A qualitative approach was used to ensure the research was exploratory enough to gain an insight into how consumers make choices when shopping for FMCGs, while quantitative scales were used to provide a level of 'conclusive' measurement which was essential in order to determine whether a consumer's self-image affects their brand preferences when buying FMCGs.

3.7 Qualitative Research

In order to achieve many of the primary research objectives of this study - to understand how respondents shop for FMCGs, to gain an insight into what they think about when deciding between FMCG brands and to understand when FMCG brands are considered to be important to respondents and when they are not so important - it was necessary to use qualitative research, as it is considered superior to quantitative research when the research requires an in depth understanding of attitudes and motivations (Denzin and Lincoln 2000). This is something quantitative research cannot achieve as effectively, as it is more concerned with measuring attitudes rather than understanding the reasons and underlying feelings behind them.

Qualitative research is “open ended, dynamic and flexible” by nature (Gordon and Langmaid 1988; p.76) and is, in part, guided by the respondent. This allows the moderator the freedom to respond to what the respondent is saying and adapt the research to probe fully on areas of particular interest that may spontaneously occur during the research. It is essential for this research to have a flexible approach because part of the purpose of this study is to understand the role and importance of FMCG brands in consumers’ lives, there is no hypothesis to test, therefore it needs to be exploratory and open ended.

Although quantitative research does allow the option of including open-ended questions, respondents are often limited to answer within a certain number of words, which does not always allow for an in depth understanding of why respondents may feel a particular way. It also does not allow the following questions to be specifically tailored to respond to the previous answers individual respondents have given; therefore potentially insightful areas of questioning may be missed.

3.8 Limitations of Qualitative Research

There are clear limitations of qualitative research which will ultimately impact on how the findings of this research can be used in a wider context. Due to the in-depth nature of qualitative research, sample sizes are relatively small which means the results do not have statistical validity. This means “the results cannot, with known levels of confidence, be applied to the whole population under investigation” (The Market Research Society 2002; Unit 2, p.10). This research is intended to uncover insights and develop an understanding of how consumers view FMCG brands and whether their self-image affects their brand preferences when buying FMCG brands. It is not intended to be statistically representative of the population as a whole; instead it is offered as a starting point from which more conclusive research can be developed in the future.

The fact qualitative research usually occurs face-to-face is a benefit in many ways; however it also has significant limitations. Moderators attempt to build a bond with respondents in order to make them feel more relaxed and open for discussion. However, some respondents may feel pressurised into giving an answer that they feel the moderator wants to hear in a desire to please them, as a result they may conceal how they really feel, which therefore raises questions on the validity of the research. This is known as ‘The Hawthorne Effect’ (Chisnall 1992). The likelihood of this occurring in this research was minimised, as the author is a trained and experienced qualitative moderator and an accredited member of The Market Research Society (MRS) and Association for Qualitative Research (AQR). The introductory part of the interview made it clear to respondents that there were no right or wrong answers and that all that was required was an honest response.

The lack of standardisation in qualitative research may also be considered to be a limitation, questioning the reliability of this research, as reliability focuses on the consistency of results (Patton 2002). With qualitative research, some people question whether the research would provide the same findings if it were to be undertaken again, either at a different time, by a different researcher or with different respondents. For the purpose of this research a qualitative approach, and therefore lack of rigid structure and strict standardisation was felt necessary in order to gain an understanding of respondents' attitudes and motivations towards FMCG brands. The issue of reliability and validity, authenticity and trustworthiness is discussed at the end of this chapter.

3.9 Individual Depth Interviews

Importantly for this research, individual depth interviews are:

> ...orientated to penetrate the superficial or 'public' face of the respondent e.g. finding out the person's true opinion about an issue rather than their publicly stated opinion which is possible a socially accepted opinion.
>
> (The Market Research Society 2002; Unit 2, p.12).

This is of crucial importance when researching self-image congruence because this research has already established that self-image is a multidimensional construct comprising the actual, ideal, social and ideal social selves and understands that each of these possible selves have different motivational tendencies (see Figure 2, in Chapter 2).

In a group situation (for example a focus group, mini group or paired depth), respondents are perhaps more likely to be motivated by their 'public self' (social self and ideal social self). They are also more likely to be motivated by the need for social approval, which may mean they give a response based on their public self, rather than their private self. This would not necessarily be a true indication of their self-image congruence in relation to FMCGs, as much research (Sirgy and Su 2000; Hong and Zinkan 1995; Martin and Bellizzi

1982) has hypothesised that the private self (actual and ideal) will better predict brand preferences for less conspicuous products.

Individual depth interviews are particularly effective when the research needs to clarify individual views (The Market Research Society, 2002). This is significant for this study as it is crucial to understand an individual's impression of a brand's image, as well as their own self-image, in order to truly gauge the level of congruence. In contrast, a focus group situation is often focused on gaining a 'group consensus' to an issue which is not appropriate for this research. Focus groups were also considered unsuitable because minority viewpoints may be lost due to group members feeling too insecure to voice their opinions. There is also the possibility that a respondent with a particularly strong personality may dominate the group and influence others' opinions.

Further benefits of individual depth interviews are that they allow personal insight and nuances to come through because there is enough time to focus and explore issues in depth, thus ensuring that they have been fully understood. However, there are also disadvantages with individual depth interviews - notably the fact they are time-consuming in terms of conducting the interview and analysing the audio files. This means studies using individual depth interviews tend to have smaller samples than those using focus groups.

3.10 Observations

Accompanied shopping trips were considered as part of this methodology because of the focus on FMCG brands in the context of supermarket shopping. Some pilot interviews were carried out using this technique. The pilot interviews identified that accompanied shopping trips consume a lot of time following respondents around the store observing *how* they shop and *what* brands they buy, rather than gaining in depth insight into the reasons *why* respondents prefer certain FMCG brands.

A further limitation was that fact that the in-store environment was often busy, somewhat distracting and did not allow creativity within the interview, such as the use of projective techniques. Due to difficulty in obtaining store permission it was not possible to audio record these interviews making analysis and transparency of the research more difficult.

Importantly for this study, the attention caused by being followed and observed as they shopped made some respondents feel self conscious. This may have prompted respondents to access their public self rather than their private self, which may not be a true representation of their typical behaviour.

Having completed some pilot accompanied shopping trips, it was felt that individual depth interviews were a more appropriate method for addressing the research aims and objectives. However, it was felt that there was still some benefit in spending time in the yellow fats aisle to observe the natural behaviour of shoppers in order to provide context and wider understanding of how shoppers interact with the aisle (e.g. how long they spend browsing, what do they look at first etc).

The observations were done in a passive way by merely observing shoppers, rather than intercepting them. It was felt the passive process would contribute to the rigour of the research process because “the observed activity is not influenced by the researcher” (The Market Research Society 2002; Unit 5, p.15).

Observations were conducted in three different supermarkets; Tesco, Asda and Sainsbury. These supermarkets were selected as research has identified that 68% of the UK population do their main weekly grocery shop at one of these stores (Food Retailing UK November 2007). Research has also identified that yellow fats are very much a planned purchase and tend to be routinely added to the list of the weekly shop when consumers get close to running out (Mintel, Yellow Fats UK, 2007). Most UK consumers buy their yellow fats at Tesco, Asda or Sainsbury, with The Grocer (08/07/06) reporting Tesco as having the largest share of the yellow fat market with 29.3%, followed by Sainsbury with 16.2% and Asda with 14.2%.

Observing customers at three different supermarkets ensures a spread of response across different socio-economic groups, as research (P&G Intelligence) has found that each supermarket has customers that generally fall into different socio-economic groups. The socio-economic profile for most customers of Tesco is BC1C2D, while for Asda it is CDE and for Sainsbury, BC1. By observing customers at all three different stores, this research aims to observe customers of varying socio-economic backgrounds to ensure a mix of response and potentially more transferable findings.

Customers were observed over different times of the day and at weekends to ensure both workers and non-workers could be observed and also to identify if there are any differences in behaviour at different times of day and at weekends.

Table 4 below shows the schedule for the observations, which ensured each store and each day of the week was observed at varying times. In total twenty-one hours of in-store observations took place.

Table 4: Schedule for Observations

Day of the week	TESCO Socio-economic profile: BC1C2D	ASDA Socio-economic profile: CDE	SAINSBURY'S Socio-economic profile: BC1
Monday	8am – 9am	5pm – 6pm	8pm – 9pm
Tuesday	10am – 11am	7pm – 8pm	4pm – 5pm
Wednesday	6pm – 7pm	10am – 11am	2pm – 3pm
Thursday	2pm – 3pm	11am – 12pm	6pm – 7pm
Friday	4pm – 5pm	1pm – 2pm	8am – 9am
Saturday	8pm – 9pm	9am – 10am	12pm – 1pm
Sunday	12pm – 1pm	3pm – 4pm	10am – 11am

3.11 Measuring Self-Image Congruence

There are a number of different ways to measure self-image congruence. The most common are traditional methods which measure the product-user image using semantic differential or Likert scales, then measure self-image in relation to the brand user-image and use discrepancy scores across all dimensions (Sirgy et al. 1997). However, Sirgy et al. argue that traditional methods may be of "questionable validity and subject to a number of limitations" due to three key issues (1997; p.493):

1. The use of discrepancy scores which Sirgy et al. (1997) argue involve a multitude of problems. They have been questioned by a number of researchers (Berger-Gross 1982; Cronbach and Furby 1970; Johns 1981; Peter, Churchill and Brown 1993; Wall and Payne 1973) for being potentially unreliable by "having systematic correlations with their components, having spurious correlations with other variables, having questionable construct validity, and restricting" (Sirgy et al. 1997; p.493).

2. The possible use of irrelevant images due to the fact that many studies use predetermined image dimensions. Sirgy et al. (1997) argue that this is the most important problem with traditional methods because it forces respondents to indicate levels of congruence with image dimensions that respondents may not even associate with the product.

3. The use of the compensatory rule which rates self-image congruency scores across the entire image dimensions. Sirgy et al. (1997) argue against this and state that images are processed holistically or 'globally' rather than based on each image dimension.

As a result of these issues Sirgy et al. (1997) developed a new method for measuring self-image congruency which takes a more direct and global approach. Rather than measuring brand-user image and self-image separately, the new method asks respondents to think about a typical user of the brand and then describe this user using personal adjectives. The respondent is then asked to agree or disagree with whether their overall view of the brand-user image is consistent with how they see themselves (their self-image). This is different from traditional methods of measurement because the respondent is asked to rate self-image congruence based on a holistic 'global' image of the brand, rather than based on each individual adjective. Sirgy et al. (1997) conducted six studies using this method and found it had a predictive validity over traditional methods.

After analysing both the traditional and new method for measuring self-image congruence, an approach combining the two methods was felt to be most appropriate for this study. The traditional discrepancy scores will not be used due to concerns about their potential reliability; rather it will use the new approach. The benefit is that this is more direct and incorporates "reference to the psychological congruity experience" (Sirgy et al. 1997; p.439). This approach will also allow respondents to attribute their own personal adjectives to the brand-user, rather than using a predetermined list which may not be relevant to the brand.

However this research will not measure self-image congruence based on the new 'global' method, as Sirgy et al's research (1997) gives little evidence for the argument that the compensatory rule is not valid. It is felt the traditional method of rating each adjective individually allows potentially richer insight, as it enables the research to look at each attribute individually if necessary. This enables detailed understanding of which attributes have the strongest influence levels of congruence, which is likely to be of great interest to marketers and brand managers. It is also felt that this approach allows more transparency than a global judgement.

3.12 Sampling: The Population of Interest

For the purposes of this research it was necessary to talk to people who did the regular food shopping for their household, who were in charge of making the majority of the purchasing decisions and who purchased yellow fats. This was a pre-requisite to ensure that respondents would have enough knowledge of FMCG brands to enable them to discuss their choices and feelings towards them in sufficient depth to meet the aims and objectives of this study.

A screener was used (see Appendix 2) to select appropriate respondents. When asked if they were responsible for the main food and grocery shopping for their household and whether they had bought yellow fats in the last three months, the vast majority of men answered no and therefore had to be screened out. This is supported by recent research into UK households that has found that, while major changes in gender roles have occurred in the last few decades, food purchasing remains a heavily gendered issue with woman being significantly more likely to be responsible for the household food shopping than men (Lake 2006). This study reinforces previous research by Murcott (2000), which acknowledged that, although food purchasing does involve both genders, it is still very much a predominately female dominated task. This is a view also held by Solomon et al. (2002) who state that when it comes to buying groceries women are the key decision makers.

It is therefore felt that the population of interest for this study will be women who are in charge of the regular food shopping for their household and who are in charge of the majority of the purchasing decisions. It is acknowledged that a proportion of men are also in charge of food shopping for their household. However, it is evident that it is still a predominantly female role, so interviewing only women would provide a more focused study rather than adding gender as a variable to consider when analysing the results. This is significant when researching self-image, as the inevitable difference between the self-image of males and females is likely to be profound and will therefore add a further dimension which is felt unnecessary for the purpose of this research.

When conducting some initial pilot interviews it became evident that there may be differences in the extent to which self-image affects brand preference depending on whether a respondent lives alone or with a partner/other family members. It therefore appears that household status may be a moderating factor affecting the extent to which self-image affects brand preference. This is supported by research which recognises "the family rather than the individual in the household to be the relevant decision-making unit" (Lalwani 2002, p.184; see also Grashof and Dixon 1980; Davis 1976).

Existing research has also acknowledged that "family decisions are often characterised by accommodative rather than a consensual decision" (Solomon 2002; p.357), which has the potential to have a significant impact on self-image congruence. In order to explore this potentially interesting area further, a quota was set to ensure an equal mix of women living alone and those living with a partner/other family members.

Those living with friends/housemates were excluded from this study because pilot interviews identified that food purchasing responsibility was highly variable within this segment. For example, sometimes respondents bought FMCGs while considering the needs of friends/housemates and at other times they bought just for themselves. Taking into account this is a relatively small exploratory study, as well as taking into account time-frame and budget, it was decided that comparing those living alone with those living with a partner/other family members would provide a more focused study than adding another variable.

The study focused on the London area and respondents were recruited from a variety of boroughs to ensure the sample was not focused on one small geographic location. The sample aimed to include a mix of respondents from inner and outer-London areas, as well as different ethnic minorities. It also aimed to include a mix of women across different age groups with varying socio-economic status

3.13 Sample Size

Taking into account that this was an exploratory study, the sample size was relatively small. Five pilot interviews were initially conducted (two accompanied shops and three individual depth interviews), and quotas were then set as follows:

- 10 x women living alone
- 10 x woman living with a partner/other family members

Considering the in-depth nature of the methodology, it was felt that a total of twenty-five interviews (including pilots) would be sufficient to gain a reasonable understanding of the views of the population of interest and address the research objectives. However, these quotas were set only as a benchmark as it is important to understand that "qualitative sampling develops during the research process as you discover new avenues and clues to follow up" (Daymon and Holloway 2002; p.158). Taking this into account, additional time was allocated at the fieldwork stage as a contingency, in case it was felt that more interviews would be needed to add further insight. Ultimately this was not necessary.

3.14 Sampling Method

As this study is using a primarily qualitative approach with a relatively small sample size, it was felt that a non-probability sampling method would be the most practicable. Purposive sampling selection was used as it is considered appropriate for qualitative data collection and particularly good for exploratory research (The Market Research Society 2002).

Purposive sampling allows the researcher to use their judgement and select respondents who are believed to be 'representative' of the population of interest. For the purposes of this study, the researcher used the screener (see Appendix 2) as well as her own judgement to ensure a mix of respondents from suburban and inner city areas, ethnic minorities, as well as a mix of women across different age groups with varying socio-economic status.

This study also aimed to include a mix of those using butter and those using spreads to ensure the study was 'representative' of the yellow fats category. While quotas could have been set to ensure an appropriate mix, this was considered too costly and time consuming, as well as unnecessary as the sample is too small to be statistically representative.

Respondents were screened to ensure they did not buy only based on price and promotional offers, as was is likely to significantly affect the influence of self-image in determining brand preferences and therefore may bias the findings of this study.

Those who were employed within the manufacturer, wholesale, retail and distribution of yellow fats were also screened out as they may bring some level of bias. In addition to this, those who worked in Advertising, Marketing and Market Research were screened out as they are likely to be research 'savvy' and therefore may provide answers from a more informed viewpoint that are not necessarily representative of the wider population. Precautions were also taken to exclude any respondents who had attended previous research on a similar subject as they are known as 'professional respondents' who tend to say what the researcher wants to hear as they are generally motivated only by the cash incentive.

A key benefit of purposive sampling is that is allows the researcher to interact with respondents before recruiting them. This enables the researcher to use their instinct to get a good 'feel' for the respondent and allows them to ensure respondents can offer some perspective and contribution on the research issue. This is crucial considering the research approach is based on individual depth interviews and therefore has a relatively small sample (Churchill and Iacobucci 2002).

3.15 Limitations of Sampling Method

A limitation of any research using a non-probability sampling method is the fact that the elements are obviously not chosen based on probability. This therefore makes it impossible to assess the level of sampling error, thus the precision and accuracy of any claims made about the population of interest is unknown (Churchill and Iacobucci 2002). However this study was designed as an exploratory study and will not strive to make statistically accurate estimates about the population of interest as a whole, although as Robson (2002) acknowledges “it is still possible to say something sensible about the population from non-random samples” (p.218)

A limitation of using a purposive sampling method is the fact that it naturally involves some form of researcher bias. In order to minimise the likelihood of any potential bias, a screener was used to evaluate if people were suitable to take part in this study. This ensured that respondents were all asked the same questions in the same way before being selected to take part, which gave greater consistency across the recruitment and selection process. It also allowed a transparent profile of all respondents who took part, as well as those who were screened out.

3.16 Recruitment Process

Respondents were approached near to the entrance to different supermarkets across various London Boroughs - a mix of inner city and more suburban locations. Those who were interested in taking part were then asked the screening questions to check if they fitted the recruitment criteria. Those who were eligible to take part were offered a small financial incentive of £15 to be paid after the interview had taken place. Once the respondent had agreed to take part in the research, relevant contact details were exchanged and an interview date was later arranged.

Interviews took place in respondents' homes to ensure they felt comfortable and relaxed. It helped them to be near to the FMCG brands they had bought to prompt recall and it also allowed the researcher to look inside their fridge and cupboards to gain an invaluable insight into the type of brands they bought. In research there is often a difference between 'reported behaviour' and 'actual behaviour'. This is particularly important to consider for the purpose of this research as respondents may claim to purchase more upmarket brands and be less willing to admit to purchasing supermarket own-brands for example. Interviewing respondents in their home minimises the risk of a difference between 'reported behaviour' and 'actual behaviour' because the moderator can check which brands respondents have already purchased before the interview takes place.

3.17 Interview Structure

The individual depth interviews lasted approximately one hour and thirty minutes, although the exact time varied depending on the respondent. A discussion guide was used (see Appendix 3) to ensure each interview followed the same generic structure. This maintained a level of consistency to allow fair comparisons to be made when analysing the data. The discussion guide also ensured that all relevant topics were covered.

Pilot interviews were conducted, in part, to aid the development of the guide and to ensure that all questions were clear for respondents to understand, therefore increasing internal validity (Robson, 2000). Crucially for this research the discussion guide was used in a flexible, rather than prescriptive way, to ensure the moderator and respondent had the freedom to explore potentially insightful topics that may be relevant to the research but had not been included in the guide.

As part of the warm-up and as a way of getting to know respondents, the moderator provided them with a template (see Appendix 4) and coloured pens with which to draw a self portrait and write three key words to describe themselves. This was done to put respondents at ease but also to understand more about their lifestyle and build a picture of their self-image.

Later in the interview the moderator provided respondents with a similar template (see Appendix 5) and asked them to draw a typical user of their preferred brand and their least preferred brand. This enabled a visual comparison between the respondent's self-image and the image they had of their preferred and least preferred brand in order to see if there are any key similarities and differences between the portraits. This may give insight into whether self-image affects brand preference in this context. This is a technique which has not been used in any other empirical self-image congruence study and therefore is the first study to visually depict self-image congruence in this way.

Taking into account the aims and objectives of this study, the first section of the interview was designed to gain an insight into the respondent's shopping habits. This allowed the key FMCG brands they are unwilling to substitute and why to be identified, as well as an understanding of the factors affecting brand preference when shopping for FMCGs. This was deemed necessary to provide context to the study and was thought to be an important pre-requisite to understanding the role of self-image congruence when shopping for

FMCGs. The first section of the interview was designed to discuss shopping for FMCGs more generally, before focusing specifically on yellow fats. This was done to provide a wider context for the study and to understand how respondents view yellow fats in relation to other FMCG categories.

The second section of the interview discussed yellow fats more specifically, to gain an insight into which brand or brands respondents prefer, as well as which brands they have previously purchased. The discussion then explored why respondents make these brand choices and discussed which other brands they had considered, as well as which brands respondents were not willing to consider and the reasons why. Throughout this section the moderator was actively listening for spontaneous references to characteristics of brand image and respondent’s own self-image.

Respondents were then asked which brands they could spontaneously recall before the moderator uncovered packs of all brands listed as having market share in the Mintel Yellow Fats UK Report (2003), as well as a selection of supermarket own-brands of yellow fat. Packs were selected to represent a mix of spreadable, block, low fat and low-in-salt varieties. The brands chosen are detailed in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Brands of Yellow Fats used for Interview Stimulus

Spreads	Butter	Margarine
Flora	Lurpak	Stork
Clover	Anchor	
I Can't Believe It's Not Butter	Country Life	
Utterly Butterly	Kerrygold	
Bertolli (formerly Olivio)	Tesco's Own	
St Ivel Gold	Sainsbury's Own	
Vitalite	Asda's Own	
Benecol		
Tesco's Own		
Sainsbury's Own		
Asda's Own		

In order to help stimulate discussion, stimulus material was used to remind respondents of the brand choices they are faced with in the aisle (Chisnall 1992). They were also used to help respondents rank brands in order of their brand preference. In some cases, where individual respondents did not use butter at all and only used spreads, respondents only ranked the spreads (and vice versa); otherwise they were encouraged to rank all brand based on their brand preferences. Respondents were then asked to rank all of the brands, based on the ones they actually buy, to establish if brand preference is a good indicator of brand choice in this category.

After the pilot interviews, it became evident that the preferred brand rankings and the rankings for the brand respondent's actually bought were the same, therefore indicating that for the yellow fats category brand preference is a good indicator of brand choice. After the pilot interviews respondents were simply asked to rank their preferred brands.

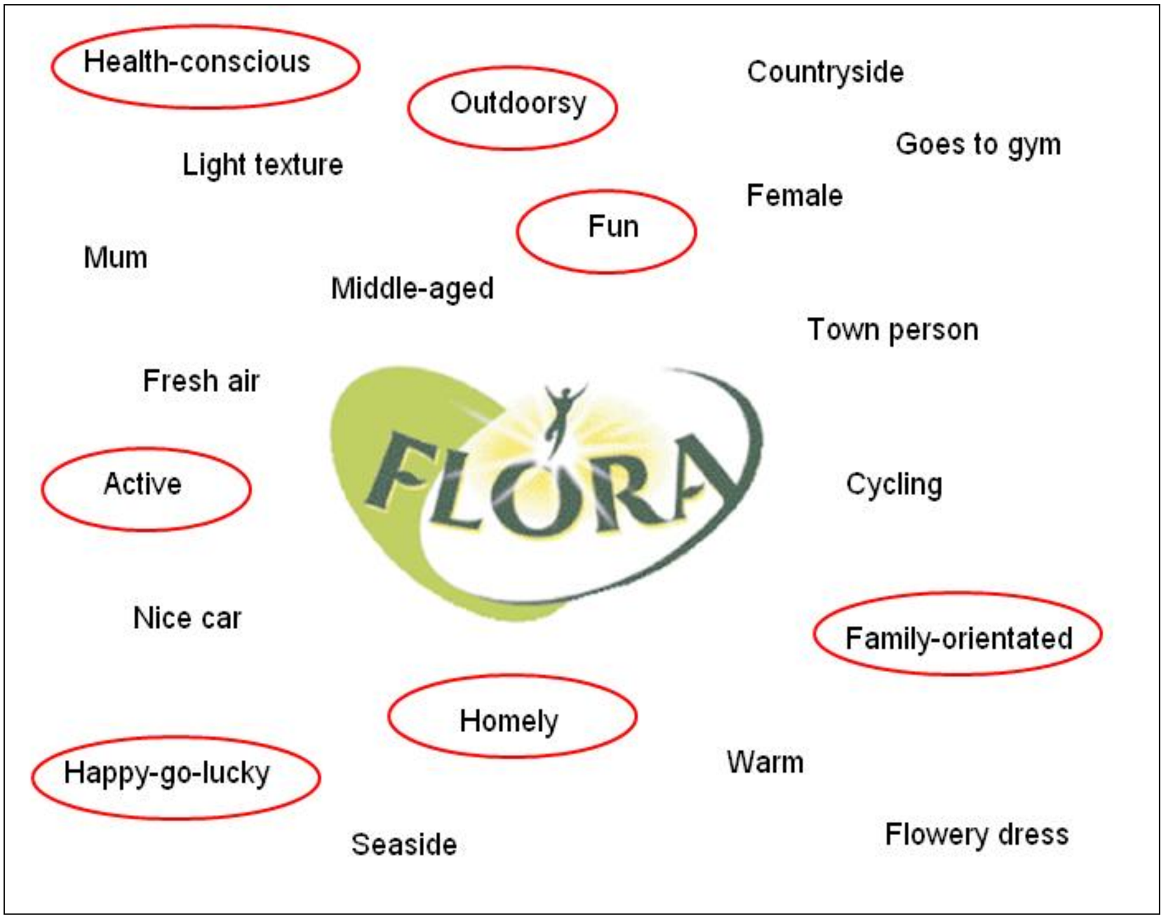
Using the brand preference rankings, the moderator then selected the respondent's first and second preferred brand as well as their mid-ranking and least preferred brand, to establish a measure of self-image congruence at different levels of brand preference. Following Sirgy's new direct method (1997) for measuring self-image congruence, respondents were asked to think of adjectives to describe a typical user of the brand. This was done in the form of a projective technique, as previous research into brand image (Hussey and Duncombe 1999) has found this to be a successful method.

3.18 Projective Techniques

Respondents' feelings towards a brand can often be subconscious or may seem irrational to them. Using a projective technique encourages respondents to use their imagination and talk openly, without the potential embarrassment that direct questioning may cause. This should enable a more creative and often 'richer' response (Churchill and Iacobucci 2002).

The projective technique was done in a creative way using flip charts and coloured pens to build up a picture of a 'typical brand user'. Flip charts were used as they are a large blank space which can often encourage and motivate respondents to use their imagination as they feel they have to fill up the space. Respondents were encouraged to use their imagination to describe a typical brand user's personality and lifestyle. This was done to help stimulate respondents imaginations and creativity in order to help build up a detailed list of adjectives. Once the respondent had built up a profile for all four brands, the moderator asked respondents to choose the key attributes which they felt captured the essence of a typical brand user. This was done by asking respondents to circle their key attributes using a red pen as shown in Figure 4 below (also see Appendix 8).

Figure 4: Example of Projective Technique for Preferred Brand, from Depth 1: Flora



3.19 Likert Scales

The moderator then copied down the list of key adjectives circled in red onto Likert scales and respondents were asked to rate the extent to which the adjective described them, using a five point scale. An example is provided in Figure 5 overleaf (also see Appendix 9).

Figure 5: Example of Likert Scales for Preferred Brand, from Depth 1: Flora

Use a number from 1 (does not describe at all) to 5 (describes very well) to indicate how well each of the following describes you.

Outdoorsy
1 2 3 4 5

Homely
1 2 3 4 5

Fun
1 2 3 4 5

Health-conscious
1 2 3 4 5

Happy-go-lucky
1 2 3 4 5

Family-orientated
1 2 3 4 5

Active
1 2 3 4 5

Likert scales were chosen as they have been used in both the new and traditional methods of measuring self-image congruence and have been used successfully in many empirical self-image related studies. Research has also proven them to be reliable as they can effectively demonstrate respondents' attitudes (The Market Research Society 2002).

Once respondents had rated themselves using the Likert scales, the self-image congruence score for each brand was calculated by first adding up the ratings for each attribute per brand, then dividing the result by the number of attributes for that brand, which then gave an overall self-image congruence score for that particular brand. An example of the calculations to determine the self-congruence rating for the respondent's preferred brand from Depth 1 is shown in the table below (also see Appendix 10):

Table 6: Calculations for Preferred Brand from Depth 1: Flora

	Attribute	**Rating**
	Outdoorsy	5
	Homely	5
	Fun	4
	Health-conscious	5
	Happy-go-lucky	4
	Family-orientated	5
	Active	4
Totals	7	32
Self-congruence rating	**32 / 7 = 4.57**	

As the example shows, the respondent in Depth 1 chose seven attributes for Flora. Using the Likert scales, they then rated themselves as follows on each:

5+ 5 + 4 + 5 + 4 + 5 + 4.

The total score for all attributes adds up to 32.

In this case, because the respondent listed seven attributes, the total score for all attributes is divided by seven to give the self-congruence score for that brand. In this example, 32 divided by 7 gives an overall self-image congruence score of 3.6.

3.20 Limitations of Likert Scales

The main limitation with Likert scales is that respondents often tick the midpoint when they actually mean they 'don't know', which is an obvious difference that may potentially bias the scores (Market Research Society, 2002). However because this research is qualitative in nature, the moderator was available to answer any questions respondents had when completing the scales. The moderator also made it clear to respondents in advance of giving them the scales that they should consider their decision and not use the midpoint as a default simply if they were unsure.

A further limitation is the method used to calculate the self-image congruence score. For example some respondents often found it hard to think of attributes for brands they did not know as well, this meant there was inevitably a lower number to divide the attribute scores by, which in some cases may have given some brands a score that was artificially high. However, when this occurs in the analysis it will be made clear that the score should be treated with caution.

It is important to recognise that this research is using a primarily qualitative approach and as such the sample size is relatively small, therefore the scores can not be considered conclusive or statistically representative, rather they are indented to provide an indication as part of an exploratory study.

3.21 Ensuring Reliability and Validity

Ensuring reliability and validity is of great importance to any study as it ultimately affects the quality of the research findings (Daymon and Holloway, 2002). The fact that reliability and validity are essentially measures of objectivity means these are complex notions in the context of qualitative research (Daymon and Holloway, 2002). Qualitative research is language based rather than number based, which means there is potentially more room for researcher subjectivity and bias (The Market Research Society, 2002).

Most researchers agree that objectivity and neutrality are almost impossible to achieve in qualitative research. It will inevitably be affected by the researchers own motivations and values, as well as the broader social context in which the research takes place (Blaxter, Hughes and Tight, 1996). However, measures can be put in place to minimise the effect of researcher bias.

3.22 Reliability

Reliability refers to the extent to which the same results would have been uncovered if the study were to be repeated again, either at a different time or by a different researcher. This research concurs with the opinion of Daymon and Holloway (2002) and accepts that it is unlikely that if this study was repeated by another researcher, they would achieve exactly the same results. However, where possible in this study, measures have been taken to ensure this research is reliable and that future studies could be carried out in the same way.

A screener was used to select respondents in a transparent and consistent way. A discussion guide was formulated to ensure all interviews covered the same topics in the same order, thus ensuring consistency. Likert scales were also used to provide a consistent measurement.

A framework was developed to ensure analysis was done in a fair and transparent way. The audio tapes of all individual depth interviews were reviewed and notes were made in a consistent format designed to draw out the key themes to ensure they could be analysed in a comparable way. One interview was fully transcribed to ensure transparency (see Appendix 7). Themes were grouped by objective to ensure the analysis can prove clear delivery against the research aims. Anonymous verbatim quotes have been used throughout the report to illustrate key points made and to bring to life the ‘voice of the consumer’.

3.23 Validity

Validity refers to how accurate, honest and insightful the research is (Sykes, 1990). Although it is clear that it is virtually impossible to be completely certain any study can eradicate all issues relating to validity, an awareness of the issues and developing a strategy to combat them helps to ensure a valid research study (Daymon and Holloway, 2002). For this research a number of measures were put in place to ensure validity.

Member checks were used to ensure the quality of the research as they are ‘a valuable way of guarding against research bias’ (Robson, 2002. p.175). Respondents were sent a photocopy of the fieldwork notes from their interview to ensure the moderator had understood and had accurately reflected their opinions and to allow them the opportunity to raise any additional issues. This helps to ensure validity and credibility as it avoids misinterpretation and empowers respondents to make sure their voice is heard (Daymon and Holloway, 2002). Each respondent signed a declaration stating that their views had been fairly represented (see Appendix 11).

When analysing the data this research used theoretical validation (Kirk and Miller 1986) to further improve validity. This involved searching for existing research to support key findings as well as searching for disconfirmation to find any research that may contradict the research findings. It was felt that this technique would provide a balanced view of the findings and reduce any self-selecting bias (Kirk and Miller 1986).

Reliability and validity are the conventional ways used to evaluate the quality of the research, however, they are derived from quantitative research and are based on a positivist viewpoint. As this research is primarily qualitative, based on a social constructionist approach it is more heavily aligned with an alternative perspective for ensuring the goodness of the research. This perspective is based on the work of Lincoln and Guba (1985) who believe the quality of the research can be better characterized by trustworthiness and authenticity. They argue trustworthiness and authenticity should be central to the research process as a whole (Daymon and Holloway, 2002), which is something this research has taken into account from the outset.

3.24 Authenticity

For a study to be authentic it must ensure participant's true views are reflected and that the study is fair. The measures taken to ensure this study was conducted in a fair and transparent way and that the findings fairly represented respondent's true views are mentioned above (e.g. member checks and standardised materials).

3.25 Trustworthiness

Daymon and Holloway (2002) argue that trustworthiness is made up of four key criteria; credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

As well as member checks, other measures were taken to ensure credibility. Methodological triangulation was also used in the form of in-depth qualitative interviews and quantitative Likert scales. This approach ensures the research is able to provide a more complete picture. The findings are arguably more credible as they are not just based on one method, as other methods have been used to for confirmation. For this study quantitative scales were used to test image congruence even though it had already been identified through the qualitative in-depth interview.

Care has been taken throughout this thesis to provide a detailed audit trail (Daymon and Holloway, 2002) of all decisions that were made throughout the research process. A clear rationale is presented for the choices that were made. Field notes were made for each interview and one interview was fully transcribed (see appendix 7). All materials used for recruitment and during the interview are included in the appendix. It is felt that this will contribute towards to dependency of the research.

Reflexivity was also undertaken through all stages of the research process. This study includes sections detailing the limitations of the approach taken, the conflicts that arose (e.g. aligning Bournemouth University and MRS codes of conduct when conducting in-store observations), the problems encountered (e.g. older respondents having difficulty with projective techniques) and includes a review of the approach (see section 3.28 below). In addition to this, suggestions as to what could be done differently if the study were to be repeated are included throughout the report where relevant.

Transferability is also important in ensuring trustworthiness. It is of great importance that the findings of this research are transferable, not only to ensure trustworthiness, but also from a practical point of view. As this research is using a relatively small qualitative sample size, it is clear that the findings will not be statistically representative. This is not the intention of this research; as previously stated, it is intended to be exploratory in nature. However, careful consideration has been made throughout the research design to ensure the findings will be as transferable as possible, both from an academic and practitioner level.

As previously mentioned, yellow fats were chosen as the focus of this research specifically because they are a category consumed by 99% of UK household (The Grocer, 08/07/06) and are relatively low in cost and therefore accessible to everyone. Yellow fats are consumed by people of all ages, genders, ethnic backgrounds, religions and socio-economic groups (Mintel Yellow Fats UK, September 2005), which make the findings of this research potentially more transferable to other FMCG categories than if a niche category had been chosen.

Although not the main focus of this academic study, this research recognises that some of the findings are also relevant and transferable to marketing practitioners and marketers of FMCG brands. Care has been taken to ensure the reader is aware of the relevance to practitioners and not just scholars. As such a section focusing on ideas for marketers has been included at the end of this study.

3.26 Conduct of the Research

As has been discussed above, observations were included in the multi-method research design, and conducted according to MRS guidelines. They were covert in nature to ensure shoppers' behaviour remained natural and was not biased by the knowledge that a researcher was watching them. This presents a dilemma – on the one hand, the current Bournemouth University Codes of Practice (2009) require that:

…participants and research teams must be as fully informed as possible about the purpose, methods and intended possible uses of the research, what their participation in the research entails and what risks are involved' (3.1)

They also recognise, however, that:

…individual consent may not be necessary for non-intrusive research activities; for example studies involving observation of public behaviour. However researchers must consider and respect the privacy of individuals and groups involved and ensure that the research does not run counter to the Human Rights Act 1998, Article 8 (10.6)

For the purposes of this element of the study, the intention was to avoid "contaminating" the research by informing respondents in advance that their behaviour whilst selecting from the yellow fats aisle may be observed (thus arguably making their behaviour less natural and influenced by the fact that they know they are being watched). Silverman (2000) argues that “we should not assume that ‘covert’ access always involves possible offence” (p.200). He “does not envisage any problems arising” providing the researcher is sensitive to the needs of those being observed and causes neither offence nor harm to others (p.200). With this in mind, it should be noted that the research, whilst covert in nature, was conducted with store permission in a public place, was observing a relatively impersonal activity (i.e. behaviour on the yellow fats aisle), was unobtrusive and respectful of the needs and privacy of those being observed.

All other elements of the study were conducted in full compliance of both the MRS and Bournemouth University Research Ethics Codes of Practice.

3.27 Interviewing Older Respondents

As this research has already identified, yellow fats is a category that offers something for everyone, as a result it is a product that is used by people of all ages. In fact research has found that the older population are particularly heavy users of butter and spreads (Mintel Yellow Fats UK, 2007).

Self-image and brand preferences affect everyone, regardless of their age; therefore age quotas were not set for this study. The ages of the women in this study ranged from 24 to 80 years old, with six of the respondents being over 65 years old. However, as Mariampolski (2001) acknowledges:

> ...there are very wide variations among people classified as seniors in terms of self-image....Little should be inferred from knowing just someone's age" (p.233).

Age, in terms of having different questions or approaches for different age groups, was not was not taken into account when creating the research design, although interestingly the over-64's contribute relatively the most to the volume of sales in the yellow fats market according to Mintel (1999a). Upon reflection it may have been helpful to gain an understanding of how best to moderate this audience as Mariampolski (2001) states "there is a 'language gap' between generations" (p.234).

While this interview guide and materials worked well and added an interesting perspective to the findings, there was one key area in the discussion that caused a minority of the older respondents some problems. This was the projective technique where respondents were asked to imagine a typical user for four yellow fat brands. This involved a degree of creativity and using their imagination that some older respondents were not used to. This felt like a strange task for some and made them feel uncomfortable. As a result some were not able to think of as many adjectives to describe the brands, this may have had an effect on their congruence ratings.

The impact of the difficulty respondents faced was minimised by the fact a trained moderator was used and that there was a discussion guide with prompts should respondents find the exercise difficult (see Appendix 3).

3.28 Review of the Research Methods

Throughout this chapter justification and reasoning has been given for each approach used, as well as an understanding of any limitations and the measures undertaken to minimise the effect of such limitations on the quality and integrity of the research.

It important to recognise that “no experiment can be perfectly controlled and no measurement can be perfectly calibrated. All measurement, therefore, is to some degree suspect” (Kirk and Miller, 1986. p.89). While some drawbacks have been identified they are minor in nature and unlikely to seriously detract from the authenticity and trustworthiness (or validity and reliability) of this research.

If this research were to be repeated, it may on reflection have been beneficial to schedule the interviews to allow sufficient time between each interview for analysis. Given that qualitative research is an iterative process this may have improved the quality of the questioning.

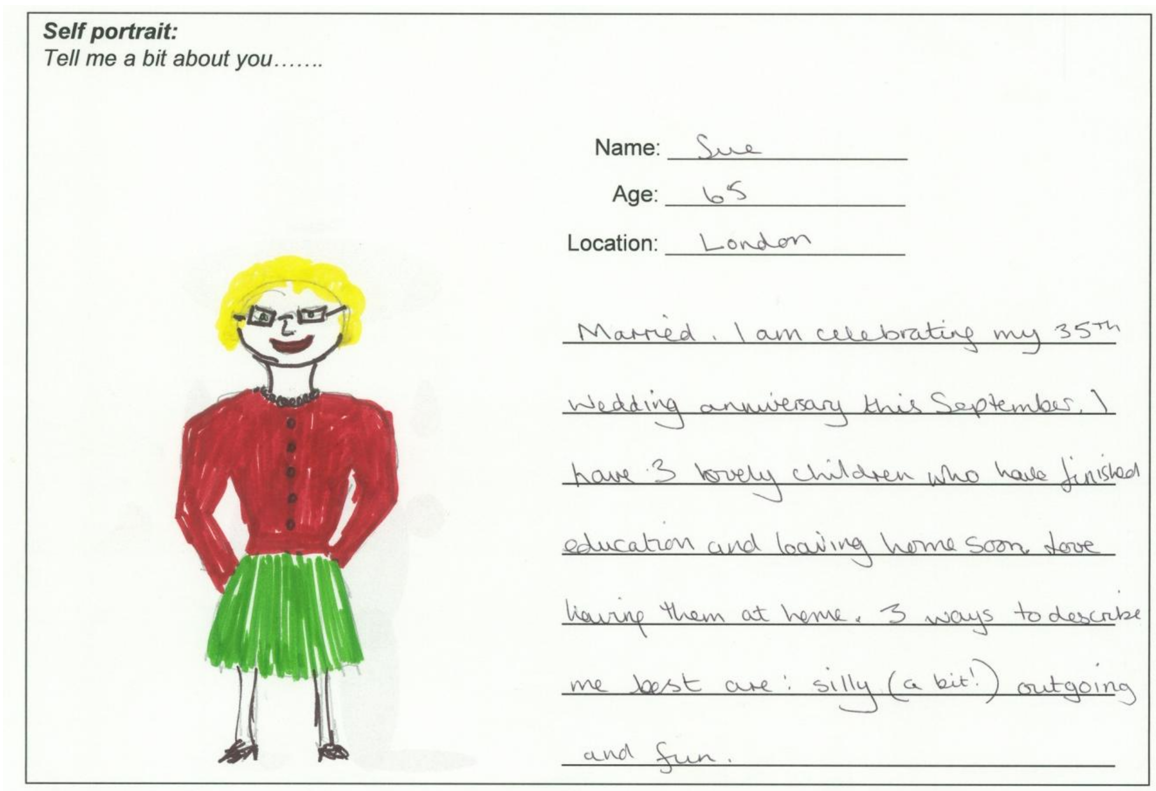
Future research evaluating self-image congruence in the context of FMCGs may seek to use a larger more robust sample to ensure the results are more conclusive and are statistically representative of the population of interest. However, this was not the intention of this research.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

The purpose of this Chapter is to answer the primary objectives of this research and discuss the findings in relation to the overall research aims. The findings will also be discussed in relation to existing literature discussed in Chapter 2, as well as any other relevant literature to ensure theoretical validation (Kirk and Miller, 1986).

4.0 Self Portraits

A selection of self portraits are shown below to give a flavour of the kind of people who took part in this research. This was done to 'bring to life' the research findings and to gain an insight into respondents' self-image.



Self portrait:
Tell me a bit about you…….

Name: Sue
Age: 65
Location: London

Married. I am celebrating my 35th wedding anniversary this September. I have 3 lovely children who have finished education and leaving home soon. Love having them at home. 3 ways to describe me best are: silly (a bit!) outgoing and fun.

Self portrait:
Tell me a bit about you…….

Name: JO
Age: 24
Location: Kennington

Single. Just love my music, music, music!!. Music is my life. My dream is to be a professional pianist. 3 words to describe me:— alternative, musical, Free spirit

Self portrait:
Tell me a bit about you…….

Name: Andy
Age: 32
Location: Hampton

Work for my parents print company. Living alone again for the first time in six years which is scary.
I am active but quiet and quirky

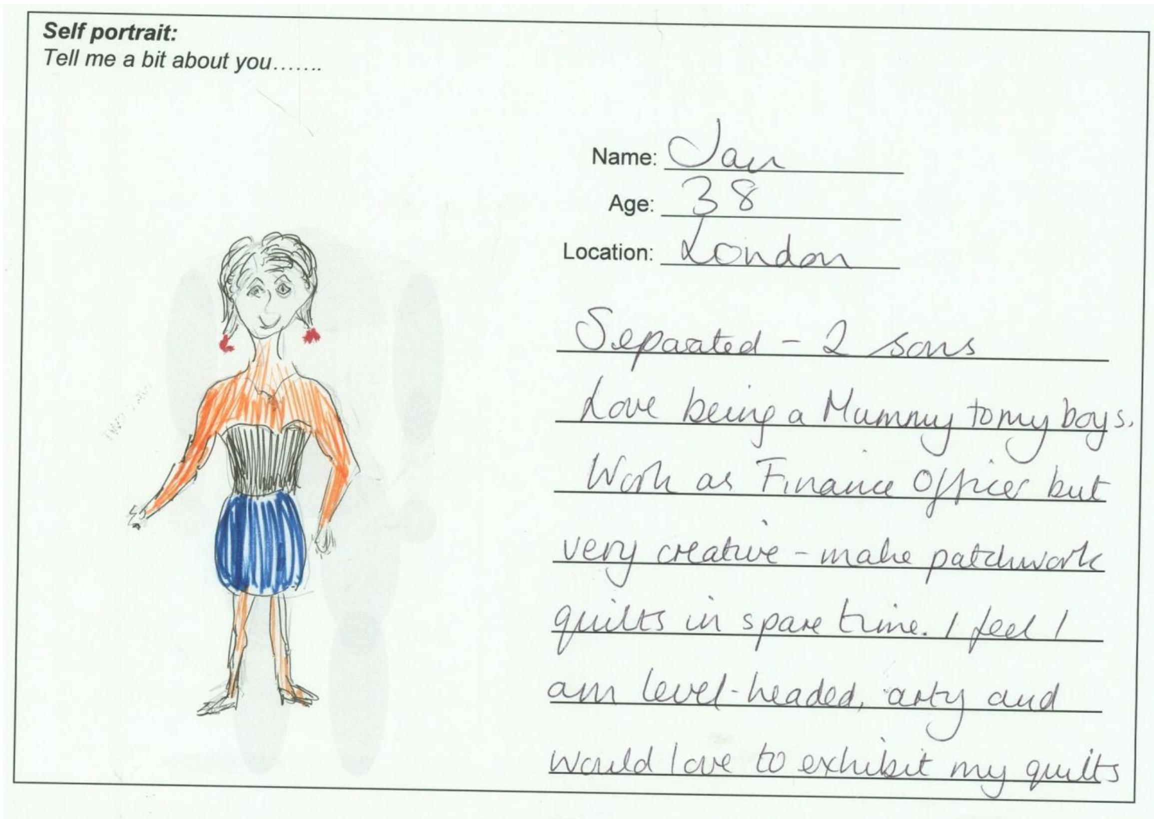


Table 7, below, contains a short snapshot of each respondent to help gain further insight into who they are and how they see themselves. This is intended to provide context before a detailed discussion on their thoughts towards supermarket shopping and yellow fats.

Table 7: Overview of Respondents

Name	Age	Living situation	Describe yourself in 3 words
Margaret	80	Widow - Lives alone but daughter and 2 grandchildren live next door	Always on-the-go, stubborn, generous
Pat	69	Widow - Lives alone with pet budgie	Christian, keen gardener, bookworm
Jenny	43	Single	Tidy, organised, cultured
Jo	24	Single - Just moved out of home and renting a flat for the first time	Musical, alternative, free-spirit
Dot	72	Widow - Lives alone. Has 1 son but no grandchildren which she finds very difficult as all her friends have them	Lonely, frustrated, hopeful
Victoria	30	Single	Loyal, happy, friendly
Andy	32	Single - recently split up from long term partner	Quiet, active, quirky
Sarah	25	Single	Confident, warm hearted, funny
Fiona	28	Single - Lives with new puppy called Roxy!	Entrepreneurial, driven, positive
Annie	55	Separated - Has lived alone for the last 3 years	Relaxed, easygoing, takes each day as it comes
Bridget	47	Married - Lives with husband, 2 teenage boys and a tortoise called Henry	Busy, family-orientated, fun
Belinda	43	Married with 1 daughter and 1 son under 10	Mum, wife and cleaner!
Jan	38	Separated - Lives with two young sons	Mummy, creative, level headed
Sue	65	Married - Lives with a son and daughter who are in their early twenties. Also has one son who has moved out	Silly, outgoing, fun
Dotty	69	Married - 1 child has left home. Has 2 grandsons	Bossy, housewife, grandmother
Shell	27	Married - No children	Works hard and plays hard attitude, driven, easily bored
Doreen	68	Married - Kids have left home. Has 5 grandchildren she sees every fortnight	Reserved, content, soft
Chris	59	Married - Has 2 older children who treat house like a hotel!	Outgoing, fun, happy
Barbara	39	Partner - 4 children, 3 cats, 2 rabbits, 1 guinea pig	Laid back, relaxed, messy!
Judith Helen	57	Lives with Father	Busy, fitness fanatic, friendly

Section 1: Shopping for FMCGs

The purpose of this section is to answer the following objectives:

- To identify key FMCG brands consumers are unwilling to substitute and why;
- To identify factors affecting brand preference when shopping for FMCGs.

This section analyses the findings from the introductory part of the depth interviews and is intended to set the context for a more detailed exploration of self-image in relation to yellow fats.

4.1 Preferred Brands

This research has identified three key brands that the majority of respondents routinely purchase and are not willing to substitute; Kellogg's cereal, Heinz Baked Beans and Heinz Tomato Ketchup. These brands that were by far the most 'top of mind' as they were mentioned spontaneously by most respondents when asked which brands they were not willing to compromise on. These brands appeared to inspire high levels of brand loyalty - if they are not in stock most respondents will make a special trip to another store, or will wait until their next shopping trip, rather than buy a different brand.

It appears there were a number of factors contributing to such strong brand preference and brand loyalty in these cases. Trust, together with the perception that they offer superior quality were key reasons respondents gave for possessing such strong feelings towards these brands. It is perhaps no coincidence that these are very well established brands (established in 1906 and 1869 respectively) which often promote their heritage through their marketing communications. This indicates that reputation and trust are key factors leading to brand preference and therefore brand loyalty, which is a theory supported by existing research (Delgado-Ballester and Munuera-Alemán, 2001). This is significant to take into account for the purposes of this study, as self-image congruence may be modified by factors such as trust and reputation.

These brands are also the leaders within their product categories and heavily dominate the market. Research has identified that Heinz dominates the tomato sauce market with a 70% market share, and it dominates the baked bean market with a 67% market share (Mintel Bottled Sauces, 2008; Mintel Complete Canned Meals and Meats, 2008). As such, many respondents feel as though these brands were 'the only option'; they have become synonymous with the product category and may therefore be a reason these brands are preferred by most respondents. In such cases, self-image may have a lesser effect on brand preference.

Other preferred brands, although to a lesser extent, were McVities and Weight Watchers. Again these brands inspired a great deal of loyalty with the majority of customers not willing to purchase another brand. Interestingly, the case of McVities is similar to that of Kellogg's and Heinz in that it is a very well established brand (established in 1830) and a strong brand leader that's name is synonymous with the product category.

Although not as well established and not as mainstream as the others, Weight Watchers can still be considered a well established brand (established in 1963), it is also the brand leader in its product category. It is important to recognise that it was one of the first brands to tap into the health consciousness of consumers and as such it is often one of the few trusted brands to provide a low fat alternative. Similarly, McVities was one of the first manufacturers of biscuits, Heinz was one of the first manufacturers of tomato sauce and baked beans and Kellogg's was one of the first manufacturers of cereal. This indicates that there is a link between being the first brand on the market and being the preferred brand in that category. Again this is significant for the purpose of this research as this may moderate the relationship between self-image and brand preference.

There were other preferred brands that consumers were unwilling to compromise on and remained fiercely loyal to. However, there was no common consensus and preferred brands were very much down to individual respondents' preferences. In such cases, it was clear that respondents had developed emotional connections with the brand. For example one respondent (Margaret, 80 years old) claimed "I'd die if they didn't have Shipham's Fish Paste". Although an obvious exaggeration, this respondent's use of highly emotive language clearly indicates an emotional connection with the brand. Reasons for this lie in the fact that this is a brand Margaret has used for years; therefore it is a brand she trusts, which over time has led to an emotional connection. This is supported by existing research which identifies that future purchases are affected by a brand relationship path that includes brand satisfaction, brand trust, and attachment to the brand (Esch, Langner, Schmitt, and Geus, 2006).

4.2 Product Categories where Brand Preference is Strong

Interestingly this research has also identified two key product categories within which consumers were more likely to have strongly preferred brands - washing powder and tea. Within these product categories it appears that whichever brand respondents use, they are much less likely to consider substitutes in comparison to other product categories.

It is interesting to note that these product categories share key similarities in that they are both heavily branded with a few key brands dominating market share within the category. Similar to Heinz, Kellogg's and McVities, these brands are very well established and often promote their heritage through their marketing communications. It is also interesting to note that research has identified that within both product categories own-brands have a limited market share as brand loyalty is so strong (Mintel Clothes Washing Detergents, 2008; Mintel Tea and Herbal Tea, 2007).

One reason that brands within these categories appear to induce strong levels of brand preference and loyalty may be due to the role and perceived importance of these products in respondents' lives. For many respondents drinking tea is part of their 'daily routine', whether it be "a way of relaxing" (Judith, 57 years), "the only way I can start my day" (Barbara, 39 years) or "part of socialising with friends" (Belinda, 43 years), it appears to be a significant part of many respondents' lives. Levels of involvement in the category are therefore likely to be relatively high. This indicates that levels of involvement with the product may actually influence brand preference and brand loyalty which is supported by existing research findings (Amine, 1998; Warrington and Shim, 2000; Quester and Lim, 2003).

In the context of drinking tea, it is important to recognise that tea is very much seen as a British tradition and is part of Britain's cultural identity. As all the respondents in this study are British, a possible reason for strong levels of brand preference within this category may be because tea it is part of their social identity. This relates to existing research into social-identity-based decision-making which states that if a consumer's social identity is relevant to the item being evaluated, it increases the likelihood that their social identity may influence their decision (Reed, 2002).

Similar to tea, washing clothes is very much a fundamental part of many respondents' lives and routine. Many respondents, particularly those living with a partner / other family members, say that sometimes they feel like their "day revolves around washing" (e.g. Bridget, aged 47). This was especially true for those who were not in full time employment. Washing clothes had a real importance to many of the respondents' lives and many discussed a sense of "unease' and a feeling of "pressure" if they were "not on track" or "up to date" with their washing (e.g. Belinda, aged 43; Bridget, aged 47; Barbara, aged 39). Respondents also spoke of a "sense of satisfaction" and "achievement" when all the washing is done (e.g. Chris, aged 59), indicating they were heavily involved with the category which may explain why brand preference within this market is particularly strong.

In the context of washing clothes, it is important to recognise that traditionally in British society, this is seen very much as the woman's role. While gender roles within society are continually changing, the view that washing clothes is predominantly a woman's responsibility is still prevalent. This is evident in current advertising for most washing cleaning products which still casts this as a woman's role. This was certainly still true for all respondents interviewed, as all of them did the majority of the clothes washing within their households. This is a finding supported by existing research which found that, despite women having made great progress in terms of equal opportunities over the last few decades, they are still assuming the traditional female role within the home (Lake, 2006).

This is significant, as many respondents living with a partner/other family members, (particularly those with children) said that "washing is a big part of my role as a good wife and Mum" (Bridget, aged 47). For many, it seemed that part of what they described as being a 'good' wife and mother is being 'good' at household chores such as washing clothes, as it is a way of looking after their family. This may explain why there is such an emotional attachment to the process and therefore explain why brand preferences within this category are particularly strong. Similar to tea, buying washing powder may access respondents' social identity as what they perceive as 'being a good wife and mother'.

4.3 Purchasing Situations where there is little Brand Preference

As well as identifying product categories where brand preferences seemed to be high, this research also indentified particular situations when respondents had little preference for any brand, these situations are discussed in the following section.

- **FMCG Brands used as an Ingredient**

When asked about products for which they did not have any brand preferences, quite surprisingly there was one product mentioned spontaneously by many respondents - tinned tomatoes. No respondents bought branded tinned tomatoes, or if they did they did not have a brand preference and were not aware of the brand they had bought. Most respondents bought supermarket own-brand tinned tomatoes. The reason given by respondents for the lack of interest in brands for this product was that “a brand doesn’t matter so much if you’re cooking” (Victoria, aged 30) and tinned tomatoes only tend to be used while cooking.

Respondents said that when products are used in cooking the quality of the brand is not so important because it is “not standing alone” (e.g. Judith, aged 57). Tinned tomatoes is an ingredient which is always used as part of something else, e.g. soup or lasagne. Perhaps more so than other products that serves as an ingredient, tomatoes were mentioned as enticing little brand preference because “a tomato is a tomato” (Chris, aged 59). It is something grown, rather than something ‘made’, therefore respondents could see no added value, and as a result, all purchasing decisions for this product appeared to be mainly price led. Interestingly, respondents were not able to name any brands of tinned tomatoes other than own-brand labels. This indicates extremely low levels of engagement with the product, which may further explain a distinct lack of brand preference for any brand of tinned tomatoes.

- **FMCGs that are 'Naturally Grown'**

Similar to tomatoes, brands for products that are 'naturally grown' were seen by respondents as unimportant and therefore did not inspire any preference for particular brands. This was because respondents could not see the added value, or more importantly they could not see any real difference between brands, as respondents stated - "a prune is a prune" (Margaret, aged 80), "with rice, I don't think I'm getting a huge difference" (Jan, 38) and "if I can't tell the difference I'll buy own-brand, I like to think I'm ahead of the game" (Bridget, 47). Therefore when buying naturally grown products most respondents appeared to make their decisions based mainly on price.

- **Non-edible FMCGs**

In the context of FMCGs, many respondents identified that brands are not so important when the product is not edible and therefore they did not have strong brand preferences for products such as kitchen roll, foil, sandwich bags etc. Only a small minority of respondents bought branded products in these categories. Most felt that there is a "marked difference between something you taste and something you use" (Jenny, aged 43); therefore they felt that there was no point in paying more money for branded products because ultimately they are just "wasted". This indicates that when buying such products respondents have the end result in mind (i.e. the product will ultimately be thrown away), rather than the use (product efficacy during point of use) because of this respondents tended to decide between these products mainly on price.

- **FMCG Brands Bought for Others**

Interestingly respondents living with a partner or other family member(s) were slightly more likely to buy own-brand products than single respondents; this of course may be down to the fact they are more likely to experience financial pressures as a result of having more people to feed. However reasons given, particularly for those with children, were that brands are not so important if the respondent is not the person who will be consuming the product. They are less willing to pay extra for branded products if they perceive children or other family members would not be able to appreciate any difference in quality. As Barbara (aged 39) said: "if it's for the children I'll buy own-brand; if it's for me I prefer the proper brands". Therefore even though respondents had preferences for certain brands, if a product is being bought for other family members (particularly children) then they will not necessarily chose their preferred brand, instead they tend to buy mainly on price and will often buy supermarket own-brand products.

4.4 Factors Affecting Brand Preferences

It is clear that there are certain circumstances when FMCG brands are not perceived to be important. In such cases, respondents state that they are most likely to buy based on price. It is important to recognise that issues previously discussed relating to price, usage, product-type, and who will be consuming the product, may act as moderating factors to congruence levels. Some of these key issues will be discussed in more depth below, as well as identifying other factors affecting brand preference in the context of FMCGs. This addresses a gap in the literature, identified by Xue (2008), who states that more potential moderating factors need to be considered to help understand self-image congruence.

- **Price**

As previously discussed in the Chapter 2, this research takes into account that pricing has a huge impact on consumers' shopping habits and is likely to be a significant moderating factor for image congruency. Of all those interviewed, only two respondents claimed to be motivated by price alone when buying FMCGs. However, many consumers admitted to being tempted by offers and price promotions. Although the frequency of them being attracted by such offers has decreased over time, as it appears most respondents have become cynical to special offers and are now focused on "seeing the real <u>value</u> of the offer" (Andy, aged 32). She continues that she has learnt through experience and also the media that "although it is cheaper it's not necessarily value for money".

This may mean that although price is a key consideration when shopping for special offers, the decision is not based on price alone, as respondents are also looking for 'value' in other ways. This is important for the purposes of this research as it indicates self-image congruence may potentially affect brand preferences, even when respondents are buying brands on price promotions.

There is a perceived risk in buying based on special offers, particularly if the offer involves a new product. As Sarah (aged 25) stated, "great £1 off but if I don't like it, it will be left in the fridge and I'll end up buying another one anyway!" Interestingly those living alone were less likely to be persuaded by 'special offers'. This may relate to the level of perceived risk, as "I live alone so if I don't like it, there's no one else to eat it so it will just get thrown away and I can't stand waste" (Pat, aged 69). The lack of relevance of the offer for those living alone is also a consideration because, as Pat continued, "two for the price of one is no good to me as I won't be able to use them!" Therefore the level of perceived risk involved when purchasing in these situations may be a moderating factor affecting brand preference.

- **The Family Factor**

There are considerable differences between those buying for a partner/family and those buying only for themselves. As previously mentioned, in circumstances where respondents will not actually be using the product and when they feel the family member(s) won't appreciate the difference in quality, they are more likely to buy supermarket own-brand products and will often buy based primarily on price. However, it is the brands that are bought at the request of other members of the family and the brands that respondents know their family members really like that they are less willing to substitute. This is primarily down to fear of waste and relates to the level of perceived risk previously discussed. For example, Sue (aged 65) stated "I once bought Buxton [water] instead of my son's usual Evian because it was on special offer. He went mad and refused to drink it!"

Those buying for a partner/family often said "it is easier to stick to the same brands because you know everyone likes it and it won't cause a fuss", as "the kids would kill me if I bought another brand" (Bridget, aged 47). Family members may have strong preferences for particular brands even if the respondent who is purchasing the brand does not, therefore in order to please everyone and avoid disappointment and arguments, many respondents believe it is "safe to stick with what you know…. you can't go wrong with tried and tested" (Jan, aged 38). For example when discussing honey, Doreen (aged 68) referred to her husband and stated “if I did change [the brand], I’d have to be absolutely sure he’s going to like it and won’t complain”.

It is clear that for those shopping for a family, there are often higher levels of motivation to buy a particular brand because there are potential negative consequences and even feelings of inadequacy in their role of homemaker if they buy the ‘wrong’ brand. It therefore appears that trust in the brand and perceived risk, may be moderating factors affecting brand choice when buying for others.

Within the context of this research, differences between single households and those living with a partner/family are of particular interest because if respondents are buying for someone else, levels of self-image congruence are likely to be affected. This is supported by existing research which recognises the influence of the family as a decision-making unit (Lalwani, 2002; Grashof and Dixon, 1980; Davis 1976).

- **The Taste Factor**

Of course, the biggest factor influencing brand preference in the context of edible FMCGs is often claimed to be taste. Taste was given by all respondents as the biggest motivating factor influencing brand preference and it is inevitably of great importance. However, when it comes to analysing what respondents say versus what they actually mean, it is important to consider existing research, which has found that taste is often given as a default explanation for brand preference, yet this may not necessarily be the case.

There have been a number of blind taste tests where the product respondents choose based on their claimed preferred taste, is often not the brand they choose when they are unaware which brand they are actually tasting. This indicates that brand image may play a bigger role in brand preference than consumers realise.

For example, a hundred respondents were asked to taste the brands Diet Coke and Diet Pepsi. When the respondents did the taste test ‘blind’, they were unaware which brand was which - in this case fifty-one respondents said they preferred Diet Pepsi. However when the same respondents tasted the brands again with an awareness of which brand was Diet Coke and which brand was Diet Pepsi, only twenty-three respondents said they preferred Diet Pepsi (De Chernatony and Knox, 1990). This example illustrates that brand image can affect a consumer’s perception of taste and therefore brand preference, even though it may be at a subconscious level.

- **Habitual Purchasing**

It important to recognise that the vast majority of FMCGs are purchased in a habitual way. Some respondents describe themselves as “stuck in a rut” and acknowledge how “boring” and “terrible” their shopping habits have become. Again this relates to the fact that people are now living increasingly busy lives, therefore many respondents describe themselves as shopping as though on ‘autopilot’. This is supported by existing research which acknowledges that many grocery products become habitual purchases for consumers, often because less effort is required (Solomon et al., 2002). However, it is interesting to note that some respondents felt their interview for this study “was the wake up call I needed” (Sarah, aged 25) and “has proved to me that I should try other brands” (Chris, aged 59). This indicates that once the choice is re-evaluated there is a willingness to change.

Habitual purchasing is likely to moderate levels of self-image congruence because current self-image is arguably less likely to be accessed as shoppers are on autopilot.

- **Brand Sets**

The results of this study also support existing literature which found that consumers limit their own-brand choice. This is known as ‘brand sets’ (Louden and Della Bitta, 1993; Solomon et al., 2002). For example, despite there being numerous choices of brands on the shelves, respondents stated that when it comes to washing powder “I have a choice of either Persil or Ariel” (Sue, aged 65); when it comes to ice cream “I have a choice of Walls or Cornish” (Margaret, aged 80) and so on. Many respondents use this technique as a mechanism to make decisions quickly and easily while in-store. Again this is related to the fact that consumers are now living increasingly busy lives and generally want to make their food shopping as quick and easy as possible. For most product categories respondents had limited their choice before entering the store. This appeared to be an unconscious decision because, when probed, respondents could not easily justify why they preferred certain brands and would not consider others.

4.5 Section Summary

The purpose of this section was to answer two of the research objectives:

- To identify key FMCG brands consumers are unwilling to substitute and why;

- To identify factors affecting brand preference when shopping for FMCGs.

In summary, there are a number of different FMCG brands respondents prefer. Reasons for these preferences were based on trust, price, perceived risk, taste, habit, usage, social identity, who will consume the product, and product type. These are all factors that may moderate self-image congruence levels and will therefore be explored in more depth later in this chapter.

<u>Section 2: Yellow Fats</u>

The purpose of this section is to answer the following objective:

- To identify factors affecting brand preference when shopping for yellow fats.

This section analyses the findings from the in-store observations and depth interviews and is intended to identify reasons for brand preference within the yellow fat category. This is a pre-requisite for understanding whether self-image affects brand preference in this category.

4.6 Key Drivers of Brand Preference for Yellow Fats

This research has previously identified that brand preference doesn't necessarily translate into brand choice. However, for the yellow fat category, brand preference does seem to be a very strong indicator of brand choice. This may be because respondents consider yellow fats to be so low in price, so price does not significantly moderate brand choice. In fact, the only factor respondents identified as preventing brand preference translating into brand choice related to 'health', as some respondents preferred brands that were high in fat which in reality they would not buy. However, these respondents still ultimately bought a brand within the 'healthy' category that represented their brand preference within that sub category.

As seen in Figure 6 below, most supermarkets split the yellow fats aisle into three sub categories; cooking and baking (mainly block butter and Stork), everyday spreads (spreads and spreadable butter), and healthy and wellbeing (low fat spreads). This is important because what the brand will ultimately be used for appears to be the first consideration for respondents when deciding which brand to purchase. When observing the yellow fats aisle it was clear that most respondents went straight to a particular sub category, rather than looking at the aisle as a whole. It therefore seems that usage may precede other factors when determining brand choice.

Once respondents had made a decision based on usage, it appears they will then make decisions based on taste, ‘spreadability’ and health, before considering other factors such as brand image. This is supported by existing research (Mintel Yellow Fats, 2007) which identified that convenience (in terms of the ability to spread), health (including naturalness) and taste are key factors affecting purchase decisions in this category.

Figure 6: An Example of the Layout in the Yellow Fats Aisle

Cooking & Baking **Everyday Spreads** **Healthy & Wellbeing**

(Observed in Tesco Extra, Watford - with store permission)

4.7 Usage Occasions for Yellow Fats

As previously discussed in the first section of this chapter, intended product usage affects respondents' decision-making processes, which may affect brand preferences. Usage is therefore a key factor which has the potential to moderate self-image congruence levels. Different usage occasions in the context of yellow fats are discussed in detail below.

- **Butter as an Ingredient for Cooking**

Butter as an ingredient for cooking has been used by all respondents at some point in their lives. When butter is used in this way, the brand is not perceived to be as important - most respondents concur that "for cooking I will buy cheaper own-brand or special offers" (Margaret, aged 80). Similar to other FMCG brands that are used as an ingredient (for example, tinned tomatoes) respondents believe "taste isn't so important because you have all the other ingredients that add to it" (Victoria, aged 30). When butter is bought to be used <u>only</u> as an ingredient for cooking, most respondents admit that they do not remain loyal to their usual brand. Instead, their main driver of brand preference is price because quality and trust in the brand is not so important.

- **Butter as an Ingredient for Baking**

Although the brand and perceived quality of the butter is not given high importance by respondents when using butter as an ingredient for cooking, it is very different when using butter as an ingredient for baking. Respondents make a clear distinction between the two. The difference is that when used for baking, it is seen as a key ingredient that is fundamental to the success, taste and even the look of the cake. The fact there are generally much fewer ingredients used for making a cake adds to the perceived importance of the brand and quality of the butter. Many respondents also believe that the type of butter used actually effects the colour of the cake, thus brand choice is seen as important because of the conspicuous nature of the results.

For many of the women interviewed, being able to bake a cake is seen as an important part of their identity. For many, it is something their mother and grandmother taught them to do and they feel a sense of pride in carrying on this tradition. Respondents acknowledge that women have many roles that they feel they have to fulfil “in order to feel like a real woman” (Bridget, aged 47) and an important role is that of a ‘homemaker’; which respondents define as someone who is capable of running the home and cooking healthy food for their family.

Respondents say they feel this pressure from many different sources, however, the increased awareness on the importance of a balanced diet which has been brought about by the government, as well as TV personalities such as Jamie Oliver, has added to this pressure. This sense of ‘pressure’ to cook from scratch and use only ‘the best’ ingredients was felt to be particularly important for those with a family and especially those with young children. It is clear respondents feel baking is an important part of their role as a woman. It is therefore, perhaps, unsurprising that their brand choice when baking is also seen as important and most will not just buy based on price when buying for this purpose.

While ‘margarine’ is no longer a term that respondents use to describe everyday spreads and no respondents admitted to using margarine for any other purpose, it is still the preferred product for some baking. This may be because it is what they used when they first learned to bake as children. The brand Stork is used by most respondents when baking because it is "seen as the best for baking" and is something "my Mum always baked with" (Dotty, aged 69). Respondents see Stork as 'traditional' and 'trusted', which are brand qualities they seem to find appealing when baking. This indicates that the brand image and the image respondents want to portray when baking are similar and are both centred on tradition, trust and success. This is something which may be of interest to marketers of yellow fats and is also important for the purpose of this research as it indicates that in this context there is a link between a consumer's self-image and their brand preference.

- **Special Occasions**

Most respondents admit that they modify their brand choice when buying for special occasions such as a party, Christmas, or when entertaining friends or family. This is primarily because special occasions usually involve social gatherings when respondents will need to entertain and provide food for guests. Similar to a woman's need to be seen as a successful homemaker, respondents also allude to the importance of showing people they can also be a successful 'hostess', which respondents define as someone who can provide good quality food, drink and entertainment in a social situation. Because of the need to impress guests and successfully fulfil this role, respondents admit that when shopping for special occasions they will often spend longer in the supermarket making their decision because their final choice is perceived to be of greater importance than when buying for everyday use.

All respondents admitted to looking for what they consider to be more upmarket brands when buying butter/spreads for special occasions because of the desire to impress guests, “If people are round I don’t buy so much on economy. It’s special, it’s not every day, and it’s more about image, I suppose” (Jenny, aged 43). Respondents admit that they choose different butter/spread when they have guests in order to please them and make sure they have enjoyed themselves, “I buy Clover if I’m going to have a do or if my grandsons are coming to stay because I know that people tend to like it more than my usual Flora Light’ (Margaret, aged 80).

Respondents also admit that taking the time and initiative to buy different butter/spreads on special occasions is “a way of treating my hubby and my kids and anyone else who might pop by over Christmas” (Belinda, aged 43). It therefore appears that the woman’s role as the ‘hostess’ is very much part of her public self. When choosing butter/spreads for social occasions, many respondents mentioned the importance of “being seen to be a ‘proper woman’ who can put on a good spread” (Bridget, aged 47). This indicates that their social self and ideal social self are likely to be more predictive of brand choice in this context, which reinforces existing research findings previously discussed in Chapter 2 (Sirgy and Su, 2000; Hong and Zinkan, 1995; Martin and Bellizzi, 1982).

It is also interesting to note that while most respondents do not buy butter for everyday use, primarily because of health and convenience concerns, many will buy butter on special occasions, particularly around Christmas time. This is a way of treating the whole family but is also seen as an important part of tradition. As Sue (aged 65) commented, “we always have a slab of ‘proper’ butter for Christmas; it’s just tradition and I don’t think Christmas would feel like Christmas without it". So it may be that brands portraying images around 'family' and 'tradition' are more likely to appeal to a consumer's self-image in this situation and therefore may affect brand preference in this context.

- **Family Concerns**

Many older respondents, who are more likely to eat healthy cholesterol-reducing spreads, tend to buy different products for when grandchildren visit because there is a feeling that such spreads are not good for children. "I heard on the radio that you're not supposed to give Flora Pro-activ to children so now I'm scared to do it!" said Doreen (aged 68). Some older respondents also discussed the need to stock brands - "I know the grandkiddies like it, otherwise they might get upset" (Margaret, aged 80). Many respondents feel that it is especially important to have food, including butter/spreads, which are familiar to children at a young age "to make sure I avoid tantrums" (Dotty, aged 69).

Some older respondents acknowledge that this is part of a woman's role as a good grandmother who wants to please her grandchildren and feel that "I am doing right by them and that I am doing my job" (Doreen, aged 68). This indicates that the image of the brand as being 'fun' and 'good for children' and the self-image that the woman wants to portray of being a 'good grandmother' who is doing the 'right thing' for her grandchildren may influence brand preference.

- **Everyday Use**

Usage, in terms of occasion and who will be consuming the butter/spread, clearly moderates brand choice in this category. However for everyday use, most respondents say they are loyal to one brand. When asked what would happen if their favourite brand was out of stock, most respondents said they would prefer to wait until they went shopping again rather than buy another brand as a substitute. This indicates that their choice of butter/spread is of considerable importance to many respondents as they are reluctant to substitute another brand in its place.

However, most respondents did say that they would buy another brand if they were 'desperate'; being desperate was defined by respondents as having already run out of butter/spread with no time to go to another shop. Only a very small minority of respondents would go without rather than have anything other than their preferred brand. This indicates that while brand loyalty appears to be reasonably high in this category, it is not as high as it is for Kellogg's cereal, Heinz baked beans and Heinz tomato ketchup, which are the brands that most respondents are not willing to compromise on or substitute. This may be because the yellow fats category is not overly dominated by one brand and therefore respondents feel there is sufficient choice to enable them to substitute brands if necessary. Many of the brands are well-established and well known, and respondents feel they are able to trust that particular brands are of a certain standard in terms of quality.

When respondents are 'desperate' and do choose to buy a substitute instead of their preferred brand, most will buy what they describe as the 'nearest brand' to their preferred brand. Respondents will choose the brand they consider 'nearest' based on what is most important to them about the brand they currently choose. Key drivers most commonly mentioned were the ability to spread easily, whether it has a 'butter-like' taste, the ability to freeze the product, the size of the pack, how healthy it is, if the product is oil-based, and of course price. When using a substitute brand many respondents will buy a brand they have tried before because it is a known entity which therefore lessens the risk of waste. As Andy (aged 32) commented: “If Utterly Butterly isn’t there then I’ll buy I can’t Believe It’s Not Butter because I’ve had it before so I know I like it”.

Although respondents mentioned mainly functional reasons for choosing a brand which they described as being ‘nearest’ to their preferred brand, it is interesting to note that often the brands were also perceived by respondents to be very similar in terms of image. Even if respondents were not consciously aware of this, it appears that brand image does affect brand preference in this context.

Interestingly, no respondents mentioned ‘nearest’ in terms of coming from the same umbrella brand. The manufacturing brands such as Unilever, Dairy Crest and Arla were not a consideration for respondents, thus indicating that the yellow fat brands are the only brand image shoppers are responding to when making brand choices.

Apart from usage, respondents identified a number of different reasons as to why they buy the butter/spread they currently use. Respondents identified that taste, ‘spreadability’ and health were all key drivers to purchase and, as such, most brands within this category offer a compromise of all three. Once respondents have made a choice based on usage, health, convenience and taste, they can be placed into three segments based on how they then choose their preferred band. These segments are based on habit, recommendation and price.

4.8 Habitual Purchasing

Habitual purchasing appears to be prevalent within the yellow fats category, particularly for respondents who buy based on what they have traditionally always bought. These respondents admit their purchase has become a habit – "there's no rhyme or reason, I've used it since the world began, since I was old enough to cook. I'm a stickler for one thing" said Pat (aged 69). Interestingly when asked what brands of butter/spread they were aware of, most respondents were unable to mention many other brands and even when prompted, most were completely unaware of relatively newer brands on the market, other than those that had been heavily advertised. This is because for many respondents buying butter/spread "has become as automatic as cleaning my teeth" (Judith, aged 57), they admit to not even looking at other brands and describe themselves as being "almost blinkered", going straight to their preferred brand "as if I'm on automatic pilot!" (Sarah, aged 25).

The observations gained from time spent in the yellow fat aisle support these findings, as most shoppers were observed spending less than five seconds at the shelf face. Most simply picked up their usual brand and left the aisle without looking at others. This is supported by existing research which found that when grocery shopping consumers spend less than five seconds scanning the aisle (Solomon et al., 2002).

All respondents considered butter/spread to be a relatively low cost, low involvement purchase, which may explain why they did not spend much time or effort making their decision. This research has identified that most respondents do not choose their butter/spread in-store, instead it is a choice made not only before the respondent enters the store, but a decision that in many cases has been made years before. This is an important issue to consider when analysing image congruity as the self-image of respondents when they chose their preferred brand may have changed over time but due to habit their brand preference may have stayed the same.

It is interesting to note that, although respondents acknowledge that buying butter/spread has become a habit, it was not something they were previously aware of. As a result of this study, many respondents stated in follow up thank you calls that they didn’t realise they had become ‘so stuck in a rut’, and as a result a number respondents have been motivated to re-evaluate their brand choice and try other brands that they had previously ignored. A minority have even permanently switched brands, which may be because they feel the new brands are a ‘better fit’ with their current self-image, as the brand choice is more recent.

- **Sense of Tradition**

When buying butter/spreads, most respondents appear to buy based on a sense of tradition. They buy it because “it is what I have always used” (Doreen, aged 68), they are “just so used to it” (Victoria, aged 30) and “it’s familiar - I know that whenever I open up my fridge it will be there” (Jan, aged 38). This is a purchase decision that was made in the past and has become a habitual purchase for many respondents. Existing research has found this to be very common in relation to grocery shopping as consumers lack the motivation to spend time searching for other brands (Solomon et al., 2002; Louden and Della Bitta, 1993).

- **“Mum used it”**

For many respondents in this segment the choice of butter/spread is not necessarily a choice they consciously made. Many say that thinking back they realise they buy the same brand as their mothers bought because “it’s what I was used to” (Jo, aged 24). There is also a sense that “Mother knows best” and that “she must have chosen it for a reason”, so they trust in that decision and carry on in the same tradition – “she used Kerry Gold which is why I carried it on” (Jenny, aged 43). This is supported by previous research which found that opinions formed in childhood are often long lasting and influence decision-making during adulthood (Fry et al., 1973).

- **“Used Since I started Shopping”**

Other respondents in this segment did make the conscious decision to choose the brand they currently use. However for most, this was a decision they made when they very first left home and started shopping for themselves, “I mean, I’ve used it all my life really...well, since I was married and started shopping” (Doreen, aged 68). Respondents say that because they do not want to spend hours in the supermarket each time they go shopping, they tend to make a decision and once they are happy with that brand they “stick to it to make shopping quicker and easier” (Sue, aged 65). Respondents say that they “don’t have the time or the energy to go around looking at all the different spreads. I literally want to pick up Flora and move onto the next aisle” (Judith, aged 57).

4.9 Recommendation

Other respondents can be grouped together based on the fact they chose their preferred butter/spread based on recommendation. These recommendations typically come from three key sources: their Doctor, friends/family and recipes. Although these decisions may also have been made in the past, they are likely to have been made more recently than those who are buying based on a sense of tradition. This may result in higher levels of image congruence among this group of respondents. It may also be that those buying based on recommendation are more likely to be high self monitors, as previous research (Hogg, Cox and Keeling, 2000) has identified that high self monitors are more concerned with what people think of them and are more influenced by external factors. As a result it may mean that these consumers are more likely to be influenced by their public self.

- **"The Doctor Knows Best"**

Many respondents, particularly those aged above fifty, say they their current choice of butter/spread is based on their Doctor's advice. This is due to health issues and most commonly cholesterol problems - "we've bought Flora Pro-activ ever since my husband had a heart attack" (Doreen, aged 68). In such cases, there is a feeling that they do not really have a choice, instead many feel they are buying a particular brand because they have to – "I'm not saying I buy for choice; it's what my Doctor told me I should have" (Annie, aged 55). In such instances it is questionable as to whether there is a strong link between a consumer's self-image and their brand preference. However, many of these respondents consider themselves to be healthy and mature, which are the same associations they have with Doctor-recommended brands such as Benecol and Flora Pro-activ which suggests there may be a link between self-image and brand image.

- **Inclusion in Recipes**

Some respondents chose their preferred brand because they were advised to in a recipe that they either read in a magazine, cookbook, newspaper or website or were recommended by a chef on television. This was a credible reason which actually encouraged and motivated respondents to break their habit and switch brands on the promise that the recommended butter/spread would be of a better quality and would produce better results when baking and cooking, as Victoria (aged 30) states ‘I always have to follow recipes to a T. If a recipe says to use a certain butter then I’ll buy it - they all seem to say Lurpak so I always buy that now”.

Respondents in this segment rated “being a good cook”, “having good quality things” and “striving to be the best” as important aspects of their self-image. They rated the brands recommended in recipes such as Lurpak and President as being of high quality and ‘the best’, especially when cooking, therefore there is a potential link between self-image and brand image for respondents in this segment.

- **The Influence of Friends and Family**

A minority a respondents chose their preferred brand based on the recommendation of family or friends. Previously these respondents said they bought out of habit based on what they had traditionally always done. However, being encouraged by friends to try something new or different made them re-evaluate their choice and buy based on their recommendation. Interestingly, this made them feel “modern”, “a bit different” and “more fun” (e.g. Fiona, aged 28) which are also qualities they attached to the brand they use, which indicates a link between self-image and brand preference.

It is interesting to note that while it is still predominantly the woman’s role to shop for the food, partners and other family members will often accompany them to the supermarket. In-store observations identified that shoppers (mainly women) chose the yellow fat without any discussion or input from whoever was accompanying them. However, in other aisles such as crisps and confectionary, children were often observed trying to persuade their parents to buy particular brands, whilst in the alcohol aisle shoppers were often observed discussing brand choices with their partners or spending more time browsing. This is potentially important for the purposes of this research as it indicates that when shopping for yellow fats, other family members are less likely to influence brand preference unless they have a specific dietary need, therefore self-image congruence may not be as heavily moderated by family members as other product categories.

Interestingly the issue of perceived risk was not mentioned in the context of yellow fats, perhaps because there are so many brands in the category that respondents feel that if their preferred brand is out of stock they are able to buy another brand ‘near’ to that of their preferred brand. Also as family members are generally not heavily engaged with this category, buying a different brand is unlikely to be as much of an issue compared to baked beans for example. This is because, as these results have already suggested, many consumers have particularly strong brand preferences for Heinz within this category and are unlikely to respond favourably to a substitute.

4.10 Price

The third group of respondents can be segmented by the fact they buy primarily based on price. Unlike the other groups previously mentioned, this choice is a current one and is made every time the respondent goes shopping. Only a small minority of respondents choose their butter/spread based mainly on price, perhaps because the category is seen by respondents as a relatively low cost and therefore not worthy of spending time looking for the ‘best deal’. Those who buy on price tend to spend longer in the yellow fats aisle as they consider different options. These respondents say they use in-store signage to navigate the aisle and help draw their attention to special offers in order to save time. Respondents buying on price tend to be those with a young family and less disposable income. Because these respondents are buying mainly on price there was little indication of a link between their self-image and brand image because price is the key driver, self-image and brand image appear to be much less important and are not likely to be important motivating factors influencing brand choice in this context.

4.11 Section Summary

The purpose of this section was to answer the following objective:

- To identify factors affecting brand preference when shopping for yellow fats.

In summary there a number of different factors affecting brand preference in the context of yellow fats, these were: usage; who will be consuming the product; brand preferences of family members; habit and tradition; recommendation; price and social identity. These are all factors that may moderate levels self-image congruence, the extent to which will be explored in more detail when analysing the image congruence scores.

<u>Section 3: Image Congruence Results</u>

The purpose of this section is to address the following objective:

- To measure levels of self-image congruence in the context of yellow fats.

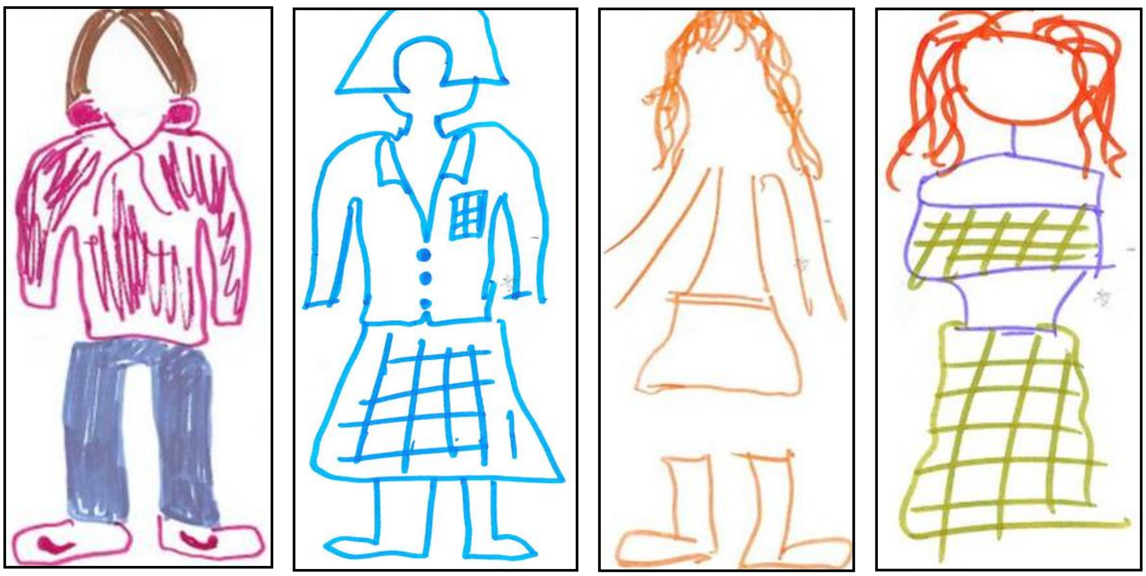
This section analyses the findings from the ‘typical user’ projective technique and the rating scales to identify whether self-image affects brand preference in this category.

4.12 Defining Brand Image

When asked to describe the ‘typical user’ for their preferred brands, respondents were able to imagine this person in great detail. They were able to create a real sense of identity for this person and were able to describe their gender, age, clothes and even where they like to eat. For brands ranked highly in terms of brand preference, respondents were able to list an average of eight attributes which were then measured on Likert scales. However, for brands ranked towards the mid- to end of the scale in terms of brand preference, many respondents found it difficult to imagine a ‘typical user’ and needed much more time and prompting to create an image. On average they were only able to list five attributes for their least preferred brands.

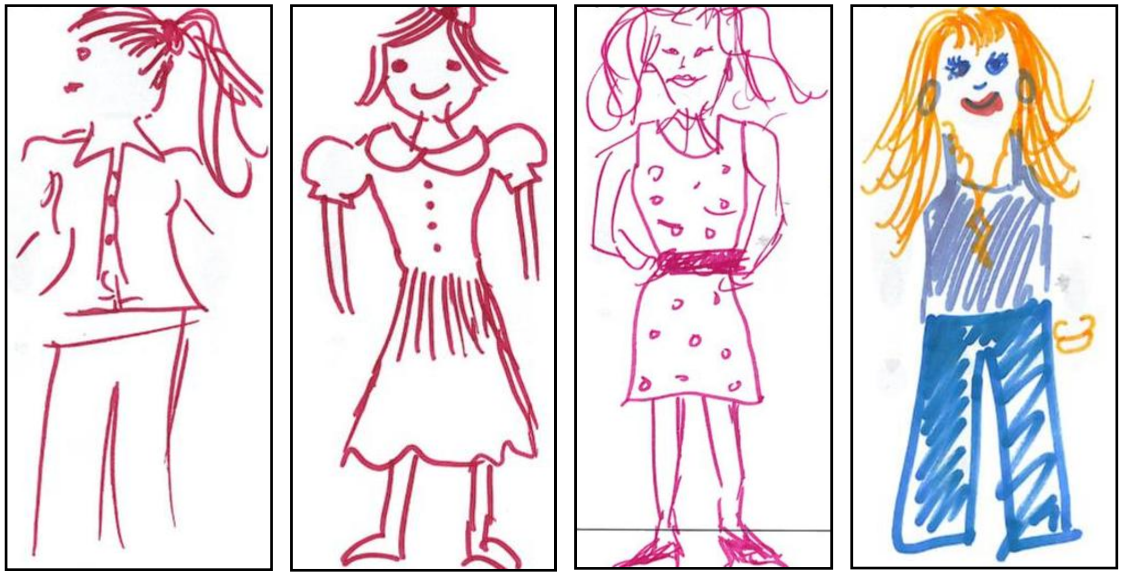
When asked to draw a portrait of the typical user of their least preferred brands, some respondents found it difficult to build up a clear picture. This is illustrated by the fact that many of the portraits for their least preferred brands do not have a face (see examples in Figure 7 overleaf). This was unique to the portraits of the least preferred brands and did not occur in any of the self-image portraits or any portraits of the typical user of their preferred brand. This indicates that respondents may not even be aware of the image of their least preferred brand which may be one reason why they are not engaging with the brand.

Figure 7: Examples of 'Faceless' Portraits for Least Preferred Brands



In contrast, portraits of respondents' preferred brands are often extremely detailed. Many of these portraits appear to be aspirational, in that they are often more favourable than respondents own self-image portraits in terms of weight, attractiveness and clothing (see examples in Figure 8 overleaf). This indicates that respondents' ideal self-image may be accessed when choosing their preferred brand.

Figure 8: Examples of Portraits for Preferred Brands

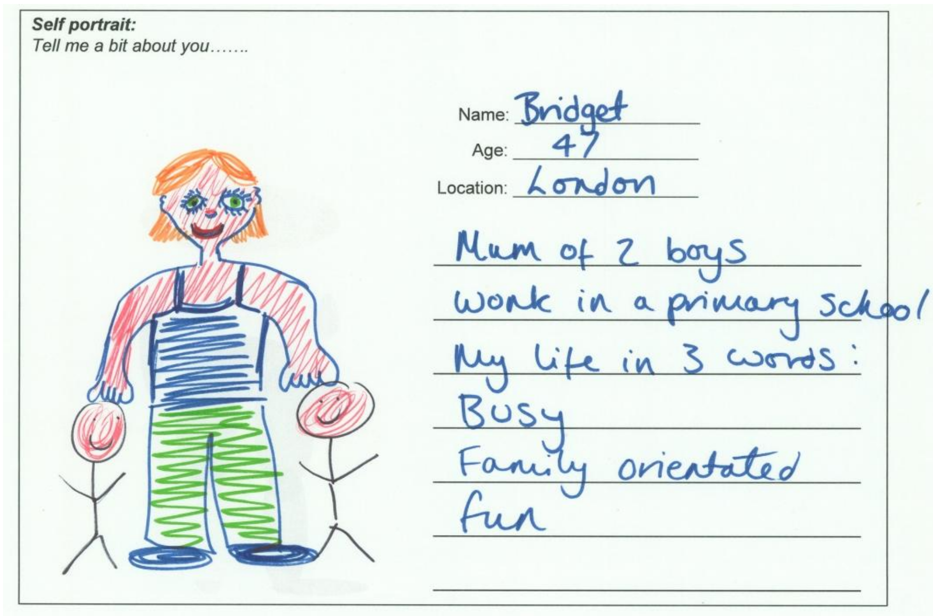


Some respondents were able to build up a more detailed picture of their least preferred brand, although these images were often in stark contrast to the portraits of their own self-image and the image of their preferred brand. These differences were primarily in terms of gender, age and personality traits. This indicates that there is a link between self-image and brand preference in the context of yellow fats because for most respondents, the portrait of their own self-image often has similarities to the portrait of the typical user of their preferred brand, which indicates high levels of self-image congruence. However, the portrait of their least preferred brand is either faceless, lacks detail or is completely different to their self-image portrait, thus indicating low levels of self-congruence.

The case studies below show two of the strongest examples from this research where the illustrations clearly depict that self-image does affect brand preference in the context of yellow fats.

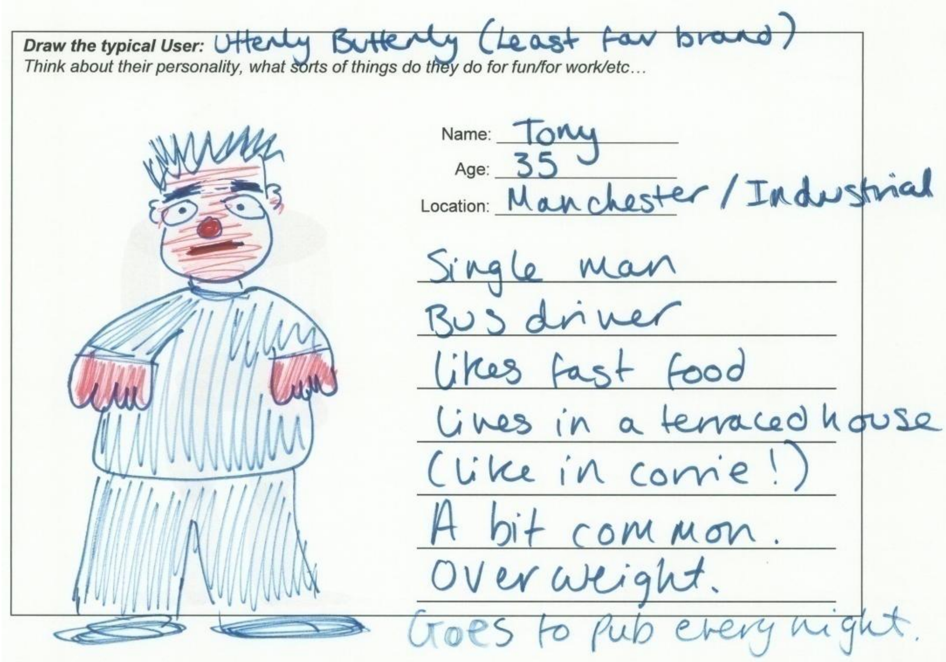
4.13 Case Study 1: Bridget (Family)

Self Portrait:



Typical User of Preferred Brand (Flora):

Typical User of Least Preferred Brand (Utterly Butterly):

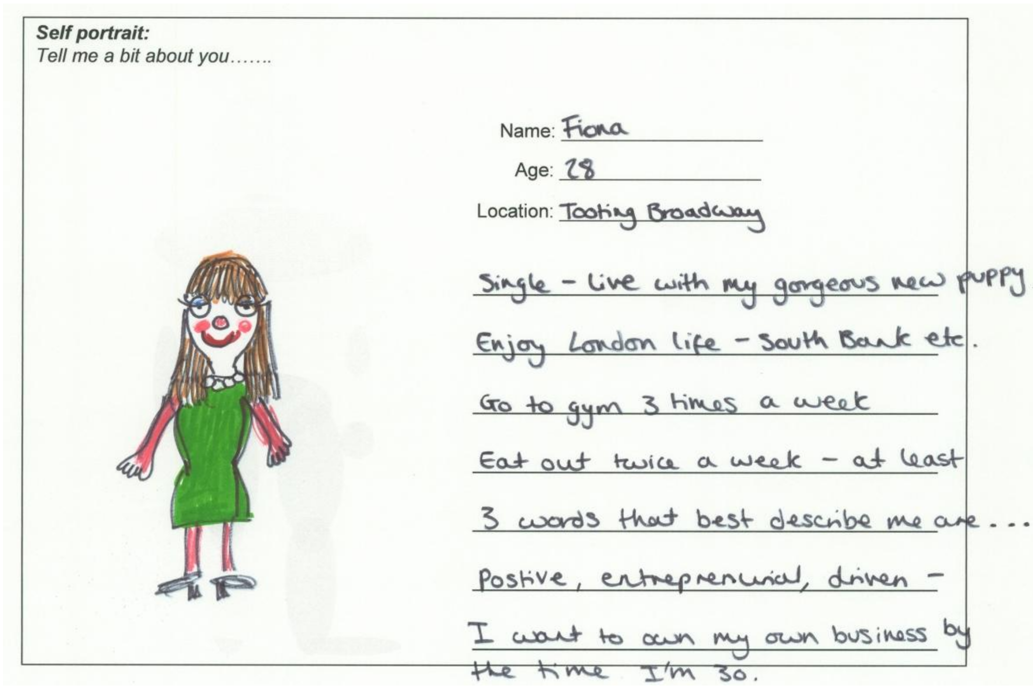


This case study shows clear similarities between Bridget's self-image and the image of her preferred brand. The pictures are very similar but the personality traits also share many common themes, notably that of family, living a busy active life around the children, having fun and being sociable. This clearly shows that respondents like brands that they feel have a similar image to themselves. In this case, the picture is so similar to her self portrait that it indicates Bridget is buying this product based on her actual self-image.

The least preferred brand, however, is in stark contrast to Bridget's self-image portrait, visually and in terms of personality, lifestyle traits and most notably gender. It appears as though Bridget has made a negative judgement about the brand image which may explain why it is her least preferred brand.

4.14 Case Study 2: Fiona (Single)

Self Portrait:

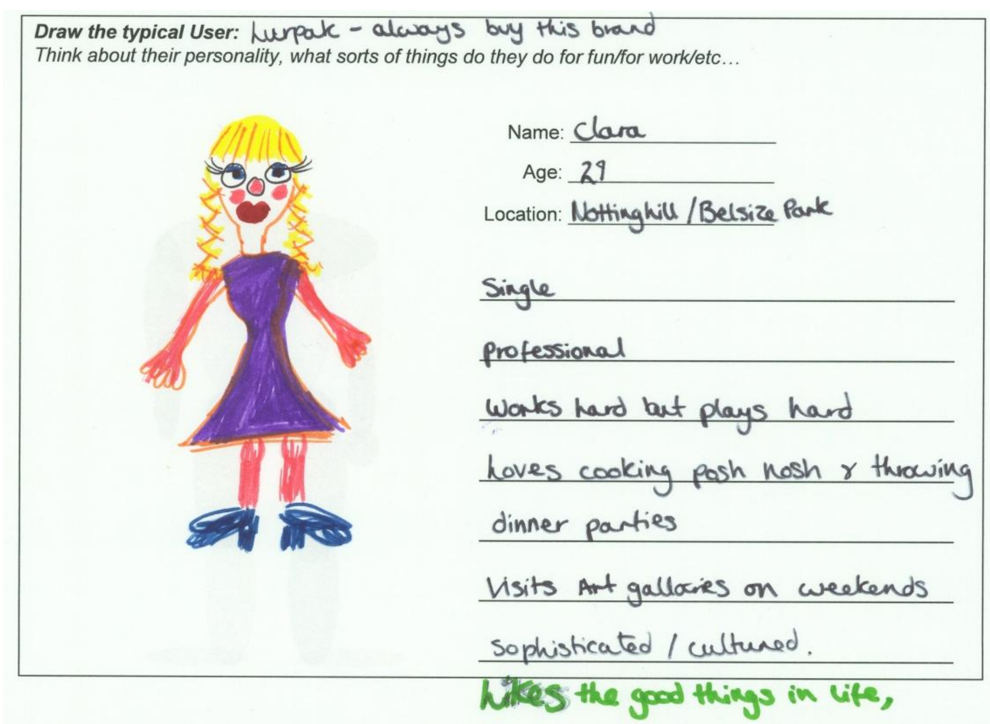


Self portrait:
Tell me a bit about you…….

Name: Fiona
Age: 28
Location: Tooting Broadway

Single – Live with my gorgeous new puppy.
Enjoy London life – South Bank etc.
Go to gym 3 times a week
Eat out twice a week – at least
3 words that best describe me are . . .
Postive, entreprenurial, driven –
I want to own my own business by the time I'm 30.

Typical User of Preferred Brand (Lurpak):



Draw the typical User: Lurpak – always buy this brand
Think about their personality, what sorts of things do they do for fun/for work/etc…

Name: Clara
Age: 29
Location: Nottinghill / Belsize Park

Single
professional
Works hard but plays hard
Loves cooking posh nosh & throwing dinner parties
Visits Art galleries on weekends
sophisticated / cultured.
Likes the good things in life,

Typical User of Least Preferred Brand (Benecol):

Similar to the previous example, Fiona's self portrait and the portrait of her preferred brand is similar, they also share key personality and lifestyle traits such as being single, enjoying good food and being entrepreneurial. This again illustrates a clear link between self-image and brand image in this context. This example shows the preferred user in a slightly more favourable way than the actual self portrait. For example, the typical user of the preferred brand lives in a more exclusive area of London, they are arguably more attractive in terms of weight and clothing. They also appear to be more sophisticated and successful. This may indicate that Fiona accesses her ideal self-image when buying her preferred brand.

The least preferred brand image is again very different to her own self-image in terms of personality traits, lifestyle and, in this case, most notably age.

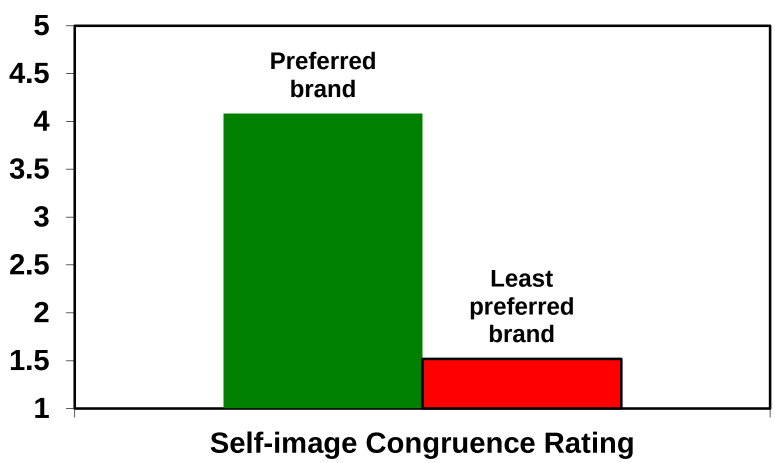
4.15 Self-Image Congruence Results

The following section looks specifically at the results from the Likert scales, which respondents completed during the last part of their individual depth interview.

4.16 Key Findings

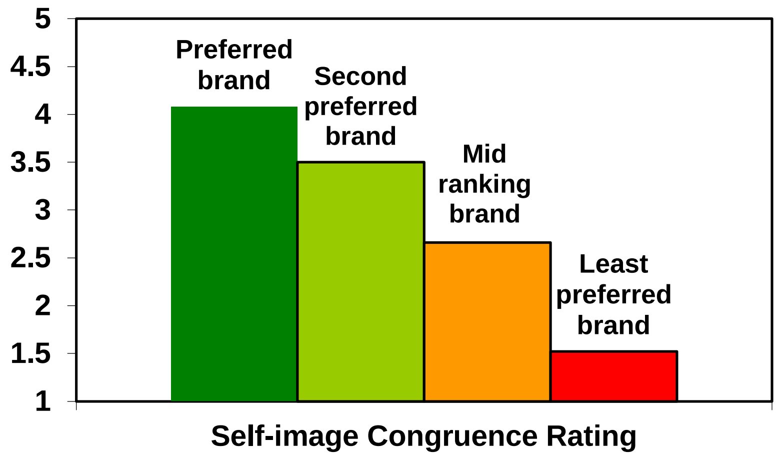
The image congruence results have identified that self-image does affect brand preference in the context of butter/spreads. As Figure 9 illustrates, on average the image congruence rating for respondents' preferred brand was 4.08, whereas the rating for their least preferred brand was 1.52, leaving a clear difference of 2.56.

Figure 9: Self-image Congruence Ratings for Preferred and Least Preferred Brand



When looking at the self-image congruence ratings, including respondents' second preferred brand and their mid ranking brand, there was a clear gradient that further supports the link between self-image and brand preference in the context of yellow fats.

Figure 10: A Comparison of Self-image Congruence Ratings across all Brands



However as identified in the previous sections in this Chapter, there are a number of other factors that influence brand preference and therefore moderate levels of self-image congruence.

4.17 Buying for Others

In the few instances where the respondent is buying butter/spread only for another member of the family (for example, if they have particular dietary needs), their self-image congruence rating for the brand they buy is lower than the average for preferred brands, at 3.75 compared to 4.08. This may be because their choice better reflects the brand preference and self-image of the person they are buying for rather than themselves. However the level of congruence is still reasonably high because it represents a choice made by the respondent within a specific sub category.

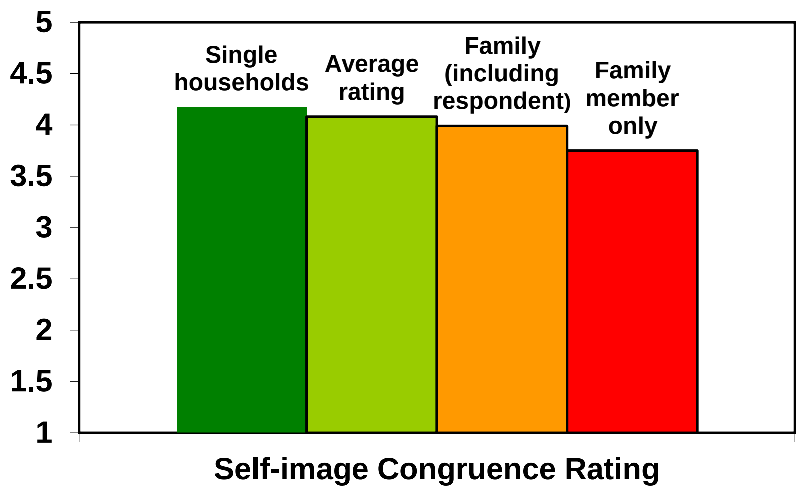
For example, one butter-eating respondent (Doreen, aged 68) had to buy her husband a low fat spread after he suffered a heart attack. While her own preferred brand was Anchor, she bought her husband Flora Pro-activ. While the latter wasn't her own preferred brand of all the brands within the yellow fat category, it was her preferred brand of all those in the 'healthy' section. This demonstrates that even when buying for others, a consumer's self-image will still affect brand preference.

When buying for themselves as well as for other members of the family, image congruence for the brand they buy is also slightly lower than the overall average, at 3.9 compared to 4.08. This may be because the choice represents a compromise between themselves and other family members. Interestingly, the congruence level is only marginally lower which indicates that buying for a partner / other family member as well as themselves, does not have a significant impact on the affect self-image has on their brand preference.

4.18 Single Person Households

Those living alone, who buy only for themselves had a slightly higher image congruence rating for the brand they buy than those living with family members, with a rating of 4.17. This may be because they are only thinking about themselves and therefore their own self-image plays a stronger role as it is not 'diluted' by other influences such as the needs and self-image of others. However, as Figure 11 below illustrates, living with a partner/family member compared to living alone does not have a strong moderating effect on self-image congruence.

Figure 11: Comparison of Self-image Congruence Ratings for Single Households versus those living with a Partner/Family Member



4.19 Habitual Purchasers

Those respondents who buy the brand that they have traditionally always bought have a relatively low self-image congruence level. Congruence levels for their preferred brand are 3.66, compared to the average at 4.08. This may be because their brand preference represents a brand choice made in the past, and as self-image is continually evolving (Cantor et al., 1986), it may no longer represent their current self-image. Interestingly most other brands they rate also have similarly high scores, which makes it difficult to tell if self-image is actually affecting brand choice for habitual purchasers.

The reason other brands are getting similarly high scores appears to be because respondents had relatively little to say about them. These respondents are not aware of the other brands available and describe themselves as ‘blinkered’ when they are in the yellow fats aisle, this explains why they are not able to attach many brand attributes to most other brands. Instead they seem to project what they know about their preferred brand onto other brands, which may explain why other brands are getting what appear to be artificially high scores. The fact that their brand choice represents a decision made in the past may also be a reason as to why respondents were unable to attach clear brand attributes to other brands - in most cases they have not considered other brands for many years.

4.20 Buying Based on Recommendation

Those buying based on recommendation had relatively high levels of image congruence with the brand they buy, compared to those buying based on habit - 4.81 compared to 3.66, which is also higher than the average rating at 4.08. This may be because the decision to buy this brand was made more recently and was perhaps a more considered decision. It was something respondents had either discussed with friends or family or was information they had read about or watched on television and then remembered and acted upon once in-store. This indicates that how recent the brand decision was made may moderate levels of self-image congruence.

4.21 Buying Based on Price

Respondents who bought mainly based on price did have a preferred brand or set of brands but perhaps unsurprisingly their self-image congruence ratings were lower than average at 3.54 compared to 4.08. This may be because price is a stronger influence on their brand choice than their self-image, therefore they had not bought any brand frequently enough to build a strong relationship.

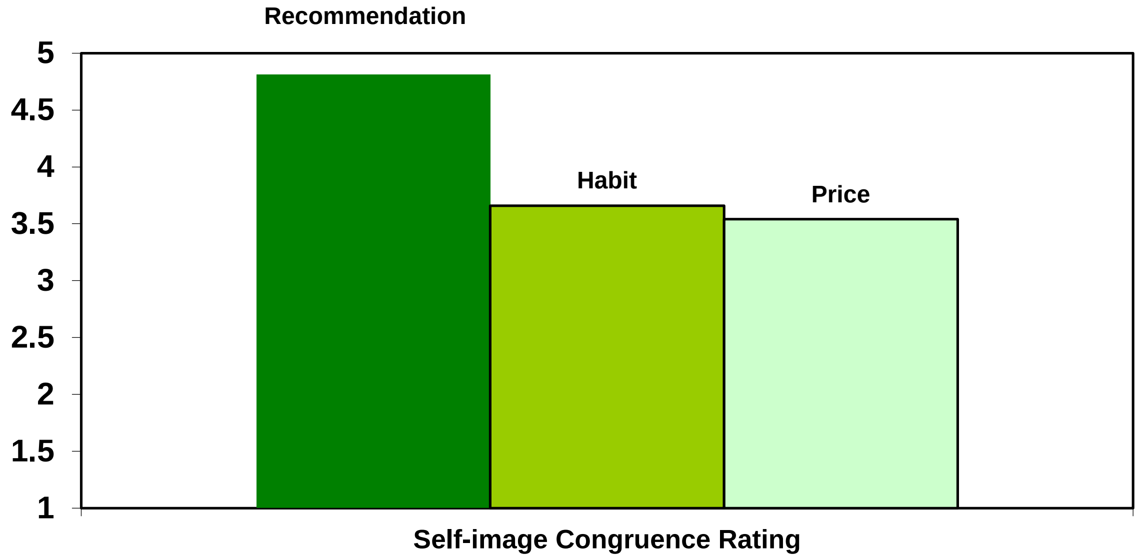
Although most respondents who bought mainly based on price did have a preferred brand or set of brands, their preferred brand(s) were not always the brand(s) they purchased due to price constraints. Therefore while self-image does appear to influence brand preferences for respondents who buy butter/spread mainly based on price, these preferences do not always predict behaviour because due to extraneous circumstances (for example, low disposable income) price is a bigger factor influencing brand choice.

The results from this study suggest that respondents can be segmented into three key segments (habit, recommendation and price) based on how they then choose their preferred brand. Figure 12 overleaf illustrates that habit, recommendation and price will each moderate the level of self-image congruence for respondents preferred brand.

4.22 Key Attributes

As previously discussed in the methodology, the benefit of rating each adjective individually, rather than using a global measure, allows potentially richer insight as it enables the research to look at each attribute individually. This is important for the purpose of this research because levels of congruence may be determined by individual attributes.

Figure 12: Comparison of Self-Image Congruence Ratings based on how Respondents Choose Yellow Fats



Interestingly attributes that act as key determinants of brand preference vary by brand but are very much linked to the images the brands are aiming to portray, as previous research into the yellow fats category has indentified (Mintel Yellow fats, 2007). For example, key determinants for preference of 'Stork' are that it is 'traditional' 'old fashioned' and 'safe'. This very much links with the image the brand is trying to portray through its 'Get Britain Baking' campaign, promoting old-fashioned family fun. Similarly, high-scoring attributes for Flora were based on being 'active', 'healthy' and 'family-orientated', which is an image Flora marketers have continued to cultivate through their association with healthy living and sponsorship of the London Marathon (Mintel Yellow Fats, 2007). This indicates that the image respondents have of brands is very much influenced by advertising and promotional campaigns.

It was also interesting to look at the attributes respondents gave to the brands that they bought on special occasions, compared to the attributes they gave the brands they bought for everyday use. Common attributes for everyday brands were ‘sensible’, ‘happy’, ‘fun’, ‘active’ and ‘traditional’, whereas common attributes for brands bought on special occasions included ‘cosmopolitan’, ‘classy, ‘professional’, ‘sophisticated’ and ‘elegant’. There seems to be a clear difference in terms of what is driving brand preference in these cases. While the attributes listed for everyday spreads are practical, basic and are more likely to appeal to an individual’s actual self, the attributes listed for brands they buy on special occasions are highly aspirational and are more likely to appeal to an individual’s ideal social self.

This supports existing research (Sirgy and Su, 2000; Hong and Zinkan, 1995; Martin and Bellizzi, 1982) which identifies that the private self (actual and ideal) will better predict brand preferences for less conspicuous products (everyday yellow fats), while the public self (social and ideal social) will be more predictive of conspicuous products (yellow fats bought for special occasions).

4.23 Section Summary

The purpose of this section was to answer the following objective:

- To measure levels of self-image congruence in the context of yellow fats;

This research has identified that self-image does affect brand preferences and ultimate brand choice in the context of yellow fats. There are a number of factors moderating the influence of self-image on brand preference, however, whether the brand is being bought based on price, habit or recommendation are key moderating factors.

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of this section is to answer the research aims:

- To explore whether self-image affects brand preference in the context of FMCGs
- To identify factors affecting brand preference when shopping for FMCGs

This research has identified that self-image does affect brand preference in the context of FMCGS. It has also identified a number of influencing factors that moderate this relationship. However, before discussing these moderating factors in more detail it is important to first reflect on the key findings and major achievements of this work.

5.0 Contributions of this Research

This research has gone further than expected in terms of making a contribution to the literature in the area of self-image congruence. There are three key findings that make this research unique to any other study in this area, these relate to recency effects, the roles of women and ‘facelessness’.

The findings from this study suggest that there are two moderating factors which emerged that have not been referenced in any previous published study in this area:

- Recency of decision
- The notion of wanting to be the perfect wife, mother and grandmother

This research discovered that both of these factors have the potential to moderate the relationship between self-image and brand preference.

5.1 Recency of Decision

The findings from this study suggest that the more recently the brand preference was formed, the more likely it is to be relevant to a consumer's current self-image. This has a logical appeal as self-image is malleable and changes over time (Cantor et al, 1986). This study has found that the more recent the brand choice, the higher the level of self-image congruence. This is because the decision was made based on who the consumer currently feels they are, rather than who they were when they made a decision a long time ago – a decision which has simply become a habit and not a current reflection of who they are.

This is a potentially interesting area for future research as there appears to have been no other studies in the area of self-image congruence which have identified the concept of recency of decision-making as a factor moderating the relationship between self-image and brand preference.

5.2 The Notion of the Perfect Wife, Mother and Grandmother

This research also uncovered how important it is to a woman's self-image to be seen as the perfect female role model, particularly in the roles surrounding family life (wife, mother and grandmother). This ideal self-image ultimately affects their brand preference as they strive to achieve this image of perfection. Interestingly, it is not just about *showing* they are the perfect wife/mother/grandmother (public self), it is more about *feeling* they are 'up to the job' and 'doing the best for their family (private self). This finding challenges much research into current gender roles and assumptions of the modern woman and was an unexpected research finding in 2010, when assumptions about a more modern and equal role for women seem to predominate.

This notion of the role of the woman in the home has not been raised in previous published research in the area of self-image congruence. It was first uncovered in this study when talking about baking, which is often seen as a female role and is something mothers teach their children to do from a young age. There is a great deal of tradition, nostalgia and pride associated with baking which may be why this notion has such influence on women in this context.

Other categories that generate the same associations may also cause women to be influenced by the need to be ‘perfect’. This may also be true for many food-based FMCGs as women discuss the feeling of self-worth and pleasure they get from providing for their family – and their way of ‘providing’ is often through food.

It is important to note that for grandmothers, whose main focus in life tends to be on the family, getting the right butter / spread was also about proving their worth and proving they are in touch with what their grandchildren like. It is a way of pleasing and connecting with their grandchildren, which is why the purchase has greater importance to them.

This is particularly pertinent for grandmothers as they have less roles and responsibilities in life i.e. they are no longer raising children, they no longer work, many are widowed and no longer play the role of ‘wife’. Therefore the few roles they do have are given more focus and importance. The smaller things (e.g. buying 'the right' butter) become more important in terms of defining their self-image (i.e. I am a 'good' grandmother).

5.3 The Notion of 'Facelessness'

Another important achievement of this work is that it is the first of its kind to visually depict self-image congruence. No other published study has represented the relationship between self-image and brand preference in this way. The visual depiction is very powerful and highlights the importance of creating a brand image. Brands that do not have an image are effectively 'faceless' in the eyes of the consumer and therefore they do not even enter into their consideration set.

Facelessness is arguably worse than being disliked because it means the brand is invisible in the eyes of the consumer and it simply gets ignored and forgotten altogether. Respondents' least preferred brands tended to be those without faces or detail. This shows just how important creating an effective brand image is. Even if a brand image is well defined but is not close to the consumer's own self-image, at least they are aware it exists and may consider it if other factors such as price promotions influence behaviour.

There is relatively little research into the notion of 'facelessness' in brands. This is likely to prove an interesting area of future research.

5.4 Key Factors Affecting Brand Preference when Shopping for FMCGs

To answer the research aims, the key moderating factors on self-image congruence in the context of FMCGS are summarised below. The factor which had the most negative effect on self-image congruence levels was price.

5.5 Price

When buying FMCG brands primarily on price, levels of self-image congruence are relatively low. This may be because many consumers only buy based on price when they can see little difference between the brand images within a particular category. Consumers tend to buy on price when there is no perceived added value or difference in quality. This is particularly true for product categories where the product is perceived to be ‘natural’. Within categories where price is the key discriminator, self-image will have less of an effect on brand preference.

5.6 Usage and Consumption

What the product will be used for and who will be consuming it will also moderate the effect self-image has when choosing FMCG brands. For example, when a butter or spread is bought as a cooking ingredient, the brand image may not be as important to the shopper because the brand is not being used as a ‘stand alone’ product. Therefore, because the brand image doesn’t play a strong role in affecting brand preference, their self-image is may not influence brand preference in this context.

This may also be true for FMCG brands which are bought for children, who many respondents believe will not appreciate the quality of their preferred brand. Therefore instead of buying based on their self-image, shoppers are likely to be more concerned with price. Conversely when buying for guests and special occasions the conspicuousness of the product is of great importance due to its symbolic meaning (Belk, 1988; Elliott & Wattanasuwan, 1998). In this case, the brand image is of more importance to consumers and therefore their self-image is likely to have a greater effect on brand preference.

5.7 Habitual Purchasing

Habitual purchasing also has a big impact on self-image congruence in the context of FMCGs, this is because most FMCGs are routinely purchased and therefore consumers develop habits to save them time when shopping. This is significant in the context of this research because self-image is continually developing (Cantor et al, 1986) and therefore the self-image a consumer had when they made the brand choice (before it became a habitual purchase), may not necessarily reflect the consumer's current self-image.

5.8 Buying for Others

Although this research found little evidence that buying for a partner or other family member had a significant influence on self-image congruence in the context of yellow fats, this may be because yellow fats is not a category that many people are highly engaged with, therefore other family members are unlikely to have strong brand preferences that will influence the consumer's level of self-image congruence. However, this research has identified that this may not be the case for other brand categories where other family members are likely to be more heavily engaged (for example crisps and confectionary). This may also be an interesting area for future research.

5.9 Taste

Taste is also a key factor in determining brand choice within the context of FMCGs, however, as previous research (e.g. De Chernatony & Knox, 1990) has identified, brand image can often play a big role in consumers' perceptions of taste. Therefore although taste does affect brand preference, self-image congruence also has an effect.

5.10 Self-Image and FMCGs

The primary aim of this research was to identify if self-image affects brand preference in the context of FMCGs, using yellow fats as an example. The findings of this research have clearly identified that there is a link between self-image and brand preference in the context of FMCGs. This contributes to existing research into self-image congruence, most of which has investigated the relationship between self-image and brand preference in the context of high value and high involvement products.

Therefore this study has started to work on the research need identified by Jamal and Goode (2001) who stated that "more work is needed to establish the significance of self-congruence on brand preferences… in the case of high frequency and low value brands" (p.490). Yellow fats are considered to be a high frequency, low value brand by all respondents; therefore this research has established that self-congruence exists in this context, as well as identifying the impact of moderating factors.

However, it has to be noted that each FMCG product category is inherently different and therefore the moderating factors and the extent to which self-image congruence affects brand preference may differ from the yellow fat category. This research is intended to be used as a starting point for future research and is not attempting to claim that self-image congruence will affect brand preference in the same way for every FMCG category.

5.11 The Impact of the Recession on the Yellow Fats Market

As this research was conducted prior to the global financial crisis it does not take into account the affect the downturn in the economy may have on self-image congruence in this category. It is important to reflect and take note of the impact of the recession upon the yellow fats market.

In a recent report on the impact of the recession on consumer behaviour, Mintel (2009) noted that

"the consumer was initially slow to react to the credit crunch – retail sales remained strong throughout the first half of 2008, funded at least partly by people drawing on savings and running up more credit. By the turn of the year, though, the picture was entirely different. Consumer confidence has plummeted, and most people have already chosen to cut back on spending in at least one area, with eating out and socialising among the hardest-hit sectors".

However, they contend that, based on their research between 1990 and 1992 (the last period of serious recession) that the consumer markets most likely to be negatively affected by the current downturn are likely to be household durables, cars and to a lesser extent, leisure activities. Generally, spending on FMCG goods such as yellow fats is, as a category, less affected.

In their 2009 Yellow Fats report, Mintel expect that the yellow fats market will continue to make a small growth between 2009 and 2014, suggesting a real growth of 6% taking into account changing consumer preferences and demographics. Market share has shifted such that butters now command a higher share of the market as customers shift from calorie counting to a more balanced, healthy and natural diet.

Mintel conclude, however that in 2009 cost pressures led to an easing of overall price increases in this market and propose that "consumers, with their incomes under pressure, rein in spending, perhaps buying more products on special offer or switching to own-label". Additionally, they suggest that in times of recession, sales of bread and a rise in home cooking may also lead to stable or even increased sales. Interestingly, they do not make any projection about the higher end of the yellow fats market – the extent to which the specialist or organic butters and spreads may be adversely affected.

Therefore in terms of this study, it is feasible (or even expected) that some consumers will base their choice of butter or spread on price or special offers whilst the UK is in recession. The extent to which they do this and how this 'forced choice' impacts on the findings of this study can only be speculated on, although it is quite likely that a future study would note that such consumers would select from a more limited (through price) range the brand that *most closely*, but not ideally, reflects their self-image

CHAPTER 6: RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0 Recommendations for Future Academic Research

Based on the findings of this study there are three key areas of opportunity for future research:

While self-image congruence has been found to affect brand preference in the case of high frequency, low value brands, this was measured specifically in the context of yellow fats. More work needs to be done to include a wider range of product categories to explore this relationship further.

This research used a qualitative methodology and was intended to be an exploratory study. Future research investigating self-image congruence in the context of FMCGs may wish to use a quantitative approach with a larger, more robust sample. This will ensure the results are statistically representative, which means the findings will be more conclusive.

Considering price is the biggest factor moderating self-image congruence and this research was undertaken before the UK went into a major recession, future research may wish to investigate whether self-image congruence levels are as high as reported in this study or whether price has become an even bigger moderating factor.

Additionally, this study has raised a number of other areas that could form the basis of future research:

- This study focused only on the 'actual self'. It may be interesting to conduct further research to explore congruence levels between the 'ideal self' and brand preference within the context of FMCGs;

- It may also be interesting to explore the impact of special occasions (e.g. Christmas / dinner party) vs. everyday buying on congruence levels;

- This research concentrated on the experiences and behaviour of women, which provide a focused study and enabled discussions about women's identity. It identified the notion of wanting to be seen as a perfect female role model as a factor moderating self-image congruence levels. Future research may wish to replicate the study using male participants to explore areas of similarity and difference;

- Researching categories where brand preference is particularly strong (e.g. where a few brands dominate the category / where the preferred brand was first to market), as well as categories and products where there is no obvious sign of brand preference (e.g. brands used as an ingredient / products that are naturally grown / brands that are non-edible) may provide an insightful comparative study exploring congruence levels at these two these polar extremes.

- Further research looking into habitual vs. recent decisions and how this affects congruence levels is likely to be of interest, especially as this research identified recency of purchase as a new factor moderating self-image congruence.

- Understanding the impact of recommendation on congruence levels is another potentially interesting area of future research; exploring who has more influence on congruence levels (e.g. the ‘expert’ voice of a doctor, the recommendation of a celebrity chef, the inclusion in a recipe or the suggestion of friends and family).

- At a brand level identifying the attributes which act as barriers to purchase (e.g. Benecol is seen as being for old people and I Can’t Believe It’s Not Butter is viewed as a male brand). Understanding what causes this and to what extent congruence levels would change if this key attribute were to change would be an interesting area of future study.

- This study is the first to visually depict self-image congruence. Building upon this work and further exploring the concept of ‘facelessness’ in least preferred brands is a new and potentially insightful area of research.

6.1 Recommendations for Practitioners and Marketers

Although not the main focus of this research, there are nevertheless some potentially interesting findings for marketers of yellow fats and indeed marketers of FMCG brands in general. The fact that self-image has been proven to have an effect of brand preference is likely to be hugely significant as no research of this kind has ever been conducted within this category.

The results of this study raise important issues which marketers may wish to consider when formulating strategies for any future branding and communication. The findings of this research suggest that if brands are able to portray themselves as having a similar image to consumers' self-image, they are likely to be preferred by those consumers and are therefore more likely to succeed in the marketplace.

This research has identified some clear problem areas for brand managers of yellow fat brands; most importantly the fact it tends to be a predominantly habitual purchase which makes it difficult to get consumers to notice other brands, let alone actually try them. However, it is interesting to note that after being 'encouraged' to look at and evaluate other brands, a number of respondents have since tried different brands and three respondents have actually switched permanently. This is significant as it indicates that if marketers can make consumers aware of other brands on the market there is potential to change purchasing behaviour.

The findings from this study suggest that there may be additional ways in which marketers of yellow fat brands can succeed in this difficult marketplace. However, further research may need to be done in these areas. The four ideas below are presented as a starting point for further debate:

a) **It is important to catch consumers' attention while they are young, as this research has shown that many FMCG products such as butter/spreads are likely to become a habitual purchase.** Like current practice amongst High Street banks, it may be beneficial to give great deals to students/young people/first time buyers, who are likely to be more concerned with price, and have less experience of purchasing these products. The Over time the purchase is then likely to become habitual.

b) **It is also important to attract people when they are making an independent choice for the first time.** They are therefore more likely to look at what is on offer as the product may not yet be a habitual/automatic purchase for them. If marketers catch people while they are young, the findings of this research indicate that they are likely to remain loyal in later life.

c) **Consumers appear to respond most favourably to promotions that are less obvious, such as the inclusion of FMCG brands in recipes, for example**. This study has found that recipes are generally perceived as a trustworthy source. They also have a further benefit as many people don't like to deviate from the recipe for fear of ruining it. In a media 'savvy' and cynical society where people do not like to feel that advertising influences them (note: the majority of respondents in this research claimed that they were not influenced by advertising), it appears that the more subtle the advertising and marketing communications, the more effective it may be.

d) It is interesting to note that **many consumers do not really understand butter/spreads:** If they are told it is healthy, they seem to accept it. For example one respondent (Bridget, aged 47) stated 'I buy it for the saturates or whatever they call it, low fat or whatever it says'. If desperate 'I'd buy the nearest in polyunsaturates, not that I really understand what that's all about'. Therefore there is a real opportunity to educate consumers on the benefits of such products and to create a unique selling point (USP). Understanding the target market's collective self-image may help give a competitive advantage and help in the creation of a USP for FMCG brands such as yellow fats.

This is a small scale and exploratory study, but the findings both support and develop existing knowledge about consumers, self-image and brand preferences. By positioning this study within the context of FMCGs (i.e. the yellow fats market) it has been possible to make a contribution to knowledge at both an academic and practitioner level.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Key Brands in the Yellow Fats Market

Butter

The revival of butter has been driven primarily by the convenience of spreadable butter previously only offered by spreads and margarine, since their introduction in the late 1990s sales of spreadable butter have risen significantly. However while the convenience of spreadable butter is driving growth, sales of block butter have declined partly because sales of spreadable butter are cannibalising block butter (Mintel Yellow Fats UK, September 2007).

Sales of butter have also been driven by consumer demand for more natural products which is something many of the major brands have exploited by focusing their promotions on the purity of their products, highlighting the natural production processes and milk from free-range cows, for example. With consumer demand for naturalness, taste and convenience predicted by Mintel to continue, spreadable butter is expected to take even more market share from block butter and spreads (Mintel Yellow Fats UK, September 2007).

Sales of butter have also been driven as a result of the proliferation of cookery programmes and celebrity chefs such as Jamie Oliver, Nigella Lawson and Gordon Ramsay who have encouraged a revival in cooking from scratch, particularly at weekends. Many of these chefs use butter in their recipes which has had a significantly beneficial impact on sales of butter as consumers seek to emulate their recipes (Mintel Yellow Fats UK, September 2007).

Spreads

Although spreads currently have a 53% share of the overall market value, sales of spreads have declined due mainly to consumers switching to spreadable butters. Sales of spreads have fallen in both volume and value in recent years; however some areas of the spreads market are still experiencing high demand and growth.

Sales of low fat and olive spreads remain high driven in part by the media focus on healthy eating and concerns about obesity brought about by television programmes such as Gillian McKeith's *You Are What You Eat* and Jamie Oliver's *Jamie's School Dinners* as well as significant press coverage. The awareness of the relationship between diet and health is at an all-time high; eating healthily has now increased in importance and is seen as a social norm as consumers become more concerned and aware of the health properties of the food they are eating (Mintel Yellow Fats UK, September 2007). Increased awareness of heart disease and high blood pressure has also driven demand for cholesterol-lowering yellow fats such as Benecol and Flora Pro-activ (Mintel Yellow Fats UK, September 2007).

Despite becoming more health conscious consumers are increasingly less willing to totally compromise on the taste of butter for the health properties of low-fat and functional spreads, therefore buttery tasting spreads are one of the few areas of the spread market that are still growing in volume. Consumer demand for buttery tasting products has meant that brands like Utterly Butterly and Clover have increased their sales over the past few years (Mintel Yellow Fats UK, September 2007).

Key Brands

The yellow fats market is dominated by three large manufacturers whose brands command high levels of loyalty, with over half of consumers tending to stick to the same brand. The majority of consumers prefer branded products to supermarket own label with long-established brands such as Flora, Anchor and Lurpak experiencing particularly high levels of brand awareness and customer loyalty.

Manufacturers

The three companies that dominate the yellow fats market and own the majority of the brands are Unilever, Dairy Crest and Arla. Unilever is the leading manufacturer in this category with its portfolio of four brands, Flora, Bertolli, I Can't Believe It's Not Butter and Stork accounting for over half of all sales. Dairy Crest is the second biggest manufacturer with brands such as Clover, Utterly Butterly, St Ivel Gold County Life and Vitalite. While Arla is the third biggest with brands such as Lurpak, Anchor and Yorkshire Butter. Kerry Gold which produces butter of the same name is also an important company with significant market share in the yellow fat category.

Unilever Brands

In 2004 Unilever launched a new mission to meet consumer needs for a healthy lifestyle, convenience and occasional indulgence. An overview of its four brands in the yellow fats category are detailed below.

- **Flora**

Flora spread was first created in 1964 after the medical profession asked Unilever to create a healthy alternative to butter, lard and hard margarines. The result was a spread that was high in polyunsaturated fat and low in saturated fat and was one of the first soft margarines to be launched in the UK, although it is now classified as a spread rather than a margarine due to a reduction in fat levels. It is currently the leading spread in terms of market share.

The spread range includes Original, Light, Buttery Taste, No Salt and Extra Light varieties. Their Flora pro.activ range consists of Light and Extra Light and Olive Oil spreads. The brand has also been extended into yogurts, mini yogurt drinks and a milk drink. Flora pro.activ contains plant sterols which are claimed to lower levels of bad cholesterol in three weeks. Since 2005 all Flora spreads have contained omega-3 from plants.

Over the years Flora have continued to cultivate their association with healthy living. Flora has been the official sponsor of the London Marathon since 1996.

- **Bertolli**

Bertolli was originally launched in the UK as Olivio in 1991 and was one of the first olive-oil-based spreads to be launched in the UK. In 2003 its name was changed to bring it under the Bertolli branding umbrella which also has brands in the olive oil and cooking sauces category and promotes a healthy Mediterranean lifestyle.

- **I Can’t Believe It’s Not Butter**

I Can’t Believe It’s Not Butter is a dairy spread which was launched in the UK in 1991. It is promoted for its butter-like qualities and taste and competes directly with Dairy Crest’s Utterly Butterly as well as supermarket own-label equivalents. It promotes the fact that it tastes so much like butter that it is difficult to tell the difference.

- **Stork**

Stork margarine was launched in 1920 and has established itself as a product used for baking. A soft tub version was introduced in the 1970s. In the 1990s Stork created the ‘Get Britain Baking’ campaign. The brand has a loyal base of customers who use it to bake

Dairy Crest Brands

- **Country Life**

Country Life butter was launched by the English Butter Marketing Company in 1970 to counteract the growth in imported butter. The range now includes Sweetcream Salted Butter, Unsalted Butter, Cornish Butter, Shirgar Butter, Somerset Butter and Garlic Butter as well as Spreadable and Spreadable Lightly Salted.

The Country Life brand centres around the fact that it is the only major butter brand to be made in the UK. The brand promotes its English heritage and the fact it is made in the countryside giving it a natural outdoor feel. It aims to appeal to consumers interested in the provenance of their food, particularly those concerned about food miles.

- **Clover**

Clover was launched in 1983 as the first dairy spread with the authentic taste of butter that only contains half the saturated fat of butter. The brand centres around the fact that it is traditionally churned with buttermilk to give it a buttery taste.

The brand positions itself as a family spread and portrays traditional values of warmth and love.

- **Utterly Butterly**

Utterly Butterly was launched in 1995 to compete with Unilever's I Can't Believe It's Not Butter. It positions itself as a better-for-you alternative to butter as it contains 70% less saturated fat than butter but retains its buttery taste because it is still made with buttermilk. Promotion of the brand has a light-hearted and fun approach.

- **St Ivel Gold**

St Ivel Gold is a low-fat spread available in Extra Light and Extra-Light + Omega 3 varieties. In 2007 the range was reformulated down to 19% fat and it is currently the lowest fat spread on the market.

- **Vitalite**

Vitalite is a healthy dairy free sunflower spread launched in 1983 and was targeted at families because of its vitamin content.

Arla's Brands

- **Anchor Butter**

Anchor's product range includes block butter, Spreadable and Lighter spreadable, with Anchor being the leading block butter brand.

Anchor is the only butter brand on the market made using milk from free-range cows and is benefiting from consumers concern about over processed foods and concern for all round health and well-being, rather than solely weight loss, which is making many consumers turn to more natural products. The brand promotes nostalgia and outdoor family fun.

- **Lurpak**

The Lurpak brand has been established in the UK since 1901. The butter range now includes slightly Salted and Unsalted Classic block butter as well as Slightly Salted Spreadable, Lighter Spreadable and Spreadable Unsalted.

Lurpak is the leading yellow fat brand and positions itself as a premium, high quality, natural butter targeted at 'food gourmets'.

Kerrygold

The Kerrygold range includes packet butter and softer butter. In July 2006 they launched Lighter Softer Butter which contains 25% less fat than Kerrygold Softer Butter.

The Kerrygold brand centres around the values of being pure, natural and Irish. Whilst other butter producers make spreadable butter by adding vegetable oil, Kerrygold make their butter softer naturally. They do this by carefully selecting milk containing cream produced in the summer which is naturally softer and through a cream crystallisation process.

Supermarket Own-Brands

Supermarket own-brands find it hard to compete in such a heavily branded market. Most follow the innovation led by the major brands, bringing out similar brands at a lower price.

Market Leaders

Flora is currently the leading spread and until 2006 was the leading brand in the yellow fats market as a whole, however in 2007 as a result of a £13 million marketing campaign promoting the naturalness and taste of Lurpak, sales of the brand increased to £178.9 million and Lurpak became the market leader of the yellow fats industry as a whole. Anchor remains the market leader in sales of block butter.

APPENDIX 2: Screener for Depth Interviews

1. Sex

Male ……………………………………1 CLOSE
Female ………………………………...2

---

2. Age last birthday

Write in here: _______

ENSURE A MIX OF AGES

---

3. Marital Status

Single - living at home with parents ..1 CLOSE
Single – house share ....2 CLOSE
Single – live alone…………………….3 CHECK QUOTA
Married/cohabiting............. …………4 CHECK QUOTA
Widowed/divorced – live alone………5 CHECK QUOTA
Widowed/divorced – live with others…6 CLOSE

---

4. Do you have any children?

No children ....1 Pre family
Children aged:
  0 - 5 years ....…….2 Younger family
  6 - 11 years ....…….3 Younger family
  11 - 15 years ....4 Older family
Children 16+ at home................... ..5 Older family
Children not living at home......……6 Empty nesters

CHECK QUOTAS

---

5. **What is the occupation of the member of your household with the largest income? (Chief Income Earner)**

Position

Industry

Skill/Qualification

<u>If Retired</u>, Previous Occupation?

<u>If Self-Employed/Managerial</u>, How many employees responsible for?

<u>If Civil Service/Armed Forces</u>, What grade, what rank?

<u>6. Social Class of Chief Income Earner</u>

A…………………………………......1
B……………………………………..2
C1……………………………………3
C2……………………………………4
D……………………………………..5
E……………………………………..6

ENSURE A MIX OF SOCIAL CLASS

---

7. **Occupation of Respondent**

<u>8. Work Status</u>

Work full time …………………………..1
Work part time.....................................2
Student ………………………………..…3
Not working nor seeking work ………..4
Unemployed …………………………....5

---

9. Where do you live?:

Write in Borough: ________________________

Rural ………………………………………………...1
Urban ……………………………………………..2

---

10. **Ethnic origin**

White ………………………………………..1
BME (black minority ethnic) 2

---

11. UK Nationality

Have you been Resident in the UK for longer than 12 months?
Yes 1
No 2

INTRODUCTION

Good morning/ afternoon/ evening. I am from Bournemouth University and I am conducting some depth interviews in this area about supermarket shopping.
Can I ask you a few questions? It will take approximately 5 minutes.

X1 We are looking for people who work in certain types of jobs. Do you currently or have you ever worked in any of the following?
SHOW CARD A

X2 Do any of your family or close relatives work in any of the following?
SHOW CARD A

X3 Do any of your friends work in any of the following?
SHOW CARD A

	X1	**X2**	**X3**
Advertising Agencies/Publicity/Creative and Design Agencies/Consultancies	1	1	1
Journalism (TV/Press/Radio), Media Independents/Publishing	2	2	2
Public Relations	3	3	3
Marketing/Sales Promotion/ Outdoor specialists (i.e. Poster Advertising)	4	4	4
Market Research	5	5	5
National Politics	6	6	6
Corporate identity companies/Direct marketing consultancies	7	7	7
Manufacture, Wholesale, Retail, Distribution of yellow fats	8	8	8
None of these	9	9	9

CLOSE IF ANY OF THE ABOVE OCCUPATIONS CODED

QA Have you ever attended a market research group discussion / depth interview before?

YES	1	**GO TO QB**
NO	2	**GO TO Q1** (min 3 per group)

QB How many market research group discussions/ depth interviews have you ever attended?

ONE	1	
TWO	2	
MORE THAN 2	3	**DO NOT RECRUIT**

QC When was the last time you attended a group discussion / depth interview?

LESS THAN 6 MONTHS AGO	1	**DO NOT RECRUIT**
MORE THAN 6 MONTHS AGO	2	

QD On what subjects was/were the group discussion(s) / depth interviews you attended?

____

DO NOT RECRUIT ANYONE WHO HAS BEEN INTERVIEWED ON THE SUBJECT OF SUPERMARKET SHOPPING

Q1. Can I check who is responsible for the main food and grocery shopping for your household?

Self alone	V	
Self and partner jointly	X	
Partner / someone else alone	0	CLOSE

Q2. Thinking about your **MAIN** household shop which of the following stores would you say is your Main store (single code) i.e. at least 4 out of 5 of your main shopping occasions

Morrisons	0
Asda	1
Sainsburys	2
Tesco	3
Lidl / Aldi	4
Other please specify:	5

Q3. Would you say you do your main household shop at the store on mainly online?

Mainly at the store	V	
Mainly on line	X	CLOSE

Q4. Which of the following products have you purchased in the past 3 months for yourself or any member of your household? (SELECT ALL THAT APPLY)

Butter	0
Spreads	1
Margarine	2

TO HAVE BOUGHT FROM AT LEAST 1 OF THE ABOVE CATEGORIES ENSURE A MIX OF BUTTER AND SPREAD USERS

Q5. Which of the following brands have you purchased in the past 3 months for yourself or any member of your household? [ONLY ASK CATEGORIES WHICH RESPONDENT HAS PURCHASED IN LAST 3 MONTHS. ROTATE ORDER OF BRANDS]

Butter:

Lurpak	0
Anchor	1
Country Life	2
Kerrygold	3
Other please specify:	4

Spreads:

Flora	0
Clover	1
I Can't Believe It's Not Butter	2
Utterly Butterly	3
Bertolli (formerly Olivio)	4
St Ivel Gold	5
Vitalite	6
Benecol	7
Other please specify:	8

Margarine:

Stork	0
Other please specify:	1

Q6. Which of the following statements would you say best describe how you tend to shop?

I always tend to buy whatever is on offer	0
I will only buy one brand and never look at others	1
I buy from a range of brands and products	2

ENSURE A MIX

AT END OF RECRUITMENT QUESTIONNAIRE:-

RECRUITER SAY:

The depth interview will take place on (date) .... at (time) and will take place at your home. It will last 1.5 hours and you will receive £15 as a token of our appreciation of your time and help.

The depth interview will be audio-taped. The answers you give will form part of a confidential research study. They will be analysed along with those of many others and will never be linked back to you personally. The results will be used solely for the purposes of this Research Study.

Thank you very much for your help with this study. I will contact you a day or 2 before the depth to confirm that you are still able to attend.

FINALLY:-

Can I contact you again in the future about this study?

	Yes	1
	No	2

CONTACT DETAILS

FULL NAME OF RESPONDENT: ______________________________________

HOME ADDRESS: ____

____

POST CODE: _________________________

TEL NO. (HOME): ______________________

(PLACE OF WORK): ____________________

MOBILE: _____________________________

BEST TIME TO CONTACT (HOME): ________AM/PM

(PLACE OF WORK): _________AM/PM

WHERE RECRUITED (TESCO/ASDA/SAINSBURY'S): ____________________

DAY, DATE AND TIME OF DEPTH INTERVIEW: _________________________

GIVE RESPONDENT CONTACT DETAILS

Signed: _______________________________________ Date: _____________

APPENDIX 3: Discussion Guide

1.) Introduction (5 minutes)

- Thank respondent for participating
- Introduce self and purpose of research (keep research purpose broad to ensure minimal respondent bias) say it is to find out about people’s supermarket shopping
- Reassure there are no right or wrong answers – it’s an informal chat and should be fun!
- Reassure on confidentiality - MRS Code of Conduct, audio recording etc.
- Explain what the research is for and how the results will be analysed and presented
- Inform respondent the interview will last approximately 1 hour and 30 minutes
- Remind respondent to turn mobile phone off
- Ask if they have any questions before we start

2.) Warm up (10 minutes)

Objective:
- To put respondent at ease and understand more about their lifestyle in order to start building up a picture of their self-image

Materials:
- Coloured pens and Self Portrait Sheet

- Could you tell me a little bit about your daily life?
    - Name, who do you live with?
- What do you do for a living?
    - What do you like best/dislike about the job, why?
    - What hours/days of the week do you tend to work?
- What do you like to do in your free time?

- What are your aspirations?
    - Where do you see yourself in 5 years time?

- If you won the lottery this weekend what would you spend your money on?

Now we're going to do something a little bit fun…. (**GIVE RESPONDENT COLOURED PENS AND SELF PORTRAIT SHEET**) I'd like you to draw me a self portrait of how you see yourself and write a little bit about you in the lines provided…. It's just supposed to be a fun way of getting to know you – I won't be judging your drawing skills so please don't spend too long on this.

3.) Shopping Behaviour (25 minutes)

Objective: To gain an insight into the respondent's shopping habits in order to:

4 Identify key FMCG brands consumers are unwilling to substitute and why

5 Identify factors affecting brand preference when shopping for FMCGs

I'd now like to talk with you about supermarket shopping, how you see it, feel about it, how it fits into your life

- How do you feel about supermarket shopping?

- Where do you go to do your main shop?
    - Probe: Store name (e.g. Tesco/Sainsbury's/Asda) and store type (e.g. metros/standard/hypermarket)
    - Why do you tend to go to these particular stores?

- When do you tend to go?
    - Probe days of the week/times of day
    - Why do you tend to go then?
    - Do you always go at the same time? When/why?

- How would you describe the way you shop for things that you buy regularly like groceries?

- Do you decide before you set off what you need and just get that?

- How far in advance do you plan?

- Or do you tend to shop spontaneously for things as and when you see them? e.g. ‘oh yes, now I see it, I’m running out of kitchen roll, better get some of that’
    - Or is it a ‘bit of both’?
    - How does this change according to what you are buying?

- Do you ever make shopping lists [if this has not come up already]?
    - For what kind of items?
    - Why do you make lists for those things? Why not for other things?
    - What are the typical things that you plan for vs. buy spontaneously in store?

- Who do you normally go shopping with for things like groceries, the weekly shop etc.? (Spontaneous then probe: Alone? With family? Friends?)
    - How does this change depending on what you are shopping for?

- Tell me about some of the brands you usually buy
    - Why?
    - What is it about those brands that you particularly like?

- Are there any brands that are particularly important to you that you wouldn’t buy a substitute if it was out of stock?
    - Why do you say that?

- Are there any products you buy where you regularly switch brands?
    - Why do you think that is?

- Are there any brands you would never consider buying?
    - Why?
    - What is it about those brands you don’t like

- Do you ever buy supermarket own-brands?
    - Why/why not?

- Do you buy any economy or value brands?
    - Why/why not?

4.) Yellow Fats (45 minutes)

Objective:

- To identify factors affecting brand preference when shopping for yellow fats

- To measure levels of self-image congruence in the context of yellow fats

Materials:

- Packs to aid recall and to be used for ranking task
- Flip charts and pens for projective technique
- Typical User Sheet and coloured pens
- Likert Scales

Now I'd like to talk to you about butter, spreads and margarine. This will be the focus for the remaining part of the interview

- Which do you buy?
  - Why?

- Which brands do you buy?
  - How long have you been buying this brand for? How is it different to other brands?

- When you are in the supermarket how do you choose this brand?
  - E.g. Do you look at other brands in the aisle?
  - Why/why not?

- What affect do promotions have on you in the context of butter and spreads?
  - Does it tempt you to buy a different brand?
  - Do you notice offers in this aisle?

- If your preferred brand wasn't there what would you do?
  - E.g. Buy another brand or wait?
  - What does this depend on?

- Have you tried any other brands?
  - What made you switch?

- Are there any brands you would never buy?
  - Why do you say that?

- For those with a family ask: What butter/spreads/margarine do your family like?
  - Does this affect what you buy?
  - Tell me more about this….

I’m going to give you a minute or so for you to tell me all the brands of yellow fat you can think of….. Any that spring to mind…..

UNCOVER PACKS

- Are there any you haven’t seen before?
- Are there any there that you were aware of but forgot to mention?

Now I’d like you to use the packs and rank them in order of your preferred brand to your least preferred brand.

Ok thanks for doing that…. Now we’re going to do something a little bit different which involves using our imagination! I want you to imagine the typical user of this brand **(USE RANKING TO PICK PREFERRED BRAND, SECOND PREFERRED BRAND, MID RANKING AND LEAST PREFERRED BRAND)**. I’m interested in anything that comes into your head, even if you think it sounds silly or you can’t explain why you think it….. Let’s build up a real picture of this person…..

Use flip charts to capture response for all four brands

LIST OF PROMPTS (USE ONLY IF RESPONDENT IS FINDING THIS DIFFICULT):

- Are they male or female?
- How old are they?
- What job do they do?
- Do they have a family?
- What do they look like?
- What do they like doing?
- Describe their personality
- What makes them tick?
- What music do they like?
- What clothes do they wear?

- What kind of relationship would you have with them? (e.g. friend/parent/teacher/colleague/drinking buddy)

- If they were a celebrity who would they be?

Give respondent coloured pens and 'Typical User Sheet' and ask them to draw the typical user of their preferred brand and least preferred brand.

5 minute break while moderator copies attributes onto Likert scales

Please look at these scales and circle a number from 1 (does not describe at all) to 5 (describes very well) to indicate how well each attribute describes you. Moderator to explain that the midpoint is not to be used as a default if the respondent is unsure.

5.) Wrap up and close (5 minutes)

- Thank you for your time today

- Explain next steps – they will be sent fieldwork notes and asked to sign a member check to ensure the moderator has understood and had accurately reflected their opinions and to allow them the opportunity to raise any additional issues

- Finally any questions?

APPENDIX 4: Self Portrait Sheet

Self portrait:
Tell me a bit about you…….

Name: ____________________

Age: ____________________

Location: ____________________

____

____

____

____

____

____

____

APPENDIX 5: Typical User Sheet

Draw the Typical User:
Think about their personality, what sorts of things do they do for fun/for work/etc…

Name: ____________________

Age: ____________________

Location: ____________________

APPENDIX 6: Likert Scales Sheet

Use a number from 1 (does not describe at all) to 5 (describes very well) to indicate how well each of the following describes you.

a)

1 2 3 4 5

b)

1 2 3 4 5

c)

1 2 3 4 5

d)

1 2 3 4 5

e)

1 2 3 4 5

f)

1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX 7: Transcript of Depth 1

Please note this transcript has been ‘anonymised’ to protect the respondent’s identity. For this reason the introduction and warm up have not been transcribed. Family names have been changed.

We’re going to talk about your supermarket shopping.

Are there any brands that are particularly important to you that you wouldn’t buy a substitute if it was out of stock?

My breakfast cereal, fruit and fibre, I always have to have the Kellogg’s one. I’ve tried various other ones and they’re just like cardboard whereas the Kellogg’s one has the right combination for me.

So you have actually tried others?

Yes, Ian’s tried to sneak others in when he’s gone shopping. I’m a real one, I suppose, for buying brands rather than supermarket brands. For most of the things I’ve tried I usually find I prefer the proper brands, like Kellogg’s, rather than the supermarket brands. Cost wise I will look – if it’s baked beans for the children I might buy the supermarket brand but if it’s for me then I would probably buy the proper brand. It’s a matter of taste, not a case of snobbery.

Can you think of particular products that if you ran out and you were desperate for, you would not opt for anything else?

Flora margarine, I tend to prefer Flora.

Why’s that?

I prefer the taste and I know it’s good. Also PG Tips, I would always go for PG Tips, again for taste, and they make them in nice little bags, they look nice!

So if you ran out of Flora and you were desperate for a spread, and you went to the supermarket and they had run out, would you buy another brand?

I don’t know, I think I would probably wait, it depends how desperate I was. If I was really desperate I would probably try another margarine, I don’t think I would buy butter instead, and if I was going to buy another one, it wouldn’t be, say, Tesco’s own, I’d probably buy something like Bertolli, the adverts say it’s good for you!

Are there any other brands that you would go without rather than buy a substitute?

Well I know that Ian likes orange juice but without the bits in, he likes the smooth one.

With regard to bread I tend to get the Hovis white for the children and I will have Hovis brown.

Why Hovis?

Taste and they do a good range as well.

With the products you buy, do you always buy the same brands?

Yes, we tend to be creatures of habit. But sometimes I vary on jams and also washing powder, I vary between Persil and Ariel, depending on which one is cheaper. That one I do on price because to me they wash in a similar way.

What about Tesco brand washing powder, have you ever tried that?

No partly because Andrew has a slightly sensitive skin so I know that Persil and Ariel he will be alright with.

Do you buy any supermarket own-brands?

Well that's quite interesting really because Ian's been doing some of the shopping recently and he will quite often buy own-brand things.

Why do you think that is?

Think it might be a bit to do with price probably; perhaps he doesn't taste the difference so much with things. It's possible that he buys supermarket brands on things he doesn't eat! I think the other week he bought some Waitrose own-brand crisps and they aren't the same as Walker's crisps.

Did you eat them?

Yes but under sufferance! But it's a case of next time you go shopping could you get me Walkers!

Why's that?

Again it's taste. I always think that the packets don't seem to have as much in them either. Value for money I suppose. Although they may be cheaper they're not necessarily better value for money.

What other brands do you always buy?

We use Andrex toilet rolls.

Always?

Yes – well we have had previously own-brands but I prefer the quality of Andrex and they last a little bit longer.

What about kitchen rolls?

I tend to go for the recycled kitchen rolls

Why's that?

Because I tend to feel I am doing something for the environment. Whether I actually am I don't know.

Are there any brands that you would never buy – say of butter or margarine?

I tend to be a creature of habit but I don't think I would ever buy own-brands of butter and margarine.

Why's that?

Prejudice!

What do you imagine them to be like then?

I think they would be more greasy. Also I've just found out that I have high cholesterol so I am trying to find things that are low in cholesterol and also for the children, I am trying to give them more healthy things. Trying to get them into good habits which is hard!

Are there any other brands or products that are important to you that you would be upset if they weren't in the supermarket.

I am sure there are lots of them ….. Colgate toothpaste – I do like that which is due to taste as toothpastes all have a different variation in taste.

With the brand items you have tried variations?

Yes on occasion and I then settle for one I like. Soft Rinse for example, I tend to go for one with a nice smell so I am not so rigid on that. Sometimes they may bring out a new fragrance and depending what I feel like, whether it's Autumn or Spring or whatever.

Moderator looks around kitchen and prompts….. What about fruit?

Well the children do tell me what they like so I have to buy Granny Smith apples and sometimes Braeburn. They might try others at other people's houses but at home they are the ones they would choose. I will try different apples, I quite like the interesting shaped ones just to see what they taste like. We also like bananas and clementines. If there is a choice of bananas then I go on price.

And vegetables?

I try to buy loose rather than pre-packed. Generally because I think they tend to be cheaper and also you can choose the quality whereas when they're pre-packed you don't necessarily know what you're getting.

What about ice-cream?

Usually Wall's or Cornish ice-cream. I'm not a great ice cream eater it's usually for the children. They would love more exotic ones but I tend to buy the cheapest in the Wall's range. We have tried the cheaper ones but I have found that once you've taken them out of the freezer, then put them back, the next time they are rock hard, even though they are meant to be soft scoop.

Are there any other brand you can think of that you always have to have before we move on?

We have Heinz ketchup.

Have you ever tried any others?

We have when we haven't been able to get Heinz but we've always gone back to Heinz because the others tend to be a bit more vinegary - these would be the own-brand ones. For Baked Beans we tend to be Heinz again. We have tried HP because I believe a survey was done and it said that HP was the best variety. But they're not always readily available. They often have HP reduced sugar or reduced salt but I tend to like the beans with all the bad bits in!!

Now I'd like to talk to you about butter, spreads and margarine. This will be the focus for the remaining part of the interview.

Which do you buy?

We have Anchor spreadable butter which the others eat but I don't I tend to use Flora. They would eat Flora if they had to - Stuart would eat Flora but the others prefer butter.

So why Anchor spreadable?

Because it's usually for sandwiches and toast and it is so much easier to spread. Taste-wise the family decided this is the one they like. And I suppose Anchor is a household name.

If I'm cooking I do buy cheaper butter, probably Tesco's or one of the butters that may be on special offer, so I use the block butter if I'm making cakes or baking.

So why wouldn't you buy Anchor for cooking?

Because it's too expensive to use for making a cake or biscuits where taste is not so much of a factor I don't think as you have all the other ingredients to add to it.

How long have you been using Flora?

A long time – I think as long as I've been married. When I was a child we always had butter I don't think we ever had margarine.

So when did you start using it?

I think it was when you get this health conscious thing and all the adverts say that it's low in polyunsaturates and cholesterol so I think I've stuck with Flora ever since then.

And the same with Anchor spreadable?

Yes, and that's since I can remember really.

When you are in the supermarket how do you choose this brand?

I tend to go straight to the ones I normally buy, I suppose because I am happy with them, I don't see the need to change. I suppose I do notice the products I recognise from the advertising, like Olivio so I suppose advertising does have quite a big effect but it doesn't have such an effect that I want to buy it.

What if one was on special offer, would that influence you to buy it?

No I don't think so.

So if Flora wasn't available what would you do?

It would have to be the brand that was nearest to it, but I wouldn't be very happy doing so. I don't know, I would have to study the tubs to read what was nearest to it.

Nearest to it in what sense?

Well nearest re: polyunsaturates, not that I really understand what that is all about. I suppose I would go towards Olivio because it has olive oil in it and we use olive oil to cook with.

Do you know of any brands your friends or family use?

Not really – it's not something I take much notice of.

I'm going to give you a minute or so for you to tell me all the brands of yellow fat you can think of….. Any that spring to mind…..

Good old Olivio, Anchor, Utterly Butterly, St Ivel,

So we'll open some of these up (SHOWS PACKS)

Oh look – it's Utterly Butterly!! Oh look that's what I should be eating, Benecol.

Why do you say that?

From the cholesterol point of view.

Would you think of buying it?

Well I suppose I might now try it for its buttery taste.

When did you find out you had high cholesterol.

Last week. Oh look at all these I should have remembered!

Are there any of these you haven't seen before?

I've seen Bertolli and Benecol but only in adverts.

This is the new Olivio

Oh right, so is it the packaging that's different?

Yes a bit different

So you use Anchor Spreadable, what about Lurpak spreadable would you consider buying it?

Well I don't eat it but I don't think Ian would like it because it has low salt and he likes a salty butter.

So as we were saying earlier, if you couldn't buy Flora which one of these would you consider buying as an alternative?

Benecol or Bertolli.

Now I'd like you to use the packs and rank them in order of your preferred brand to your least preferred brand….. So the one you normally buy at the top to the one you'd never buy at the bottom.

That's brilliant, thanks for that. So for spreads you've chosen Flora, then Bertolli, then Benecol, then Gold, then Lurpak, then Clover, then Vitalite, then supermarket own-brands, then Utterly Butterly and finally I Can't Believe It's Not Butter.

Now we're going to do something a little bit different which involves using our imagination! I want you to imagine the typical user of Flora. I'm interested in anything that comes into your head, even if you think it sounds silly or you can't explain why you think it….. Let's build up a real picture of this Flora person….. (MODERATOR USES FLIP CHART TO CAPTURE RESPONSE AND ENCOURAGE CREATIVITY)

Someone who is health conscious, it has a light textured flavour to it; makes me think of the countryside; someone very outdoorsy, someone who goes to the gym; an active person. Female, middle aged, non smoking, more of a town sort of person. Makes me think of outdoors; cycling. Person going to the seaside in a nice car, fresh air. A fun, happy-go-lucky type of person. A mum who is very family orientated, a homely warm person.

Can you draw this person for me? MODERATOR GIVES RESPONDENT TYPICAL USER SHEET AND COLOURED PENS

Now let's imagine a typical user for you second favourite brand, Bertolli….

An Italian, olive groves, sunshine, tomato, olive salads, outdoor eating, again an outdoorsy person

Tell me more about the sort of person who would buy it?

Makes me think of an Italian mama! Really jolly and caring. The rounder person!! Likes to look after the men, so very traditional and family orientated. Big family, lots of children and grandchildren, fashionable in an elegant sort of way, nice shoes, air freshener, someone who does a lot of cleaning. An airy house with tiled floors. Very cosmopolitan, confident lady.

What about in comparison to Flora?

If they were dressed I can imagine a Flora person would have like a flowery dress on and a Bertolli person would have a suit.

I think Flora is a more sort of homely person whereas Bertolli person, although they have a big family, they are a mother with a career and a nanny.

What about Lurpak

A bit French. Makes me think of very pale things, a bit boring Would wear dark clothes. PR work, very organised. Makes me think of Ryvita, almost organic sort of person, very sensible and routined. Single family – no children. Plain – no patterns in their house. Minimalist and a bit cold. Not very jolly people, serious in fact. A bit of a loner. Would drink slightly obscure drinks but not to excess.

What about I Can't Believe It's Not Butter

A young female slightly frivolous, giggly, immature, younger sort of person, lots of friends, goes out drinking, quite loud and brash and flashy person. A bit lazy and they like buns and have a slightly unhealthier diet. It doesn't seem serious. Don't imagine them down the gym, a dog lover! Almost that they think they're being healthy but not consciously. Someone without good taste! Someone who is worried about price before quality.

Wow I didn't realise I had such a thing about own-brands.

Is there anything else you want to say that you have not mentioned?

No I don't think so.

Well you've been brilliant – that's quite an imagination you have there! We've got lots of interesting things here but what I'd like you to do now is take this red pen and circle the really key attributes for each person. We need to capture the real essence of them….. So if you could only use a few of these words to describe the person which would they be?

We're going to take a 5 minute break now so if you need a cup of tea now's your chance! After that I'm just going to ask you to fill in a sheet I have for you and then we're just about done.

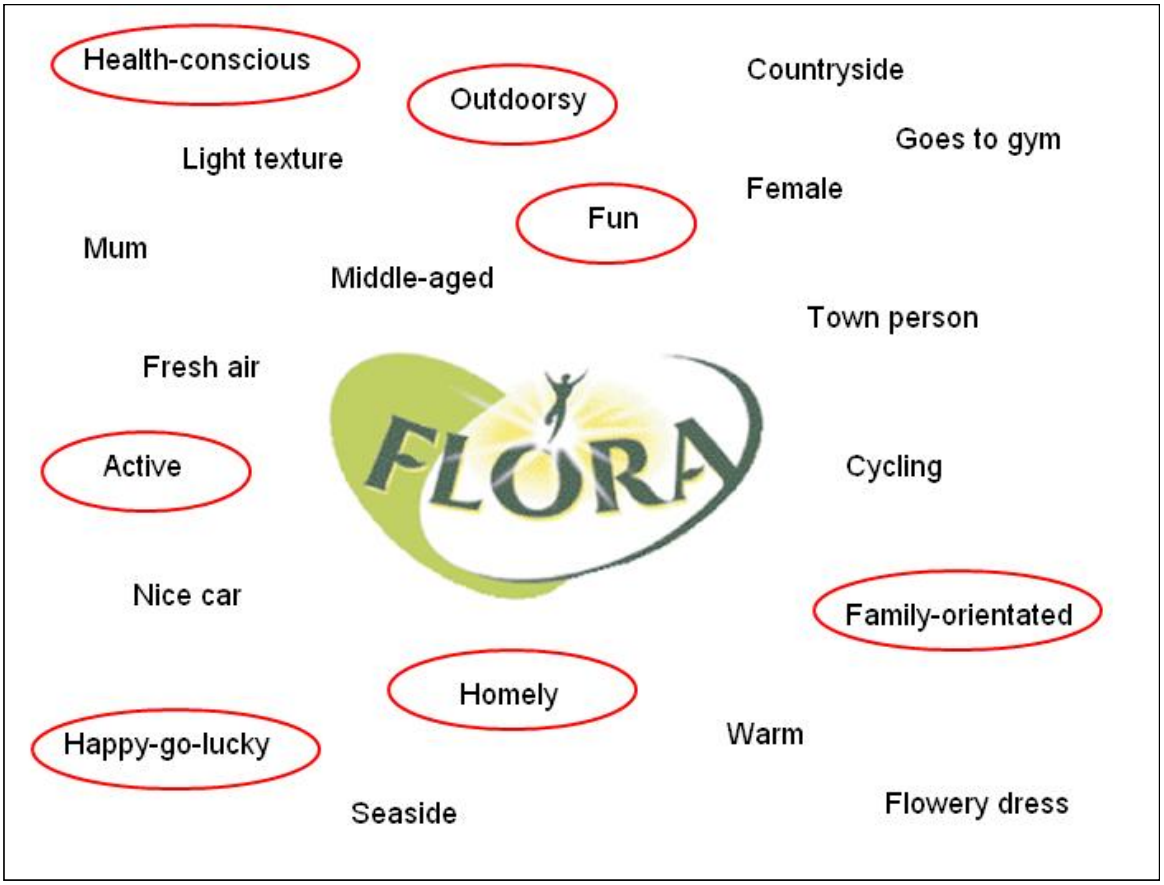
MODERATOR COPIES CIRCLED ATTRIBUTES ONTO LIKERT SCALES

RESPONDENT FILLS IN LIKERT SCALES

Well thanks so much for your time today. (Moderator then explains what happens next and pays respondent £15 incentive)

APPENDIX 8: Flip Charts from Depth 1

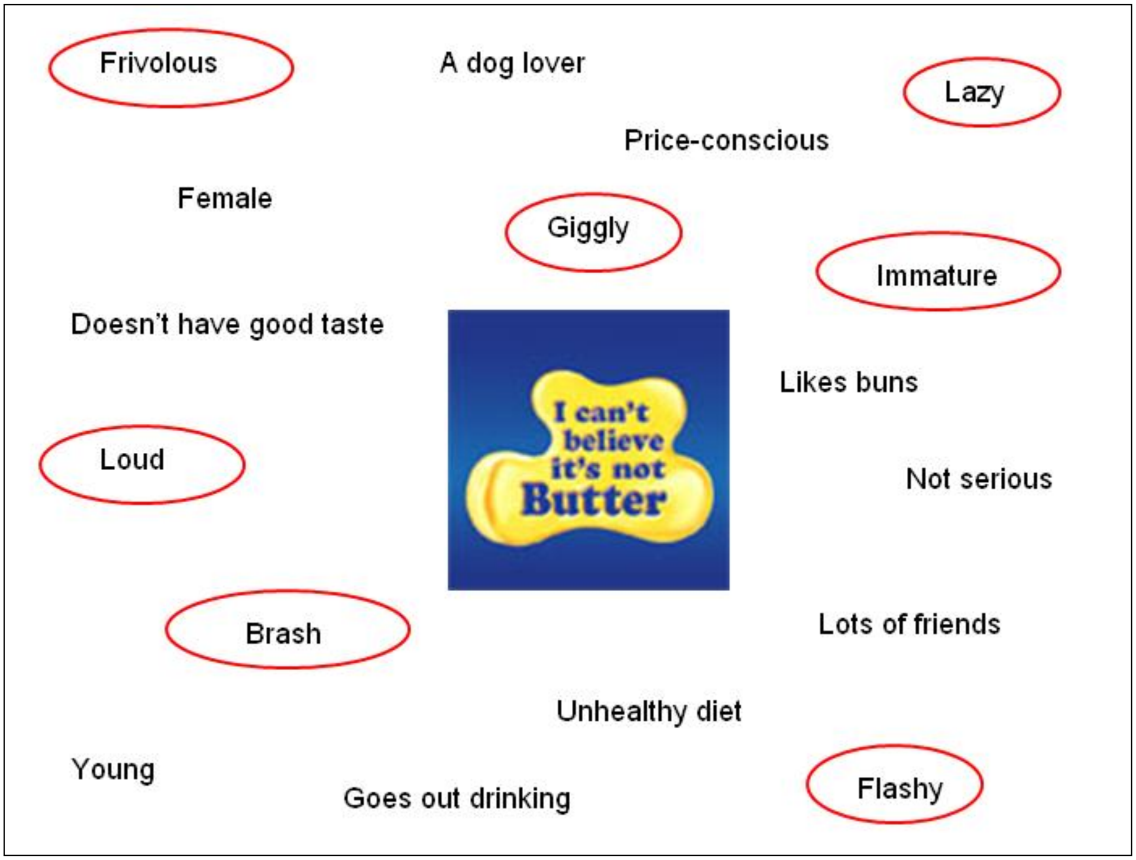
Flip Chart for Preferred Brand: Flora



Flip Chart for Second Preferred Brand: Bertolli

Flip Chart for Mid Ranking Brand: Lurpak

Flip Chart for Least Preferred Brand: I Can’t Believe It’s Not Butter



All attributes the respondent has circled in red are added to the Likert Scales Sheet below. The respondent then rates themselves against these attributes.

APPENDIX 9: Attribute List from Depth 1

Use a number from 1 (does not describe at all) to 5 (describes very well) to indicate how well each of the following describes you.

Outdoorsy

1 2 3 4 5

Homely

1 2 3 4 5

Fun

1 2 3 4 5

Health-conscious

1 2 3 4 5

Happy-go-lucky

1 2 3 4 5

Family-orientated

1 2 3 4 5

Use a number from 1 (does not describe at all) to 5 (describes very well) to indicate how well each of the following describes you.

Active

1 2 3 4 5

Elegant

1 2 3 4 5

Traditional

1 2 3 4 5

Jolly

1 2 3 4 5

Caring

1 2 3 4 5

Confident

1 2 3 4 5

Use a number from 1 (does not describe at all) to 5 (describes very well) to indicate how well each of the following describes you.

Cosmopolitan

1 2 3 4 5

Serious

1 2 3 4 5

Organised

1 2 3 4 5

Routined

1 2 3 4 5

Cold

1 2 3 4 5

Loner

1 2 3 4 5

Use a number from 1 (does not describe at all) to 5 (describes very well) to indicate how well each of the following describes you.

Boring

1 2 3 4 5

Minimalist

1 2 3 4 5

Sensible

1 2 3 4 5

Frivolous

1 2 3 4 5

Giggly

1 2 3 4 5

Flashy

1 2 3 4 5

Use a number from 1 (does not describe at all) to 5 (describes very well) to indicate how well each of the following describes you.

Loud

1 2 3 4 5

Brash

1 2 3 4 5

Immature

1 2 3 4 5

Lazy

1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX 10: Calculations to Determine Self-Congruence Ratings from Depth 1

Preferred Brand: Flora

	Attribute	Rating
	Outdoorsy	5
	Homely	5
	Fun	4
	Health-conscious	5
	Happy-go-lucky	4
	Family-orientated	5
	Active	4
Totals	7	32
Self-congruence rating	**32 / 7 = 4.57**	

Second Preferred Brand: Bertolli

	Attribute	Rating
	Elegant	3
	Traditional	3
	Jolly	4
	Caring	5
	Family-orientated	5
	Confident	4
	Cosmopolitan	4
	Outdoorsy	5
Totals	8	33
Self-congruence rating	**33 / 8 = 4.12**	

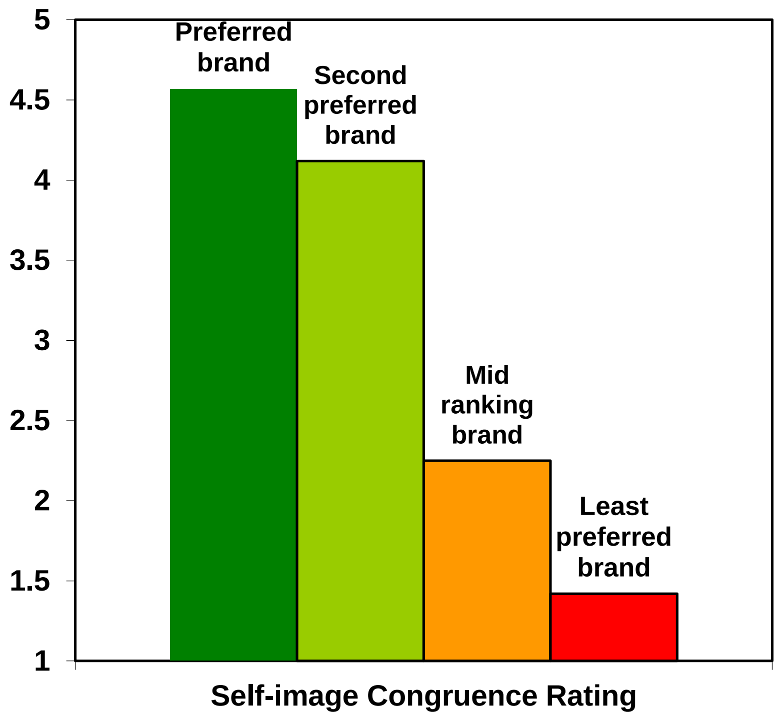
Mid Ranking Brand: Lurpak

	Attribute	Rating
	Serious	2
	Organised	4
	Routined	3
	Cold	1
	Loner	1
	Boring	1
	Minimalist	3
	Sensible	3
Totals	8	18
Self-congruence rating	**18 / 8 = 2.25**	

Least Preferred Brand: I Can't Believe It's Not Butter

	Attribute	Rating
	Frivolous	1
	Giggly	2
	Flashy	1
	Loud	3
	Brash	1
	Immature	1
	Lazy	1
Totals	7	10
Self-congruence rating	**10 / 7 = 1.42**	

A Comparison of Self-image Congruence Ratings across all Brands Rated for Depth 1



APPENDIX 11: Member Check

Due to respondent confidentiality the signed copies are not included in the appendix as they can identify respondents by their surname; however, they are available upon request

Dear Jo,

I have read the photocopies of the notes you took during our interview. I agree this is an accurate representation of the interview that took place and that it fairly reflects my response.

Yours Sincerely

……………………………………………..