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# *The Secret of Love:*

A Case of Lovemarks

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# Abstract

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<b>Key words:</b>	Lovemarks, Brand Relationship, Brand Love, Emotional Attachment, Emotional Branding
<b>Purpose:</b>	Our aim is to provide a better understanding of the love that consumers have for their brands and which factors that have an essential role in order to be a loved brand.
<b>Methodology:</b>	We have chosen to use an iterative approach to our qualitative study. Implementation of nine personal interviews has taken place, after a semi-structured approach.
<b>Theoretical perspective:</b>	The theories involve both consumer behavior and branding in new era in order to give a modern perspective in these areas. The theories selected concern aspects related to emotional branding, multi-sensory marketing, customer satisfaction and brand relation.
<b>Empirical data:</b>	Our empirical information consists of the nine in-depth interviews conducted. From these, we have done our analysis.
<b>Conclusions:</b>	After using Lovemark as a tool to investigate brand love, it is concluded that brand love, which is affected by sensuality, intimacy and respect, is a result of long term relationship between consumer and brand.

## Preface

We would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who made this study possible and has supported us during the thesis.

Initially, we want to extend a special thank you to our respondents for taking their time to be interviewed and providing us with information about their relation with their beloved brands. Thank you for showing a great commitment.

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We hope that you will enjoy your reading!

*Lund, 28 May 2010*

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# 1. Introduction

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*The first chapter of our study consists of the problem formulation and aim of the study which are defined after analyzing the previous studies about the subject. Our empirical case Lovemark is also introduced to make the structure of the study clear for the readers.*

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*”If you have it, you don't need to have anything else, and if you don't have it, it doesn't matter much what else you have.”*

*Sir James M. Barrie*

What does Barrie refer to in this quote? The answer is simple, *LOVE*. Love is a feeling that is as old as the history of human being. It is a sense of *attachment, devotion or admiration* for someone, an object, a religion or anything (Merriam-Webster.com). Definitely, love is one of the strongest emotions not just in person to person relations but also in consumer-brand relations. Therefore brand love comes to the stage with its significant effect in marketing field.

With the introduction of relationship theory, brands and consumers become two interdependent partners in a relationship where both partners are active (Fournier, 1998). In the relationship marketing approach, marketers play vital role in positioning the brands as the active participator to the relationship through the process of personification (*humanization*) which means the representation of a thing as a person or the representation of an abstraction by the human form (Zinkhan, 1993; Fournier, 1998).

In consumer-brand relationship, various feelings can be observed such as passion or hatred. Love is one of those feelings that marketers try to create between their brands and consumers. As stated by Varley (2008), loving a brand differs from liking a lot since brand lovers will never stray. Once customers turn into brand lovers, it will be hard for competitors to attract those loyal ones. Marketers appreciate the emotional attachment between brands and consumers so they started to use slogans in a way to evoke feelings and emotions. There are

many campaigns and slogans which evoke emotions to attract consumers such as “I’m lovin’ it” McDonalds’ international marketing campaign or Delta Airline’s “You’ll love the way we fly”. The importance of addressing emotions generated a new branding model called emotional branding which is based on highlighting emotional aspect of a certain brand (Hestad, 2008).

According to Moor (2007:17), since nineteenth century, brands have been used to inscribe certain meanings and values rather than just indicating origin thanks to series of technological developments. Moor’s approach is partly correct since technological developments make communication of values and meanings easier but from the consumer’s point of view, it is important to analyze the reasons behind the tendency of attaining certain values to the commodities as changing social needs.

From marking ownership of cattle to serving as a symbol providing identification of the producer (Bertilsson, 2009) brands have long history. In the times of globalization, companies which own strong brands have the power to compete. This is the reason why Keller and Lehmann define a brand as a growth engine (Keller and Lehmann, 2009).

From management perspective, developing strategies to differentiate brands is the result of recognizing brands as the most important assets that provide differentiation opportunity for a long time (Wilson, 2009). Brand is classically defined as set of mental associations such as unique, strong and, positive, held by the consumer, which add to the perceived value of a product or a service (Kapferer, 2008). Haxthausen (2009) defines brand as an identity and a reputation. A brand’s identity and promise creates perceptions and expectations in customers’ mind. It also creates perceptions and expectations with other constituencies, including employees, investors, suppliers and other stakeholders, such as the public at large (Haxthausen, 2009).

From consumers’ perspective, a brand affects almost all aspects of a consumer’s life. In the consumer society, consumption of branded products means a lot for consumers such as enabling them to form their identity and reinforcing their social.

Modern marketing produces many brands that are perceived as indispensable in the relationship built with the customers. They signify certain values which satisfy various needs

arouse from social existence. For instance, Coca-Cola represents a lifestyle, while Apple signifies differentiation; Gucci is the symbol of quality whereas AXA provides confidence. Beside representing various values, these brands also the ones that are successful at maintaining a relationship with their customers based on love.

Since forming an emotional relationship becomes the primary goal of branding, it is worth to make a study which aims to learn more about brand love, a priceless asset for both branding experts and consumers. Our study basically focuses on the concept of brand love and searches for the criteria that influences brand love by benefiting from the concept of Lovemark which is introduced by Kevin Roberts, the CEO of the advertising agency Saatchi & Saatchi.

## 1.1 Relevance of Brand Love

Due to the decreased product differentiation and intense competition (Fournier and Yao, 1997), establishing consumer-brand relationship based on emotions has become more important than ever. Beside economic factors and market conditions, consumers' tendency of engaging in relationship with brands is related with the characteristics of postmodern consumers and their attached meanings to consumption. In order to analyze the reasons of the requirement for a strong emotional attachment with a brand from consumers' perspective, meaning of consumption in the postmodern era is going to be explained.

Postmodernism has gained considerable attention from authors in different fields since it affects various areas including marketing. It is important for marketing managers to recognize the new understanding in sociology and organization which influence marketing practices and change usual ways to reach to the consumers (Cova, 1996). Cova (1996: 495) declares that "the philosophy of postmodernism proposes a situation where the individual, freed of the constraints of collective ideals in such matters as education, the family, and sex, can operate a process of personalization as a way of managing behavior, with as few constraints and as many choices as possible. The current era is one of individualism, where the individual can and should act personally to demonstrate his individual existence and differentiation." Raaij (1993) approaches the freedom of individuals from consumer perspective and defines the situation as *embarras de richesses* and *embarras des choix*, thus consumers are free to make selection among different products and styles.

Consumption in postmodernism takes a new form that is more hedonic based. Consumers seek for images and symbols that are attached to the products. They use the products for the values or meanings they express, in other words there exist *reversal of production and consumption* (Raaij, 1993). Rising of individualism and loss of the community feeling in postmodern era are said to be the reasons of why consumers are in search for images and symbols attached to the product; thus through consuming products which encourage them to form their identity, they compensate the lack of community feeling by illusion of belonging to a community formed by consumers (Cova, 1996). Raaij (1993) claims that postmodernism is the era of *hyperreality*, thus consumers attach certain meanings to the goods and acquire that *packaged meaning* by consuming the product.

Consumption process in the postmodern era is a life-long process for consumers to form and reflect the individual identities through reconstruction and re-evaluation (Wilska, 2002). Expressing a lifestyle through using a product becomes dominant in this period. “According to the sociological literature on postmodernity, consumption and the creation of different lifestyles are the means by which personal identity and self are constructed” (Haanpa, 2007: 479). Cova (1996:498) expands the idea as stating that “consumers are suspended between two poles; a quest for self versus a quest for community, given meanings (images) versus constructed meanings (experiences).”

The shift in the meaning of consumption also influences branding which we are interested in as well. In the situation where consumers are in pursuit of image, branding functions as imposing image to the products to differentiate them from the competitor’s. Consumers form their own image related to the brand and the message they receive from the brand strengthen this image (Raaij, 1993). Raaij (1993: 555) clarifies the point with an example:

“Toothpaste is originally connected with the mundane reality of brushing your teeth. Brushing with a certain brand of toothpaste leads to the consequence of having white teeth, fresh breath, and finally to values such as attractiveness, sexiness, self-esteem, security and happiness. These values may be added to the brand over time through advertising. These new meanings (images) signify a new reality. This reality, when believed by the users of the brand feeling more sexy, secure and happy, becomes a hyperreality for them. In postmodern terms, the image does not only represent the product, but the product represents the image.”

In this regard, emotions have great importance for the process of image making. Due to the fact that postmodern consumption is based on hedonism, emotions, which arise while using or after using a product, play significant role during the selection phase of the brand. Lim and Ang (2008) list the basic criteria as *aesthetics*, *taste*, *symbolic meaning*, and *sensory experience* on which product evaluations are based in hedonic consumption. For this reason, brands are promoted in a way to evoke emotions and positioned as providing various emotional benefits in the age of postmodernism (Ruth, 2001).

In the postmodern age, the common point of the marketing experts and consumers is developing emotional attachment with brands. Pursuit of hedonism, individual self-expression and identity development (Whang, et al., 2004) are the reasons of consumers for developing emotional attachment. On the other hand, due to intense globalization and increasing competitiveness, affecting consumer's attitude and creating loyalty become more difficult than ever so alternative ways of influencing customers are needed (Banytè, et al., 2007). For companies, establishing emotional bond is an efficient way for continuous relationship between the customer and the brand.

Schultz et al. define attachment as; “a multidimensional property of material object possession which represents the degree of linkage perceived by an individual between him/her self and a particular object. Attachments serve self-presentational functions. Self- presentation can refer to symbolic display to others or to the self in an intrapsychic process of self-reflection or self enjoyment” (Schultz, 1989: 360). Banwari (2006: 557) explains the reasons of developing emotional attachment with products in his study. He states “with many products, we develop an emotional bond after acquisition and through use. First, this is due to enjoyment of the product—if the product is a recreational product and we have spent considerable number of hours enjoying it, then we feel attached to it. Second, if and as the product serves repeatedly in symbolically expressing our inner ‘I’ to others, we begin to see that product as our true friend.”

Possession of objects has symbolic meanings for individuals in the development of a unique identity (Schultz, 1989). According to Belk (1988) in the process of identity reflection, brand personality, which expresses brand's human-like characteristics associated with a brand (Maehle and Shneor, 2010), functions as an instrument for self expression.

Consumers' tendency towards connecting emotionally to the brands which are *hedonic* or *self-expressive* in their nature directs branding strategies towards enhancing hedonic or self expressive aspects of the offerings to increase emotional response from the consumers (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006).

## 1.2 Previous Studies

The importance of emotional attachment has been recognized by many scholars in the postmodern age where globalization dominates. For this reason many scholars such as Schultz, Kleine and Kernan (1989), Swaminathan, Stilley and Ahluwalia (2008), Banytė, Jokšaitė, Virvilaitė (2007) have studied emotional attachment within the framework of brand (object) - consumer relationship. Especially Susan Fournier's articles provide a basis for the studies in this subject. Majority of the studies focuses on the emotional attachment to an object and its meaning for the consumers.

Shimp and Madden (1988) can be said as the pioneers who introduced a conceptual work about the consumer-object love with the title of 'Consumer-Object Relation: A Conceptual Framework Based Analogously on Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love' (1986) (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). The article adapts **Sternberg's Triangular Theory of Love** for person-person relations (PPRs) to consumer-object relations (CORs). The authors claimed that Sternberg's theory could be used to analyze the concept of love in consumer-object relations (CORs). The study of Shimp and Madden is important since it provides a different perspective by adapting a person-person theory to consumer-object relations.

The Triangular Theory of Love is based on three components of love as intimacy, passion and decision/commitment (Shimp and Madden, 1988). Sternberg (1986) identifies intimacy as the emotional component and defines it as "feelings of closeness, connectedness and bondedness and also includes sharing, feelings of emotional support, holding another in high regard, and having intimate communication" (Shimp and Madden, 1988:163). Shimp and Madden claim that intimacy exists in consumer-object relations as well. To them, intimacy matches with the feeling of liking; thus feeling of liking gets stronger as the relationship continues over time (Shimp and Madden, 1988). However, Carrooll and Ahuvia (2006) do not confirm the idea that accepts the brand love as the intense level of liking due to the conceptual difference

between them. Love includes the identification of consumer's identity with the brand in addition, love for a brand preclude negative emotions (Carrooll and Ahuvia, 2006).

In The Triangular Theory of Love, passion is the motivational component including needs such as self-esteem, succorance, nurturance, affiliation, dominance, submission, and self-actualization. In CORs (Consumer-object relations) yearning which means having strong desire for something is the substitute of passion (Shimp and Madden, 1988). The last component named as decision/commitment signifies the cognitive aspect of love and clearly exists in the CORs (Shimp and Madden, 1988).

**Components of PPRs and CORs**

Psychological process	Sternberg's component	Consumer- object process analog
Cognition	Decision/ commitment	Decision/ commitment
Emotion	Intimacy	Liking
Motivation	Passion	Yearning

**Figure 1: Components of PPRs and CORs (Shimps and Madden)**

Shimp and Madden's study is about love in consumer-object relations which vary from love in consumer-brand relationship that we focus on since the product does not engage in the in consumer-brand relationship that we focus on since the product does not engage in the relationship. When the product is replaced by the brand, the structure turns into two active engagers that co-create value in the relationship (Fournier, 1998).

Susan Fournier is one of the important researchers that have been studying the consumer-brand relationship and brand love. One of her articles called 'Consumers and Their Brands: Developing Relationship Theory in Consumer Research' (1998) is attention-grabbing regarding the explorative approach to the consumer-brand relationship. Her study refers to the term humanization of objects while explaining the brands as the *active partners* in the relationship. Fournier's assumption regarding brands as the active partners in the relationship is beneficial in explaining the nature of relationship between consumers and brands. Her article provides a framework for consumer brand relationship (Forunier, 1998). In the dynamic nature of relationships, how brands are perceived as relationship partners and how the meanings are embedded to the relation are some of the questions that can be answered

through her study. However, Fournier does not provide a deep analysis of love for brands in this study since brand's contribution to the relationship needs to be clearer.

Another research about brand love was made by Carroll and Ahuvia with the name of 'Some Antecedents and Outcomes of Brand Love' (2006). The study is striking since it provides empirical support by measuring effects of type of products (hedonic or utilitarian) on brand love and probable consequences as loyalty and positive WOM. "The study introduces a multi-item measure of brand love and refines the understanding of this phenomenon" (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006:87).

### **1.2.1 Problem Formulation**

Fournier's study with David Glen Mick called 'Rediscovering Satisfaction' (1999) presents a *phenomenological and longitudinal investigation of satisfaction* (Fournier and Mick 1999:5). The study concludes that love is *a mode of satisfaction* (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). Moreover, Fournier and Mick discover five facets of love which is defined as a form of satisfaction. These facets are *passion, feelings of uniqueness, a sense of caring, obsessive attachment, overlapping selves*. (Fournier and Mick 1999:11) To them, this mode of satisfaction which is beyond pleasure includes close relationship between the consumer and product (Fournier and Mick 1999).

The study is, then, criticized by Carroll and Ahuvia (2006) who argue that love, as an affective in its nature, differs from satisfaction which is cognitive evaluation. Carroll and Ahuvia (2006: 81) summarize the differences between two concepts; "Satisfaction typically is considered as a transaction-specific outcome, brand love oftentimes is the result of a consumer's long-term relationship with the brand. While satisfaction frequently is linked to the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm, brand love requires neither expectancy nor disconfirmation (e.g., the consumer experiences this emotional response to the brand in the absence of cognition; the consumer knows what to expect from the brand, so little, if any, disconfirmation takes place."

As Carroll and Ahuvia stated satisfaction and love are two different concepts. We support the idea which claims satisfaction is cognitive evaluation whereas love, which needs further analysis, is affective in its nature. Majority of the previous studies mainly focus on the

emotional attachment rather than brand love. Those underlying the concept of brand love do not provide sufficient information to explain the factors that affect the love between the consumers and brands. After doing research in previous studies, we conclude that previous studies do not provide a conceptual framework of brand love with a distinct approach. However, they provide basis for further studies.

Love concept in consumer-brand relationships needs to be investigated not only in academic world but also in management world since consumers are emotionally driven in decision-making process. It is proved that decision making takes place in frontal and parietal (sensory) cortex of human brain (Paseran et al., 2008). Although, importance of emotions is explicit in decision making process, most of the companies ignore the sensual and emotional part of the consumer relationship. They may focus on fast and cheap production to gain more profit in a short time. Moreover, as stated by (Runestad, 2010: 11) “some companies rush to market, take a generic and give it a name, but they do not have the platform to support the ingredient.” As a result, most of the products stay as commodities or random brands that people have no emotional connection with. These products carry the risk of being abandoned when consumers find the one that they will love.

In the contemporary marketing world, *brand love* is a new marketing construct that results from transforming consumer’s satisfaction into a passionate emotional bond (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006). Consumers, in most of the times, cannot explain their attachment to a brand in a logical way, thus price or practical benefits are not sufficient to explain the reason why a certain brand evokes emotions of a consumer (Banytè, et al., 2007). In order to contribute to the academic literature about brand love and draw the attention of the companies to create love for their brands, we offer to investigate what affects brand love by using Lovemark concept as a tool.

### **1.3 Lovemarks**

Lovemarks is an interesting concept introduced by Kevin Roberts, the CEO of Saatchi & Saatchi Company. Bradley et al. (2007: 42) summarize Robert’s assumption as; “emotions will transform brands into something greater. Roberts calls them “Lovemarks.” More specifically, by marketing toward individuals’ emotional core, a greater connection between products and consumers will be made. If it is done correctly, a “Lovemark” and an indelible

relationship will be created.” Roberts (2005:52) describes brand love as “*more than liking a lot*”. An important feature of Lovemark is its subjective character hence it does not signify a brand which is certificated by certain authorities. Even if a brand succeeds to reach a consumer’s heart, it becomes one’s Lovemark.

The following part was taken from the website of ‘Lovemarks’ indicating a consumer’s feelings about his favorite brands:

*“Apple, MINI and New York City are three Lovemarks I would like to get in touch with. All three have a lot in common with my lifestyle. Apple and MINI are qualitative, high-grade products with nice minimalist design. New York City is a place where you can discover many interesting things.”*

Holger Leuteriz, Germany (Lovemarks.com)

One of the Roberts striking claim is about the economic shift from attention to attraction economy. In order to understand what Roberts mean by attraction economy, we need to clarify the concept of attention economy in advance.

### **1.3.1 Attention Economy**

Technological developments facilitated the dissemination of information in the global world. Usage of internet and its effects on all aspects of social and economic life are the signifiers of a new era. Instant information dissemination leads to *information overload* (Davenport and Beck, 2002) which overwhelms individuals since they are perceived as consumers to whom marketing efforts are directed.

Davenport and Beck (2002) describe the situation in 90’s as ‘information assault’ and explain that there was abundance of information, knowledge but shortage of human attention. The economist and Nobel Prize recipient Herbert Simon (1971:40-41) who first mentioned the attention economy summarizes the core assumption of the concept as; “What information consumes is rather obvious: It consumes the attention of its recipients. Hence a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention.”

The trouble with limited attention has been recognized by the psychologists and behavioral economics (Falkinger, 2007). In this age, as scarcity of attention reveals itself, attention gets more valuable than money (Henderson, 1999). Davenport and Beck (2001:3) support this idea by claiming that attention, like money, should be perceived as currency and continue as; "those who don't have it want it. Even those who have it want more. You can trade it, you can purchase it. People work to preserve and extend what they already have . . . and attention can be converted into other currencies, like accumulating enough *e-points* by viewing online ads to *earn* a DVD player."

Business world has been affected from the situation where *global competition produced lean organizations; very high customer expectations, short cycle times and a need for just- in- time everything* dominate (Davenport and Beck, 2002:50). For this reason a new management concept called *attention management* became more of an issue in the era of attention economy.

### **1.3.2 From Attention to Attraction**

According to Roberts claim, today we live in the era of attraction economy where the control shifts from manufacturers and retailers to consumers. He continues that emotional connection is fundamental for existing in the future (Roberts, 2007).

As it was mentioned, human attention was perceived as currency during the attention economy. To Roberts, emotion is now the currency of the attraction economy where *two-way, interactive communication is dominant and companies sense their customers one by one* (Roberts, 2007:14).

Roberts' description about the current economic environment may not be a recent discovery. Experience economy which was introduced by Pine and Gilmore is more or less similar to what Roberts claims. According to Pine and Gilmore, experience is an economic offering since consumers desire experiences and companies, in response, design and promote experience (Pine and Gilmore, 1998).

Pine and Gilmore (1998:98) characterize 'experience' as a real offering like any service, commodity or good and strengthen their opinion by claiming "an experience occurs when a company intentionally uses services as the stage, and goods as props, to engage individual

customers in a way that creates a memorable event. Commodities are fungible, goods tangible, services intangible, and experiences memorable.”

Roberts’ attraction economy and Pine & Gilmore’s experience economy are similar concepts as they both integrate consumers into the offering and make it memorable. However, Roberts mentions the importance of personal attractions. He criticizes marketers since they perceive attraction as just providing *theme parks, joy rides or showmanship* and underestimate the importance of personal attractions which create emotions and intimacy (Roberts, 2007).

Ethical economy, on the other hand, is similar to the concepts of experience and attraction economy in a way that consumer participation and integration lay at the core. Ethical economy is based on social production (Benkler, 2006) that brings companies and consumers together in the process of producing value since technological developments as well as sociological factors (*post-War transformation of the capitalist economy*) provide opportunity for consumers to involve directly in *user-led innovation systems* (ethicaleconomy.com).

### **1.3.3 Distinctions between Iconic Brands and Lovemarks**

In 21st century, companies aspire to have a strong brand which can inspire consumers and create a strong relationship that is supported by strong loyalty. Douglas Holt names these brands as ‘Iconic Brands’ (Holt, 2004). Iconic brands differ from Lovemarks in several ways; iconic brands are the ones that join the pantheon of cultural icons, they become consensus expressions of particular values dear by some members of a society (Holt, 2004: 4). However, Lovemarks are more emotionally driven. Iconic brands are based on myths and cultural icons (Holt, 2004) whereas Lovemarks are based on emotions, passion and love (Roberts, 2005). Iconic brands are created through cultural branding which focuses on performing myths (Holt, 2004); on the other hand, Lovemarks are formed basically through emotional branding.

### **1.3.4 Critics of Lovemarks**

The idea of Lovemark heavily relies on the love concept that contemporary consumers have great tendency to feel for objects (brands). However, Roberts’s approach and his way of relating existing theories to the concept has been criticized by some academicians and authors. A critical article named as “Love: A Critical Reading of Lovemarks” is written by

Janet Sayers and Nanette Monin. The article includes striking criticism of the concept so it is worth to read.

Sayers and Monin qualify the book as an *airport book* which is extensively read by practitioners. Moreover, the authors criticize the Roberts' approach to love by referring to the thoughts of Marx on commodity fetishism and Freud on sexual fetishism.

The authors admit the existence of product love in marketing literature but the point is that they provide anti argument for Roberts' approach. Sayers and Monin (2007: 679) state that “we have no quarrel with the love for objects (we are fond of quite a few ourselves) but believe what Lovemarks provides is a fetishism of production, as well as objects of consumption. Roberts is concerned only with selling and as any adman knows, “sex sells”. Sex has been selling products for quite some time, but demoting love into the role of a profit-generating pimp extends this marketing abuse. And making respect a precondition of the love generated by Lovemarks does not ameliorate the abuse. Does the precondition of respect before seduction remind you of something?” According to them, the answer is simple. Precondition of respect before seduction reminds them of seduced woman waiting for respect. In summary, the authors are not satisfied with Roberts' depiction of love, thus; to them, love is commodified and mixed with the thoughts of Marx and Freud on commodity and sexual fetishism. The reason of providing criticism against Lovemarks is to emphasize that we are aware of the critics about Lovemarks. Even though the critics about Lovemarks for leading commodity and sexual fetishism arise from social concerns, we cannot ignore the success of Roberts in the marketing field.

In the following sections, we will mention about the ‘Lovemark’ concept in a detailed way since our study aims to contribute to the concept of love through analyzing Lovemarks.

## **1.4 Aim of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to investigate brand love through the concept of Lovemark. Consumer's feeling of love develops over time as the relationship between the brand and customer gets intense. The importance of love has been recognized yet the studies related to this concept have not provided the essence of it. In our study, we aim to understand what

affects ‘love’ between the brand and customer by making use of Lovemarks to provide a distinct approach.

As the competition is getting fierce as well as the companies crave for being the market leader and generating brands that are going to be irreplaceable in consumers’ life. Most of the new born brands pass away because of the off beam strategies, plus, even the old ones have difficulties with surviving in the competitive environment. Turning customers into brand lovers might be one of the most effective ways of surviving in the marketplace.

With this study, we aim to explore what influences the creation of brand love among consumers. We seek for criteria which are essential for brand love to exist. For this reason, our **research question** is;

### *What influences love of consumers for brands?*

To investigate what creates and affects brand love, we conduct an empirical research including open interviews with selected **brand lovers** in the cities of Lund and Malmö, Sweden. We aim to investigate how the dimensions of Lovemarks, **mystery, intimacy and sensuality**, affect brand love and if there are additional points that need to be revealed regarding what affects brand love.

While making a research about brand love, benefiting from a recently developed concept and making it more relevant to academic world will provide a different viewpoint to the existing marketing literature. To us, Roberts’ definition of love for a brand and its dimensions (mystery, intimacy and sensuality) need further analysis to understand and check if they contribute to the existing studies about brand love.

The reason why we make use of Lovemark concept to find out whether Roberts’ main dimensions of love work and we can find additional criteria for existence of love in the relationship between brands and consumer is; he can be considered as an insider in branding world as his company Saatchi & Saatchi has many clients such as Procter & Gamble, Toyota, Coca-Cola, etc... Moreover, Roberts’ powerful examples of Lovemarks such as Coca-Cola, Harley Davidson and Apple which found the way to reach customers subliminal perception are worth to think about this new phenomenon. In this context, they created strategies to

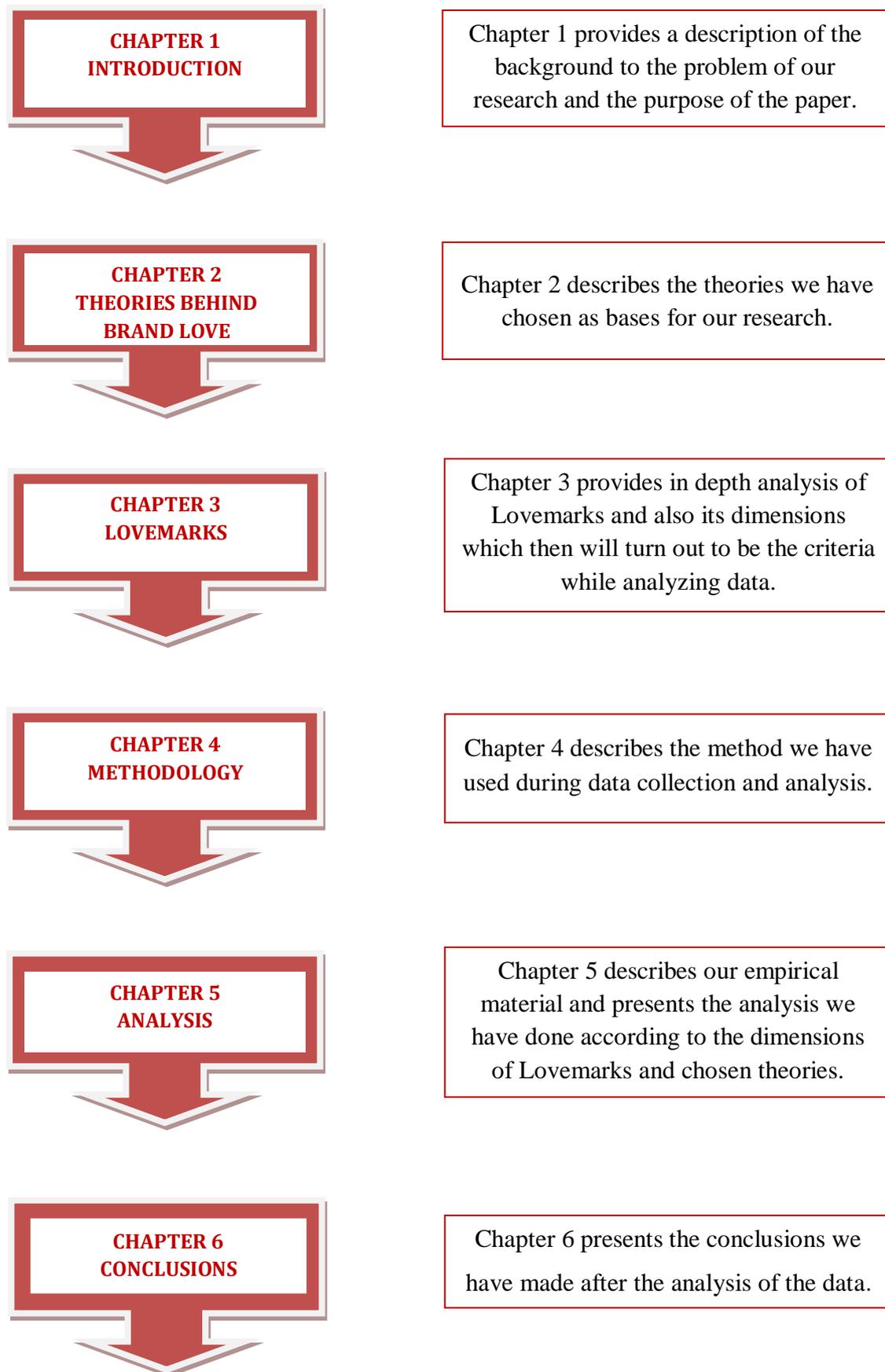
convert their brand into a lifestyle. Customers embrace these brands moreover they form brand communities and be volunteer advocates of the brand. As prospective brand managers, understanding the notions that create a powerful relationship between consumer and brand based on love will help us to create better strategies.

## **1.5 Limitations**

The first limitation of the study is related with the characteristics of love in general such as not being tangible and impersonal. Thus, the way of expression of love is subjective. For this reason, our study can be criticized of not providing a decisive method for our research question. However, our study will offer a different approach for further studies.

The second limitation of our study has to do with the degree of the generalization of the findings. Brand lovers will be of people living in Lund and Malmo in Sweden, meaning that the area covered is not big enough to get us a reliable conclusion. Lovemarks is regarding a global concept and by having our study in one country, in two cities leads to question the validity of the study.

## 1.6 Disposition



## 2. Theories behind Brand Love

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*This part of our study consists of explaining theories behind brand love from two perspectives; brands and consumers. Selection of theories is based on the aim of clarifying the roots of brand love. Next chapter includes deep analysis of the assumptions of Kevin Roberts and connection between the existing theories. It is significant to explain related theories and concepts before the following chapter to make it understandable.*

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Within the relationship between consumers and brands, brand love is defined as a level of emotional attachment of a consumer to a certain brand. The attachment of consumers includes passion, positive evaluation of the brand, positive emotions and declaration of love for the brand (Carroll and Ahuvia, 2006).

To comprehend brand love and how it develops both from branding and consumers' perspective, main theories and models should be conceived. Brand identity, value, personality and positioning define how to create difference in the market and in consumer's mind. Other branding theories such as viral marketing, emotional branding and cultural branding are briefly covered to be harmonized with our empirical case, Lovemarks to be more explanatory. In addition, the part explaining legal protection of the features gives an idea about how to protect uniqueness of the product or service.

Existing theories and concepts of consumer behavior are significant to explain how love for a brand develops in the long term relationship. Satisfaction, delight, loyalty and emotional attachment which explain why and how consumers feel commitment to a brand further how love develops over time are significant for better understanding of the concept.

### 2.1 Key Concepts and Theories in Brand Love

As we mentioned before, we analyze brands from two perspectives; from management and consumer. In accordance with our aim, literature review consists of theories and concepts from both sides.

Theories and concepts about branding have implicit link with the concept of love since all of them are developed and designed to establish strong relationships with consumers. In order to understand what strategies and tactics brands develop to be loved by the consumers, it is important to explain some branding theories and models that are interrelated with each other.

### **2.1.1 Key Concepts and Theories about the Product Brands**

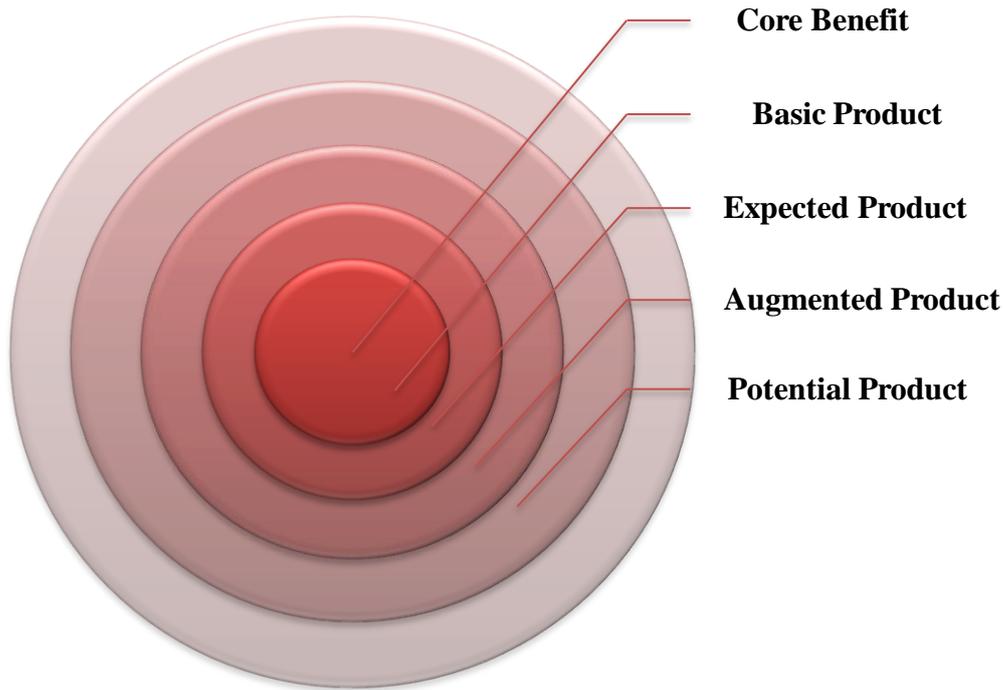
First of all, theories and concepts that are significant for brands to establish relationship with consumers are going to be explained. These theories and concepts provide a deeper understanding about formulation of love since brand love is formed in relationships.

#### **Brand Identity**

Brand identity which is ‘the mixture of images, opinions, impressions carried by all those aware of the brand’ (Upshaw, 1995: 63) constitutes the noise free part for companies. Since the identity of the brand plays an important role on consumers’ brand perception, companies should follow a carefully determined brand identity strategy.

Kapferer’s Brand Identity Prism which evaluates a brand in six dimensions demonstrates components that help differentiation of a brand from others (see appendix 5). *Physical facet*, is the product itself, *brand personality is the* humanization of the product, *brand culture is composed of* values and principles, *brand relationships expresses* consumer relationship and bounds, *customer reflection* is aimed customer profile and the consumer image which is tried to be created by company, and finally *customer self-image* signifies the way that consumer feels as one uses the product (Kapferer, 1997).

Physical facet or the product itself is the starting point of a loved brand because it is the core of the brand that they are trying to market. At that point, Kotler’s Product Level model can be helpful to examine a product. Kotler defines a product as not only tangible because it could also be “anything that can be offered to a market to satisfy a want or need. Products that are marketed include physical goods, services, experiences, events, persons, places, properties, organizations, information and ideas” (Kotler, 2006: 372). Kotler states that there are five different levels that can be achieved to add more customer value when planning its market offerings.



**Figure 2: Five Product Levels (Kotler, 2006)**

- **Core benefit**, the benefit or the service that the consumer is really buying.
- **Basic product**, a version of the product containing only those attributes or characteristics absolutely necessary for it to function.
- **Expected product**, a minimum level of expectation that consumers have and agrees to regarding a set of attributes and conditions.
- **Augmented product**, level of exceeded customer expectations such as brand positioning and competition. It's in this level that differentiation arises.
- **Potential product** encompasses all the possible augmentations and transformations the product or offering might undergo in the future by searching for new ways to satisfy customers and distinguish their offer.

One of the six dimensions of Brand Identity Prism is **brand personality** which is defined by Jennifer Aaker (1997: 347) as “the set of human characteristics associated with a brand.” Brand personality is a component of brand equity that covers the **humanization** of the brand to strengthen the emotional attachment between customer and the brand and to have a better brand communication. Adding a personality to a brand is needed to differentiate it from the commodities.

In her Brand Personality Framework, Aaker (1997) divides brand personalities in five groups as; *sincerity, excitement, competence, sophistication* and *ruggedness* (see Appendix 3). Aaker and Biel (1993) emphasize that a brand's personality gives consumers a brief idea about people who consume the brand. For instance, Harley Davidson's rebellious, powerful and classic brand personality is well known in all around the world, and these characteristics of the brand formed a loyal brand community with an age median 46.7, from who feels young, powerful and rebellious (Pugliese et al., 2002) (coastalsenior.com).

Another dimension is **positioning** which has a vital role during creation of a powerful brand. Ries and Trout (1982) emphasized that "positioning is not what you do to a product. Positioning is what you do to the mind of the prospect" (Kotler, 2003:135). Depending on the aspired consumed group to reach, companies should set a position where they can act as the best, the safest, cheaper, faster etc. so the product can stick to consumer's mind. In "The Discipline of Market Leaders" Treacy and Wiersema (1994) mentioned components of "value disciplines" as *operational excellence, customer intimacy* and *product leadership*. Briefly, operational excellence is focused on operations and executions. Personnel are task oriented and generally these companies offer reasonable quality with low price. Product leadership needs a flexible environment. Companies that plan a positioning as a product leader, focus on brand management, innovation and design. Loved brands are generally the product leaders. Customer intimacy, needs strong relationships with consumers, focus on CRM. As products or services are tailored individually, this positioning brings high loyalty.

Evans et al. (1996) mentions the importance of brand name in positioning. Decision takers should inspire from the marketplace and try to create a long lasting memorable vision with the name. Furthermore, Ellwood (2000: 123) emphasizes the importance of a brand name and briefly explains its function as "it should crystallize the experience of the brand in a single word or phrase that is transferable around the world and can be protected." Seven functions of a brand name can be seen in Appendix 2.

Establishing brand personality and positioning a brand are strategic efforts towards creating a favorable **brand image** in the minds of the consumers. Brand image is defined as "the understanding consumers derive from the total set of brand-related activities engaged in by the firm rather than simply a perceptual phenomenon affected by the firm's communication activities alone" (Park, et al., 1986: 135). Kırdar (2003) states that a brand must create

positive features, benefits, personality and company values in the minds of the consumers to establish a strong brand image. While many scholars claim that the important point is what a brand does in the minds of the consumers, Kapferer (1992) states that the central concept in branding is brand identity rather than brand image since the real brand management requires a consistent and an integrated vision with a strategy.

## **2.1.2 Recent Branding Theories in the New Branding Era**

Recent developments in technology and changes in economic and social environment have necessitated new ways to reach consumers such as viral branding. Emotional bond with consumers is developed through emotional branding and sensory branding creates opportunity for marketers to affect consumers through their senses.

### **2.1.2.1 Viral Marketing**

As technology develops, it becomes vital for brands to search for new ways to reach consumers. It is no doubt that to create long term relationship based on love, brands should establish and maintain communication flow with consumers. Viral branding which refers using electronic communications to spread messages related to a brand through network buyers is one of the recent developments in marketing (Dobelea et al., 2005). Hill et al. (2006:257) simply defines the viral marketing as ‘when firms give explicit incentives to consumers to spread information about a product via word of mouth, it has been called viral marketing’. Viral marketing or buzz marketing is a self generating activity which is less expensive compared to the traditional marketing efforts (Dobelea, et al., 2005). Moreover, this new phenomenon involves voluntary participation of the consumers by generating content about certain brand therefore it becomes more favorable and effective for both consumers and marketers (Dobelea, et al., 2005). Li et al. (2009: 2) reinforces the effectiveness of viral marketing as stating that ‘purchase decisions made by users are usually influenced by the comments of purchased experience of their own social network. From the perspective of firms, the marketing behaviors focus only on the users who are powerful to others and willing to spread product impressions that can be expected. This strategy not only decreases costs but also increases correctness for marketing.’

Voluntary participation of consumers to content generating shows the relation between viral marketing and emotional influence. In order for making consumers voluntarily contribute to the content generating, it is necessary to build strong relationship including trust and emotional affection.

### **2.1.2.2 Emotional Branding**

Emotional branding is a post-modern branding concept which is highly related with underlying emotional dimension of a certain brand (Hestad, 2008). As Thompson et al. (2006) stated emotional branding was introduced in the late 1900s as an opposition to the benefit driven understanding in branding by supporting the idea of establishing consistent and distinctive image in the consumer's mind. Thompson et al. (2006: 51) emphasize that the aim of emotional branding is to forge strong and meaningful affective bonds with consumers and, in so doing, become part of their life stories, memories, and an important link in their social networks.

In his book called 'Emotional Branding: The New Paradigm for Connecting Brands to People' Gobe mentions the importance of emotions for brands as following; 'emotional branding comes from partnership and communication. Building the right emotion is the most important investment you can make in a brand. It is the promise you make to consumers, giving them permission to enjoy the world of the brand' (Gobe, 2001: XXVII). Emotional branding has become an important strategy in branding since consumers react emotionally and evaluate objects on emotional basis (Gobe, 2001). Even though it is intangible emotional brand satisfaction has an influential role on decision making process of consumers (Ellwood, 2000).

### **2.1.2.3 Sensory Branding**

Sensory branding has emerged at the beginning of 2000s as a new branding concept to differentiate the brand in the crowded marketplace. Marketers have been facing with difficulties in differentiating their brands due to the crowded marketplace and intense competition. Sensory branding has emerged by providing an efficient way for brands to become unique. Sensory branding is defined as "a group of key levers which are controlled by the producer and/or by the distributor to create a specific multi-sensory atmosphere around the

product or the service either by focusing on sale outlet environment or product environment, and the communication or characteristics of the product itself" (Raz, et al., 2008:719; cited from Filser, 2003). The goal in sensory branding is 'including as many touch points as possible' to be memorable (Lindstrom, 2005:85).

Sensory branding provides an influential way of strengthening the connection between a brand and its consumer. That's why '35 percent of the world's Fortune 500 brands have adopted the sensory branding philosophy in one way or another' (Genuario, 2007: 4). For instance, Kellogg's has its own unique crunch with an identifiable sound and feel. Also 1965 Silver Cloud Rolls Royce has its own distinct smell which cannot be bought anywhere (Lindstrom, 2005).

Sensory branding is thought to be more important in the future. Lindstrom (2005:86) states; "brands will have to integrate all their sensory touch points. This will happen by design rather than circumstance. Brands will need to have a sensory brand platform in the same way that human beings need oxygen."

## **2.2 Key Concepts and Theories in Consumer –Brand Relationship**

Key concepts and theories of consumer behavior implicitly link with brand love since love does not develop instantly, it develops as a result of certain cognitive and affective evaluations of consumers while or after using the brand. Satisfaction which is a cognitive component in the relationship between the customer and brand is followed by customer delight as the emotional response. As a result, loyalty occurs in the long run. These emotional and cognitive responses are the path to creation of love which may carry up to fandom and brand advocacy.

Consumer-brand relationship where co-creation of value exists is an important concept since a strong relationship provides reduced marketing costs, ease of access to customers, improved acquisition of new customers, and improved customer retention and profitability for the management (Payne, et al., 2009; cited from Smit et al., 2007) and social benefits for customers. Aggarwal (2004: 88) defines relationship as "a sequence of interactions between parties where the probable course of future interactions between them is significantly different

from that of strangers.” Brand love is the one of the most important component of this relationship since it enhances the relationship by making it stronger and long-lasting.

Fournier is one of the scholars that make research about the brand-consumer relationship. According to Fournier (1998), in the further stage of the relationship, it becomes a *committed partnership in which customers are* voluntary advocates for a brand. It’s a long term commitment with high loyalty.

In order to speak of *partnership* between the brand and the consumer, brands should be perceived as the entities with personality, charisma and identity (Bengtsson, 2003). For this reason, brands are demonstrated as anthropomorphous characters through marketing efforts (Bengtsson, 2003). This is called humanization or personification which derives from relationship theory. As we shortly discussed in the first chapter, *humanization* enables establishment of relationship between the consumers and brands. Chernatony (2003: 144) presents certain criteria (one of which includes love) for making the relationship stronger:

- *Love and passion – Consumers must be attracted to the brand and willing to pay any amount of money to have it.*
- *Self-concept connection – The brand should create an ownership, a sense of belonging.*
- *Interdependence - The brand must be the part of everyday life of the customer*
- *Commitment – Whatever happens consumer must be loyal to the brand*
- *Intimacy – Consumers should be very familiar to the brand. Also should understand the values.*
- *Partner Quality- The brand should be trustworthy.*
- *Nostalgic Attachment – The brand should evoke the memories.*

### **2.2.1 Values**

Consumer-brand relationship is affected by the values since brand choice of customers depend on the values that attached to the brand, personal experience while using the brand or its heritage (Clark, 1987).

According to Jagdish Sheth (1991) brand choice depends on five values. *Functional value* signifies what can consumer perceive from functional capability of a brand; *social value* represents social benefits of the brand as prestige; *epistemic value* refers to satisfaction of trying what is new; *conditional value* is the utilization of the product or service under special circumstances and finally, *emotional value* is the meaning and feelings that are created after consumption or end of transaction. To Chernatony and Riley (1998: 422), “individual brands are representations of unique clusters of values.” In order for brand love to exist, brands need to represent favorable values that make the brand preferred by the customers and strengthen the relationship.

### **2.2.2 Consumer Satisfaction**

As we discussed above, brand love is the result of long term commitment and certain cognitive and emotional evaluations of consumers. Customer satisfaction can be the first step towards brand love since satisfaction enables brand consumer relationship to continue in the long run and creates opportunity of creation of brand love. Satisfaction has many definitions in the literature provided by different researchers.

One of the definitions identifies satisfaction as ‘the summary psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with the consumer’s prior feelings about the consumption experience (Oliver, 1999: 34). Studies about satisfaction have different perspectives; Mick and Fournier (1999) evaluate satisfaction as a post evaluation of usage of a product through the expectations that exist before using the product. On the other hand, Oliver (1997) claims satisfactions as mind’s psychological state after using the product. Satisfaction is important for marketers since it affects future buying decision and customer loyalty (Eggert and Ulaga, 2002). Fournier and Mick (1999) mention about the social dimension of satisfaction and describe it as a dynamic and active process.

### **2.2.3 Expectancy-Disconfirmation Theory**

The most common theory to explain satisfaction belongs to Lewin. Expectancy-Disconfirmation theory which is proposed in 1938 constructs the basis for contemporary studies. Ha and Jang summarize the theory as ‘the theory suggests that consumers have

expectations about products or services before consumption. As the product is consumed or the service is rendered, customers compare their perceptions of consuming the product or service to their expectations. Perceptions that exceed a customer's expectations result in a state of satisfaction, leading to a positive attitude toward the product or service and influencing positive future behavioral intentions.' (Ha and Jang, 2010: 3; cited from Carpenter, 2007; Tse and Peter, 1988) Evans et al. (1996) also states that satisfaction has great effect on one's attitude towards buying product or service however satisfaction has finite duration.

Recent studies have revealed that customer satisfaction which arises from perceptions is a cognitive concept (Barry, 2005). Moreover, it is stated that satisfying customers is not enough to stick in the minds of the customers (Barry, 2005). In the competitive market, companies need to provide experiences/products which do not only satisfy but also delight their customers to retain customers. For this reason, a new concept named as customer delight has been introduced.

To some scholar, it is accepted that satisfaction is not the only predictor of customer loyalty. **Customer delight** which is an emotional response is believed to have the actual impress on future behavior (Finn, 2005, cited from Schlossberg, 1993). The concept arises from the idea that in the intense competition, satisfying customers is not enough to keep them loyal since a customer whose expectations are met can switch to another company that promises more than just satisfying them. For this reason, it is claimed that companies should do something more to exceed the expectations (McNeilly and Barr, 2006).

Finn (2005) defines customer delight as an emotional response, which results from surprising and positive levels of performance. According to McNeilly and Barr (2006:153) 'delight is a positive consequence of exceeding the customer's expectations leading to loyal customer retention.' However delight is a new concept in the marketing literature, studies about the new concept reveal some key aspects of delight. Barry (2005) states joy and surprise as the important components of delight. Chowdhury (2009: 253) explains the importance of customer delight as; 'A delighted customer, in addition to the normal fulfillment of expectations, gets some unthinkable satisfaction. In other words, a delighted customer finds the largest perceived value-cost gap. Such a customer feels an emotional bond with the product/service of a company, not simply a rational preference'.

Previous researches show that satisfaction and delight are two different notions. Barry (2005) provides the basic difference between satisfaction and delight as satisfaction focuses on meeting or *slightly exceeding* expectations whereas delight focuses on providing unexpected positive experiences that arise from unexpected features.

Oliver and Rust (2000) explains the product attributes in terms of their function by using concentric rings analysis (cited from Clemmer 1990; Levitt 1983). According to this analysis, in addition to ‘musts’ that should exist in order for the product to function well, features that are named as satisfiers and delights belong to upper levels. “High levels of satisfiers have the potential to further satisfaction beyond that provided by the basic function of the product. At the next outer level are delights, or product features that are unexpected and surprisingly enjoyable. Consumers would not ordinarily expect to find these features in the product category and are delighted with their provision” (Rust and Oliver, 2000: 87).

Customer satisfaction and delight can be conceptualized as the antecedents of **customer loyalty** which provides a committed relationship between the brand and consumers. Customer loyalty is a valuable asset for companies so as to be successful and hold the competitive advantage in continuous basis (Yeniçeri and Erten, 2008). Loyalty has no widely accepted definition but most of the researchers define loyalty in two dimensions as attitudinal and behavioral commitment (Zhang, et al., 2010). Chaudhuri and Hoibrook (2001:82) explains the difference between two dimensions with following statement; “behavioral loyalty consists of repeated purchases of the brand, whereas attitudinal brand loyalty includes a degree of dispositional commitment in terms of some unique value associated with the brand.”

Deng, et al. (2009: 115) define customer loyalty as “the tendency of customers to stay with a certain business or product brand over another when seeking to meet a particular need.” Beside financial advantages, loyalty provides a continuous relationship created by the trust with the brand and the customer by co-creating value. (Chaudhuri and Holbrook, 2001).

## 2.2.4 Brand Communities, Fandom and Brand Advocates

Strong relationship between a brand and a customer is also significant in developing **brand communities** that enables marketers and consumers to cooperate in creating value for the brand. According to Sauer (2010) a strong connection enables customer to satisfy a social need through being a partner of a relationship on the other hand, brand gains loyal customers that become advocates of the brand. In modern marketing approach, customers are not perceived as the passive recipients of value creation efforts anymore. They are perceived as collaborators of co-creation of value, strategy and innovation process (Schau, et al., 2009).

Thanks to Web 2.0, every single individual has the opportunity of being producer and the reader of the content. Therefore, marketers in almost every industry try to build and develop brand communities for a strong relationship with the brand and customer by satisfying consumer's need for sense of community (Fournier and Lee, 2009). Fournier and Lee's expression about consumer's need for sense of community approves Sauer's claim (2010) which underlies the importance of investigation of brand communities not only by examining the brand consumer relationship but also taking social motives into consideration for becoming a member of a group.

Brand communities are defined as “a group of consumers with a shared enthusiasm for the brand and a well-developed social identity, whose members engage jointly in group actions to accomplish collective goals and/or express mutual sentiments and commitments” (Bagozzi and Dholakia, 2006: 45; cited from Sauer, 2010).

Appreciation and love for a brand make consumers become a member of such group, interact with other consumers, share experience related with the brand or participate into the community activities. (Sha, et al., 2009) If the experience results with enjoyment, consumer feels sense of belonging to the community and contributes to the word of mouth. (Sha, et al., 2009)

In marketing literature, fandom is defined as “the pursuit of consumption activities at a level grossly out of proportion to those experienced by other, more temperate consumers” (Holbrook, 1987:144-145). If applying classical marketing approach, the fan is omitted in the analysis because it is only the average consumer that matters when it comes to evaluating

consumer segments and target markets. It is considered that the fans have too much difference from the average consumer. Today, the fans are receiving more recognition because they are the ones that are “most enthusiastic, creative, and loyal consumers” (Scammon, 1987:79). The understanding has been that they should not only be included in research data, they should also be analyzed in a deeper manner in order to see what motivates their actions and passion.

The challenging part is to where to draw the line when it comes to fanaticism because it is similar to other concepts in marketing and that *being the sacred* (Belk, Wallendorf, and Sherry, 1989), *personal storehouse of meaning* (Wallendorf and Arnould, 1988), *product enthusiasm* (Bloch, 1986), *compulsive consumption* (O’Guinn and Krych, 1987; O’Guinn and Faber, 1989; Hirschman, 1992) and *brand loyalty* (Schouten and McAlexander, 1995; Fournier, 2001).

Brand advocates are probably the most appreciated ones by the marketers. Aim of creating brand advocates is simple; creating enthusiastic consumers, with high loyalty, trust and love that make them support their brand and defend in any occasion (Blasberg et al., 2008). In their article, Blasberg et al. (2008) classifies consumers in three groups; promoters, passives and detractors. Promoters are the brand advocates and loyal fans that often recommend the brand to the other consumers.

## 2.3 Conclusion

We have mentioned about the concepts and theories by grouping them as brand and consumer-brand relationship perspective. These concepts and models are related with each other. As it is understood from the chapter, brand identity, personality and positioning of brand are all for creating a favorable and memorable brand image in the minds of the customers. In accordance with social and technological developments, new branding models are introduced to differentiate the brands and establish an ongoing relationship with customers. Establishing relationship between the brand and customer is possible through satisfying; further delighting customers and making them loyal to the brand.

Basic concepts about branding are important to understand their influence on generating emotional bond; recent branding models which are introduced to reach and affect postmodern

consumers. Consumer perspective is vital since brand-consumer relationship is based on what consumers feel about the brand. These models and concepts provided an insight for better understanding of creation of brand love.

## 3. Lovemarks

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*To maintain the information flow, the chapter about the chosen theories related to the formulation of Lovemarks is followed by the definition and analysis of the concept by enquiry of its essentials. We try to operationalize brand love, so Lovemarks concept will be introduced in this chapter not as a theory but as a tool to investigate and operationalize love.*

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### 3.1 Lovemarks Concept

*“Lovemarks are the future beyond brands, they have loyalty beyond reason”*

*Kevin Roberts*

As said by Kevin Roberts “Brands were running out of the juice, the whole industry becoming rapidly commodified, with discounts, store label brands” (cnnturk.com). He started to wonder about “What would come after the brands?” As the differentiation gap between products or services gets smaller, emotional connectivity will be the deciding factor. “Love and emotions” is a universal idea which people can talk about. A Lovemark can be anything, a city, a product, a person, a service. Roberts assumes that Lovemarks concept is the secret pathway to create “loyalty beyond reason”. Key factor to be a loved brand goes through making the brand irreplaceable, irresistible, respected and loved. Contemporary brands should inspire the consumers, when a housewife goes to shopping she’ll need inspiration. Consumers need inspiration because 80% of the decisions are taken in store (cnnturk.com).

The difference between a brand and a Lovemark is the type of relationship between the consumer and the brand. Lovemarks effect changes the consumption habit from rational to irrational. There is a strong loyalty and consumer decides with the heart. They buy a product not just because of a need; they buy because they love it. Mistakes of the Lovemarks can be forgiven, but for brands a mistake can be irretrievable (Roberts, 2006).

Thus Lovemark concept explains “Why some brands steal your heart?” There are some brands that ones can’t live without. The brands which can connect themselves with people’s perceptions win the game of consumption. This question is tried to be answered by several studies as mentioned in first chapter, so brand love is not a new concept. However it’s renamed and examined with a different approach by Kevin Roberts.

After many researches done by the Lovemarks Company; such as house visits, interviews and inspections, they found out that the way that goes to customers’ heart passes from three main components: mystery, sensuality and intimacy. Mystery, as we are living in the information age many companies boost their consumers with information, but consumers are fed up with that information flood. The more you know about something the less you get attracted. Sensuality, the product or service should call upon senses. Packaging, colors, smells take on heavy responsibility in branding. Intimacy, consumers expect to be influenced by brands. They want them to touch their hearts.

During time, it switched from brands to retailers. So the creativity decreased. Continuously a need for change from trademarks to *trustmarks* is emerged. Subsequent to the time of attention economy, marketing became too intellectual; it’s so much dependent to data and analysis, so marketers forget the fact that in the center of this business consumers have the most important role. Now, consumer is the boss. Consumer decides what, from where and when to buy. They don’t want to be commanded, they want to be informed but they want to find their own way. They just want be inspired. You have to generate action and affect consumer’s hearts. Roberts’ assumption about the customer’s central position in the marketing efforts is the result of the integrating customer relationship management where companies adopt customer-centric approach to retain customers loyal and make them bonded to the company/brand through using after marketing tactics (Parvatiyar and Sheth, 2001). Moreover, Roberts justifies the claim about the postmodern consumer by mentioning the customer’s freedom of purchasing decision. As we mentioned in Chapter 1, in postmodernism, increased individualism arises and consumers want to be free from the collective constraints to show their unique identity. Thus, Roberts claim about the current consumer characteristics match with what is said in the literature for existing situation.

*“Lovemarks are not owned by the manufacturers, the producers, the businesses. They are owned by people who love them.”*

(Roberts, 2005:74)

### **3.1.1 Attraction Economy**

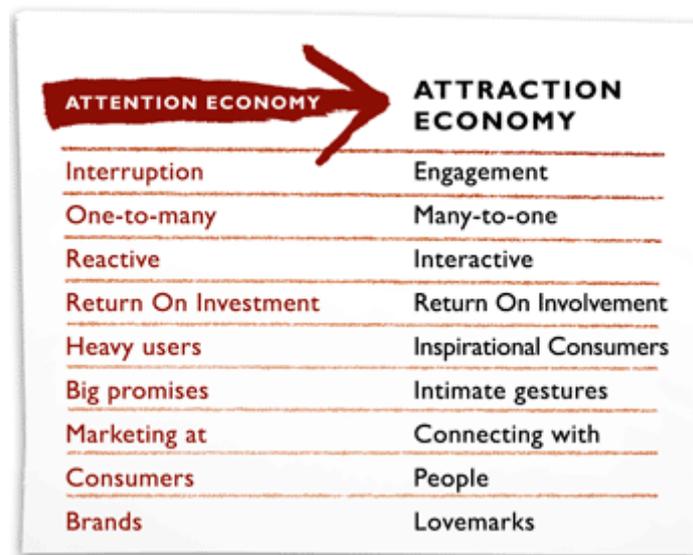
As mentioned in first chapter in 21<sup>st</sup> century there is a shift from attention economy to attraction economy. In 90s, consumers overloaded with information; advertisements on TVs and radios were living the golden age. Companies were fighting against commodification.

According to Roberts, difficulty in consumer relationships of brands is occurred because of six reasons. First, he agrees with the brand definition of Michael Eisner from Disney which is “overused, sterile and unimaginative”, while focusing on competition and brand manuals, companies ignore the needs of consumers. Second, because of increased technology usage, brands lost their mystery; postmodern consumers understood the manipulative methods of companies about the brands. Third, brands don’t understand more sophisticated and well informed postmodern consumer. Fourth, as the number of new brands increased, they become more commodified. Fifth, branding is sciencified, so many companies started to use same models and methods, but branding needs more innovation and creativity. And finally Roberts claims that branding is used for and stacked around avoiding past failures rather than seeing future. These common mistakes made by companies prevent them to be successful, during transition from attention economy to attraction economy (Roberts, 2005). Attraction economy needs Lovemarks. Core element of Attraction Economy is the consumers and the aim is attracting customers without pressure, with their own will.

*“Information, knowledge, interruption, permission, experience and attention marketing these are all yesterday. We moved to Attraction Economy, it is all about engagement, it is all about emotional connectivity”*

Kevin Roberts (saatchikevin.com)

The comparison of attention and attraction economy is demonstrated in the chart below.



ATTENTION ECONOMY	ATTRACTION ECONOMY
Interruption	Engagement
One-to-many	Many-to-one
Reactive	Interactive
Return On Investment	Return On Involvement
Heavy users	Inspirational Consumers
Big promises	Intimate gestures
Marketing at	Connecting with
Consumers	People
Brands	Lovemarks

Figure 3: Attention to Attraction Economy (saatchikevin.com)

To be successful in attraction economy, being innovative according to customers' needs, emphatic, sensual, interactive, amusing and fun, and having a unique design are mentioned by Roberts (Roberts, 2006)

As we told in the previous chapter, Roberts' attraction economy is not a new phenomenon. Pine and Gilmore's experience economy and ethical economy also basically support similar idea. Experience economy and ethical economy underlie the integration of customer to the marketing efforts therefore customers become active in the communication of brand messages. Moving from this idea, Roberts introduces the word *sisomo* – *sight, sound, motion*. This concept is used to screen what Mystery, Intimacy and Sensuality means to Lovemarks. This new era collate art with science and emotions with technology. It inspires consumers. Television, movies, cell phones, etc... *Sisomo* is everywhere. Consumers can interact with brands anytime and anywhere. Brands which can understand *sisomo* and aim to be a Lovemark will survive the age of Attraction Economy (Roberts, 2006).

*Sisomo* concept relates to viral marketing. Technological developments especially after introduction of Web 2, provided the opportunity of being both reader and producer of content. Moreover, increasing importance of websites such as Youtube and Blogger on product sales and brand recognition facilitated engaging with the brand and become active partner by

achieving information whenever and wherever they want. For this reason, online marketing has been integrated into the marketing strategies to reach to the consumers in a way that they want.

### 3.1.2 Trademarks

During creation of a powerful brand process, transformation of the intangible assets to a tangible form is also important. While companies trying to create unique brands, moreover they have to know how to protect their brands and respect other companies values. To register a sign, “anything which can convey information”, primary rule is being distinctive. According to this information; words, design, letters, numerals, shape of goods (3D), packaging shape (3D), sound, smell, colors (specific) can be registered (Ellwood, 2000).

Coca-Cola Company has the rights of the font of Coca-Cola logo; this registration protects company from imitators and unauthorized use.

® Registered Symbol, indicates that the product is a trademark and registered

™ Trade Mark Symbol, indicates that the unique feature “identifies and distinguishes the source of the goods or services from current or potential competitors and other firms” (Knudson, 2006).

Trademarks have two benefits, first, it is a guarantee of quality consistency, and this feature can be perceived as a “brand promise”. Second, it helps company to advertise and inform a product to consumers (Ellwood, 2000)

Trademarks and Patents: Being a trademark has a defensive role for the company, it *defines the territory of the company*, protects the rights of the product and also for customers patents and trademarks mean *consistency, quality, performance and value* (Roberts, 2005:30). If the trademark followed up with a successful marketing strategy, product can turn into a *Genericized Trademark* which is “once legally protected as trademarks, and have since come to signify a generic product regardless of its manufacturer”(nowsell.com).

Trademarks given below are the examples of genericized trademarks:

*Kleenex* - a registered trademark of Kimberly-Clark Worldwide, Inc

*Aspirin* – a registered trademark of Bayer AG

*Band-Aid*- a registered trademark of Johnson & Johnson

Every company aspires to own a well known product on the other hand being a generic trademark does not assure unconditional consumption of that specific product. In need of a tissue, consumer asks for a Kleenex but most likely buy any random product. Emotional connection plays a vital role in that situation. If the brand can provide a specific service or quality and manage to create an emotional relationship with the consumer, consumption and brand loyalty follows. Importance of Lovemarks concept fades in at that point.

### 3.1.3 The Love/Respect Axis

Roberts classifies products according to their Love and Respect rate (See Figure 4). To create a long term relationship, brand should be respected and loved.



Figure 4: Love/Respect Axis (theinspirationroom.com)

In Love/Respect axis, lower left-hand corner belongs to commodities (products). Commodities are products which consumers need but randomly shop. For instance, bread, salt, milk etc... People generally don't aspire for them neither these products doesn't create sensation. On the other hand some of these products managed to create emotions on

consumers and take their place in Lovemarks area such as Evian mineral water, A2 Milk etc...

*“A product my whole family could not live without – A2 Milk*

*This is a product my whole family could not live without. I didn't know whether to believe that A2 milk would make a difference in my son's behavior or not. My partner has ADHD and some say our son shows signs of it too. But we thought we'd give it a go. Within days we were seeing results, his coughing ceased and he was calmer and more well behaved (No more tantrums and screaming and yelling at everything). We've had a week without A2 milk and tantrums and bad temperedness and screaming fits again. I will never go back to any other milk again. My family and I could not live without this wonderful product.”*

Molly, Australia - 17 October 2005 (Lovemarks.com)

Lower right-hand corner of the chart belongs to fads which has high love but low respect. Fads can be described as products or trends that have society's over-interest, after enormous consumption of customers this fashion fades away (reference.com). Tamagotchi's, Beanie Babies can be examples of fads. Owning fads can be profitable for a company for a short while, if the company can keep the love on the high level and besides innovating to keeping the trust and value alive, transition from Nintendo to Gameboys and then Wii can be counted as a case for fad to Lovemark evolution.

*“Ultimate Gaming System – Nintendo*

*When Nintendo first came out I loved it with the original Mario Brothers and then the Super Nintendo came out and I thought this was the greatest gaming device ever, but ever after that I hated the product. The 3d games they brought out after the Super Nintendo was a giant turn off from the company. As time went on they still straight up sucked, then the Wii came out. Who was to ever think that Nintendo was going to be the first to come out with the ultimate gaming system to attract all audiences from age 3 to 70? The company made up for their bad products after the Super Nintendo with this live action game. I can only imagine what their next console will be. I wonder if it will go to the fridge for me while I'm playing. Love it!”*

Amodeus, - 18 December 2008 (Lovemarks.com)

On left-hand top, most of the brands take place with low love and high respect. Many brands are succeeded to gain customers' respect with good management strategies and continuous innovation and improvement. But they disregard the emotional factors (Roberts, 2005). According to Roberts brands are trusted but consumers can switch when they find another one they love.

Finally, right-hand top corner, the subjects of this study, Lovemarks take place. As mentioned before Lovemarks are premium brands that have high love and respect.

“The smart computer-Apple

I like this. This is the smart computer. Has a simple design, but cool. This computer can't concede to viruses and is easy to use. Like this so much.”

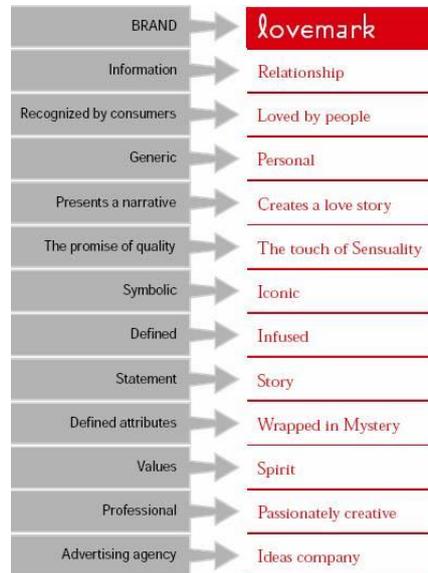
Beatrix, - 25 March 2010(Lovemarks.com)

The love / respect axis expresses the ideal positioning of brands in the Lovemark concept. To Roberts, the ones that gain respect and love of the consumers become Lovemarks. In this regard, positioning of the brand is significant to determine whether the brand is positioned as the respectable and lovely in the minds of the consumers. As it is understood, Roberts positions brands as the active partners in the consumer-brand relationship. Human characteristics such as respectable and lovely are associated with Lovemarks. This is humanization (see Chapter 1), representation of a thing as a person or the representation of an abstraction by the human form (Zinkhan, 1993) of the brand as Fournier stated in her article.

## **3.2 Mystery, Sensuality and Intimacy**

In creation of Lovemarks, the main aspect to create is *Loyalty beyond Reason*. The first idea created by Kevin Roberts was Trustmarks, because people are in need for trust to love. He claims that a Trustmark can not be only owned by companies, brand should be something that consumers will embrace. The missing notion with Trustmark idea was love. Then he comes out with Lovemarks idea which he explains that transformation as “trustmarks come after brands; Lovemarks come after Trustmarks... Think about how you make the most money. You make it when loyal users, heavy users, use your product all the time. That's where the

money is. So having a long-term Love affair is better than having a trusting relationship.” (Roberts, 2005:69) Subsequently Saatchi & Saatchi tried to distinguish Lovemarks from brands (see Figure 5).



**Figure 5: Brands versus Lovemarks (testeexperimental.blogger.com.br)**

According to their findings, a Lovemark is a superior brand which is loved by people, engages them in a relationship with the brand, more personal, blended with mystery such as stories, myths, iconic as Douglas Holt’s Iconic brands.

### 3.2.1 Mystery

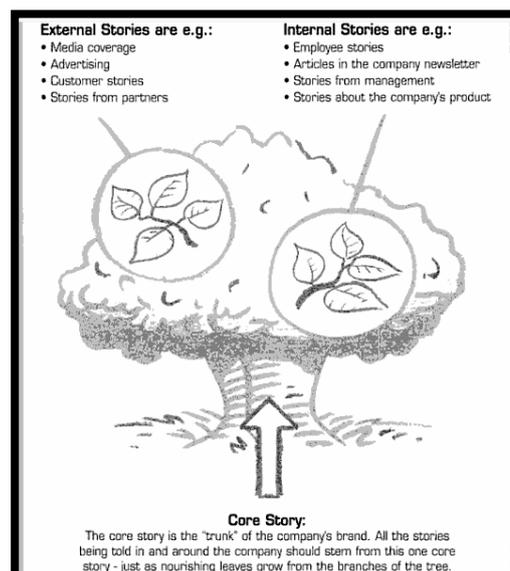
In Lovemarks concept mystery plays an essential role. Most of the companies have similar data, similar marketing methods, and hardly differentiated products. Consequently, companies that want to be successful are in search for inspiring customers and being unique. Mystery is the rising factor at that point. Roberts claims that “mystery opens up emotion. Mystery adds to complexity of relationships and experiences. It lies in the stories, metaphors, and iconic characters that give a relationship its texture.”(Roberts, 2005:85).

*“Mystery raised interest and expectations. Testers really did fall in love with the product.”*

(Roberts, 2005:210)

Storytelling is the vital part in mystery. The stories relate to the brand should communicate with people, people should find something in them. In addition, for successful branding, *storytelling* is as important as consistent vision integrated to the strategy. For Roberts the most important dimension of love, mystery, includes telling great stories. He claims that *great stories* which strengthen the consumer-brand relationship make the brand experience livelier. (Roberts, 2005) His ideas points out the concept in branding which is called storytelling. In fact, storytelling is an old form of art. Herskovitz and Crystal (2010: 21) explain storytelling as “a way of making sense of the world, as a way to make and strengthen emotional connections, and as way of recognizing and identifying with brands of any type.” They underlie the importance of storytelling in branding and support the idea that storytelling strengths the consumer-brand relationship as well by stating “what a brand means to a consumer is based . . . on the narratives he or she has constructed that incorporate the brand” (Herskovitz and Crystal, 2010: 21).

The authors of the book called ‘Storytelling: Branding in Practice’ (2005) classify stories as external stories (media coverage, advertising, customer stories and stories from partners) and internal stories (employee stories, articles in the company newsletter, stories from management and stories about the company’s product). The basic idea of both types of stories comes from the ‘core story’ (Fog, et al., 2005). They show the types of stories as in a form of a brand tree (see Figure 6).



**Figure 6: Storytelling: Branding in Practice (Fog, Budtz & Yakaboylu)**

In the competitive market place where physical product is no longer a source of differentiation, external and internal stories provide an opportunity for sustaining the bond between the consumer and brand by creating meanings for experiences (Fog, et al., 2005). Therefore storytelling is an important way of differentiation of a brand.

Using past, present and future is essential for mystery creation. If a brand has a strong heritage, adapting it to its present and reflecting to the future is going to create a good impression on consumers. Not only having its own history, also brands may use country heritage or traditions. As an example to this, Guinness brand is given in Lovemarks book. Taking Irish spirit behind, Guinness became a world-wide famous brand (Roberts, 2005). Or else the Audi example:

*“The Audi four-ring emblem symbolizes the merger in 1932 of four previously independent motor-vehicle manufacturers: Audi, DKW, Horch and Wanderer” (audi.com).*

Successful brands use that past-present-future connection factor effectively, because this is also a trust factor that can somewhat promise quality.

Inspiring customers with dreams is also important. With slogans and inspirational campaigns impressing customers and showing that the brand is supporting their aspirations and values feeds the relationship between.

*“It makes you feel like the man you are!”*

*Buick*

Iconizing a brand with symbols is another vital step to compose mystery. According to Roberts successful companies blend what represent their values and public image to create logos to be memorable. As he mentioned in his book, Toyota Prius managed to create this image well (see Figure 7) (Roberts, 2005).



**Figure 7: Prius Green Logo (paradisebay.com.au)**

### 3.2.2 Sensuality

The second notion in creating respect and love is sensuality. The fact is, senses play an important role on decision making and persuasion, but many companies struggle with the precise use of senses in the right place, they have problems with the relationship management (Roberts, 2005). As known five senses are sight, hearing, smell, touch and taste. When brands succeed to appeal to customers' senses, they can find the way that goes to their hearts.

“Color sell and the “right” colors sell better”, the motto of Color Marketing Group emphasizes the importance of colors in marketing (colormarketing.org). From retailing perspective, Pierre Martineau claims that color of the store can affect the consumption mood of the consumer. For example the positive and negative feelings that the color of the walls in a store (Pierre Martineau, 1958). Short wavelength colors such as red and blue attracts consumers to buy more, especially blue background color makes customers purchase more rather than red (Bellizi&Hite, 1992). According to a research made by Chebat & Morrin (2007), different colors have affect on the consumers' perceptions about the retailer's quality, so décor may be turned into an advantage by creating a positive image about the product quality sold in a store.

Pantone, Inc., the world-renowned authority on color, claims that “for more than 45 years, Pantone has been inspiring design professionals with products, services and leading technology for the colorful exploration and expression of creativity” (pantone.co.uk). The company defines the “Color of the Year” annually. According to these data, many companies shape their production line.

Sound and music are significant in branding because “they can set moods and trigger powerful emotions” (Roberts, 2005:117). With TV commercials, retailers and social media, brands are using sounds for value creation. Even some brands are associated with their sound, the Nokia Tune, roar of Leo the Lion (MGM), roar of the Harley Davidson motorcycle. According to Robert's Lovemark concept, “hearing and speaking are two of the most powerful forces in creating deep emotional connections with people” (Roberts, 2005:118). In academic world this concept is known as Sound or Audio Branding. As the sounds and music are easily recognizable and memorable companies are using sound branding as a part of their branding strategies.

Scent and taste are two integral senses. The areas that marketers can take the assistance of these senses are mainly limited with food and cosmetic sectors. Nonetheless, currently service businesses such as hotels, banks, retailers and real estate agents use scent marketing (Stephens, 2007). According to a research made in Duke University, smell plays an important role in long-term memory (softpedia.com). “Smells must be developed from a highly focused understanding of what the brand stands for.”(Stephens, 2007). Brands as Starbucks, Nivea and Nutella can be given as examples to successful smell and taste marketing.

Touch is the last sense on the list. According to Masao Inoue, Chief Engineer of Toyota, touch is the *material* (Roberts, 2005). To feel people have to touch. So usage of the right material and packaging the emotions may flow the customers.

The component of sensuality is directly related with a branding concept that we have mentioned in the second chapter; sensory branding. Sensuality underlies the sensory branding. This new branding concept is the result of pursuit for new ways to differentiate brands. Addressing as many touch points as possible makes this branding approach more effective. By stating as one of the components, Roberts also place sensory branding as one of the key drivers of Lovemarks.

### **3.2.3 Intimacy**

Although Intimacy is vital for emotional relationships, it is more intangible than Mystery and Sensuality; it requires both listening and talking. Brands should understand what matters to consumers and adapt themselves to these needs, because brands belong to customers, the ones that love them. Roberts supports his Intimacy notion with several statistics from *Social Trends* (statistics.gov.uk). According to these data, in developed countries the tendency to “Single Living” is increasing. In order to that, people start to humanize brands, so the given value to the objects is increasing (Roberts, 2005). Intimacy notion has three aspects; empathy, commitment and passion.

First of all, core of empathy is listening. Companies should listen to their consumers to understand and see what their needs are. The CRM activities of companies such as sending birthday and Christmas cards relate to empathy. As mentioned above number single

households is increasing, and as people get more dedicated to their business life, important dates, writing cards and anniversaries are getting forgotten in daily rush. So a card or discount received from a company may make consumers feel like there is still someone cares for them.

Commitment is the aspired idea in Lovemark creation. Loyalty beyond reason is what Roberts aim to gain. In this point brand communities and fandom arrive on the scene. When people are committed to a brand they are more tolerable. Mistakes can be forgiven. They can wait up to weeks for a reservation in a restaurant, years for a car or a Hermes Birkin bag.

Brands should make consumers feel passionate about it. They have to feel as they are consuming for a reason, such as they belong to a group or being a worldwide famous basketball star (Roberts, 2005).

Roberts' explanation of intimacy and its components underlie the importance of strong brand relationship. We have listed the criteria for strong brand relationship. Roberts' claim about intimacy can be defined as the reflection of those criteria we have listed in chapter 2. To Roberts, empathy, passion and commitment are three aspects of intimacy. To Chernatony (2003), intimacy, as well as commitment and passion, are essential to build strong brand-customer relationship. As it is seen, Roberts' opinion is a kind of revision of existing concepts and studies.

### **3.3 Owners of Lovemarks: Inspirational Consumers**

Lovemark concept is inspired by the postmodern consumers and their needs. The more consumers get sophisticated, the more power on the economy they have. Postmodern consumers and attraction economy necessitated the shift from brands to premium brands with high respect and love. To survive in that wild and competitive economy brands will need something more than respect and functionality. Companies should accept the fact that brands belong to the customers who love them (Roberts, 2006).

For people who work with Lovemarks, Word-of-mouth has a vital role. When there are millions of brands to choose from, consumers' opinion plays a vital role on influencing others.

The secret for acceleration into a Lovemarks lay behind the supportive customers. “Inspirational consumers build fan sites, inspirational consumers act as the catalyst for word-of mouth campaigns, inspirational consumers can make great products better, inspirational consumers have ideas that matter, and ideas can transform your brand-if you let them.”(Roberts, 2005:194). When a brand succeeds to create a decent Mysterious, Sensuous and Intimate communication with customers they will initiate word-of-mouth, an elusive way of marketing. Companies should hear advices and complaints of consumers, because as they start a relationship with a brand, they will try to inspire company to embellish the product quality and services. They will support the product, talk about it to their entourage. A brilliant case about inspirational consumer in Lovemarks book is about a grandmother who loves Sūtaş branded milk, talked with local store to sell this brand. Moreover to retain this brand in the store she started a local campaign among neighborhood in İstanbul (Roberts, 2005).

Richard Hynter, Deputy Chairman of Saatchi & Saatchi Worldwide, claims that companies such as Harley-Davidson and P&G comprehend the new and energized consumer group. “Inspirational Consumers are the people who are ready and willing to intensify their interaction with companies. They are so passionate about the future of their Lovemarks that they don't hesitate to take action. Inspirational Consumers love influencing other consumers as well as those who make the products they love.”(Roberts, 2006:55).

### **3.4 Creation of a Lovemark**

Lovemark creation process starts with understanding consumers. According to what they want, what they love and when brands should form. “Great Lovemarks come out of great passion- a commitment to creating long term emotional connections with consumers.” (Roberts, 2006:73). There are no certain rules for creating a Lovemark. There is a different story behind all great brands. But somehow they unite in several concepts, in his second book “*The Lovemarks Effect*”, Kevin Roberts writes about how to be a Lovemark with a step-by-step guide that is explained below.

### 3.4.1 Respect is the Key

Consumers are not stable, as the time changes consumer behavior changes. To gain their respect, brands should eliminate their suspicions about the innovations and changes. Lovemarks Company classifies the essentials of respect in three groups; Performance, Trust and Reputation. Performance relates to innovation, quality, service, brand identity and value. So companies should ask themselves if they can fulfill their performance and are they well ahead of their competitors. Trust factor consists of reliability, commitment, ease of use, openness, and security. Consumers should trust the brand; they should believe that the brand is on their side and honest. Companies should take consumer feedbacks into consideration. They have to keep their promises. And the third, Reputation is gained by leadership, honesty, responsibility and efficacy. When the Lovemarks are analyzed, it is clear to see that generally they are the trend makers, first in their class, socially responsible and worth what consumers paid for (Roberts, 2006).

### 3.4.2 Consumer Relation

The motto of Lovemark concept is “*consumers own the brand*”. Consequently companies should know the consumers and what they are interested in. To be succeeded in consumer relations, companies should dig deeper, invest in to find what are their fears, dreams, expectations. While they are examining consumer behavior, the marketers should go out of their office and observe consumers in their own environment. Being honest to consumers has a vigorous role in the process. Brands should never boast about, if they are not capable of giving what they promise. Disappointment of one consumer can snowball into bad word-of-mouth. Besides, companies should keep their “*worries, problems and hardships*” to themselves (Roberts, 2006:77). In case of an anxiety, they have to keep quiet and try to solve it inside the company first. Finally, the CEO’s and marketers should try to see the life from consumers’ perspective. If a company manufactures cars, managers also have to use the car they produced (Roberts, 2006). Philip Clough, the CEO of Kiehl’s explains their connection with loyal consumers as “we’ve rewarded devotion through the Kiehl’s bus tour. We visit our customers where they live and work and distribute gifts of their favorite formulas. The bus tour has always been about celebrating both our most loyal customers and unsung heroes in the community...” (Roberts, 2006:108).

### **3.4.3 Brand Positioning**

To start to the being a Lovemark journey, the brand should know what it stands for. Self positioning in Love/Respect by evaluating the brand on “the Lovemark” (See appendix 4) is the first step to see how close the brand to be a Lovemark. Consumer perception should be the main criteria on the evaluation. Subsequently a comparison among the competitors should be done to see the gap (Roberts, 2006).

### **3.4.4 Adding Mystery, Sensuality and Intimacy**

As mentioned before, mystery, sensuality and intimacy are the essentials of Lovemarks. Lovemarks should be mysterious, because after the transition from Attention Economy to Attraction Economy consumers are fed up with information overload. Kevin Roberts indicates that stories have an undeniable power in being a premium brand. Consumer stories, testimonials, experiences of the current customers can be de guideline for others to love the brand, because they will inspire.

Having a memorable icon, a creative brand name is another step to add mystery, because these are the notions that is going to stick into consumer minds. And lastly being a dream object is the last step. Consumers should aspire for the brand. Starbucks is successful in this point, since their fans know the feeling when they get into a Starbucks. When they hear a new Starbucks café is going to be established in the neighborhood, they will start to dream about the feeling (Roberts, 2006).

Sensory branding keeps consumer minds busy. Sensuality is mostly about sticking into consumers’ brain. For instance music, every brand should have a rhythm, music. The selected music to represent the brand should match with brand values and should embrace with consumers. Customizable products which let customers add some from themselves add sensuality to a brand. For instance, Apple lets their customers write on the cover of their iPhones or Ipods if they are shopping online. This option boosts the value of the product, because it adds personality and individualism. Packaging and texture of a product is distinctive, the design that creates curiosity can be followed by purchase and maybe a long term relationship if the product is as well successful (Roberts, 2006).

To create love between consumer and the brand, adding intimacy is also needed. Companies should listen what consumers say and take action according to these information. As mentioned before remembering the special days such as birthdays, anniversaries of consumers having an active CRM department makes consumers closer to the brand.

### **3.4.5 Fandom and Brand Communities**

Finally, the last step of creating love is the brand communities. Kevin Roberts puts the consumers in the core of a brand, if the company can give the needed value to them, they will start to create their brand communities to support what they love.

*“The Saab Club of Canada, founded in 1978, is a non-profit corporation dedicated to the owners' enjoyment of their Saab in a convivial atmosphere”*

*(Saabclub.ca)*

As the given example above, brand communities make consumers get closer to each other. They share the news, memories, and even complaints.

Furthermore, this step of love creation also relates to brand advocacy. Successful companies such as Starbucks, Apple, P&G and some more understood the importance of WOM or brand advocacy (Keller, 2007). The loyal consumers and the brand lovers defend their brands against negative comments. So Lovemarks can benefit from consumers by gaining newer ones and eliminating the possible destructive comment threat.

## **3.5 Summary**

This chapter analyzes the empirical case of the study and blends Lovemarks concept with existing marketing theories. First we presented Kevin Roberts' Lovemarks concepts formation by defining changes in market and consumer behavior. Subsequently with Love/Respect axis we positioned commodities, fads, brands and Lovemarks and explained the distinctions. As we use Lovemarks as a tool to measure love and attachment in our analysis we provided in detail definition of Lovemarks' dimensions; Mystery, Sensuality and Intimacy. Since the main focus of love is consumers we explained Consumers' role in brand love. Finally in light of Kevin Roberts' second book “The Lovemark Effect” we provided a brief guideline for companies, to give an idea about the success steps in creation of a Lovemark.

## 4. Methodology

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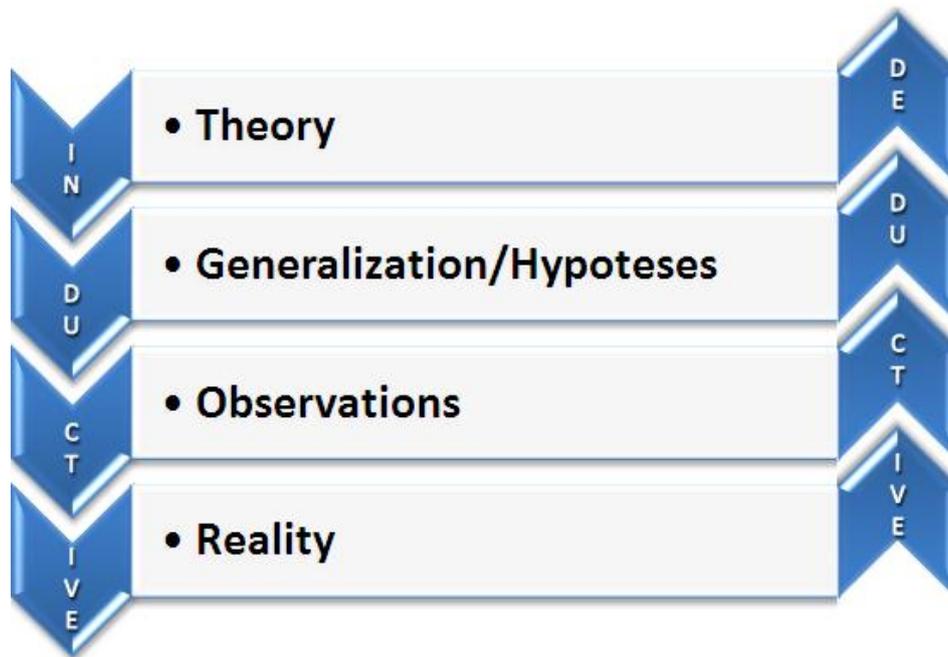
*The methodological considerations and the approach we have used out will be presented in this chapter. Based on our research question, we have made a selection of methods and approaches that we consider most relevant to our analysis.*

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### 4.1 Methodological Considerations

As guidance to how we should collect the data needed, we decided to conduct a qualitative study in order to gain a more in-depth knowledge about how people that loves their brands think and feel.

#### 4.1.1 Approach



**Figure 8: Inductive and deductive approach**

It is clear out of the figure above that a *deductive approach*, in the first stage, is based on theory and then formed into hypotheses. The main work is ahead of the data collection in other words. Afterwards the data gets collected through observations (Bryman & Bell, 2003). This is done to get the assumptions confirmed or rejected and to further be able to get a

picture of the reality (Jacobsen, 2002). The opposite means that theory of the reality will be created from empiricism, which is an *inductive approach*. This approach starts from what we want to focus on, and goes on to the general where the starting point is the reality gathered through empirical data (Jacobsen, 2002). Usually thereafter a theory will be formulated that will be generated from the empirical data.

Here you will assume from reality and not hypotheses in an inductive approach, you are not controlled by a determined idea about how the outcome should look like. The data collection will not be having any expectations when there is no established theory to be assumed and it is in this collection the main work of the inductive approach is. The inductive approach is open since there is no limit to what information we may collect, and therefore the answers will contribute to new discoveries because of its exploratory nature (Jacobsen, 2002).

The approach that we find most relevant to our research, its purpose and our problem area is an *iterative approach* that is a combination of both inductive and deductive approach.

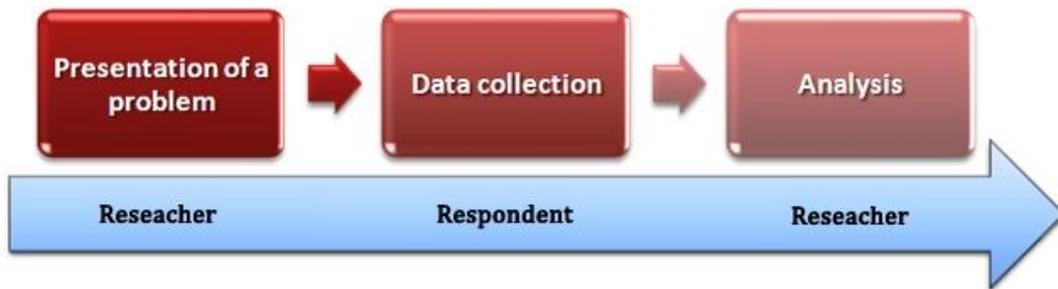
The iterative approach is based on repetitive interplay between the collection and analysis (Bryman & Bell, 2003, p.425), weaving back and forth between data and theory. This was selected because we mixed the theorizing with the empirical data collection and meanwhile also made our interpretations. By mainly starting with a deductive approach with Kevin Roberts reality, Lovemarks, we switch to the inductive approach where we had theories and were researching the general, to know what the reality is. This, at the same time that we had Lovemarks in mind and because of this mix and going back and forth with the analysis and our empirical material, iterative approach was the best choice for us.

#### **4.1.2 Research Methods**

Qualitative approach is an open approach where information is being collected and operated as little as possible which then are being structured after the material has been reviewed (Jacobsen, 2002).

The method so to say puts few restrictions on the response that the respondent can provide (Jacobsen, 2002). It contributes to detailed information of the information provider and their (correct) understanding of the situation (Jacobsen, 2002).

One of the advantages of a qualitative approach is openness (Figure 9) since it contributes to more flexibility for changes during the investigation if the need arises. The structuring and categorization occurs in other words at the analysis and does not need to be made before data collection, as is the case for the quantitative approach. That is favorable to our situation as we do not have a completely clear picture of what to look for in advance and thus are more open to unexpected events.



**Figure 9: Level of openness in the qualitative approach (Jacobsen)**

We are also looking after answers to questions such as why, where, when, how, to get a deeper understanding, rather than numerical or statistical information. That is why quantitative method is not considered to be appropriate, where the main objective is to obtain figures. The qualitative approach contributes to greater understanding and clarity in a particular subject on a given group. In this way, we can see the connection between individual and context (Bryman & Bell, 2003). It is possible to create greater understanding through further development of responses to obtain a better insight and a better perspective, or even find the intensity of attitudes (McGivern, 2006).

## 4.2 Procedure

### 4.2.1 Primary Data Collection Method

Primary data is the information that the researcher collects directly from the source of information. Collection can be done by, for example, questionnaires or interviews (Jacobsen, 2002). This is our most important part of our data collection as the primary method is adapted to our purpose and our problem definition, which is impossible to find in the secondary form with the same shape and target group.

It was obvious to us that our choice of method would include any kind of interviews, such as interviews or focus groups where this method is more flexible. We want to get a deeper insight into the respondents' way of thinking and in their views and we believe that the best way for a better understanding is when our respondents express their answers verbally. In the interviews, we can also listen to and interpret the respondents' tone of voice which says more than if we only had read the answers from a questionnaire survey. By our use of interviews, we can reduce the number of non-response because the respondent and the interviewer can talk their way through various problems and misunderstandings that may arise during the interview time. Another advantage is that we can get better information and deeper understanding through our opportunity to ask supplementary questions depending on previous answers, to keep up the conversation.

We did not do any observations because we are not looking for random consumption habits of the consumers, we are looking for an answer for why they have a commitment with a brand and that would not be shown through observations. So importantly, what we would have missed out on is the thoughts and the feelings that the consumers have, which is of interest for the thesis in question.

If we had chosen questionnaires we would not had the chance to hear the respondents' view points because the concerned topic is broad and it would become difficult for them to formulate their opinions either by forced answers that do not fit or through their own written

answers that are not so well developed. In a discussion it becomes more fluent and more thoughts arrive.

We do not believe that a combination of in-depth interviews and focus groups would have given us a better outcome. Since we want to get as good quality as possible, we concluded that it is the interviews that will generate the most. Focus groups contribute to a more general view and can also affect the outcome, whereas in-depth interviews, as the name says, goes into more depth in the respondent's thoughts and interpretations. Since there also is not other respondents who can come up with contradictions this often leads the respondents to give an honest answer about what they really think and feel about the subject, which means that the individual's interpretation appears.

In our case, we have conducted nine interviews of a qualitative nature as we think we can get a better understanding of thoughts and actions of the respondents about loyalty relations and why people love their lovemarks.

The purpose of this study is to obtain people's subjective perspective, how they interpret and understand a particular situation and their feelings. Through a qualitative study, which the collected data consists of words, our hope is that their views will be clearly communicated (Jacobsen, 2002).

#### **4.2.2 Interview**

An interview may be more or less open in its structure by being; structured, semi structured or unstructured. The first-mentioned means that the questions and answering alternatives are predetermined and are in sequence. A semi-structured interview is partially open, given that what differs with a structured interview is that you do not have predetermined answers while an unstructured interview is completely open. This reminds of a normal conversation where you do not follow an interview guide and the respondent is not controlled (Bryman & Bell, 2003). We see it as a clear advantage that the interviews can be open as this could lead to interesting discussions. It also contributes to greater understanding of the respondent's thinking and interpretations when you do not force them with pre-determined questions with given answer categories.

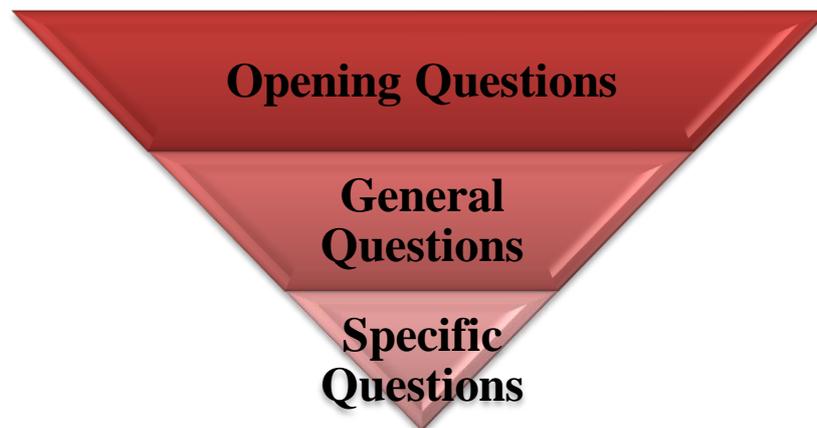
Open interviews will contribute to the data that is much nuanced, where the individual and unique understanding of the respondent appears. This benefits our investigation, although it can be considered as complex due to the amounts of words that are going to be analyzed without easily comprehensible categories. New aspects can be highlighted when one converse more freely and thus obtain more details by the proximity that arises between researchers and those being investigated. The fact that it also is flexible is an advantage because we in the startup stage felt that the dividing line between data collection and analysis was unclear and vague, since we did not know what we would "discover" during the interviews, but by being able to have the ability to change both the problem, data collection method and analysis, has enabled us to analyze our data retrospectively on the basis of a more specific way of looking at the problem.

Although this method is resource-demanding and slow to perform and process, we get more out of the work than if we had chosen a different method. Therefore the intensive formulation is preferable, which means that you prioritize many variables over many units. The processing was time consuming because we had to listen to the tape-recorded interviews several times and each time new data emerged. The fact that we only interviewed a few people makes that we cannot generalize, and the representativeness becomes an issue, that is the external validity. Our priority was to get a better understanding within the selected research topic, and although we cannot generalize, we can get a better understanding of brand loyal people and their way of thinking.

We compiled an interview guide for the semi-structured part of the interview with questions that could be suitable for our investigation. The interview guide is contained in *Appendix 1*. We have done individual interviews with open answers to get as full answers as possible. All of us three were not attending every interview, we interviewed one by one and that will be further discussed in the respondent part.

Before interviewing, we gave our interviewees brief information about Lovemarks so during the interview the "Lovemark" term was used instead of brand and also for making them talk about their ultimate brand. We did not tell them the purpose of our study in order to not affect the outcome. In the interviews, we started initially structured with questions. This approach contributed to the respondents feeling comfortable, less nervous and we had the relevant

background information that could be used for future issues. Then the interview proceeded in semi-structured questions which went on to become more detailed and concrete. The questions were therefore designed in accordance with the funnel model (Figure 10).



**Figure 10: The funnel model**

The questions focused gradually on our specific problem while space was provided for adaptation. All interviews were conducted in the same way when it comes to the semi-structured part of the interview where the questions were read out in the same order. The difference was the follow-up questions that could occur based on the respondent's reply. When the respondents were answering our questions they got to speak freely and not be controlled so that their answers would not be affected. The interviews were recorded on tape to avoid losing important data. Only when the interviews were conducted and information was collected, it could be structured and then be divided into categories that you can find in the empirical chapter (Jacobsen, 2002).

Before we conducted the interviews, we chose to first do a test interview. This would give us a better estimation of the time for the performance and get an idea of eventual oddity that may be encountered. The respondent knew that this was a test interview and that the material would not be used. It was not recorded because it was the design of the interview guide that we wanted to test and see if it was clear and complete. Therefore, we had no benefit from the answers. There were some adjustments that were made afterwards, one question was clarified and sometimes follow-up questions needed to be added.

### **4.2.3 Selection of Respondents**

In the selection of respondents, we felt that nine people were reasonable given the time constraints. We have chosen to see the respondents as individuals and thus our research is not based on gender perspective, we ignore this. With regard to age, we have a small spread but even this factor is not considered to be important because we believe that brand love is not related with age. One example is Harley Davidson which the majority of fans are not young people.

We chose to interview with people we know because to talk open and relaxed about this subject could probably not be obtained with strangers at a random place. Besides, there isn't any secret fact that our friends are going to reveal so that they would feel uncomfortable to tell it to one they know and that is why we interviewed one by one. Furthermore, the interviewees will have a lovemark so that we can get a deeper understanding of where the love comes from. Before the selection of interviewees we observed their relations with brands, chose the ones who are loyal and have a deeper emotional connection with their brands. There weren't either any marketing students that was interviewed.

Some distortions may arise from the selective sample since we only interviewed nine people. We cannot certainly say that these people are representative of the public opinion. From these interviews, we can however deduce some indication of what creates loyalty beyond reason and love between a brand and consumer.

We have compiled our respondents to get a better overview of them:

NAME	Brand	Age	Major	Nationality
AYŞENUR	Body Shop	25	Cultural studies	Turkish
DAN	Coca Cola	24	Political Science	Danish
DUYGU	La Senza	25	Chemistry	Turkish
GUSTAV	Axe-Africa	26	Physics	Swedish
ILDIKO	Starbucks	22	International Relations	Hungarian
KORAY	Apple	24	Business and engineer	Turkish
PIA	Chanel make-up	20	Political Science	Swedish
SAMIRA	Gucci Rush 2	25	Accounting	Swedish
ÜMIT	McDonald's	22	Nuclear Physics	Turkish

Table 1: Compilation of respondents

#### 4.2.4 Interviewer Effect

What should be in mind during the implementation of the interviews is the so-called interviewer effect when the interviewer subconsciously or consciously controls their respondents. Interviewer effect occurs if the respondent is influenced by the interviewer to respond in a certain way. The respondent may feel uncomfortable with opening up when he meets the interviewer or the interviewer may behave in a certain way to get the respondent to answer anything else. This was another reason why we used the funnel model by starting with a more neutral topic, by starting to ask about general loyalty, and then ended with the emotional field when the respondent felt more comfortable. We avoided controlling the respondents, and instead letting them define their own words and put across their views before we began a discussion and as mentioned before we did not inform them the aim of the thesis in order to avoid the interviewer effect.

## **4.3 Validity and Reliability**

### **4.3.1 Validity**

Two main concepts of validity are the validity and relevance. Validity is divided into internal and external validity (Jacobsen, 2002). Internal validity is based on whether we measure what we think we measure, while external validity is based on whether the results from a limited area are valid in other context, than what we have chosen to investigate (Jacobsen, 2002).

In qualitative research validity cannot be measured in figures. Therefore we will now describe how the research affects our application.

Our approach helps us to reach an individual interpretation from nine different individuals. By having started from empiricism in the starting phase and not theory, we have been more open to the outcome.

As for our external validity, we cannot generalize the results in general since we do not believe that our sample of respondents is representative of the masses when they are too few in number. The aim of our method is to take note of the unique, specific, not to achieve generalizability.

### **4.3.2 Reliability**

The two main concepts of reliability are authenticity and credibility. What is questioned is whether one can trust the investigation and if the execution is considered convincing (Jacobsen, 2002). High reliability is obtained if one believes he will get the same result by doing the same survey again (Jacobsen, 2002). To achieve this it is important that the information which it receives has not been influenced by various factors such as signals or stimuli by attempting to obtain a specific answer (Jacobsen, 2002).

We hope to achieve increase of the reliability of the material through documentation of the interviews, using a voice recorder. This is to get all the relevant information and precise statements of the respondents. The documentation is made so that we do not only rely on our

notes and memories and also so that we can be able to show accurate quotes from respondents in the latter part of the thesis.

## **4.4 Source Criticism**

Our sources are carefully thought out to enhance the credibility. We have used several books on the subject to not rely on only one source and one point of view since different authors have different theories about the selected topic.

Conducting interviews has helped to an even more credibility because we have taken it directly from the studied objects, namely the individuals with a lovemark. They have been responding in their own words and own expressions. They also had the opportunity to speak freely and not be controlled during the interview so that we would obtain and discover as much as possible. The disadvantage of our qualitative approach is that we cannot compare or measure the respondents with the help of a scale but at the same time they are being considered separately. As to the questions, they can appear as vague because the standardization was low and the questions were reformulated during the interview time but at the same time we wanted to not have predetermined questions to be able to ‘dig’ more into the answers given. The study was also time-consuming and because of the limited resources we contented ourselves by only examining a few units. That the interview effect may have occurred may be another problem that should be taken into consideration.

## 5. Analysis

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*This chapter is composed of in depth analysis of our empirical data obtained from the interviews. Our criteria are the dimensions of Lovemarks, mystery, sensuality and intimacy in addition to respect. We will analyze participants' answers to investigate which component of Lovemark influences brand love.*

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In his book (The Future Beyond Brands: Lovemarks) Roberts lists the dimensions which create love for the brands and make them Lovemarks. He defines these dimensions sequentially as *mystery*, *sensuality* and *intimacy*. In addition we will cover *respect* as he states important criterion for love. In accordance with our aim, in this chapter we analyze our empirical data through the dimensions Roberts identifies to find the notions of consumer's love for brands. By analyzing our data obtained from the interviews, we try to understand the love concept and see if we can add something different to the dimensions of love stated by Roberts.

As we mentioned above, mystery, sensuality, intimacy and respect are our criteria while analyzing empirical data. They will give us further understanding about what creates and maintains love in brand relationship. We will discuss results in the next chapter and question the validity of dimensions of Lovemark in the love concept.

### 5.1 Mystery

To Roberts, the first dimension of creating love is mystery including great stories, media effect, past-present-future, dreams, myth & icons and inspiration. Each expresses different aspect of mystery.

### 5.1.1 Great Stories

To Roberts, stories behind brands are vital since they provide chance to live. About the stories, he states “stories feed Lovemarks. They are how we explain the world to ourselves and give value to the things we love. Stories have huge value in business because they look in the right direction. You cannot tell a story without characters and emotion and sensory detail.” (Roberts, 2005:88). From Roberts’ point of view, stories make the brand live and provide emotional attachment to the brand. Company created stories or consumers’ own stories are both valuable in this sense. In order to obtain the stories of our participators, we asked questions regarding to their stories in the flow of interview.

One of our respondents tells her story about the brand which makes it more memorable and the relationship more emotional for her:

*“One time, when my boyfriend and I were in Copenhagen, it was really cold, we said ‘let’s get out of here’ so we got on the train but we got off on the airport which is on the way to Lund, just to get a Starbucks. I just go to airport 2 hours in advance just for coffee”*

Ildiko, 22

Ildiko shares her story related to the brand. Her boyfriend and she are the characters of the story and for sure the brand, Starbucks is the main character of it. Her story makes the experience with the brand more precious and, as Roberts stated, adds some degree of emotion, character and sensory detail to Ildiko’s brand experience.

In this point, storytelling becomes more of the issue as we mentioned in chapter 3. The expert of storytelling, Annette Simons states: “When you tell a story that touches me, you give me the gift of human attention- the kind that connects me to you, that touches my heart and makes me feel more alive” (Roberts, 2005: 89). Her explanation about storytelling confirms the studies existing in the literature but also points out that storytelling arises from social existence of human being. For this reason, throughout the interviews, it was obvious that our participators were eager to tell their stories which connect them to their brands and make them

involved in the brand relationship. One of our interviewees tells her story which she thinks important and meaningful:

*“I was going to buy a lip gloss but I didn’t have so much money. I was about to buy Max Factor which has the same color and 200kr cheaper. But at last minute I’ve changed my mind went to Kicks and bought my Chanel lip gloss. The perfect color”*

Pia, 20

Here, again the main character is Chanel and Pia’s passion for her brand is obvious. Thus, this story is worth to memorize for her since it signifies her passion and satisfies her in a way that she has something to share about her brand.

Coke’s secret about the ingredients is an important story that creates curiosity among the customers. One of our interviewees immediately tells its secret story regarding his/her favorite brand, Coke.

*“They have this secret recipe in a safe place somewhere in New York, the headquarters, like the secret ingredients that nobody can ever know about or at least that’s the myth, so yes, there is some mystic around it, you could say that.”*

Dan, 24

*Media effect* on creating, shaping or inspiring stories is important to analyze according to Roberts. Therefore, we tried to learn their ideas about how their favorite brands are reflected in the media and whether they are influenced from these news or ads.

Some of the participators said that the news or ads affect them positively.

*“News about La Senza, for instance, takes place in the magazines which belongs to certain class, high quality. It makes me feel more confident about the brand...”*

Duygu, 25

*“Media has a good effect. It affects my love. You see celebrities use it and it makes me feel exclusive. The exclusive brand that I can afford”*

Pia, 20

*“Three years ago I was watching videos about Iphone. Those made me buy Iphone”*

Koray, 24

Some of the participators replied that they did not even see any ad or news about their brands.

*“I don’t know how Gucci Rush is mentioned, or even if it is mentioned in the media. I don’t look into it to see what people have to say about this product. Since I am sure of this perfume and I’ve tried it myself, I’m not looking for info. I’m satisfied.”*

Samira, 25

*“Coke is never mentioned at all in media, and if they are mentioned it’s about negative workers rights, exploitation of 3<sup>rd</sup> world, I can go on and on. The past years, as I can recall, have not been objective when it comes to coke in the media, it has been more like a commercial when they talk or write about it.”*

Dan, 24

The answer of Coke lover is really interesting for the media’s negative influence on the brand. His attachment to the brand makes him an advocate of the brand since he thinks that the brand is reflected negatively in the media.

However, majority of the interviewees did not have much idea about reflection of their brands in media and think their brands do not need to invest for advertising. For instance, Starbucks lover said that she did not see any ads of Starbucks added that Starbucks does not need such kind of promotions.

### **5.1.2 Past, Present, Future**

Past, present and future of the brand are important while analyzing mystery dimension of love. Roberts gives importance to this aspect since he thinks that “Lovemarks are like the best families-they combine learning from the past with the dynamics of the present to create great futures” (Roberts, 2005:91).

Disneyland is successful at positioning itself within the borders of past, present and future. At the gates of Disneyland in California, visitors can see this statement which Disneyland finds the right place for itself in the past, present and future:

“To all that come to this happy place: Welcome. Disneyland is your land. Here ages relieve fond memories of the past, and here youth may savor the challenge and promise of the future.”

In order to learn how important and effective this aspect is, we asked questions related to establishment of the companies owning brands, important celebrations and future plans of the brands. When we asked questions to learn what the participators know about the past, present and the future of their brands, again majority of them could not answered.

Here are some of the answers of those who responded:

*“History of Apple is important for me; I made a research about it before I bought the phone”*

Koray, 24

*“History of Chanel makes it special. It started in 30s, it’s an old brand and it never failed”*

Pia, 20

*“They have many special events, in Sweden in an amusement park, next week there is a McDonald’s day”*

Ümit, 22

*“They (Coke) started out as a medical cocobain cocai liquid remedy for toothaches, cocaine stopped being used. They want to hide their past since they used cocaine, and now it is family friendly and they have started their own tradition, for instance the Christmas commercial.*

*There is no Christmas if there is not a coke commercial so they succeeded to change their image and they had 100 years to do it, no wonder they succeeded...(About the future plans of the brand) The trend is to blend coke with all crappy flavors and it hasn’t hit of. They do buy*

*other drinks and they sell it under their name but their iconic soda will always be Coca Cola.”*

Dan, 24

Consumers’ knowledge about the brands’ history, success or goal for the future are stated as important for the relationship based on love by Roberts. However, in our research, we could not get sufficient information from the all interviews.

### **5.1.3 Dreams**

*Dreams create action, action inspires dreams* (Roberts, 2005: 93). This is what Roberts think about dreams. According to him, brands which create love are the ones that listen to their customers and know how to tap into their dreams (Roberts, 2005). This also indicates that the brand understands its customers. We asked questions our participators how their brands fit into their dreams and how they would act if their brands were no longer available.

We got more replies for these questions.

*“You cannot imagine, for sure! Sometimes when I don’t have money but I want McDonalds, I find a way. Burger King cannot compensate”*

Ümit, 22

*“I know it Chanel and it makes it more fabulous, it makes me feel better. When a person asks I say it is Chanel Eye shadow”*

Pia, 20

*“I get a good feeling from the scent and it doesn’t go away for several hours. Other people always say that I smell good and they also use perfumes but they prefer mine and wants to know which one it is so they can by it themselves.”*

Samira, 25

One of our respondents loving Starbucks identifies the brand with freedom and enjoyment which fits into her dreams. Her identification is an example that the brand has succeeded to

become reflection of her dreams. As Roberts stated, the brand, Starbucks has achieved to tap into the dreams of its customer. Another answer for ‘no longer availability’ comes from Pia, she said, “In case of a no longer production situation, the panic will come; I’ll go to the store and buy all the Candy lip gloss which is my favorite. And I’ll survive till the last one ends”

#### **5.1.4 Myths and Icons**

Memorability of icons and myths make them one of the aspects of mystery. Brand icons are important since they convey brand message and visually stick to the mind. To Roberts, Lovemarks are also icons (Roberts, 2005). As we explained in the second chapter, iconic brands are, like Lovemarks, have strong loyalty and inspiration among the consumers (Holt, 2004).

In order to learn how myths and icons affect respondents’ love for their brand, we asked questions about logo of their brands and how they perceive them.

The lover of Starbucks, associates the logo with city life, summery, sun glasses, walking in the street or sitting on the street enjoying life. Apple lover, Koray defines the logo as simple and says; “It makes me think about simplicity and that matches with their products.” Chanel lover, Pia says; “I love the logo. It is simple and good looking, it says luxury.”

Axe lover expresses her association of bottle with being powerful and strong.

“Axe’s bottles are always black and have some kind of effect/picture of a fire or fireworks that I associate with being powerful and strong.”

Gustav, 26

Gucci Rush lover, Samira just describes how the logo of the brand is.

“The bottle has a G, and Gucci is known for its G’s on their products.”

Samira, 25

It is concluded from the answers that logo, the visual component of the brand reflects the brand image and it is one of the things that come to the mind when consumers think of the

brand. It also functions effectively in the brand relation. Thus, it strengthens brand's promise in the relationship.

### 5.1.5 Inspiration

Inspiration is the last component of mystery. We asked questions to find out if the brand inspires something in the lives of the consumers. Inspiration is the component which is the weakest among the components of mystery. We could get only one answer form the Gucci Rush lover.

*“Because of the fact that the perfume, Gucci Rush, smells so good, stay on for several hours and I am really satisfied with it, the brand Gucci has inspired me to buy more products from them, such as their make-up, bags and sunglasses.”*

Samira, 25

Roberts strongly mentions that the love creates inspirations for consumers. However, our research showed that love for a brand does not always lead to inspirations. Accordingly, it is the questionable component whether a brand love must lead to inspirations in the lives of the consumers.

According to Roberts, the mystery dimension with its components is the most important dimension in the love context. We tried to measure its importance in brand love for the selected brand lovers. In the general, when we asked questions regarding the components of mystery dimension, we could not get sufficient answers from the majority of the respondents. Especially past, present, future component including establishment of the brand, its history, and its success in the past, future plans did not mean much to our respondents. Some of them even commented negatively as we ask related questions since they could not give meaning to the relationship between the questions regarding the past, present and the future of the brands and their love for them.

Also, it is concluded from the responses that our respondents do not pay attention to media effect on brand image. This is a sign of the decreasing effect of traditional media in the times of evolution of the new media vehicles. Moreover, the questions for learning the effects of

dreams and inspiration component of mystery dimension did not attract the attention of the considerable amount of the respondents. Majority of them had no idea about how they identify their brands with their dreams and how they are inspired from the brands. On the other hand, participators were eager to tell about their stories related to the brand and their perception of the visual component since storytelling is strongly related with the social connection and the connection with the brands.

In the overall, our empirical research showed that the mystery dimension cannot be the primary dimension of love of our respondents for their brands since the components of mystery did not give full understanding of the love concept in our research.

## **5.2 Sensuality**

According to Kevin Roberts, sensuality is the second notion in love creation. Contrary to Roberts, responses of our interviewees indicates that sensuality plays the main role in love. As stated before in Chapter 2, sensory branding is the academic correspondent of sensuality. While analyzing sensuality we stick to Kevin Roberts and focused on vision, sound, smell, taste and touch.

### **5.2.1 Vision**

Appealing to customer's eye has the vital role in love. As we mentioned in previous chapters, many researchers as Martineau, Chebat & Morrin, Lindstrom and Bellizi & Hite mention that colors, packaging and design attract consumers' interest. Brands obviously work hard for being memorable by "including as many touch points as possible" as Lindstrom (2005:85) mentioned.

*"It's like falling in love. First you see the body, and then you put your emotions. When you see an Apple product you fall in love then you start to search technical features"*

Koray, 24

In interviews we searched an answer for what creates love. The aim is to find what kind of visible specialties differentiate loved ones from brands. Mainly our respondents claimed that appearance of a product or atmosphere of the store highly affect their love.

*“Main one in Vienna is my favorite, the layout of it, the furniture, big armchairs where you can sit and enjoy your coffee. There are also books you can read, that’s a nice feeling.”*

Ildiko, 22

In her answer, Ildiko explains why she prefers Starbucks over others according to the atmospherically specialties. She associates coffee with a warm environment; Starbucks fulfills her expectations from a café.

*“La Senza reflects my lifestyle with colorful products. You know, majority of the underwear brands have colorless, straight models, they are all the same. But La Senza has numerous models with different colors which make me feel different, unique”*

Duygu, 25

*“Black and white is associated with Chanel. I love the packaging and it makes me love it, Simplicity makes it more beautiful”*

Pia, 20

Both of our respondents focused on the color factor. We talked about the importance of colors in decision. Our respondents also confirmed that color of a product directly affects their admiration. In some brands such as Apple, we can see the simple white color of MacBook distinguishes MacBook from all others and becomes one of the effects on love for the brand. Companies should pay attention to color selection and even they may let customers pick their own color rather than giving one option to elicit personalization.

*“As I said, the bottle is designed to drive attention and gives the impression of being very powerful and strong, while looking at Nivea who is in the same price range, only has a blue bottle with no effects what so ever. Even the more expensive ones are really simple when it comes to the design so yes; I think Axe has the best design.”*

Gustav, 26

*“It appeals to my eye. I can understand a product is Apple from far away. No unnecessary buttons or anything. They give you what you need. It’s the ultimate design. I didn’t see anything better”*

Koray, 24

Having the best design in the class is mentioned by two participants. Owning a product which has a unique design make our participants comfortable about their products, they feel proud. Love has a visible shape when it’s formed with a unique design, people want to buy more and products can take attention of consumers easily.

On the other hand, only one out of nine mentioned that her perfume doesn’t have a unique design and an interesting bottle. She claimed that she’ll care for what is inside the bottle rather than the shape of the bottle. But probably brands have this advantage only if they are well known and have a good w-o-m community. Otherwise if brand is unknown and shape of the product is not appealing to the eye, product will fade away before consumers discover it.

*“The perfume bottle is really simple and ordinary. Since it sells really good I don’t care about the bottle, there is no need to have a nice bottle. If you go to the store, Gucci Rush’s design does not attract but those that do, that have a really good design, they often smell bad. So no, they don’t have the best or the ultimate design for its type or category.”*

Samira, 25

## **5.2.2 Sound**

Sound and music have a special place in our lives. We can consider it as the soundtrack of the life. People associate some sounds with products or things, every time they hear the sound associated thing pops up in their minds (Trainor, 2004).

Where possible, brands benefit this advantage of music. When adding a special tone or music to a product, marketers go in charge and create unforgettable advertisement jingles of atmosphere music.

*“I love Starbucks music; I even tried to download it. They have African music, jazz, and oldies. As a coffee house they have nice music. It’s a chill out music. It affects my love”*

Ildiko, 22

As in the quotation of Ildiko, she associates Starbucks with specific kind of music. After her response, we made a search about Starbucks music because also from our own observations, Starbucks has its own tunes, so we found out that Starbucks also branded their music under *Hear Music* name. It is also interesting that the slogan of Hear Music is “*The Sound of Starbucks*”. This example proves that consumers associate some brands with sounds and even that association makes sounds popular.

*“When I hear the jingle, I wanna go there”*

Ümit, 22

As our respondent Ümit associated McDonalds’ advertisement jingle with the hamburger, every time he hears that tune he claims that he gets hungry and wants to go to McDonalds. This reaction can be explained as traditional conditioning in psychology (Dayan, 2000; Pavlov, 1927). Contemporary marketers focus on physiological impression. They know how to affect human brain and make their brands irresistible.

*“When I hear it, I can understand an Apple product from its sound”*

Koray, 24

*“Cokes glass bottles sounds differently when you open them up compared to other sodas, I think it is because they use different amount of carbonic acid. Even the commercial plays the same sound.”*

Dan, 24

Our respondent, Dan, claims that his brand Coca-Cola has a unique sound because the product is unique and it has a special formula.

*“When you open a Coca-Cola, you hear the unmistakable sounds that are the ultimate invitation to 'Open Happiness' and enjoy a simple moment of refreshment,”* said Katie Bayne, Chief Marketing Officer, Coca-Cola North America. *“We know there's nothing quite like drinking a Coca-Cola, so if people share their interpretations of how that sounds, have fun*

*and make us thirsty, we may put them in a Coca-Cola commercial" (Thecoca-colacompany.com).*

### 5.2.3 Smell and Taste

Smell and taste, Kevin Roberts associated these two in his research because both senses are correlated. In food and beverage sector, smell and taste are undeniably main factor and reason for selection. Even though how popular and trendy an object is, people will not keep buying it if it doesn't taste or smell good.

*"I love trying every product in the Shop, their smell, naturalness make me want to feel every single product."*

Ayşenur, 25

*"It has its own special smell."*

Samira, 25

*"When I first opened the Iphone box, the smell made me happy"*

Koray, 24

From the responses above we can say that different odors create different emotions. A good perfume may make a person feel unique, sexy, self assured etc... When consumer finds the smell that represents oneself relationship creation accelerates. Many people use the same perfume for years, or go to same coffee shop because they associate this smell with memories. While describing smell in Lovemarks chapter, we mentioned the role of smells on long term memory. So a product with a successful smell has a great opportunity to play in Lovemarks league.

*"Coke is irreplaceable because it's the flavor you can't live without because they sell Pepsis and it's a big disappointment compared to if you get coke. When they don't have coke you'll get disappointed."*

Dan, 24

*“I’m not a gourmet but I can tell you the difference between any brand and McDonalds, the amount of the ingredients is secret. You can not make it at home, No compensation for that taste”*

Ümit, 22

*“Their name! And their coffee really tastes good. I wouldn’t call it as a good coffee in a traditional taste, but I like different flavors, trying new things”*

Ildiko, 22

All of our respondents, who have Lovemarks chosen from food and beverages, think that taste of a product is the most important aspect because it’s the core value of the product. They need to buy that product because they love the taste. Even the simple hamburger in McDonalds has a special recipe; consumers should go and buy that hamburger in the restaurant if they crave for it.

#### **5.2.4 Touch**

And finally touch is the final sense. When we consider blind people we can say that they see with their hands. So obviously touch of a product has special features that distinct from others. Sleeping on a silk bed linen, wearing a cashmere vest, bottle of champagne; all these can be associated with luxury. The touch or as said by Stephen R. Baird “Touchmarks” has a distinctive role on Lovemarks.

*“Bread is smooth; when you touch the package you are happy because you know that you will eat that unique hamburger soon”*

Ümit, 22

*“The bottle itself has a specific feel to it, if you can say that, like no other bottles are shaped like a coke so you will know if it is a coke even if you’re in the dark.”*

Dan, 24

The answer of the lover of Coca-Cola reflects what Coca-Cola Company’s trying to do. In his article about Touchmarks, Baird mentioned that Touchmark shouldn’t be functional or

decorative but distinctive. Coca-Cola bottle fulfills all specialties for being a Touchmark and the bottle is registered to prove its uniqueness. Here in our interview, the participant claims that Coca-Cola bottle is so unique that you can understand it's a Coke even it is dark.

*“I don't care about how big or small the bottle is or how it's shaped. Axe has as any other deodorant sprays a metallic bottle but maybe Axe's bottle is a little bit shorter than other brands, but as I said that is not important to me.”*

Gustav, 26

On the other hand, rest of the respondents could not tell anything about distinctiveness of their products' touch or they did not claim that touch has an effect on their love for the brand.

## 5.3 Intimacy

According to Kevin Roberts, intimacy is the third and last notion in love creation, Intimacy is the more intangible dimension when compared with others. Brands should both listen and talk since people star to humanize brands. In this part, three components of intimacy, empathy, commitment and passion will be analyzed.

### 5.3.1 Empathy

Empathy is mainly about listening to consumers. Brands obtain a deeper understanding of the consumers in order to see what their needs are. Almost all of our respondents felt that they are important for their brands since their brands provide what they want by listening to them and understanding them.

*“My love makes it different. I chose them and they treat me well”*

Ildiko, 22

*“I have been using La Senza for many years. They know how to manage the problems. They do their best while changing the product. They give importance to their customers, making them feel special and important.”*

Duygu, 25

As Duygu mentions, her brand makes her feel unique and she knows that she does matter for the brand. To create intimacy for the brand, it is essential that the brand itself knows its customers in order to satisfy them as expressed by Ümit:

*“If I know them and they know me, they know what I will eat. That’s intimacy.”*

Ümit, 22

On the other hand, when it is a very standardized product that cannot be personalized, it will be more of a challenge. Here is an example of the reply that we got concerning Coca Cola, maybe not the most personalized brand:

*“I don’t think I matter to the people responsible for Coca Cola. I’m probably just a drop in the ocean. Since their product is complete as it is, there is no need for modification. They would not care if I for instance requested more sugar. So far they have not done anything for me; they’re just taking my money really.”*

Dan, 24

### **5.3.2 Commitment**

As mentioned before, commitment is the aspired idea in Lovemark creation where loyalty beyond reason is the aim to gain more tolerated customers who leaves room for mistakes.

When commitment combines with loyalty, it becomes a powerful weapon for brands. Roberts defines Lovemarks as having this powerful weapon (Roberts, 2005). We tried to analyze the effect of commitment by asking questions to learn if they would switch to another brand when they confront with a brand that has higher quality. Majority of our brand lovers said that they would try other brand which provides higher quality. However, they expressed that they would not completely end their relationship with their brand since they think their brand would still be unique. This shows their commitment to their brand.

*“I don’t think that I’ll cheat on Starbucks, I’ll try the new one if everyone is saying that it’s better than Starbucks, but I’ll feel bad about it. I’ll not give up Starbucks.”*

Ildiko, 22

*“If I find something better, I’ll not completely leave Chanel, I’ll try the other one as well.”*

Pia, 20

*“If the other products make something new I may change but it’s not going to be Apple. Apple gives you the security feeling”.*

Koray, 24

With one exception:

*“Yes, if the other soda is better, then I would choose the better one. I pay for the liquid, other thing like nostalgia, I will not pay for.”*

Dan, 24

Commitment is not only about replacement, it is also about giving the brand a second chance if something turns out wrong. Given our responders different scenarios, everyone would still stay brand loyal but would react on different ways.

*“Even though I heard a scandal about Starbucks, I’ll still go to Starbucks!”*

Ildiko, 22

*“If there is a hair, nail or anything in my food, I’ll go and change it with a new one. I won’t consider changing the company. I’ll just ask what that is. In all sectors there can be problems like that.”*

Ümit, 22

*“Coke would most definitely not the right thing if something went wrong, they would try to bury it so that nobody would know. Hey would never speak of it again like their other*

*problems. If it is a huge thing I would sue them, and hope for a court settlement so they would avoid bad media attention but I wouldn't stop drinking coke."*

Dan, 24

But what if there is no problem with your brand, what if a better product will come to the market? This is the second scenario that we examined, in order to see if they would replace their own brands.

*"I hate Pepsi so no; I would not buy it even if it were 80 % off. I would not either test a new and cheaper replacement because I've found my flavor, my brand. I don't need anything else, it gives me exactly what I want and I get it every time. I would buy Coke over any other soda any day. I feel like it is mine good old coke. I would not cheat on my brand, as long as they have coke they have to offer I will choose coke."*

Dan, 24

There can be all sorts of unpredicted and uncontrolled incidents that can occur to a brand. Some examples are; scandals that will be covered in media, prices that will increase and new products or brands that comes out in the market and will compete with the "lovemark". One thing in common all these examples is that, the stronger a customer's commitment is for the loved brand, the less will the negative effect be for the brand and its customer loyalty.

### **5.3.3 Passion**

As mentioned in third chapter, passion ought to be sought in order to make the consumer feel that they are consuming for a reason. What we researched in this part was if they are so passionate about the brand that they would try to convince others to change to the same brand.

*"I convinced my boyfriend who doesn't like coffee. Now he's a Starbucks fan as well"*

Ildiko, 22

*"If my friends say something against Apple I'll try to change their idea"*

Koray, 24

When consumer is just satisfied with a brand one can be easily affected but it is another thing when consumer has a greater passion for something, it won't be easy to be affected from surroundings, like Koray above, or consumer might even convince others to discover why this brand is worth having emotional attachment to.

In one case, the respondent has not tried to convince others to buy the same brand but he would show his disaffection:

*“No, have not tried to convince anyone but I look down on those who drink Pepsi and I make sure to make them know how I feel about them and everybody who sells Pepsi as well.”*

Dan, 24

This leads us to the humanization where consumers feel various emotions towards the brand, such as love, respect, passion or hatred. By highlighting emotional aspects of a certain brand, brands can have certain position in the minds of the consumers. This was tested by asking the respondents what they perceived the brands human emotions would be:

*“Really rich, living in New York City, girl, elite, popular, wearing designer clothes and chic, this is the Starbucks brand as a human”*

Ildiko, 22

*“Reliable. When I imagine La Senza as a human, it would be a very beautiful, sexy and strong woman.”*

Duygu, 25

*“My best friend, the American guy. McDonalds will be obsessive, he's a cult. You love it or hate it. Maybe a nerd, I like that. Maybe just because I wannabe one. Closest to myself”*

Ümit, 22

To get a better brand communication, one way could be to strengthen the emotional attachment by adding a personality to differentiate it. As we discussed in the first chapter, humanization provides a closer relation between the brand and consumer. In most of the answers we realized that respondents try to associate their brands with *ideal selves*. For instance, La Senza lover Duygu correlates her brand with a beautiful, sexy woman as she

desires to be. Consumers are getting intimate with the brand by humanizing it. This factor makes brands irreplaceable since the brand's character fulfills consumers' aspirations.

## 5.4 Respect

Respect is stated as the founding principle of love, also a successful business. In the absence of respect, love will disappear like all infatuations. It is important since it carries love to the future (Roberts, 2005). Roberts and his company claim that the respect is a criterion for love to exist. This is the reason why we used respect for evaluating the data obtained from the empirical research. Before analyzing the answers, we should draw attention to the point that every participant feels respect for their brands for different reasons. Chanel lover expresses her respect which results from the corporate success for many years.

*“Of course, Chanel is an old known company; they didn't fail in anything they produced. They have clothes, bags, perfumes and everybody loves them, how can I not respect them”*

Pia, 20

In addition, Roberts and his company divided respect into two components as values and performance which are two aspects that create respect. For this reason, while posing questions to understand the importance of respect in the love concept, we used the components of it, as Roberts and his company defined.

### 5.4.1 Values

Values that are internalized by the brands are stated, by Roberts, as a reason to respect them. We also expressed the importance of values in consumer-brand relationships (see Chapter 2). Values affect the choice of brand and consumer's attitude in the relationship. Roberts explains values as the sources of respect for the brands. In order to comprehend the effect of brand values in love concept, we directed few questions whether the brand values are source of respect for them.

The Body Shop lover strongly advocates the values of The Body Shop. Obviously, her respect for the brand arises from the values that The Body Shop internalizes.

*“The Body Shop supports human rights and pay attention to environmental issues. It cares of human being and so its customers. Even it cares of animals. I do not know any other brand that takes care of the world like The Body Shop... I believe in the high quality of The Body Shop but I also pay attention its standing in the market. Because other brands are looking for only profit through promoting their products and do not support such values explicitly. The Body Shop even does not make intense promotions. This is also a difference of The Body Shop.”*

Ayşenur, 25

Moreover, she says the brand is worth to use, her confidence is strong since the brand keeps the promises.

*“As a consumer, I want to be affected not only by advertisements but also by the feeling that the brand provides. The Body Shop gives more than I need as a consumer so nothing can change my feelings towards it. Not only at the time of shopping but also after shopping, I want to feel that I did something good for myself. In addition, The Body Shop keeps its promises. It promises me a smooth and healthy skin. So far I got what it promised me as a consumer.”*

Ayşenur, 25

*“McDonalds’s just a big company in the global world. They have many charity houses for kids. I respect them because of that. People may say that McDonald’s is giving people fatty food and destroys environment but on the other hand they help kids. Not every company does that so that makes them better than the others”*

Ümit, 22

*“This free trade and environmental friendly moves are not the main reason to love Starbucks but it is one more reason to love it”*

Ildiko, 22

*“Yes, I feel like there are still some poor people and there is still someone who’s trying to help them. I’m being happy when I see this box in front of the cash machine”*

Ümit, 22

*“As an engineer I respect the production of Apple products. They use simple materials. 80% of their materials are recyclable”*

Koray, 24

If we generalize the responses so far, brands’ CSR efforts are perceived as added value to the brand. Consumers pay attention what the brand does for the environment or social problems. It is clear from the responses that consumers obtain certain value from the brands’ CSR efforts. Thus, the relationship gets stronger as the brand gives the image of taking care of such problems.

#### **5.4.2 Performance**

To Roberts, beside values, respect may also arise from the performance of the brand. (Roberts, 2005) A good performance creates functional value for the consumer. (See Chapter 2) Our participants were completely satisfied with the performance that their brands show during and after the usage. This strengthens their admiration and respect for their brands.

*“They do the best while changing the product. They give importance to their customers; make them feel special and important. I changed many times and never experienced irresponsibility, disrespect or any silly treat. They always treat very kindly and manage this kind of process in a very professional way. This is another reason for my loyalty to this brand.”*

Duygu, 25

*“Apple is unique for me they have their own system and vision. They are different than other products. It is useful and addictive. They are simple. Ipod, Iphone they are user friendly. You don’t need a guide for Apple you can solve it by yourself. Windows needs upgrades. Iphone’s screen is special. Nothing can scratch it. I carry my phone in my pocket and I don’t afraid”*

Koray, 24

Components of respect, performance and values gave us a direction for how to measure the respect since it cannot be measured easily through interviews with limited time. Roberts' assumption which places respect as the *founding principal* of love is also proved by our research. In the overall, we can conclude that whether it is based on values or performance, respect exists in all love based relationships of our selected group with their brands.

### 5.4.3 Trust

To Roberts (2004), Lovemarks are the premium brands that consumers both trust and love. So we asked our respondents if they trust their loved brands. All of our nine respondents indicated that they trust the brands and companies behind.

*“I have not met any customer who is not satisfied with La Senza. This situation strengthen my connection to the brand cause it is good to know that I am not alone who thinks like this.”*

Duygu, 25

Conferring to Duygu's answer, we found out that satisfaction of customers creates trust among other customers. Besides, when we analyze the comments of consumers on Lovemarks website mainly a high trust and satisfaction is greeted.

*“Reputation is also important. If you compare with another company, feedbacks and customer reviews make me choose Apple”*

Koray, 24

Reputation of a brand is one of the main factors that create trust. By some means trust and reputation represent quality and functionality. Coca-Cola lover trusts what he drinks because he knows that the company is successful for years and also he blends stories, mystery of the secret formula and history of the brand to reason trust factor.

Apple consumer trusts Apple, because he somehow believes that the system that Apple uses is virus free and he will have technical support under any circumstance.

Chanel lover, Pia, claims that there is no other product with the same color and vision with Chanel so these specialties turn Chanel into a trustmark for her.

Ümit thinks that McDonalds is a trusted and big company because it donates money for kids and that funding makes him feel as he also donates some money to hunger fund every time he eats from McDonalds.

To sum up, every brand lover has a different point of view while describing trust but it is obvious that every successful Lovemark manages to gain consumers' trust.

## 5.5 Additional Criteria

During the interviews, we tried to cover all notions that Kevin Roberts stated as love creators. Since our aim is finding out what influences brand love, we check if there is any other component that can be effective in brand love stated by Roberts.

First focus is on price because according to Roberts, brand lovers have tendency to pay more for what they love. So we asked 'in case of any price change, what would their reaction be?'

*"I'll pay more for Apple"*

Koray, 24

*"Chanel's price is not important. It doesn't affect my love"*

Pia, 20

*"Coke has increased their price every year as long as I can remember so I would probably still buy it, but if they increase their price by a lot I would most likely stop buying the product."*

Dan, 24

According to those findings, brands that reached to be loved have power to shift and change prices. Generally, these high class brands are slightly more expensive than normal brands but mostly consumers have willingness to pay more. While those that purchase exclusive brands such as Gucci and Chanel care less or not at all, those that buy cheaper products are more price sensitive as Coca Cola and the Axe-Africa respondents. As we mentioned above, the most drastic example of that willingness is with our interviewee Pia. She preferred her

Lovemark “Chanel” which costs 300kr over 115kr Max Factor lipstick which has similar color to Chanel.

## 5.6 Three Reasons to Love

“Price, Taste, Simplicity” - McDonalds

“Taste, Atmosphere, Memories” - Starbucks

“Durability, Colors, Exclusive” - Chanel

“Usability, Simplicity, Design” – Apple

“Quality and variety of products, Service quality, Image” – La Senza

“Values, Naturalness, Quality” – The Body Shop

“Taste & Quality, Price, Memories” – Coca-Cola

“Smell, Quality, Feeling” - Axe

“Smell, Durability, Feeling” – Gucci Rush

In our interviews we asked our interviewees about which three specialty come to their minds when they think about their brands. The aim of this question is to find out what creates the love.

Mostly the respondents focused on product related qualifications such as taste, smell, quality, durability, atmosphere, colors and usability.

Feelings such as simplicity, memories, emerging senses, being exclusive and values of the company secondarily have importance on love creation. The results are expected and matching Kevin Roberts’ love concept; because the product itself creates the body and senses assist it to be loved. The chart below demonstrates the share of product feature, feeling and price in love creation.

## 5.7 Summary of Analysis

To sum up, sensuality has the most important role in creating brand love according to our interviews, unlike Kevin Roberts’ assumption that positions mystery as the most important dimension of love. People want a unique product, a one (depending on what it is) that tastes extraordinary, smells extraordinary, so unique that product cannot be replaced by any others on the market. Our respondents felt like sounds, jingles can make them associate with that

brand and in some cases make them want it right at that moment. Vision and touch are also important in ways that make the respondent enjoy great atmospheres, colors, designs and grabbing attention of the consumer while having that extraordinary product to make one feel proud. On the other hand, three of our respondents, meaning 33 percent of the total, did not care at all for the design or the packaging. As the Gucci lover said, ‘the packaging can be an advantage to attract attention of potential consumers but when you love your brand, your product, the packaging would not affect your choice but that also depends what type of product we are talking about’. However, in the Apple case, design of the computer is important since it stands out from other computers in the eyes of the owner.

According to our analysis, intimacy is the second important dimension whereas Roberts ranks it as the third. Regarding empathy, one of the notions of intimacy, almost everyone agreed that their brands meet their needs but there were different opinions regarding the brand and if it would listen to the consumer. Some of the interviewees said they are shaped by the consumers because they are the users, other sad that their opinions might not count because the product is already complete and irreplaceable (Coca Cola). Others did only care of the customer service when it came to empathy but no matter how; the respondent’s wants to be heard. The second notion, commitment, will increase brand loyalty in different scenarios such as, replacing new or better brands, scandals, price increase, and price decrease of the competitor. Most of the respondents felt the same, they would probably not try a new brand but if they are proved somehow that another brand is better, they would still stay committed to their brands while testing the new brand. Because of great commitment, the price has nothing to say in the two scenarios mentioned. The third notion is passion, and most of the respondents are not active in persuading their surroundings to shift to their brand or start using it, but it happens.

Our research suggests that the least important dimension is mystery. The respondents felt that a brand should know their consumers, their dreams, and by fulfilling that and finding a place in the heart of the consumer it will be irreplaceable. Through different myths and icons some brands did strengthen their relationship with the consumer by reflecting the brand image. In some cases; they would buy everything left in the store or even stop purchasing that category as it is for the Coca Cola lover that would stop drinking sodas if the product would be stopped producing. In other cases; it would be sad if the product didn’t exist anymore but the consumers would eventually find something new like in the case of the Gucci perfume and

Axe deodorant. Our respondents hardly knew anything about the past, present or the future of the company but we must say that a couple at least knew something about the past which made us believe that the company's history or previous success doesn't affect brand love. Neither is media, traditional one, affecting their love for the brand. There was also lack of inspiration and at least, the storytelling was not either an essential role as Roberts claims.

We also looked at how respect influences brand love and it seems like if the brand keeps its promises and adopts a socially responsible vision, the customer receives added value and do get a good performance that are linked to the respect of a brand.

## 6. Conclusion

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*This chapter includes a brief summary of the study and general findings obtained from the analysis. The study ends with the implication for future research.*

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Postmodernism has led to a new era where consumers have complex needs and identify themselves with consumption patterns. In general, emotional attachment is evaluated as the favorable condition but in our study, we focused on a more specific concept, brand love. Brand love which aroused as the result of social changes that affect society like postmodernism is an important component of brand-customer relationships.

At the beginning, we identified our problem which motivated us for making this study. The problem was the need of more studies on brand love from different approaches. Further, we framed the main problem in two perspectives. The first was the insufficient information and different evaluations of brand love in previous studies. Majority of the studies focus on emotional attachment but we think that as a more specific concept, brand love signifies a higher level of an emotional attachment. The second perspective expressed underestimation of companies the importance of the sensual and emotional aspect of consumer-brand relationship.

We offered Lovemarks as an empirical case to solve the problem we identified. Lovemarks which includes brand love at the core is a recent concept introduced by Kevin Roberts. We aimed to analyze brand love through the dimensions of Lovemarks; **mystery**, **sensuality**, **intimacy** and **respect** which is stated as significant for a brand to become a Lovemark by Roberts.

To reach our aim, we selected brand lovers whom we observed before the interviews to be sure about their love for their brands. Interviews including open questions were held with nine brand lovers. We directed the interviews through investigating the influence of previously mentioned dimensions on their love and learn more about what influences their love in order

to see if we could find something different than Roberts' dimensions and if we could make contributions.

While brand love is formed, product itself has the most essential effect. We can argue that brand lovers are first impressed by the product attributes (quality, smell, design etc.) Our study matches partly with Fournier and Mick study which evaluates love as a mode of satisfaction (see p.13) since our interviewees are totally satisfied with their brands. However, brand love is a strong feeling that is beyond satisfaction that cannot be expressed as a mode of satisfaction which is a cognitive evaluation. Our research shows that after cognitive evaluation (being satisfied from the brand), brand lovers become delighted so it is the emotional evaluation that creates brand love.

Our analysis did not support Roberts ranking of dimension as mystery, sensuality and intimacy. He claims that mystery is the main criterion that influences brand love. However, our participants stated that not all of the components of mystery such as past & present & future of the company, inspiration and myths influence their love for the brands yet it is clear that the stories about the brands, icons and dreams arise from brands strengthen their relationship with the brands. We can conclude that Roberts characterization of a Lovemark as a *best family* of the consumer is questionable to certain degree since loving a brand does not always entail all the components of mystery dimension.

We found out that sensuality relates most with the product because all of our respondents answered our questions about sensuality in relation with the product qualifications such as taste, smell and design. Majority of the interviewees claimed that the sensuality is the most important notion in a product. When they want to express their feelings about a brand the answers were mostly as "They have the best coffee, the best taste, the simplest design". As a result different from Roberts we can say that the sensuality, the product, is the primary factor that creates brand love.

What is more, intimacy or the consumer relations is the secondary reason to love a brand. Respondents mentioned the relationship with the employees changes their emotions and it creates stronger bounds when the consumers are known or treated well by the employees. According to Roberts intimacy creates passion. He claims that when consumers feel passionate about a brand they also convince other consumers to purchase the product and

even make them fans such as Ildiko who turns her non-coffee lover friend into a Starbucks lover. As we expressed in the previous chapters, humanization makes establishing close relationship with brands. Our interviews definitely confirmed the effect of humanization on relationships. Our consumers get more intimate with the brands when they humanize it. To investigate intimacy dimension, we also asked questions regarding participants' imaginary human features attached to the brands. We discovered that consumers correlate their brands with their ideal selves. Reflecting ideal selves through consumption of products and services is one of the important characteristics of postmodern consumers, as we stated in chapter 1. Our findings supported that idea, as well, by indicating that consumption is a complex process from brand selection to post evaluation including social motives.

Beside the three dimensions of Lovemarks, we identified respect as influencing brand love. Despite own ideas and experiences about the brand, our analysis showed that respect also arises from information that comes from the others. Brand lovers listen to other consumers' claims, advices, and recommendations which underlies the influence of word-of-mouth in shaping brand relationship.

Our analysis also supported existing studies which claim that strong brands have the power of commanding a price premium (Semans, 2004). We found that loved brands have the freedom of price setting to a certain degree since brand lovers are not actually price sensitive (majority of the interviewees state that they would not stop buying in case of increase in price of the brand) and they are willing to pay more to purchase what they value and love. That is one of the reasons for companies for making effort to create love between their brands and consumers for whom price is not the primary determinant of purchase.

In the overall, our study showed that Kevin Roberts' assumptions about the dimensions (mystery, sensuality, intimacy) of brand love have effect in influencing brand love. However, ranking of those dimensions varies in our research as sensuality, intimacy and mystery. Beside the dimensions, respect which we identified as an important factor influencing brand love, are proved that they are influential. Our study showed that Lovemark concept is worth to think about since it covers contemporary marketing theories & models and works as proved by our study.

All of the respondents had different opinions when it came to why they love their brands but what all of them had in common was that the product was stated as the most important factor, the core reason, for the product to be a loved brand.

Our findings related to the importance of the product remind us of Kotler’s model of five product level (see Chapter 2). As the result of our analysis, it can be suggested that a brand which is loved fulfills first four levels (core benefit, basic product, expected product and augmented product).

<b>Lovemark</b>	<b>Core benefit</b>	<b>Basic product</b>	<b>Expected product</b>	<b>Augmented product</b>
<b>Apple</b>	<b>Information</b>	<b>Computer</b>	<b>Providing output</b>	<b>Innovation &amp; Simplicity</b>
<b>Axe</b>	<b>Grooming</b>	<b>Deodorant</b>	<b>Anti-Perspirant</b>	<b>A Good, Non-sweat smell</b>
<b>Chanel</b>	<b>Beauty</b>	<b>Make-up</b>	<b>Beautify</b>	<b>Luxury &amp; Unique Colors</b>
<b>Coca Cola</b>	<b>Drinking</b>	<b>Beverage</b>	<b>Thirst Quenching</b>	<b>Special taste</b>
<b>Gucci</b>	<b>Beauty</b>	<b>Perfume</b>	<b>Good Smell</b>	<b>Unique smell</b>
<b>La Senza</b>	<b>Clothing</b>	<b>Lingerie</b>	<b>Covering</b>	<b>Quality</b>
<b>McDonald’s</b>	<b>Nutrition</b>	<b>Hamburger</b>	<b>Getting filled</b>	<b>Taste</b>
<b>Starbucks</b>	<b>Drinking</b>	<b>Coffee</b>	<b>Caffeine Drink</b>	<b>Quality and Atmosphere</b>
<b>The Body Shop</b>	<b>Beauty</b>	<b>Cream</b>	<b>Natural</b>	<b>Goodwill</b>

**Table 2: Evaluation of Respondents’ Brands according to Kotler’s Model**

Above there is the chart that we analyzed the brands chosen by our respondents’ in order to comprehend specifications which differentiate them from others. All nine brands fulfill four levels of Kotler’s model.

What we also found was that different factors such as price, CRM, stories, identity have an impact on love. From the corporate side, there are added aspects as price, consumer relationship management, stories, values and service. Moreover, consumers add their own memories, stories and self-identification to the product that lead a love relationship with the brand. Moreover respect, trust, commitment and passion affect love, which can be evaluated as the cumulative of many notions.

To finalize, to achieve brand love, companies should cooperate with consumers and focus on their needs, aspires and dreams. Contemporary consumer expects more subjective and unique brands from companies. In the noisy and competitive structure of attraction economy, to distinguish from competitors and to maintain the attachment and loyalty of consumers, brands should take the power of love into consideration.

## **6. 1 Implications for Future Research**

Our research which aims to investigate brand love through Lovemark provides a different approach for further researches. While gathering and analyzing data, we were aware of the fact that the research topic of our study does give us the opportunity of making generalizations to certain extent since emotions are personal and hard to express in addition, people differ in expressing their emotions. Moreover, there were limitations of our study regarding the research area and number of participants. That's why; we do not claim that our findings are strictly valid in every context. Further studies can contribute to our findings by using different methods while revealing emotions analyzing the data.

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## **7.3 Oral Sources**

### **7.3.1 Personal Interviews**

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*Samira*, student – Accounting , 25. Malmö, 7 May 2010

*Koray*, student – Business and Engineer, 25. Lund, 5 May 2010

*Ayşenur*, student – Cultural Studies, 25. Malmö, 2 May 2010

*Ildiko*, student – Interntional Relations, 22. Lund, 3 May 2010

*Dan*, student – Political Sciences, 24. Malmö, 6 May 2010

*Gustav*, student – Physics, 26. Malmö, 5 May 2010

*Duygu*, student – Chemistry, 25. Lund, 1 May 2010

*Pia*, student – Political Science, 20. Lund, 8 May 2010

# Appendix 1

## Interview Guide

All interviews are done as improvisation. We used these questions as a guideline but depending on the flow we adapted questions.

### Respect

Can you name me top three reasons why \_\_\_\_\_ became your Lovemark?

Why? What makes it different from other brands?

How long have you been using that brand?

Can I say that you both love and respect the company and brand?

What do you know about the values of the company?

Do these charity activities of \_\_\_\_\_ affect your love?

### Mystery

Have you ever heard a good story about \_\_\_\_\_ or do you have?

What do you think about media?

What do you know about the heritage of \_\_\_\_\_?

What do you know about the brand except its products?

Do you crave for \_\_\_\_\_?

Imagine one day you wake up and learn that \_\_\_\_\_ is bankrupted, any changes in your life?

### Sensuality

Do \_\_\_\_\_'s products fulfill your visionary?

Any sound that reminds you \_\_\_\_\_?

What about the music in the \_\_\_\_\_?

Why not the others, tell me why the taste difference?

What about the touch, feeling?

## **Intimacy**

You mentioned that you have a good contact with the workers there; does it affect your choice of brand?

How do you define your relationship with \_\_\_\_\_? I mean do you believe that your loyalty is a result of something more than a customer- brand context?

Any nicknames for \_\_\_\_\_?

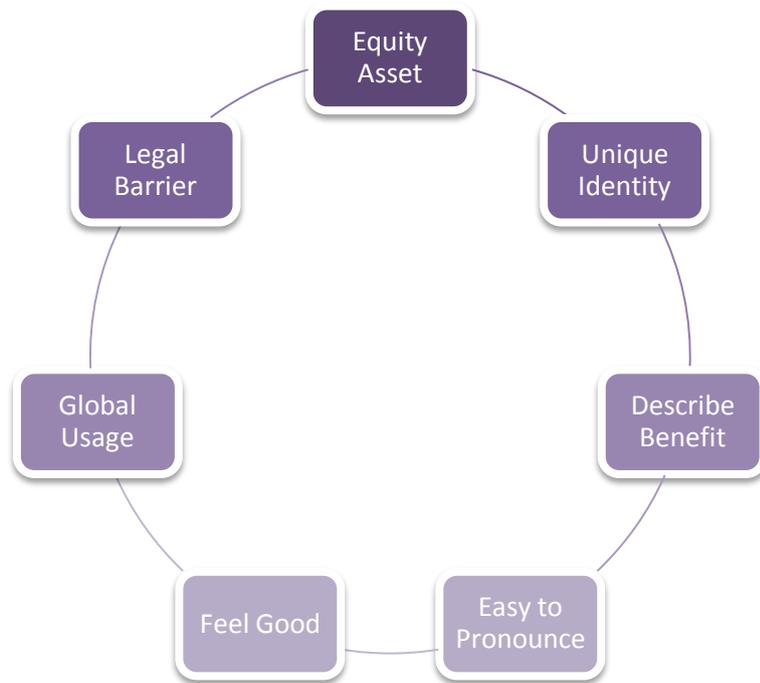
If you have a problem with anything about \_\_\_\_\_ what you do? Do you consider shifting it with another brand?

Have you ever try to convince your friends to go there?

If \_\_\_\_\_ was a human what kind of person it will be?

# Appendix 2

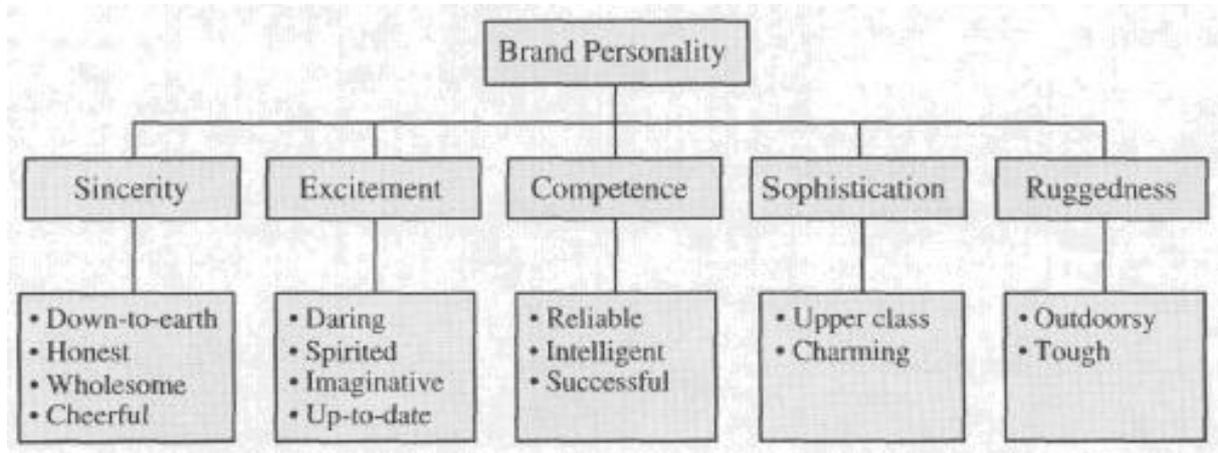
## Seven Functions of a Brand Name



**Seven Functions of a brand name  
(Ellwood, 2000: 140)**

# Appendix 3

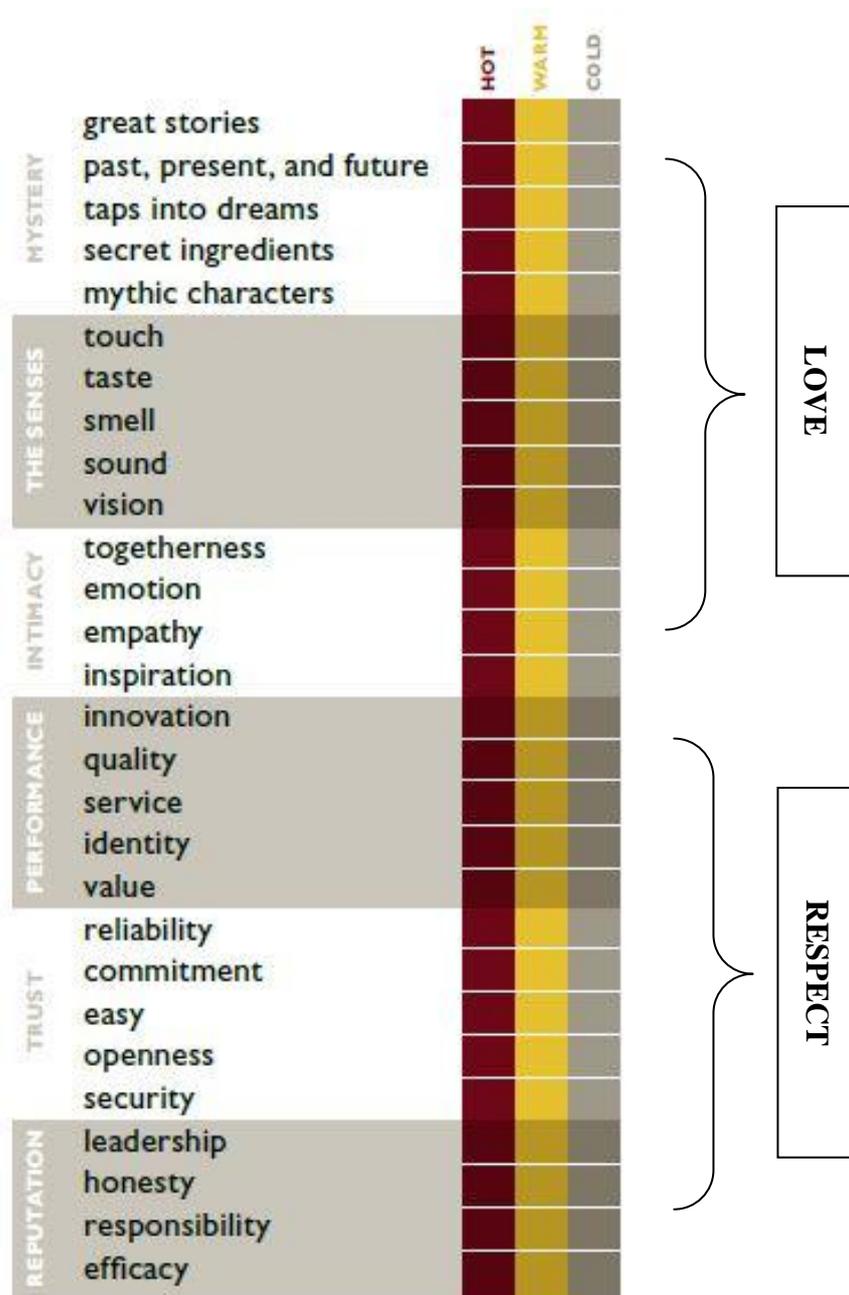
## Brand Personality



**Aaker's Brand Personality Model, 1997**

# Appendix 4

## The Lovemark



The Lovemark (Roberts,2006:85)

# Appendix 5

## Brand Identity Prism

